

## Religious Education- Where the Rainbow Promise came from

The story of Noah is amazing! It includes a family, all the animals of the Earth, a huge boat, a flood and why we have rainbows.

It all starts with Noah. Did you know that **after** Noah was 500 years old, he had 3 sons?! After Noah was 500 years old, things started getting very interesting for him.



One day, as God was thinking about the people on earth, His heart became very sad. He could see that all the people had become very bad, so bad that they stopped thinking of anything good. God was so sad and hurt that he wanted to get rid of every person and all the creatures that He had made. He wanted all the evil to stop.

The thing about God is that He gets very angry at our sin and all the bad stuff in the world but we also know that God is love. God IS love, so that means that He can be disappointed when we do bad things but He still loves us, and that's why He remembered Noah.

Noah was the only one that was righteous (which means that he did things right). He was a good guy and he walked with God.

So God said to Noah, "I am going to put an end to all the people because the Earth is full of fighting because of them. I am going to destroy them and the earth."

God then gave Noah instructions on how to make the boat. He told him what kind of wood and how big to make it. He also told him to put a door in the side of the ark and to make it with three floors. The ark was humongous!

The Bible says that next God told Noah that He would make a covenant with him. A covenant is an agreement with a promise. He would save Noah, his wife, and his three sons and their wives. They would be safe in the ark because God was going to flood the whole earth and everything else would die.

I'm missing one other BIG thing that's going in the ark with Noah and his family... and that is... The animals! Two of all living creatures male and female. Plus two of every kind of bird and every creature that moves along the ground.

Then, food for each of them for as long as they were on the boat. Yikes! That's a lot of animals and a lot of food.

It's hard to describe how big the ark actually was but if you think of some of the biggest animals you know (elephant, moose, buffalo, giraffe, rhino, gorilla) and make sure you have 2 of each of those plus all the other little animals that couldn't be stepped on...they needed a lot of room!

Some people think it took over 100 years to build the ark and the Bible says that Noah was 600 years old when the flood waters came.

Keep in mind that Noah was building a big ark because God told him to. When the ark was done God gave Noah 7 days warning before the flood to get all the animals and food on board, and told him that He would send rain for 40 days and 40 nights.

When everyone was in the ark, God shut the door. Then the rain started. The Bible makes it sound like the rain came from the clouds and that there was also water coming up from the ground, so everything probably was covered pretty quickly.

The floods kept coming for 40 whole days! The ark floated on the water and all the high mountains were completely covered with water. Every living thing died on the earth that wasn't in the ark.

So the rain came for 40 days and nights but when it stopped Noah and the animals couldn't just leave the ark. There was too much water and no land for them to walk on, everything was covered. The waters flooded the earth for one hundred and fifty days, which is about five months.

God remembered Noah and all that was in the ark so he sent a wind to help dry the earth. Finally, in the seventh month after the floods had stopped, the ark rested on the top of a mountain.

A little while after that (40 days) Noah opened a window he had made for the ark and probably let in some fresh air! Ha! Even more importantly he let a raven out. It would fly back and forth to the ark until the water had dried.

Then he sent out a dove but the dove couldn't find any place to go. He waited a week and then sent the dove out again. This time the dove came back with an olive leaf which meant the waters had gone down. He waited one more week and let the dove out again and this time it didn't return.

From the way the Bible describes Noah, his family and the animals were in the boat for just over a year or 370 days! That's a long time to be on a boat with all those animals!

When the earth had dried up enough, God told Noah that everyone could get out of the boat. That probably was a very happy day! Maybe a little uncertain as well. There would be no one but them on earth and they would have to start all over building a house, collecting food...there wasn't a big grocery store waiting for them when they got off the ark.

Then, Noah built an altar to thank God for keeping them safe. When God saw what Noah had done, he told Noah that he would never again curse the ground even if people became very bad. Then he made his official covenant with Noah and with all the animals. God would never bring a flood to kill all living creatures and destroy the whole earth again.

Then he gave them a sign for everyone to see this promise: He put a rainbow in the sky and that's to remind us of the promise God made to Noah, the animals and us today!

So, whenever you see a rainbow say a little prayer and thank God that he loves us and that He keeps His promises.