



## Preparing a sample session for Youth

Your sample session will consist of a teacher's session plan and a reproducible page. Use the outline below. Refer to the example of a designed session to help you visualize what the final product would look like.

Use the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as you study the familiar story of Noah and the flood in Genesis 6:5–9:17. Ponder the Bible insight essay, which appears at the end of this handout. Use the faith focus, "God makes a promise to all creation."

*If you wish to be considered for more than one age group, you may need to prepare an additional sample session. Contact the project office for details.*

### Youth session plan

**AGE GROUP:** Youth

**SESSION TITLE:** The Flood

**SCRIPTURE TEXT:** Genesis 6:5–9:17

**FAITH FOCUS:** God makes a promise to all creation.

#### PREPARING

##### Story summary

Summarize the story in 75–90 words.

##### Opening prayer for the teacher

Teachers need nurturing too! Offer a brief prayer that will help teachers center themselves in this story in the presence of God. Where will today's Bible story lead them and this group?

##### Tips for this week

What's important about this story for youth? Provide at least one developmental insight. Explain how to prepare for the session. Add notes as needed about special supplies or techniques used in the session.

##### To do

List preparations that are necessary for the session. Following the "to do" item, list the section in which that preparation is used, e.g., "Post labeled brown paper in a cross shape on the wall (Sharing the Bible story)."

##### Bible insight for the teacher

These essays are written by commissioned Bible scholars. The essay for this sample session appears at the end of this document. It is not necessary to copy this essay into your session.

#### GATHERING

##### Gathering activity

Begin with a gathering activity that builds community within the group and provides a hook to the day's theme.

##### Bible memory

The Bible memory passage is not generally taught in the Youth sessions.

##### Teaching tip

Include tips to help teachers adapt the session for different kinds of groups.

##### Worship

Close the Gathering time with a brief worship element, such as a song, prayer, or litany.

## **SHARING THE BIBLE STORY**

### **Introduce the story**

Provide instructions for the teacher to introduce the story to the group.

### **Encountering the story**

Provide a way for the group to read, listen to, or act out the story. Readers theaters that adhere closely to the biblical text are acceptable.

### **Reflecting on, connecting, and responding to the story**

Provide four options that you describe clearly and succinctly. The first two options should help youth reflect on the scripture text. The second two options should be ways youth can connect the story to their lives. These options are most frequently discussion-based. They are almost always social (that is, youth groups do not tend to want to do individual writing or craft projects). Avoid activities that are too juvenile for this age group. List any supplies needed at the end of each option.

### **Other ideas**

Briefly list at least three other options for responding to the Bible story. These options are not spelled out as are the ones above.

## **SENDING**

Bring the group back together for a brief closing. Send the group out with a scriptural blessing that relates to the day's theme.

## **Reproducible page**

Prepare a page that can be reproduced and handed out to the youth. The activities on this page could be used in any part of the session: as Gathering or Sending activities, litanies or readers theaters, Sharing the story options—or any combination of the above.

# Bible Insight Essay: Genesis 6:5–9:17<sup>1</sup>

By Herb Smith

## Impending Doom

According to a recent national poll, it has been reported that approximately 46% of Americans believe that the world will face a major catastrophe within the coming decades. Impending doom for humanity? The deluge narrative in Genesis has a contemporary ring to its theme. Longer than any of the other tales in primeval history, the story of Noah and the Ark is familiar even to those who score low on biblical literacy.

This weather channel episode is sandwiched between the infamous story of angelic promiscuity and the sinful pride of building the tower of Babel. God is pictured as being so despondent about the behavior of his disobedient creatures that God is “filled with regret” (Genesis 6:6). In the midst of this iniquity, one family stands forth as faithfully in fellowship with God. Noah and his kin are saved from the purifying flood. Who is this man who “had no faults” (Genesis 6:10)?

## A Child Prodigy

In the Genesis narrative, Noah is the son of Lamech. According to Jewish tradition, Lamech was a mighty warrior who killed his great grandfather Cain. Because there was blood on his hands, his wives would not relate to him. Reluctantly Zillah consents and gives birth to Noah. The child prodigy’s face is aglow with divine light. His birthday also just happened to be the day that Adam died. Upon his birth, the world immediately improved as harvests became more bountiful. Noah is credited with designing the first agricultural ploughs, sickles, and axes. It is this handy man who will construct the ark to save humanity.

## Noah’s Zoo

Divine architectural blueprints are drawn for an enormous ship to house the entire DNA on earth. From butterflies to antelopes, from ants to buffalos, the ark that Noah the carpenter is asked to build is a zoologist’s dream (or nightmare as it might be). It will have three decks. Rabbinical commentaries delineated the lower level for the beasts, the middle for the birds, and the upper for the insects and the lodging of Noah’s extended family. It has been suggested that some aquatic beasts swam along side the ark. As for zookeepers? Non-biblical sources allude to guardian angels herding the animals and providing fodder for them. God instructs Noah to make the ship of cypress wood (Genesis 6:14). Some have suggested that it was really acacia. The latter was considered sacred in the ancient Middle East. It was the wood prescribed for the Ark of the Covenant.

As the sluices of the heavens were opened and the aquifers of the underground were unleashed, rain fell for forty proverbial days. Rabbis living in a pre-astronomical age suggested that God moved some of the stars of the constellation Pleiades for this flood to occur. Furthermore, during the non-stop barrage of rain and the drying off period of one hundred and fifty days, extra-biblical tradition says that Noah received a sapphire-covered book from the angel Raphael. It was an encyclopedic volume including astronomy and the art of healing. This heirloom was later bequeathed to his son Shem, eventually to Abraham, and on to King Solomon. It is thought that Noah had plenty of time to read since he and his extended family did not need to sleep during the long voyage.

## A Rainbow in the Heavens

With the rains subsiding and the greenery again resurrecting from the fertilized soil, Noah, his three sons and their families alight from their aquatic cabin on to dry land. After a thanksgiving celebration featuring barbecued sacrifices, the assurance is graphically received. The flood of purification is followed by God’s re-creation.

A rainbow (Genesis 11:13–15) shines forth from shimmering violet to verdant green, a bow in the sky above Mt. Ararat. Throughout European and Asiatic folklore, rainbows are symbols of assurance. Moreover, in a prehistoric age, they were seen as a literal bridge to the dome of the sky, a colorful ladder to the heavens. In the New Testament book called Hebrews, the rainbow-gazing Noah is paraded as a supreme example of faith. He is called an “heir of righteousness” for obeying God (Hebrews 11:7).

God’s spectacular promise is to all creation. The renewal of life is affirmed. Applause! The rainbow is a symbol of God’s constant love.

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<sup>1</sup> This Bible essay is the property of the Gather 'Round curriculum and may not be reproduced or distributed without the explicit permission of the Gather 'Round project office.