

FAMILIES FORMING DISCIPLES

COVENANTS AND SACRAMENTS

TOPIC: God's Covenant with Noah

REFERENCES:

CATECHISM OF THE CATHOLIC CHURCH

NO. 71

Sacred Scripture

GEN 9:8-17; IS 54:9-10;

SIR 43:11-13, 44:17-18;

LK 22:20

CREED

nos.

56-58,
68-71,
73,

LITURGY

nos.

1079-80,
1094,
1129,
1219,
1223,
1262

LIFE

nos.

1954,
1987,
2017,
2020

PRAYER

nos.

2562-64,
2569,
2801

GOAL(S):

- Families will reflect on their experience of their covenant relationship with God through the Sacrament of Baptism
- Families will identify the signs of God's covenant with Noah and how it relates to the sign of the Sacrament of Baptism
- Families will reflect on how the Old Covenant points to the New Covenant

MATERIALS

- Bibles
- Skit and props to prepare/practice before session (see below)
- Rainbow/ Old & New Covenants coloring sheet from CatholicIcing.com
- Crayons or colored pencils

OPENING PRAYER

Lord Jesus Christ,
We entrust our family to You and ask for Your blessing and protection. We love You Lord Jesus with all our hearts and we ask that You help our family become more like the Holy Family. Help us to be kind, loving, and patient with one another. Give us all the grace we need to become saints and Your faithful disciples.
Amen.

ICE BREAKER Noah's Ark Charades

- Each family member thinks of one animal or insect that they would like to have been saved from the flood on Noah's Ark, but does not share it with anyone.
- Then taking turns, each person acts out how their chosen animal or insect would act and sound, while the other members of the family guess which animal or insect it is.



TEACH

1. Hook/Question

At our last gathering we began creating our Jesse Trees. As we said before, there are many times throughout the history of God's family that people gave their "Yes" to God. The Jesse Tree reminds us of those individuals and of why their "Yes" was so important in God's plan to save us, as He had promised.

What is your favorite story so far from the ornaments your family has created?



2. Introduce Topic

Covenants and Sacraments

Today we will reflect on God's covenant with Noah, what it means for us, and how ancient covenants are related to the sacraments we celebrate today!



CONTENT

You have shared about people in the Bible who said yes to God. One of those individuals is famous for saying yes to God when everyone else around him was saying no. God asked him to do something that looked ridiculous, but as a wise person once said, "Unless you are willing to do the ridiculous, God will not do the miraculous. When you have God, you don't need to know everything about it. You just do it."

*Perform Skit: **God's Promise & Sign (Gen 6:5 – 9:17)***

Please note: Below is an option to engage the content of the story of God's covenant with Noah in a creative way. It can be done very simply with four volunteers reading, or it can be performed with more props, etc. as noted below. If the skit approach is not utilized, consider another way to unpack the story of God's covenant with Noah and highlight key portions of Gen 6:5 – 9:17.



(Give Rainbow/ Old & New Covenants coloring sheets, crayons or colored pencils)

Ask: Does anyone remember what a covenant is?

Answer: A covenant is a special agreement or promise.

Explain: Back in ancient times, like when Noah lived, most people couldn't read or write, so when they were making a special contract or agreement, they made a covenant by cutting an animal in two and stating their promises aloud. It was understood that if either party broke the promise, what had happened to the animal would happen to them. So a covenant was a very serious agreement.

In this story, it is God who is making the covenant with Noah and with us, Noah's descendants.

Every covenant has a sign and a promise.

Ask: What was the sign and the promise in the covenant God made with Noah?

Answer: A rainbow was the sign and the promise was that God loves us and would never again destroy the earth with a flood.

Ask: To love God, to remain close to God and to obey Him.

Explain: Whenever a covenant is made, our relationship with God deepens. We become more and more a part of His heart, and He becomes more and more a part of our hearts. Today, God still "covenants" with us through His sacraments. When our Lord Jesus came to earth and suffered, died, rose from the dead and ascended into Heaven, He transformed the covenants and promises making up the Old Covenant into the New Covenant, and He gave us the Seven Sacraments, through the Catholic Church, as special signs and instruments of His grace and new life with Him. Every time we receive a sacrament, we deepen our familial relationship, our covenant, with God our Heavenly Father.

Ask: In the story of Noah's Ark, the flood waters washed away everything that was sinful. Which of the Seven Sacraments uses water to wash away sins?

Answer: Baptism.

Explain: Just as every covenant has a sign and a promise, every sacrament does too! The difference in the New Covenant is that the sacraments actually bring about what they promise while also pointing toward eternal life. The sign for the Sacrament of Baptism is water and the promise fulfilled is that God washes away the Original Sin that we inherit from Adam and Eve, and through Jesus in the Holy Spirit, we become a part of God's family, the Church, as sons and daughters of the Father.



FAMILY CONVERSATION

Questions:

What do you know about your own baptism? What do parents remember about their children's baptisms? When you baptized your children what did you want for them? If you were baptized when you were older, why did you want to be baptized? What role has God called you to thus far in your life? How does knowing that Jesus sacrificed His life so that you could become a part of God's family make you feel about your role in the world?

- a) First model by answering the questions and sharing from your life experiences
- b) Small group family sharing
- c) Allow for Large Group sharing (as time allows)

MISSION

First, Introduce Mission Activity

Mission Activities are to be done at home during Week 2 and to be shared at the gathering of families on Week 3.

Second, Explain Activity

- i. Continue making your Jesse Tree and praying the scripture passage for each day together as a family.
- ii. Watch the videos listed and make a plan for keeping Jesus at the center of your family's Christmas Day and Christmas Season!
- iii. Take a picture of your family practicing your favorite Advent or Christmas tradition together around your home altar!
- iv. Get ready to share about your family's plan to celebrate the Birth of Christ on Christmas Day and during the whole Christmas Season at Week 3's gathering of families.

Last, Model for the Families by

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- showing your Jesse Tree
- sharing a photo of your family around your home altar practicing your favorite Advent or Christmas tradition
- explaining why that is your favorite tradition
- explaining how your family will celebrate the Birth of Christ on Christmas Day and during the whole Christmas Season

REVIEW & CLOSE IN PRAYER

Heavenly Father,
Your Son, Jesus, is Your greatest gift to us, a great sign of Your love. Guide us as we strive to walk in that love together as a family this Advent. Help us to do our Family Advent Plans. As we prepare our hearts for Christmas, bring us closer to each other and to Your Son. Give us the grace and strength we need every day. Help us to always trust in You. Come, Lord Jesus, lead all people closer to You. Come and dispel the darkness of our world with the light of Your love. Amen.

(Adapted from <https://dynamiccatholic.com>)

BONUS IDEAS FOR WEEK 3

(May require making sure families are aware of any items they might need to bring to Week 3's gathering)

1. Have a Christmas party/celebration with treats, Christmas carols, games for the second half of your December gathering
2. Ask families to bring in food or small gifts items for the homeless, elderly or children in need.



SUPPORTING QUOTES FROM CHURCH DOCUMENTS

Second Vatican Council, Dogmatic Constitution *Dei Verbum* (1965), no. 3:

God, who through the Word creates all things (see John 1:3) and keeps them in existence, gives men an enduring witness to Himself in created realities (see Rom. 1:19-20). Planning to make known the way of heavenly salvation, He went further and from the start manifested Himself to our first parents. Then after their fall His promise of redemption aroused in them the hope of being saved (see Gen. 3:15) and from that time on He ceaselessly kept the human race in His care, to give eternal life to those who perseveringly do good in search of salvation (see Rom. 2:6-7).

Pope Francis, Encyclical *Laudato Si'* (2015), no. 71:

Although “the wickedness of man was great in the earth” (Gen 6:5) and the Lord “was sorry that he had made man on the earth” (Gen 6:6), nonetheless, through Noah, who remained innocent and just, God decided to open a path of salvation. In this way he gave humanity the chance of a new beginning.

Pope St. John Paul II, Homily (Feb. 16, 1997):

This covenant [with Noah] represents a model, a symbol, a figure of the New Covenant which God made with all humanity in Jesus Christ, through his death on the Cross and his Resurrection. [...] The destructive waters of the flood give way to the sanctifying waters of Baptism. Baptism is the fundamental sacrament in which the Covenant of man’s redemption is realized. [...] God made a covenant with Noah and included it in the work of creation. Christ, Redeemer of man and of all man, brought the Creator’s work to completion by his Death and Resurrection.