

**Gen. 9:8–17**

**Ps. 25:1–10**

**1 Pet. 3:18–22**

**Mark 1:9–15**

# A Rainbow Promise

**Goal for the Session**      *Children will find hope in God’s promise to Noah.*

## ■ PREPARING FOR THE SESSION

### Focus on Genesis 9:8–17

#### WHAT is important to know?

— From “Exegetical Perspective,” Dianne Bergant

Several important aspects of this covenant should be noted. First, it was made with all of creation. Second, it was multigenerational, made not only with Noah and those present, but with all who would come in the future as well. The biblical flood narrative contains a story of deliverance and of relationship with God. God directed Noah, the only one who found favor with the Lord, to build an ark so that he and his family and some of the animals might escape the punishing waters of the flood. From this small community God then fashioned a new human family and established a covenant with that family and with the world as a whole. This is a story of deliverance and new beginnings.

#### WHERE is God in these words?

— From “Theological Perspective,” Wm. Loyd Allen

The God revealed here is adaptable, touched to the heart by creation, and willing to accept hurt to keep hope alive. The God of this covenant is unchanging only in refusing to give up on creation. God keeps the future open by self-limitation when humanity threatens to close off hope by unlimited repeat offenses. God takes this risk because God’s heart is touched by creation’s suffering. The God declaring this covenant is not an objective judge meting out a just sentence, but a lover grieved to the heart at the beloved’s violence, yet still seeking reconciliation. Readers will find divine regret throughout this covenant, but will look in vain for anger.

#### SO WHAT does this mean for our lives?

— From “Pastoral Perspective,” Jane Anne Ferguson

The creatures made in God’s image may always resist God. Yet God lays down God’s weapons against creation, against humankind. God puts the undrawn bow in the clouds as a personal reminder “never again” to destroy creation with a flood. In the light of that bow, the rainbow, humanity can see God as “One Who Remembers,” even in the midst of chaos, even in the midst of rebellion by creation and its creatures.

#### NOW WHAT is God’s word calling us to do?

— From “Homiletical Perspective,” David J. Lose

The self-limitation and willingness to sacrifice divine freedom that this passage describes reach their climax in the passion of Jesus Christ, for which Lent prepares us. This passage invites us to reconsider our relationships with each other and, indeed, all creation. If God, who alone has the right to despair, judge, or destroy, surrenders the divine prerogative from covenantal commitment, might not we who have tasted this mercy look upon all persons and all things as inherently worthwhile, that is, as those things that God has called worthy?

**FOCUS SCRIPTURE**

**Genesis 9:8–17**

## Focus on Your Teaching

Most children are not as familiar with the season of Lent as with Advent. However, many congregations participate in a special offering during Lent, such as One Great Hour of Sharing. Children often know the story of Noah and the ark, especially about the animals. As the background for the focus scripture is reviewed, questions may come from children who were unaware of the reason for the flood or who didn't realize that Noah and his family were on the ark for a long time. Answer their questions simply and try to engage the child in conversation later if more is needed.

*God of the covenant, thank you for the second chance and for the beautiful symbol of the rainbow. Amen.*

### YOU WILL NEED

- battery-powered Christ candle
- 6 battery-powered votive candles
- purple cloth
- offering basket
- Bible
- Resource Sheet 1
- Color Pack 1, 2, 3, 4, 36, 38
- copies of Resource Sheet 2
- Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)

### For Responding

- option 1: face paint in rainbow colors, paintbrushes
- option 2: white felt, white ribbon (7" lengths), ribbon in rainbow colors (8" lengths), fabric glue, permanent markers
- option 3: pipe cleaners in rainbow colors; dowels or coat hangers; string, yarn, or fishing line; florist's wire
- option 4: Color Pack 36; *Singing the Feast*, [bit.ly/SingingTheFeast](http://bit.ly/SingingTheFeast)

## LEADING THE SESSION

### GATHERING

*Before the session*, if you are using option 2 in Responding, cut two identical cloud shapes (about 3" x 5") from white felt for each child.

As you greet the children, welcome each one and ask how they listened to Jesus this week. Ask about their families.

When you are ready to begin, have the group help you arrange the purple cloth on the worship table. Place an offering basket, Color Pack 4, the Christ candle and the votive candles as described on Resource Sheet 1 (Lenten Rituals), and the Bible on it. Have the children sit down. If collected, receive the offering. Point out the purple cloth on the table, a sign that the church year has changed to a new season. Lent began on the previous Wednesday, Ash Wednesday. Ask:

✠ What do you know about the season of Lent?

Supplement what they recall with the information on Resource Sheet 1. Ask a child to find Lent on Color Pack 1. Notice that Lent ends on Easter.

Use the Gathering Ritual on Resource Sheet 1.

To introduce the theme for this session, ask:

- ✠ When has someone given you a second chance or allowed you to take a do-over?
- ✠ How does it feel to be able to do something over?

Suggest that they listen for some people who got a second chance in the Bible story.

Extinguish the candles.

### Prepare the Paths

Prepare the paths, prepare  
the paths,  
Make ready God's way of  
justice.  
(repeat)

Smooth the rough roads,  
smooth the rough roads,  
God's salvation is coming.  
(repeat)

Inviting the children to recall what they know of a story lets them know that their knowledge is important.

**EASY  
PREP**

### EXPLORING

Invite a child to get the Bible from the worship table and turn to the book of Genesis. Note that this is the first book of the Bible. The word *genesis* means "beginnings." The stories in Genesis, especially in the first 11 chapters, are about beginnings and how the ancient people of Israel imagined the beginnings.

Show Color Pack 2. Explain that this is an illustration of the happy ending of the story. Ask:

- ✪ What Bible story is this?
- ✪ What do you remember about this story?

After the children have contributed to the telling of the story, suggest that they listen to the end of the story as it is told in the Bible. Read aloud Genesis 9:8–17. Explain that a *covenant* is a special promise between two people. When God makes a covenant with Noah, we can be sure that God will keep the promise. Ask:

- ✪ What is the covenant that God made with Noah?
- ✪ Who was included in the covenant?
- ✪ Did God ask Noah to do anything to keep the covenant?
- ✪ What is a reminder of this covenant between God and us?

Show Color Pack 3. Invite the children to tell about seeing rainbows. Suggest that they remember this story whenever they see a rainbow or any part of one.

To review the more complete story briefly before moving to the options in Responding, distribute copies of Resource Sheet 2 (The Longer Story about Noah and God). If you think some children will have difficulty following the reading, have a leader cue them for the chorus part so they echo what the leader says or does.

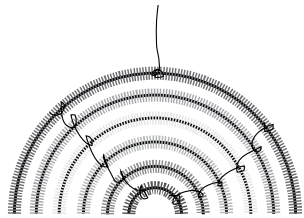
### RESPONDING

Offer at least two options so children have a choice. One might be more challenging to interest older children who can work on their own.

1. **Face Painting** Rainbows, whenever or wherever we see them, are reminders of God's covenant. Children of all ages seem to enjoy face painting. Set up a table for someone to paint rainbows on the children's faces or hands. Talk with each child to help them plan what to say when someone asks about the rainbow. This is an opportunity to invite a teen or adult to help with the group and get to know the children. Every time the children meet adults informally like this, they have another potential faithful role model in their lives.



Glue the second cloud on top of the ribbon on the first cloud.



### I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing

I'm gonna *sing* when the Spirit says *sing*,  
I'm gonna *sing* when the Spirit says *sing*,  
I'm gonna *sing* when the Spirit says *sing*,  
and obey the Spirit of the Lord.

I'm gonna *walk* . . .

I'm gonna *leap* . . .

I'm gonna *praise* . . .

2. **Rainbow Door Hangers** Create a reminder of God's faithfulness that children can dangle from their bedroom doorknobs. Give each learner two identical cloud shapes cut from white felt (about 3" x 5"). Show them how to glue a loop of white ribbon to the top of one cloud. Have them glue red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple ribbons, in that order, to dangle from the bottom of the cloud. Glue the second felt cloud shape on top. With permanent marker, write *God keeps promises* on the cloud. Review what the story teaches about God and God's covenant with Noah.

3. **Lenten Mobile** Help the group mark the weeks of Lent by making a classroom mobile. Each week, a different symbol will be added. These symbols serve as reminders of the focus scriptures, as well as what it means to be a follower of Jesus. Use dowels or a coat hanger for the base of the mobile. Use string, yarn, or fishing line to hang the symbols from the mobile base. This week, the symbol is a rainbow, a reminder of how God gives new beginnings. Bend red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple pipe cleaners—in that order—into a rainbow shape, with red as the outside band. Use small pieces of florist's wire at various points to hold the rainbow together. Hang the rainbow from the mobile base and display it at the next session. The children may make individual mobiles to take home, but keep them in the learning space until they are complete.

4. **Song** The song "I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" (Color Pack 36, [Singing the Feast](#)) can remind the children that God's Spirit helps them to live as God's beloved children. If the children know it, encourage them to make up motions to go with each stanza and sing it with the motions.

### CLOSING

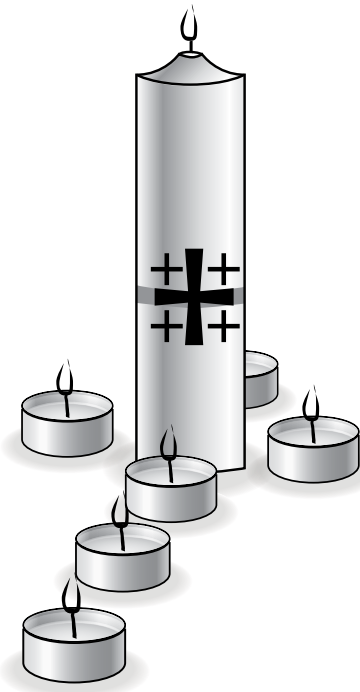
Gather at the worship table. If necessary, light the Christ candle and the votive candles. Admire the work from Responding, whether a painted rainbow or a rainbow door hanger.

Follow the Closing Ritual on Resource Sheet 1 (Lenten Rituals).

Extinguish the candles.

As you say good-bye, encourage the children to return for the next session.

## Lenten Rituals



Save this sheet for use in upcoming sessions.

### Setup

Place six votive candles in holders around the Christ candle to form a cross shape. Place Color Pack 4 next to the candle cross as a reminder to be Jesus' followers. Just as we add light to candles as we wait for the Christ child during Advent, during Lent we extinguish candles to show we are aware of the approaching death of Jesus.

### What is Lent?

The season of Lent marks the forty days before Easter, but Sundays are not counted as part of the forty days. The Lenten journey is a time to recall Jesus' journey to the cross. Traditionally, Lent is a season of reflecting on our relationship with God and how it might change the way we live. The color of Lent is purple, the color of repentance and fresh beginnings.

### Gathering Ritual

1. Light the Christ candle and the six votives, recalling that it is the season of Lent.
2. Sing "Prepare the Paths" (Color Pack 38, [Singing the Feast](#)).
3. Pray: Faithful God, open our minds to hear your word and let it change our hearts. Amen.
4. Extinguish the candle.

### Closing Ritual

1. Light the Christ candle and the six votives. Then, extinguish votive candles as a way of marking the Sundays of Lent. For example, on the First Sunday of Lent, extinguish one votive; on the Second Sunday of Lent, extinguish two votives; and so forth. On Palm Sunday, extinguish all six votive candles and the Christ candle as a symbol of Jesus' death on Good Friday.
2. Say:

**Teacher:** Jesus said, "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life" (John 8:12).

**All:** And Jesus said we are the light of the world.

**Teacher:** How do we intend to live as followers of Jesus? Place Color Pack 4 next to the candle cross as a reminder to be Jesus' followers. (Each week, invite learners to say what they will do to live out this statement.)

Lent 1: By believing God gives us fresh starts.

Lent 2: By taking up the cross to follow Jesus.

Lent 3: By obeying God's Law.

Lent 4: By learning about God's grace.

Lent 5: By having the covenant of love in our hearts.

Palm Sunday: By following our King, Jesus.

3. Sing "I'm Gonna Sing When the Spirit Says Sing" (Color Pack 36, [Singing the Feast](#)).
4. Bless:
 

**Teacher:** May God bless us, and be with us this week as we follow Jesus.  
**All:** Amen!
5. Extinguish the candle.

## The Longer Story about Noah and God

**Group 1:** God looked down and saw the earth

**Group 2:** No longer sure of what it was worth.

**Chorus:** Oh, my!

**Group 1:** People there were full of sin;

**Group 2:** They left no room for God to come in.

**Chorus:** Uh-oh!

**Group 1:** But Noah liked to walk with God,

**Group 2:** And so God gave to him the nod.

**Chorus:** Nice going, Noah!

**Group 1:** Noah, you must build an ark;

**Group 2:** Not sure where it's going to park!

**Chorus:** Parking an ark?

**Group 1:** The neighbors giggled

**Group 2:** And the animals wiggled,

**Chorus:** Parking an ark? Ha, ha, ha!

**Group 1:** But in went family to be the crew,

**Group 2:** And animals came in two-by-two.

**Chorus:** Snakes, elephants, lions, and mosquitoes?

**Group 1:** For 40 days it rained and poured

**Group 2:** Until they all cried, "Please, no more!"

**Chorus:** *(Make rainstorm noises: rub hands together, snap fingers, stomp feet)*

**Group 1:** Noah sent the raven and then the dove,

**Group 2:** Always praying to God above.

**Chorus:** Help us, God.

**Group 1:** And when the ark did come to rest,

**Group 2:** Noah offered God his best.

**Chorus:** At last!

**Group 1:** God put a rainbow in the sky

**Group 2:** And said, "You know I never lie;

**Chorus:** The rainbow sign.

**Group 1:** Never again will I send a flood

**Group 2:** That leaves the whole earth covered in mud!"

**Chorus:** A second chance. A new beginning.

