

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PRETEEN SECTION

Make sure your parents read the Bible story too! You may read together, or separately.

BIBLE STORY: THE FLOOD (GENESIS 6-10)

When human beings began to increase in number on the earth and daughters were born to them, the sons of God saw that the daughters of humans were beautiful, and they married any of them they chose. Then the Lord said, “My Spirit will not contend with humans forever, for they are mortal; their days will be a hundred and twenty years.”

The Nephilim were on the earth in those days—and also afterward—when the sons of God went to the daughters of humans and had children by them. They were the heroes of old, men of renown.

The Lord saw how great the wickedness of the human race had become on the earth, and that every inclination of the thoughts of the human heart was only evil all the time. The Lord regretted that he had made human beings on the earth, and his heart was deeply troubled. So the Lord said, “I will wipe from the face of the earth the human race I have created—and with them the animals, the birds and the creatures that move along the ground—for I regret that I have made them.” But Noah found favor in the eyes of the Lord.

Notice: *Why is God’s heart sad? Why does God regret making humans?*

Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked faithfully with God. Noah had three sons: Shem, Ham and Japheth.

Notice: *Why does God like Noah?*

Now the earth was corrupt in God’s sight and was full of violence. God saw how corrupt the earth had become, for all the people on earth had corrupted their ways. So God said to Noah, “I am going to put an end to all people, for the earth is filled with violence because of them. I am surely going to destroy both them and the earth. So make yourself a large ark of cypress wood. I am going to bring floodwaters on the earth to destroy all life under the heavens, every creature that has the breath of life in it. Everything on earth will perish. But I will establish my covenant with you, and you will enter the ark—you and your sons and your wife and your sons’ wives with you. You are to bring into the ark two of all living creatures, male and female, to

Pro Tip! *An “ark” is simply a boat. A BIG boat. Picture something like a shipping barge.*

keep them alive with you. Two of every kind of bird, of every kind of animal and of every kind of creature that moves along the ground will come to you to be kept alive. You are to take every kind of food that is to be eaten and store it away as food for you and for them. Seven days from now I will send rain on the earth for forty days and forty nights, and I will wipe from the face of the earth every living creature I have made.”

And Noah did all that the Lord commanded him.

Noah was six hundred years old when the floodwaters came on the earth. And Noah and his sons and his wife and his sons’ wives entered the ark to escape the waters of the flood. Pairs of clean and unclean animals, of birds and of all creatures that move along the ground, male and female, came to Noah and entered the ark, as God had commanded Noah. And after the seven days the floodwaters came on the earth.

In the six hundredth year of Noah’s life, on the seventeenth day of the second month—on that day all the springs of the great deep burst forth, and the floodgates of the heavens were opened. And rain fell on the earth forty days and forty nights.

For forty days the flood kept coming on the earth, and as the waters increased they lifted the ark high above the earth. The waters rose and increased greatly on the earth, and the ark floated on the surface of the water. They rose greatly on the earth, and all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered. The waters rose and covered the mountains to a depth of more than fifteen cubits. Every living thing that moved on land perished—birds, livestock, wild animals, all the creatures that swarm over the earth, and all humankind. Everything on dry land that had the breath of life in its nostrils died. Every living thing on the face of the earth was wiped out; people and animals and the creatures that move along the ground and the birds were wiped from the earth. Only Noah was left, and those with him in the ark.

Pro Tip! *It rained for 40 days, but Noah was in the Ark much longer. We have a date when the rains began: Second Month, 17th Day. Watch later for the date when Noah leaves the Ark.*

The waters flooded the earth for a hundred and fifty days.

But God remembered Noah and all the wild animals and the livestock that were with him in the ark, and he sent a wind over the earth, and the waters receded. Now the springs of the deep and the floodgates of the heavens had been closed, and the rain had stopped falling from the sky. The water receded steadily from the earth. At the end of the hundred and fifty days the water had gone down, and on the seventeenth day of the seventh month the ark came to rest on the mountains of Ararat. The waters continued to recede until the tenth month, and on the first day of the tenth month the tops of the mountains became visible.

After forty days Noah opened a window he had made in the ark and sent out a raven, and it kept flying back and forth until the water had dried up from the earth. Then he sent out a dove to see if the water had receded from the surface of the ground. But the dove could find nowhere to perch because there was water over all the surface of the earth; so it returned to Noah in the ark. He reached out his hand and took the dove and brought it back to himself in the ark. He waited seven more days and again sent out the dove from the ark. When the dove returned to him in the evening, there in its beak was a freshly plucked olive leaf! Then Noah knew that the water had receded from the earth. He waited seven more days and sent the dove out again, but this time it did not return to him.

By the first day of the first month of Noah's six hundred and first year, the water had dried up from the earth. Noah then removed the covering from the ark and saw that the surface of the ground was dry. By the twenty-seventh day of the second month the earth was completely dry.

Then God said to Noah, "Come out of the ark, you and your wife and your sons and their wives. Bring out every kind of living creature that is with you—the birds, the animals, and all the creatures that move along the ground—so they can multiply on the earth and be fruitful and increase in number on it."

Pro Tip! God finally tells Noah it's time to leave the Ark. Use the dates and figure out how long Noah was on the Ark.

So Noah came out, together with his sons and his wife and his sons' wives. All the animals and all the creatures that move along the ground and all the birds—everything that moves on land—came out of the ark, one kind after another.

Then Noah built an altar to the Lord and, taking some of all the clean animals and clean birds, he sacrificed burnt offerings on it. The Lord smelled the pleasing aroma and said in his heart: "Never again will I curse

Notice: What is the first thing Noah does when he leaves the Ark?

the ground because of humans, even though every inclination of the human heart is evil from childhood. And never again will I destroy all living creatures, as I have done.

"As long as the earth endures,
seedtime and harvest,
cold and heat,
summer and winter,
day and night
will never cease."

Notice: God makes a promise, but do you think God believes anything has changed?

Then God blessed Noah and his sons, saying to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth. The fear and dread of you will fall on all the beasts of the earth, and on all the

birds in the sky, on every creature that moves along the ground, and on all the fish in the sea; they are given into your hands. Everything that lives and moves about will be food for you. Just as I gave you the green plants, I now give you everything.

Notice: Remember how people were only allowed to eat plants? Why does God suddenly allow people to eat animals?

“But you must not eat meat that has its lifeblood still in it. And for your lifeblood I will surely demand an accounting. I will demand an accounting from every animal. And from each human being, too, I will demand an accounting for the life of another human being.

“Whoever sheds human blood,
by humans shall their blood be shed;
for in the image of God
has God made humankind.

Pro Tip! Covenant means something like promise or contract. It’s an agreement. The word “covenant” shows up often in the Bible. Watch for it in our next story!

As for you, be fruitful and increase in number; multiply on the earth and increase upon it.”

Then God said to Noah and to his sons with him: “I now establish my covenant with you and with your descendants after you and with every living creature that was with you—the birds, the livestock and all the wild animals, all those that came out of the ark with you—every living creature on earth. I establish my covenant with you: Never again will all life be destroyed by the waters of a flood; never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth.”

Notice: Who does God make this covenant with?

And God said, “This is the sign of the covenant I am making between me and you and every living creature with you, a covenant for all generations to come: I have set my rainbow in the clouds, and it will be the sign of the covenant between me and the earth.

Notice: Covenants often have signs – reminders – that go with them. What is the sign of this covenant?

Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will remember my covenant between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life. Whenever the rainbow appears in the clouds, I will see it and remember the everlasting covenant between God and all living creatures of every kind on the earth.”

THE NEXT DAY...

Noah, a man of the soil, proceeded to plant a vineyard. When he drank some of its wine, he became drunk and lay uncovered inside his tent. Ham, the father of Canaan, saw his father naked and told his two brothers outside. But Shem and Japheth took a garment and laid it across their shoulders; then they walked in backward and covered their father's naked body. Their faces were turned the other way so that they would not see their father naked.

When Noah awoke from his wine and found out what his youngest son had done to him, he said,

"Cursed be Canaan!
The lowest of slaves
will he be to his brothers."

He also said,

"Praise be to the Lord, the God of Shem!
May Canaan be the slave of Shem.
May God extend Japheth's territory;
may Japheth live in the tents of Shem,
and may Canaan be the slave of Japheth."

***Notice:** Remember how Noah was supposed to undo the curse of Adam? What do you think? Are things any better after the Flood?*

After the flood Noah lived 350 years. Noah lived a total of 950 years, and then he died.

LET'S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself.

What is God doing in this story?

What does this story tell me about God?

What does this story tell me about me?

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

MEMORY WORK: THE LORD'S PRAYER

Memorize the translation of the Lord's Prayer we use in worship. This translation uses words that you may not be familiar with, but I will provide some comments to help you understand what these words mean.

This week, try to memorize the whole thing!

You may already have the Lord's Prayer memorized? If so, begin trying to memorize the books of the Bible. Try doing just 5 per week.

THE LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven,
hallowed be thy name,
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,
on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day our daily bread;
and forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us;

and lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory,
forever and ever. Amen.

Temptations are things that make us want to do bad.

Other versions of the Lord's Prayer say, "Save us from the time of testing." You know what tests are. Tests are meant for good, to show how much you've learned. But often tests reveal how much we've failed instead. "Save us from tests!"

THINGS TO NOTICE

Temptations are things that make us want to do bad. What makes you want to do bad? What can be done to keep you from being in such situations?

Tests are tools that determine if we can succeed at what is right. Do you like tests? What is good or bad about tests?

AT HOME FAITH TIME FOR PRETEENS

PARENT SECTION

As you discuss questions with your preteens, these thoughts might help you go deeper.

CONVERSATIONS – BIBLE

Why is God's heart sad? Why does God regret making humans?

In the previous sentence it talks about "heroes and men of renown". Are heroes good or bad? Do you think God likes heroes?

Heroes are good, right? But remember Lemach? He celebrated killing someone. Heroes kill people in the name of good, but all killing is bad to God. When God looks at the earth, he saw violence and humans fighting. That's not good. Why do you think God feels all killing is bad, even if it's done by someone trying to do good?

Why does God like Noah?

The story says Noah was "righteous and blameless". That means he did what was right and not what was wrong. Maybe Noah is the first person who truly knows the difference between good and evil! What's it feel like when you do things that are right? What's it feel like when you do things that are wrong? How do you know what's good and what's bad?

How long was Noah in the Ark?

Over a year! One year and 17 days. If you had one year and 10 days, you may have forgotten that Noah entered the Ark a week before the Flood began. Could you imagine being stuck in one place for that long? What would that feel like?

What is the first thing Noah does when he leaves the Ark?

Noah makes an altar and does sacrifices. We don't do sacrifices anymore, but we could understand this as Noah's way of saying, "Thank you, God." Why do you think it's important to say thank you? When might we say, "Thank you, God"?

God makes a promise, but do you think God believes anything has changed?

God says the human heart is still evil – full of bad thoughts. God seems to feel like nothing has changed. Why do you think God lets humans continue being part of creation if they are going to continue to be bad?

Why does God suddenly allow people to eat animals?

There's a poem about how important human life is – we each contain the image of God. What can God do to keep us from hurting each other?

Sometimes to keep me from fighting with my siblings, my parents would suggest alternate activities – like having one of us play outside and the other inside. I wonder if God allowed hunting animals to keep us from hurting each other. Do you think it worked?

Who does God make this covenant with? What is the sign of this covenant?

God makes the covenant with all living things! This is the only covenant in the Bible that is made with all life.

The sign or reminder is a rainbow. Why do you suppose God picked a rainbow to remind us of this promise?

Are things any better after the Flood?

It doesn't seem like it, does it? Noah, who was supposed to be righteous and blameless, does something bad, and then when his son messes up, Noah's anger does even worse things. When God sees this, do you think God will go back on his promise? If you were God, how would you solve the problem of humans being bad?

Adult Topic

In Leviticus 20:11, the phrase "saw his father naked" is innuendo for something worse. What Ham did may have been worse than a simple accident. Does that change your perspective on Noah's reaction?

LET'S SUMMARIZE!

Answer each question yourself. I've put in some of my answers but remember: Our answers don't have to be the same. You may have heard and seen things I didn't even notice!

What is God doing in this story?

Getting angry when people hurt each other. Showing love and kindness. Saving creation from evil. Making promises.

What does this story tell me about God?

It bothers God when people are mean. Creation is important to God. God commits to loving us. God too likes having reminders of what's important.

What does this story tell me about me?

Sometimes I can be really good, but then other times I can really mess up.

What does this story tell me about my relationship with God?

God doesn't want me hurting other people. Even when I make God sad, God has made a promise to always love me.

CONVERSATIONS – LORD'S PRAYER

Temptations are things that make us want to do bad. What makes you want to do bad? What can be done to keep you from being in such situations?

A temptation could be something small, like cookies sitting on the kitchen table. We may know those cookies aren't for us, but just the sight of them can make us want to eat one. It's sort of like what happened with Adam and Eve looked at the tree they weren't supposed to eat from! Why do temptations exist?

Tests are tools that determine if we can succeed at what is right. Do you like tests? What is good or bad about tests?

Tests are meant to prove we know what is right, but often what they do is prove how much we don't know. These may not just be school tests, but skills tests in sports and job interviews.

Another work for a test is a trial. When I was 12, my parents did a trial run of letting me stay home alone. If I did well at staying home alone, they might let me ride the bus home after school. If I failed the test, I'd have to keep going to my grandparents' house after school. They gave me an opportunity to show that I could be good.

When have you been given opportunities to show that you can be good? Did you succeed? What would happen if you failed?

Why do you think God gives us opportunities to show that we can do what is good? What do you think happens if we fail?