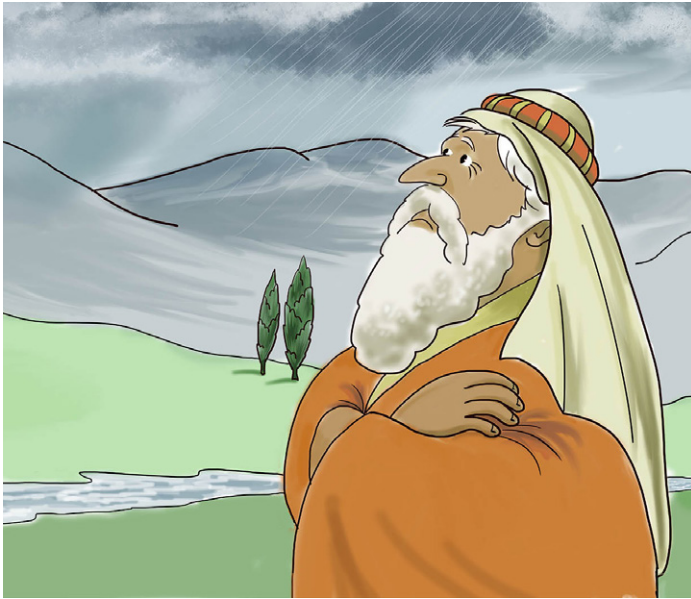


Genesis 9:8-17

Fresh starts and God's good news of a covenant

After the flood, God tells Noah that a covenant is to be made with all living creatures, that there will never be another event like the flood, in which God destroys everything and begins again. The rainbow is a sign and a reminder of this covenant.



REFLECT

Use hand-washing time this week to remember that God gave everyone a fresh start after the flood. Draw a rainbow to stick near the tap, as a reminder of God's unconditional love and promise.

CREATE

Make a 'gift of life' collage. At the centre of a sheet of paper, make/draw a rainbow and a heart. Round this, make/draw things that give you life, make you feel loved, or help you to flourish. Tell others in your household about what you have included in your collage.



Find out about the Christian charity, *Operation Noah*. Discover what being a Christian has to do with the climate crisis. Make a poster about your conclusions to inspire people to act, rather than feel guilty.

Bible notes



The stories in the early chapters of Genesis set out the ancient Israelite understanding of the relationship between God and creation: God is the source of all creation; creation is good; creation is ordered; humankind is made in God's image and tasked with caring for God's creation; living in a way that is out of step with God has disastrous results.

Many ancient cultures have flood stories that, in one way or another, are the judgement of the gods on the wayward human population. In this version, Noah is the one bit of light in an otherwise dark world. The widespread destruction caused by the flood enables a reset, a fresh start for creation, led by the one family that had remained in step with God. The months spent in the ark, while quickly read, were no brief moment and would have been a character-forming time!

On release from the ark, Noah's first response is to make an offering to God, perhaps out of gratitude, perhaps as an act of dedication. God makes several promises that give future security to humankind. These promises are sealed with the covenant set out in today's reading: a contract, a formal agreement between two parties, in this case between God and humankind – present and future. While such a contract would normally have responsibilities on either side, this covenant has no conditions attached. God's love for God's creation is such that, having enabled this fresh start, humankind will never again experience such a judgement. Never again will there be a flood to destroy the earth and all humankind. The rainbow is a memory-trigger: when we see it, we see a thing of beauty, a reminder of God's faithfulness, a promise of a future.

First impressions

- This valley flowers every three to ten years and only after a flood – what thoughts does that stir in you?
- Why is the rainbow after 'The Flood' a sign of God's covenant?
- What does God's promise mean to you?



A sending out prayer

God of new beginnings, your undying, tender love is truly amazing. You sustain the whole universe with what is needed for life. You trust us humans to care for that life. We often fail, but your love reaches out a hand to pick us up, to help us start again. Thank you. Amen.



Search online for a charity that is supporting victims of flooding and make a small donation to their work. This will help people make a fresh start after their trauma.