



Preparing a sample session for the 2011–12 curriculum year

Prepare your sample session—a teacher’s session plan and student book pages—for the age group of your choice. Refer to the session template to help you visualize what a session plan will look like in a printed teacher’s guide.

Use the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible as you study the familiar story of Noah and the flood. Ponder the Bible insight essay, which appears at the end of this handout.

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.

Teacher’s session plan

AGE GROUP:

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 your age group? If you are abridging the Bible text for a younger group, explain that here. Provide at least one developmental insight for working with this age group. Explain how to prepare for the session. Add notes as needed about special supplies or techniques used in the session.

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

Early arrivals

Begin with an activity for early arrivals.

Gathering activity

Move into 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 taught every week, often during the Gathering time.

For *Middler* and *Junior Youth*, use Genesis 9:12–13: “God said, ‘This is the sign of the covenant that I make between me and you and every living creature that is with you, for all future generations: I have set my bow in the clouds, and it shall be a sign of the covenant between me and the earth.’”

Primary children will learn only verse 13.

Preschoolers will learn only 13a: “I have set my bow in the clouds.”

No Bible memory for *Youth*.

Supplies

Include a checklist of supplies necessary for this section.

Teaching tips

Include tips to help teachers prepare activities, accommodate different abilities, and adapt the session for their groups.

SHARING THE BIBLE STORY

Worship

Enter the story time with a brief worship element, such as a song, prayer, or litany. Worship resources must be age appropriate and written or—if drawn from scripture—paraphrased by you. Because you do not have access to music from the Gather 'Round CD, you may suggest a song of your choosing, appropriate to the theme.

Introduce the story

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

Tell the story

For *Preschool*, *Primary*, and *Middler*, retell the Bible story in an accurate and age-appropriate way. For younger children, we allow limited additions that give literary quality while maintaining the meaning of the biblical text: for example, you might include multiple repetitions of a simple Bible phrase used only once in the biblical narrative or a phrase that evokes the senses (example: hearing the sound of rain). Language should be easy for children to hear out loud and understand. Stories generally provide instructions for motions or props.

For *Junior Youth* and *Youth*, 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 also acceptable.

Reflecting on the story

Include five wondering and/or open-ended questions about the Bible story. These are age-appropriate means of helping this group go deeper in its understanding of the story. A good wondering question is relatively short and uses simple language. It is open-ended, meaning it calls for more than a yes or a no and is not a leading question or a “no-brainer.” It may allow listeners to imagine themselves in the story or help them look at the story in a new way. It may highlight an important theme.

Exception for *Youth*: Questions may be more discussion-oriented and may be framed as a short paragraph rather than a single sentence.

Connecting to the story

Provide an activity that helps this age group connect this story to their own lives. Connect should be active and “whole-body” for younger children. For *Junior Youth* and *Youth*, Connect is most often discussion-based. Avoid activities that are unlikely to engage children’s attention, such as making lists on easel paper.

Supplies

Include a checklist of supplies necessary for this section

Teaching tips

Include tips to help teachers prepare, accommodate different abilities, and adapt the session for their group.

RESPONDING

Four options for small-group or individual activities

Each activity should emphasize a different intelligence. Think carefully about activities that would be fun and engaging for your age group and that would help participants connect to the story and faith focus. Most should be designed to take 10–20 minutes. *Two of these activities may be tied to the pages you create for the student book.*

Consider the range of ages and likely abilities and interest in your group and provide tips for adapting the option (for example, *Primary* groups likely contain both readers and nonreaders)

Title each activity. Following the instructions, list the principle intelligences children will use in this activity.

Close with a list of the supplies needed.

Other ideas

Briefly list at least three other activity options (See the “Other ideas” box in the Teacher guide template.)

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.

CLOSING PRAYER FOR THE TEACHER

Write a reflection and a closing prayer for the teacher.

TEACHER AID PAGE

You may use this page for a resource that will help the teacher. This may be a reproducible page or another resource that does not fit into the regular session outline.

Student resource pages

See the Curriculum Products chart at www.gatherround.org/curriculumproducts.html for descriptions of student resources. View samples of the curriculum at www.gatherround.org/freesamplesessions.html.

Preschool, Primary, Middler, Multiage, and Junior Youth units

Prepare several pages for the student book. Keep these pages lively, taking into account the age ranges of the children for whom you are writing.

Youth unit

Prepare a page that describes a youth activity or activities that could be included as a reproducible.

Bible Insight Essay: Genesis 6:5–9:17¹

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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