

Lesson Plans for Younger 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 Forever

Before Class:

Gather the supplies for today's activity (*asterisk indicates optional supplies/instruction.)

- Fruit Loops Cereal
- Elmer's Glue
- Cotton Swabs*
- Medicine Cups*
- Construction Paper or copies of the blank rainbow found at the end of this lesson
- Markers

*If you believe your children will need the additional time/help, draw a simple rainbow on each piece of paper before class begins or make copies of the blank rainbow at the end of this lesson. (See Activity instructions for more details.)

*If you choose, fill the medicine cups with glue and put a cotton swab in each cup for ease of use for the children

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.

After the flood was over, Noah and his family were excited to rebuild their houses and start a normal life again. But Noah's family was also nervous that the world might have another flood and then they would need to build another arc to rescue all of the animals. They were so worried that they didn't want to let the animals off of the boat until they were sure it was safe.

Then God said to Noah, "Noah, you have done a very good job. All of the animals are safe and I can tell that you and your family love me a lot. I do not want you to worry so I am going to make you a promise: I promise never to let a flood wash away all of the beautiful things on earth ever again."

Noah and his family were very thankful that God made this promise to them!

Then God said, "I promise to all of the animals and all of the people who will come in the future that I will not let a flood ruin the earth." God asked Noah, "Do you see that rainbow over there?"

Noah said, "I do see that rainbow. It is beautiful!"

Then God said, “I have put that colorful rainbow into the clouds to remind all of us of my promise to protect the world. Whenever you see a rainbow, remember my promise and know how much I love you.”

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 what God’s promise means.
- I wonder why God made the rainbow a reminder of the covenant.
- I wonder how you will remember God’s promise.

Activity: Today we will be making rainbows to take home in memory of God’s promise to us. 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 rainbows we will have a few steps to follow:

1) Give each child a piece of construction paper or a copy of the blank rainbow found at the end of this lesson. 2) Invite each child to draw a rainbow on his/her paper. The children will need varying levels of help with this. The rainbow only needs to be a single marker stroke of each color (red, orange, yellow, green, blue, purple.) These lines will be used as the guide for where to glue the appropriate fruit loop. 3) Give each child a bowl of fruit loops and some glue (either a small bottle, or medicine cups with glue and a cotton swap to use as an applicator) 4) Instruct the children to glue their fruit loops to the paper in the area with the corresponding color so it makes a fruit loop rainbow.

If there is time, go around and help each child write: GOD’S PROMISE at the top of their page.

Getting Closure: Ask the students what their rainbows reminds them of when they are looking at them. Recap the idea that the rainbow is a sign that God gives us to remind us of God's promise to love and protect us. You could even make a comparison to the bread and wine and how Jesus tells us to participate in communion as a way of remembering him.

Closing Prayer: *Loving God, Remind us, always, of your promise to love us no matter what. Amen.*

