

LESSON 3

THE FLOOD AND THE ARK

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: GOD'S PROMISE THROUGH NOAH (GENESIS 6:5-9:17)

- **SACRED STORY**
- **CORE PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: SACRED STORY SHELVES**
- **PIECES: ARK, ANIMALS, NOAH FIGURES, STONES, PRISM (OPTIONAL), PEOPLE OF GOD FIGURES (OPTIONAL)**
- **UNDERLAY: BROWN FELT OR RUG**

BACKGROUND

We now move with the people of God from the creation to the re-creation and God's promise to Noah, to God's family and to us.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

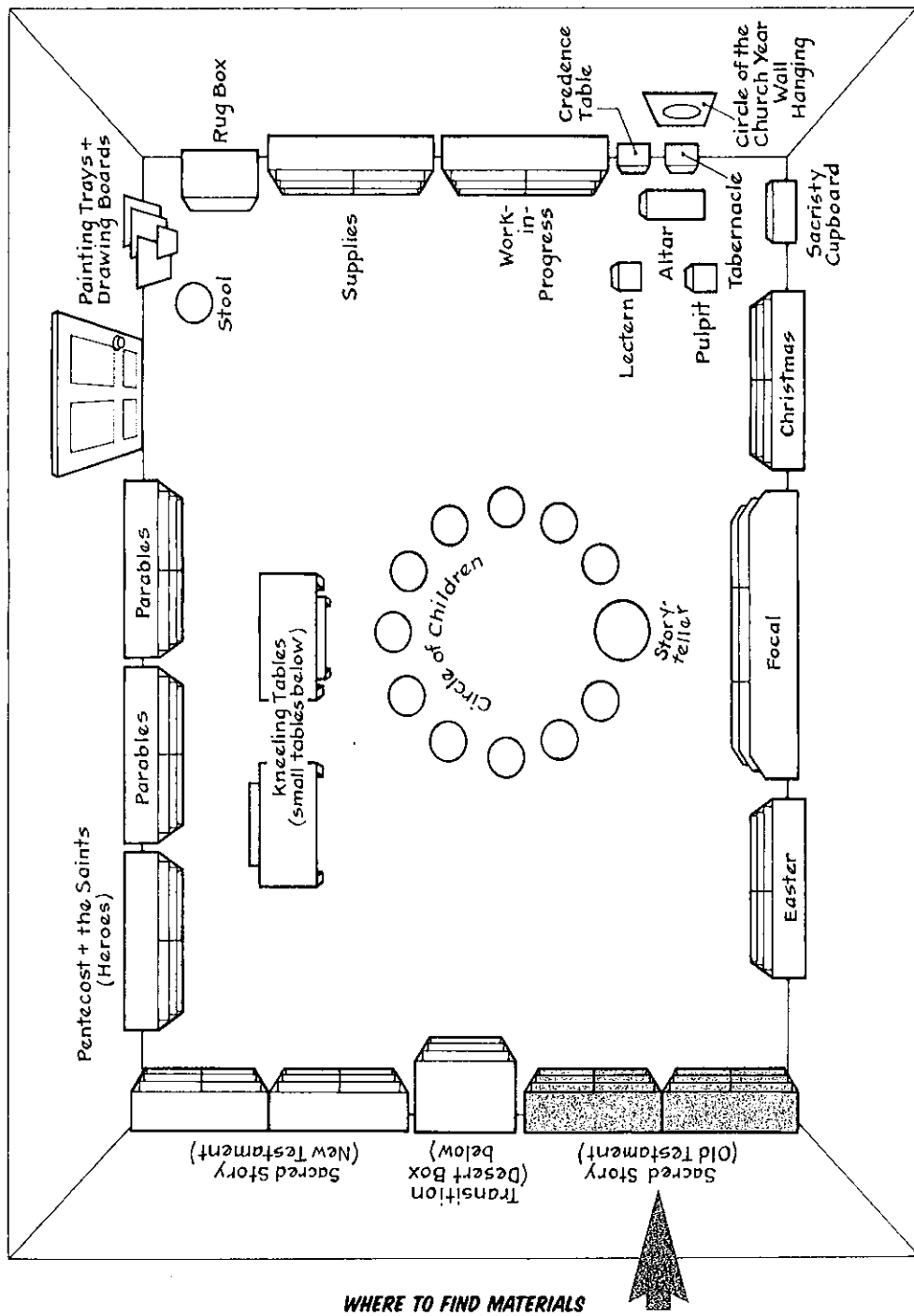
Present this material on a brown rug or a brown felt underlay; if you use an underlay instead of a rug, it is easier for the figures to stand up. You and the children will use your imaginations to make the flooding waters as you hold up the ark higher and higher.

You also need an ark, Noah, Noah's family, four pairs of animals and several stones. Keep the animals in a basket, so you don't have to take the ark apart to get them. Keep the dove in a separate small basket; the lid of this basket becomes the dove's nest. You can also keep Noah and his family in their own basket, so they won't get mixed up with the animals and become hard to find as you tell the story. If you use a rug, find that in the rug box, which has its own place in the room. All the remaining materials for this story sit on a tray that is to the right of the Creation lesson as you face the sacred story shelves.

SPECIAL NOTES

Storytelling tips: As you tell this story, be sure to lay the animals down on the ark, or place them in another secure way. As the story proceeds, you will lift the ark up, over your head. You want the children to be able to see the animals, but you don't want the animals to fall over—or, worse, fall *out* of the ark. If an animal falls in spite of your care, simply smile, put it back in the ark and continue.

When you reach the part where the waters go down, you may want to introduce the raven (see Genesis 8:6-7) before telling about the dove. We omit the raven from the main presentation because it can be a distraction, especially for younger children. However, the raven also offers us a haunting image as we tell how it went “to and fro until the waters were dried up from the earth” (Genesis 8:7). The raven never came back to the ark for rest, but continued to search on its own until the flood waters subsided. As you begin to introduce the dove, let the raven come to rest without comment.



MOVEMENTS

This lesson has a rug, so the first move the storyteller makes is to go get a rug.

Roll out the rug in the middle of the circle but within reaching distance of the storyteller. Now you need the materials on the tray from the shelf next to Creation.

Move slowly and with deliberation. You are modeling how you want the children to move with intention when they get out their work. Stop when you arrive at the shelf. Look at the children. You are keeping contact, but you are also marking this as the place where the material for the day is. There is no need to say anything if you mark this well with your action. Return to the circle and place the tray with the ark and figures on it beside you. If you use an underlay instead of a rug, spread it out now. Sit a moment and then begin.

As you say "created everything," sweep your hand across the rug in front of you. When you say "It is very good," place your hand on the rug, as if it were one of the creation cards that was "blessed" in the Creation lesson.

Move your hand to show the water flowing across the rug.

Put Noah down in the middle of the rug, two-thirds of the way toward the children. Leave room for the ark, which you will place later, so that the family remains between the ark and the children. Put "Mrs. Noah" beside Noah. (Tradition says that this woman's name was Namah. In her aprons, she gathered the seeds that would sow new plants for the world.)

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go. First, we need a rug.

When God created everything, God said, "It is very good."

But people began to do bad things. God decided to send a great flood of water to wash everything clean and make it new again.

Then God saw a good family. The father was Noah. He and his wife had three sons, and they had wives.

MOVEMENTS

These two figures are enough, but you can also add three sons and their wives, in a row "below" the figures of Noah and his wife—that is, between the first two figures and the children. We know the names of the sons (Ham, Shem and Japheth) but not of the wives. Even if you use the sons and wives, you may wish to omit names, which may distract from the story.

Move Noah away from the rest of the family as he walks with God. If you only use the figures of Noah and his wife, simply touch Noah now.

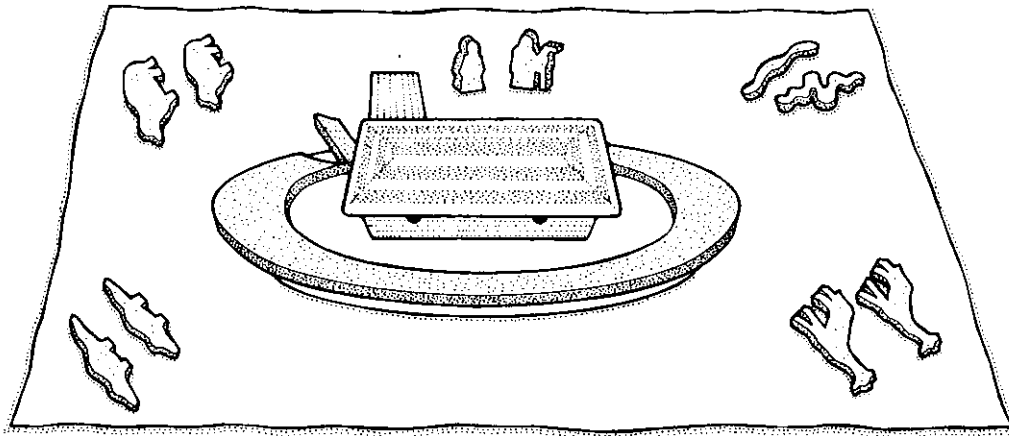
Place the ark in the middle of the rug.

Place a pair of animals at each corner of the rug.

WORDS

Noah walked with God. He came so close to God, and God came so close to Noah, that Noah knew what God wanted him to do. God wanted Noah to build a big boat called an ark.

Noah and all of his family began to build the ark.



THE ARK WITH ANIMALS IN THE CORNERS (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

Move the animals, two by two, onto the ark. Lay them flat, on both the rug and the ark, so they won't fall over and distract you and the children from the lesson. For the same reason, don't put out more than four pairs of animals. When the children work with this story on their own, they can use as many animals as they like.

As they were building the ark, animals began to come from all the four corners of the earth. They came two by two to fill the ark.

MOVEMENTS

As you speak of the rain and the puddles, show the the rain coming down with your hands, moving your fingers as rain.

Move your hands on the rug to show the puddles.

As the rain continues, put a hand at each end of the ark and slowly begin to lift it upward, rocking it a bit to show the motion of the water.

As you raise the ark higher, say:

Finally, raise the ark above everyone—including yourself—in the story circle. Hold the ark there for a time, to emphasize the experience of submersion. Everyone who was not safe in the ark was under the water. This image recurs in the liturgy of baptism, especially in traditions that submerge the baptized person. Raising something up is also a gesture of offering we encounter in later lessons about Holy Communion.

Begin to lower the ark slowly as you talk. When it is about a foot from the floor set it down without comment. Turn your attention to the dove.

Remove the top from the small dove basket and have the lid ready to place at the far edge of the rug to your right. It will become the nest the dove makes. Hold out your hand to receive the dove, and to let it fly. Fly the dove back and forth as it searches for land.

Fly the dove again.

WORDS

When the ark was finished and all of the animals were on the ark, it began to rain. Water came down from the heavens and up from the earth. It rained and rained.

At first it was like any rain, but the rain kept on coming. The puddles ran together...

...and soon the water covered everything.

When the creatures on the ark looked out into the rain all they could see was water.

It rained and rained. It rained for forty days and forty nights.

But God did not forget the creatures on the ark. After forty days and forty nights the rain stopped.

Then God sent a great wind to dry up the water, and the water began to go down.

Noah took the dove. He held it carefully and then sent it forth. It flew and flew. Noah held out his hand and received the dove. There was still nothing but water.

Noah waited seven days. He sent the dove forth again. It flew and flew.

MOVEMENTS

Point to the dove's beak and let the children imagine the olive leaf.

Hold out your hand and let the dove fly forth again. "Fly" the dove around and finally allow it to settle in its nest.

Pick up the ark again, gently rocking it. Then slowly settle the ark down on the rug.

Take the creatures out of the ark and put them in a circle. Place some stones in the middle of the circle to show how Noah "built" an altar.

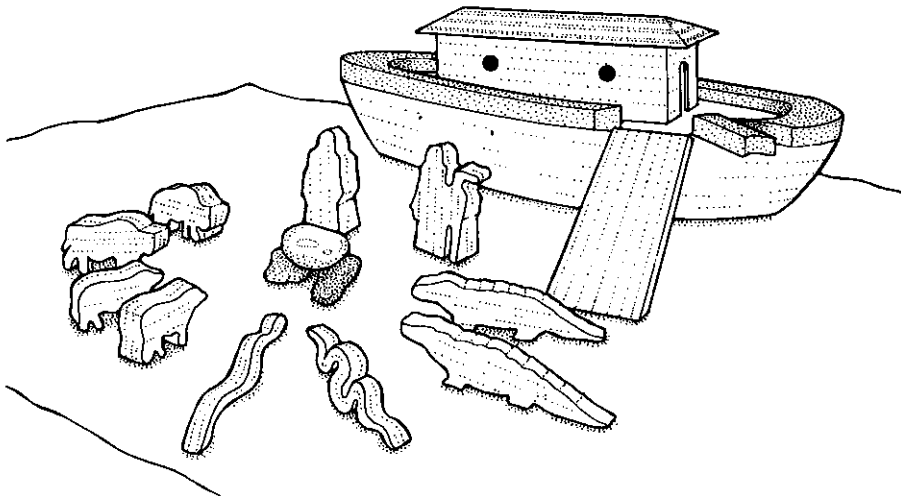
WORDS

☛ This time when it came back it had a fresh olive leaf in its mouth. Now there was something green and growing on the earth again.

☛ Noah waited seven more days. He sent the dove out again. This time it did not come back. It found a home. It made a nest, and stayed there.

☛ The water kept going down, then finally the ark came to rest upon the earth.

☛ All the creatures began to come out of the ark. They were so happy to be home again that they could not help it. They had to say their prayers to try to say how happy they were. They made an altar and gave thanks to God.



NOAH AND THE ALTAR (CHILDREN'S PERSPECTIVE)

With your hand flat, your palm facing the children, make an arc that begins at one side of the rug and goes up, then down to the other side of the rug. In other words, the arc covers the whole earth.

☛ Suddenly, all the creatures saw a great bow in the sky. It was a bow of many colors. You can still see it today when there is rain and the sun is shining. Today we call it a rainbow.

MOVEMENTS

If you are using a prism, show it to the children now.

Move the animal pairs out to the four corners of the rug. Noah and his family remain in the middle. Wait a moment or two. You then begin the wondering.

Having the story spread out on the rug while the wondering takes place helps you and the children both. Young children who cannot yet keep a whole story in mind can see the story as they reflect. As you affirm their answers, you can lovingly touch the pieces they name. Listeners—whether children of any age or adults—can also point to parts of the story or move a piece as they try to put their reflections into words

Without hurrying, replace everything carefully on the tray. Carry the tray back to the shelf. Roll up the rug and return it.

Begin the process of helping the children get out their own work.

WORDS

☞ We can't get a whole rainbow in our room, but, if you hold this prism up to the light and look carefully, you can see a piece of a rainbow in it.

☞ This rainbow was God's sign to say that God will never send such a flood again.

☞ The creatures then went out into all the four corners of the earth and filled it up again with life again.

Now, I wonder what part of this story you like best?

I wonder what part is the most important?

I wonder where you are in the story or what part of the story is about you?

I wonder if there is any part of the story we can leave out and still have all the story we need?

☞ Now, I wonder what work you would like to get out today?