Noah Builds an Ark and Loads the Animals



Scripture Reference: Genesis 6:5-7:16

Suggested Theme: God protects those who obey and follow Him. We can feel safe with God.

Memory Verse: "Teach me to do what you want because you are my God. Let your good Spirit lead me on level ground." Psalm 143:10, ICB

Story Overview:

As time went by, people became more and more evil. Only Noah was obedient and pleased God. God gave Noah special instructions to build a huge boat (ark). This ark would keep Noah and his family safe from the floods that were about to cover the earth. The ark was also big enough to carry enough animals to repopulate the earth when the flood was over.

Noah believed in God and obeyed him so everyone on the ark was safe.

Background Study:

Noah loved God and obeyed Him; the rest of the world followed after evil. So, God chose to destroy the corruption that had spread throughout the earth.

When God told Noah to build an ark, Noah's obedience continued: he built an ark! The ark was likely a flat-bottomed, box-shaped barge made of cypress wood. Some translations of the Bible refer to the wood as "gopher" wood.

No navigation was required; all the ark had to do was float and remain upright.

Assuming the box-like shape, they would have had nearly the capacity of a modern ocean freighter. It was 450 feet (137 m) long, 75 feet (23 m) wide, and 45 feet (14 m) tall. This seems very big, but that was needed to hold seven pairs of every kind of clean animal and bird, as well as one pair of every unclean animal. An 18-inch (.5 m) air vent surrounded the ark beneath the roof to allow for ventilation (Genesis 6:16).

When the building of the ark was completed, God invited Noah and his household to enter. This included Noah's wife, his three sons (Ham, Shem, and Japheth) and their wives. Only eight people were on the ark.

The entrance of the animals into the ark was precise and orderly. We do not read in the Bible about the difference between clean and unclean animals until much later. Noah seemed to understand the distinction already, though. It does seem reasonable that the extra "clean" animals would provide some food (milk, for instance) during the Flood. They would also be very important after the flood because they would reproduce more quickly and provide both food and sacrifices.

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Children often ask how all of the animals (even dinosaurs!) could have fit in the ark. One explanation is that some of the larger animals may not have been adults when they were put into the ark.

These instructions were given to Noah seven days before the beginning of the forty days of rain. The implication is that it took Noah a week just to load the passengers on the ark. Perhaps grain and other foodstuffs had already been placed on board.

God established the first of many covenants or agreements He would make with his people to assure Noah and his family that they would be safe. He promised to keep them safe throughout the disaster to come. Noah and his family probably clung tightly to this reassuring promise in the midst of the great storm and the days of floating and waiting that followed.

Noah and his family were chosen because of Noah's obedience to God, which resulted in a blessing to all people.

For more about what happened to Noah, refer to the story The Flood and God's Promise.

Way to Introduce the Story:

Bring a large bowl and several household items to the session today. Give the items to the children and let them predict whether or not each item will float. Be sure to include some items that are difficult to guess (an egg, for instance). One of the last items you could try is a block of wood. "In today's story, we will learn about a time when the whole earth was covered with water. God told a man how to build a big floating ark out of wood. The story is recorded in the first book of the bible. Who knows what book that is?"

The Story:

All the people who lived on the earth had forgotten about God. Instead, they chose to reject God and live wicked lives. This made God very sad, and He became very sorry He made people. God decided He would send a flood so He could start over.

At that time, there was one man who had not forgotten God. His name was Noah. Noah was a good man who loved God.

God said to Noah, "People are doing wicked things, I am sorry I made them. I will be sending a flood to destroy the world, so I can start over."

God instructed Noah to build an Ark. The Ark was a large boat made of cypress wood and coated with tar inside and out. It had to be a certain height, width, and length. It would have rooms, a roof, and a door.

God told Noah to put two of every unclean animal and seven pairs of every clean animal onto the Ark and enough food to feed Noah, his family, and all the animals.

The instructions God gave Noah must have seemed so strange to him, but he didn't question it. Other people must have mocked Noah. He would have looked silly building a great big boat when there had never been a flood on the earth before. But Noah trusted God and obeyed Him.

When Noah had finished building the Ark, he loaded in all the food, all the animals, and his own family.

Only eight people were on the ark: Noah, his wife, and their three sons, Shem, Ham, Japheth, and their wives.

Then God shut the door, and the rain began to fall.

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Ways to Tell the Story:

This story can be told using various methods. Always remain true to the facts found in the Bible but help children connect to its meaning by using drama, visual aids, voice inflection or other group participation.

Be selective. Each teacher is unique, so only use the illustrations that best relate to how YOU tell the story in THIS lesson. Too many illustrations can be confusing, so eliminate any that cover other stories or details you do not wish to emphasise in this lesson.

Click here for visual aids and more storytelling methods.

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Review and Reflection Questions:

Review questions help children remember and know the facts of a story. Reflection questions encourage them to internalise the meaning and implications for their lives. Asking at least one of each type of question can help strengthen a child's spiritual development and help them connect to God. Click here to learn more about review and reflection questions.

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Review:

- When everyone else on the earth was evil, who was the one person who pleased God? (Noah)
- What did God tell Noah to build? (An ark)
- How many of each kind of animal did God tell Noah to put into the ark? (Two of every kind. Seven of each kind of clean animal. Seven pairs of each kind of bird.)
- How many days did it rain? (40)
- When the flood came, how many people were on the ark, and who were they? (Eight)
- Why did God send the flood? (to end the violence and cleanse the world)
- What is something we learn about God from this story?
- What did Noah learn from his journey on the ark?

Reflection:

- What do you think it smelled like on the ark during the 40 days?
- What part of the story did you find most interesting?
- How do you think Noah and his family felt when they were in the ark?
- If you were Noah, would you have trusted God and made the ark?
- What is something you struggle to trust God about?
- What is something you wonder about this story?
- What question would you ask God about this story?

Prayer:

It is important to guide children in learning how to pray. In prayer, children can connect with God and learn that He hears and answers them. God can become a life-long friend who is with them every moment of their lives. Try using a variety of prayer methods from time to time so that the children can learn to connect with

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God in different ways. Note that you can pray at any time throughout your lesson. A variety of prayer methods are found here.

Song Suggestions:

- God Told Noah Song
- Rise and Shine Song
- Oh, Be Careful Song
- My God is So Big Song
- Goodbye World Song
- Our God is an Awesome God Song
- Refer to the Song Page on this website for more song options.

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Activities and Crafts:

- How to choose the best learning activities for my teaching situation.
- Visit the activities and songs pages for additional activities and crafts.

Activities:

- Go outside and pace off the measurements of the ark.
- Younger children could use hammers, saws, and nails on wood.
- Snack: Before the session, put 1/2 sugar in a plastic bag. Add a few drops of blue food colouring and shake the bag until you have blue sugar. Help children tear bread into the shape of an ark. Use icing or butter to “glue” animal crackers on the ark. Now, use the blue sugar to make it rain! Instead of bread, you could make a cake or cookies in the shape of an ark.
- Have the children stand in a circle. One child holds a ball. The child says the name of an animal and then throws the ball to someone in the circle. (The ball must bounce once.) The next child catches the ball and immediately makes the sound of the animal that was named. The child catching the ball makes the sound of a new animal and then bounces the ball to another player. That player catches the ball, says the animal, and then names a new animal and bounces the ball to the next player. This continues in a rhythm. If a person breaks the rhythm, they are out of the circle.
- Children can take turns naming animals that begin with the letters of their names. For example, M-monkey, A-anteater, R-rhino, Y-yak.
- Retell the story of the ark and let the children make sound effects as you tell the story (building sounds, walking up a plank into the ark, all of the animal sounds, etc.

Invite the children to respond to this story using the adaptable “God’s Story” printable reflection page. Free printables for this story.

Crafts:

- Use stickers or cut animal pictures out of magazines and glue them to a picture of the ark.

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- Paint pictures of the flood and the ark.
- Construct a model of the ark. Possible materials could be a cardboard box or craft sticks.

Print and use these free bookmarks, trading cards or timelines. Free printables for this story.

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Other Online Resources:

- Colouring page with text (Ministry Spark)
- Colouring page for Noah’s Ark (Christian Answers)
- Craft: Handprint crow & raven (DLTK)
- Craft: Bird crafts for children (Danielle’s Place)
- Craft: Paper bag crow or raven (DLTK)
- Craft: Simple animal cracker ark (DLTK)
- Craft: Noah’s ark using a paper plate. (DLTK)
- Other: “Did Noah take dinosaurs on the Ark?” (Christian Answers)
- Other: Animals, rain, storms, etc. (Christian Answers)

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