

Lesson Plans for Older Children

Scripture: Genesis 9:8-17

Background

Lent has begun and now we begin our long walk toward the resurrection light. It is often said that we cannot experience the joy of Easter without first experiencing the pain of Good Friday; this is true also of walking through the season of Lent. In Lent we search ourselves and face, head on, the vices that separate us from God. During this season we dedicate ourselves, through discipline and prayer, to growing closer to God and letting go of the things that distract us. In Year B of our Lectionary Cycle, the current lectionary year, we are blessed to experience a journey of covenant with God. Each week in this Lenten season we explore a text from the Hebrew Scriptures that focuses on an aspect of covenant with God. Through our exploration of the historical covenants with God we will seek to open for the children ways in which God invites us into covenant today.

A Notation for This Week's Scripture

On this first Sunday in Lent we hear the end of Noah's story. Most of us are familiar with the tale of Noah's arc and the flood that covered the earth. The students in your class will have played with a toy arc and plastic animals before. This week, however, we leave out all of the destruction and fear and focus on the promise. God chose Noah and his family to survive the flood and continue the human race – but trusting a God who destroys all that has been created is a difficult prospect. In today's passage we hear of the mercy of God and the promise of life in abundance to come. In this exert from Genesis God makes a covenant not only with Noah, but with all living creatures, that the world will not be wiped out again. And to remind them of this promise God sends the rainbow and tells Noah and his children that each time they see a rainbow it should serve as a reminder of God's promise

to them. God likes to give us signs and symbols to remind us of God's goodness, we practice them in the Eucharist each week when we "do this in remembrance of [Christ.]" Seeing the rainbow in nature, then, becomes sacramental as we remember the goodness of God as exemplified in the colors in the sky.

Theme: God's Promises are Eternal

Before Class:

Make sure there are enough bibles for each child to have one during the lesson.

Today your class will make a collage together. You will need magazines from which the kids can cut out pictures. Good magazines for this activity include nature magazines, home decorating magazines, and craft magazines - though any magazines can be used. Make sure to leaf through the magazines and remove any pictures that may not be appropriate for this age group.

You will also need scissors for each child, glue sticks, and a large piece of butcher-block paper or poster paper.

Label seven baskets each with a single color of the rainbow (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, purple.)

You will need painter's tape or sticky tac to hang the poster when it is completed.

Beginning: Welcome each child by name and invite them to join the circle. After the children have arrived ask them if they know what season of the church year you've just entered. If the children are stumped you could remind them of Ash Wednesday and ask them why we've put away the word "Alleluia" for the next few weeks. Once they come up with "Lent" talk to them briefly about the season of Lent and what it means for the church. Tell

them that during this season of Lent we are going to learn about different ways that God makes Covenants with the people. Does anyone know what a covenant is? A covenant is a promise or agreement between God and the people. Both God and the people have to follow the covenant for the promise to work out and remain true.

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, thank you for promising to love us always. Open our hearts and minds to remember your promises. Amen.*

The Story: Genesis 9:8-17

Before reading the story, ask the students if anyone remembers the story of Noah's Arc. If they do, invite a child[ren] to recount the story in brief. After the retelling, explain to the class that the passage for today is a conversation between God, Noah, and Noah's children after the flood waters have receded and after the dove has returned to the boat with the olive branch, signally the end of the flood.

Ask all of the children to open their bibles to Genesis. As if there are any volunteers to read. After selecting a volunteer ask them to read the passage to the group.

Reflection Questions:

- I wonder how Noah felt when God was talking to him.
- I wonder what Noah's children thought about God's promise.
- I wonder where the animals were.
- I wonder what a covenant is.
- I wonder what God's covenant means.
- I wonder why God made the rainbow a reminder of the covenant.

Activity: Today we will be making a Bow in the Clouds to hang in our classroom! In our story today God promised to protect all of the living things on the earth and to be reminded of this covenant every time a rainbow is

seen in the clouds. Likewise, when we see a rainbow we are reminded of God's goodness and promises.

To make our Bow in the Clouds we will cut out pictures of living things and earthly elements that can be used to make a rainbow. For example, we can cut out pictures of blue birds, blue oceans, blue skies, blue eyes, blue berries, etc... and collage them together to make the blue section for our rainbow. We can cut out red raspberries, red apples, red roses, red robins, people

with red hair etc... and make our red section. We will each find pictures focusing on a particular color of the rainbow and then collage the pictures together to make a rainbow.

Pass out the magazines to the children along with a pair of scissors. Place the labeled color baskets in the middle of your workspace so the children can put the colored pictures in the corresponding colored basket.

When you have enough pictures, begin the work of collaging them together. It works best to start with red and work your way along, one color at a time.

Use stickers, foam shapes, or sequins to fill in the space if you need more of a particular color.

After the bow is completed, hang it high in your classroom.

Getting Closure: Have the class stand where they can see the rainbow collage. Ask them of what their poster would remind God if God were viewing it with them. Ask them what the poster reminds them of when they are looking at it. Invite each of them to share what he or she will take forward from this lesson into the season of Lent.

Closing Prayer: *Loving God, thank you for forgiving us when we have done something wrong. Remind us, always, of your promise to love us no matter what. Amen.*