



Rainbow Promise

Goal: To remember God's love when we see a rainbow.

RECOGNIZING GOD'S GRACE . . .

. . . In Genesis 8:22; 9:8-17

Genesis 8:22-9:17 continues the story of the flood. This time, the waters have receded, and Noah and his family have set foot on dry land once more. Noah makes a burnt offering, and God responds by making a promise to never again destroy creation. The bow is hung in the sky. This rainbow image is a significant one in the story. Accompanying the image of the rainbow is the promise, or covenant, that God makes with Noah and all future generations. God promises never again to "destroy all flesh." The phrase in Hebrew that the New Revised Standard Version of the Bible translates as "all flesh" might mean all human beings, but more likely means all living creatures on earth. The scope of this covenant is vast, encompassing all of life. The other significant feature of this covenant is that it is unconditional. Later covenants, such as the covenant with Moses, are two-way agreements, with conditions binding on God's people. The covenant with Noah has no such conditions. God promises to sustain life on earth in an ongoing cycle of day and night, season upon season (8:22). The story of Noah assures us of the vast scope and timelessness of God's life-sustaining promise.

. . . In Your Children's Experiences

The image of a rainbow is always a source of surprise and joy when seen in the sky. It is a symbol of promise and hope for us across time. Children will be able to share stories about times when they have seen a bow in the sky. Help them connect this action of God as a symbol of hope and care. As they hear this story, invite them to listen for the things Noah did and for the promises God made to him. Also invite them to think about why this is a story of God's love.

. . . In Your Relationships with the Children

As you continue sharing the story of Noah and what happened after the flood, the concept of a covenant or promise will be introduced. Children can connect with this story by sharing promises made to them or by them. They also will be able to distinguish between a promise for a particular action and a forever promise. The bow that God put in the sky is a forever promise of God's love for all living things. As you end the session, invite the children to share the forever promises they remember that God has made.

God of faithful promises, I praise you for your steadfast love and grace. In Christ's name. Amen.



Supplies

Music & Melodies
(MM) 2023-2024

Stories, Colors & More
(SCM) i-iv, 2, 14, 16

basic supplies
(see p. vii)

blanket or mats

snack

Guided Play

choice 1: variety of toy animals

Exploring

choice 1: paper plates;
red, orange, yellow,
green, blue, and purple
pipe cleaners—one in
each color for each
child

choice 2: ribbon or
fabric strips in a variety
of the colors of the
rainbow

choice 3: construction
paper and/or wrapping
paper squares in red,
orange, yellow, green,
blue, and purple

choice 4: copies of
Grace Notes (GN) 1

GATHERING IN GOD'S GRACE

Before the Children Arrive

Designate a story corner and lay out a blanket or individual mats for the children so their backs will be to the door.

Post **SCM i-ii**, “Your Visual Schedule.” Cut out and glue the arrow marker onto a clothespin. Use the schedule to provide clear expectations and a visual cue for the group.

See **SCM iii-iv** for the key to icons (for example, **LG T**) and ways to adapt for children who have special needs or disabilities.

Select the activities that will work best for you and for your children. You do not need to do everything suggested!

“Exploring God’s Grace” choice 3 requires more prep.

Welcoming and Guided Play



Greet children as they arrive, and say, “Grace and peace be with you.” Prompt them to respond, “And also with you.” Be sensitive to any children who might be coming for the first time. Introduce yourself to parents/caregivers that you do not know personally. Tell them that today’s story is about the sign of the rainbow as God’s love and promise to Noah and his family after the great flood. Invite the children to choose a guided-play activity to start:

1. **Animals in the Boat**—Set up chairs or turn over a table to be a pretend boat. Invite the children to gather the animals on the boat and pretend they are on Noah’s large ark. Ask them to take turns making the sounds of the animals they have gathered.
2. **Playing with Play Dough**—Invite the children to play with play dough. Give each child some dough about the size of a ping-pong ball and show them how to roll it into a ball, flatten it like a pancake, and roll it like a rope. Invite them to make an animal with the play dough.
3. **Color Scavenger Hunt**—Cut squares of several colors of construction paper and place them on a table. Encourage the children to choose a color and to find an item of the same color in the room. They can take turns telling about their color and item. When all have shared, invite children to bring their color squares and line them up in rainbow order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple.

T *Transition times can be more frustrating to children if they have to wait. Be prepared to move to the next activity and alert children of upcoming changes. If children will need to wait, provide a simple task, such as a threading activity or hand clapping, to occupy the time and lessen the frustration.*



Transitioning to Story Time

When you sense the children are ready to move into story time, call them to the story corner, singing “Dance and Sing”—MM 3; SCM 16. Repeat words and phrases as seems appropriate.

Rainbow Action Poem



Place an object of each rainbow color mentioned in the poem in front of you. Point to each one and ask the children to name the color. Explain that *indigo* is a dark blue. Invite them to repeat the word *indigo* with you. Tell the children that they are going to say a poem about the rainbow. Invite the children to repeat each line after you and follow your motions.

Rainbow colors in the sky, / (*move hand with palm open in an arc over head*)

God put them there for you and I. / (*point to another person and self*)

Showing us with colors bright, / (*hold hands up, palms out, fingers spread apart*)

God loves us morning, noon, and night. / (*place hands over heart*)

Red and orange, yellow, green, / (*point to each object*)
prettiest colors you’ve ever seen. / (*gesture hand over objects*)

Blue and violet and indigo, / (*point to each object*)

seven colors in a pretty row. (*gesture hand over objects*)

God’s colors in a rainbow bend. / (*move hand with palm open in an arc over head*)

God’s love for us will never end. / (*place hands over heart*)

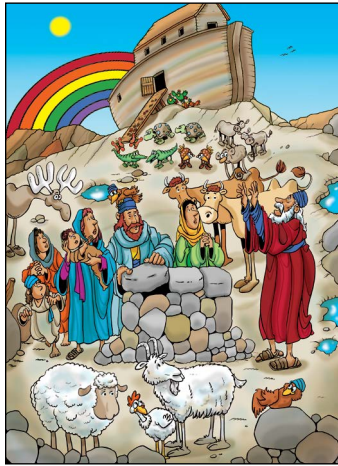
Either/Or



Have all the children stand in the center of the space. Tell them that you are going to name two animals or two colors and point to one side of the room or the other. They move to the side of the animal or color they like best. Use the following pairs:

- ▼ Elephant/ladybug
- ▼ Parrot/dolphin
- ▼ Frog/bunny
- ▼ Red/green
- ▼ Blue/orange
- ▼ Purple/yellow

To close, name all the animals and colors, and invite everyone to move to the middle and sit down.



Today's story can be found in *Growing in God's Love: A Story Bible*, edited by Elizabeth F. Caldwell and Carol A. Wehrheim (Louisville, KY: Flyaway Books, 2018), www.pcusastore.com.

Don't worry if children bend the pipe cleaners too much. You can show them how to straighten them out and try again.

Hearing the Story

L T

Open the Bible to Genesis 8 so the children know the story comes from the Bible. Tell the children that today's story is about the sign of the rainbow as God's love and promise to Noah and his family after the great flood.

Read **SCM 2**, omitting the instructions in the parentheses. Express the emotions of the story in your voice, gestures, and facial expressions. Conclude the story by prompting the children to say, "Amen."

Read the story a second time, prompting the children to follow the suggestions in the parentheses. After the story, wonder together who they will tell about God's promise and love.

EXPLORING GOD'S GRACE

1. Making a Rainbow

TD

Give each child a paper plate and two lumps of play dough about the size of a ping-pong ball. Show them how to roll their dough into a ball. Have them put their two balls of dough on either side of the paper plate. Give each child a set of pipe cleaners, one of each color: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple. Show them how they can gently bend their pipe cleaners to form a curve or a bend like in a rainbow. Instruct them to place one end of each stem in one ball of dough and the other end in the other ball of dough, forming a rainbow. Encourage the children to take the rainbows home and, when they see it, to remember God's love for them.

2. Parade of Colors

B M MS L

Celebrate the rainbow as a reminder of God's love. Play "Dance and Sing"—**MM 3**—and "Rise and Shine"—**MM 1**—and invite the children to select a color ribbon or fabric and wave it and dance to the music. Use the following suggestions to engage the children in the music with the rainbow colors:

- ▼ Have all the children sit on the floor. Call out a color and have the child(ren) with that color stand up and wave the ribbon or fabric.
- ▼ Line up the children in order of the rainbow colors—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, and purple—and have them do the "wave," standing and raising their ribbon or fabric in order of the rainbow colors.
- ▼ Line up the children in the order of the rainbow colors and lead them in a parade. Invite them to follow your motions as you move your hand, holding the ribbon or fabric up and down, back and forth, in circles, and in other motions.



3. Rainbow Mural



Before the session, adhere a large sheet of craft paper to a wall. Draw a rainbow shape with six arcs. Using the appropriate color marker, write the name of a color in each arc to designate the color the children will fill in that space. Cut squares of construction paper and/or wrapping paper. Determine the size of the squares by the rainbow you have drawn and the number of children you have—larger rainbow, fewer children = larger squares. Place each color of squares in a different container.

Tell the children that they are going to make a giant rainbow to display and remind them, and others, of God’s promise to always love and care for people and the earth. Give the children glue sticks and instruct them to glue the appropriate colored squares in the designated arcs of the rainbow. Review the colors with the children. When they are finished, write the title, “The Rainbow Promise,” on the mural. Ask the children, “What is God’s rainbow promise?” Write their answers around the rainbow. Display the mural in an area of the church where people can see it.

TD *Some children who have tactile sensitivities are bothered by everyday items that most people don’t notice. Tags in clothing, sand or grass on feet, and even the feeling of glue on their fingers can cause a reaction that may be interpreted as bad behavior. Plan for alternatives.*

4. Coloring Page



Hand out copies of **GN 1** and crayons. Invite the children to color the picture of Noah’s family and the rainbow. Engage the children in conversation as they color, using the following questions:

- I wonder, “How did Noah feel when he saw the rainbow?”
- I wonder, “How did Noah feel when God told him that God loves all people?”
- I wonder, “What did Noah and his family tell others about God?”

T *Activity during times of transition can lend focus to children. Challenge them to lift one foot and balance. See how long they can stand on that foot and then have them switch feet.*

Spread the children out and designate areas for each child to work on the mural so they don’t get bunched up into one spot.

Use “wonder” questions that do not force a child to remember facts. Wondering questions help a child think aloud. Answers are neither right nor wrong. They help teach children to speak from their hearts.



LOVING AND SERVING GOD



Call the children together, singing “Rise and Shine”—**MM 1; SCM 14**. Repeat words and phrases as it seems appropriate.

Ask each child to name a color and something that God takes care of that is that color. Invite the children to care for God’s creation as God cares for them. Call the children to snack time. Invite the children to repeat each line of the following prayer, clapping on the **bold** words.

We **thank** you, God. /
We **love** you, God. /
For **food** and **friends** and **family**, too, /
we **thank** you, God. /
We **love** you, God. /
Amen! /

As the children leave, bless them: “Red and yellow, green and blue. Remember, *(Name)*, God loves you!”



Ask parents and caregivers for their email addresses so you can send the Grace Sightings link, or invite them to visit www.pcusastore.com/GGGdownloads. Remind the parents and caregivers about the story audio (see p. vii).

Rainbow Promise



God set the rainbow in the sky to remind everyone of God's promise to love and care for the world and everyone in it.

