

## Unit RC Who was Noah?

### ABOUT THE UNIT

In this unit children will learn about Noah as an introduction to the stories of the Old Testament. The stories are also used as a vehicle for discussing the concepts of obedience, trust and the making and keeping of promises.

### WHERE THE UNIT FITS IN

This unit is an introduction to the stories of the Old Testament and is important to Christianity, Judaism and Islam, although in different ways. The Bible is studied in more detail in year 3 and the Torah in year 2.

### PRIOR LEARNING

There is unlikely to have been formal prior learning at this stage. The unit builds on children's personal experiences and feelings, and their responses to stories.

### VOCABULARY

In this unit children will have an opportunity to use words and phrases related to:

- stories in the Bible, eg *Noah, ark, God, Bible, Old Testament*
- feelings, eg *obedience, trust, promises*

### RESOURCES

- everyday representations of the story of Noah, eg *on wallpaper, bed linen, toys*
- children's Bible and pictures of the story

### EXPECTATIONS

#### At the end of this unit

*most children will:*

know the story of Noah, and know that it can be found in the Old Testament part of the Bible; talk about what they have learnt from the story

*some children will not have made so much progress and will:*

retell some parts of the story of Noah; know that it is a very old story which is found in the Bible

*some children will have progressed further and will:*

retell the story of Noah in detail and be able to find it in the Old Testament; begin to have some understanding of Noah's relationship with God and God's promise to humanity

## LEARNING OBJECTIVES

## POSSIBLE TEACHING ACTIVITIES

## LEARNING OUTCOMES

## POINTS TO NOTE

CHILDREN SHOULD LEARN

CHILDREN

### WHERE IS THE STORY OF NOAH?

- the story of Noah
  - that the story can be found in the Old Testament part of the Bible
- Show the children everyday representations of the story of Noah. Ask the children what they know about Noah: share the collective response on a flip chart. Some children may have heard about Noah from songs or the television. Discuss what they already know about the story and ask them if they know where to find it.
  - Read children the story of Noah from a children's Bible. Explain that this is a very old story. Children could begin a Noah frieze that could be added to each week. This would reinforce knowledge of the story and encourage questions about the story. The frieze could start with pictures of Noah and his family.

- retell the story of Noah using words and pictures
- know that the story can be found in the Old Testament part of the Bible

- For many children this will be their first encounter with this topic.
- It is important to remember that although the story of Noah's ark is one of the most popular and well-known Bible stories it was not written as a children's story. Thought needs to be given to some of the difficult questions raised by the story: belief in a God who uses 'natural disasters' to 'punish' people, for example, and the question of whether the promise has been kept.

### WHY DID NOAH BUILD THE ARK?

- that Noah obeyed God
- Revisit Noah's building of the ark and act out this part of the story. Talk about the hard work involved in building this huge vessel. Talk about collecting animals and loading provisions. Discuss why Noah carried out these tasks. *Why did he follow God's instructions and not skimp?*
  - Introduce the concept of obedience. *Should we be obedient? To whom and why?*
  - Add to the frieze started in the previous lesson: ark and animals.

- explain, using simple words, that Noah built the ark because he obeyed God
- talk about their own experience of being obedient or disobedient

- The story is multi-layered and a number of themes and ideas can be explored through it, *eg hope, promises, animals and our relationship and responsibility to them, new beginnings, trust and faith, obedience, and puzzling questions.*

### WAS NOAH FRIGHTENED?

- that Noah trusted (had faith in) God
- Revisit the flood part of the story.
  - Use drama to encourage questions and feelings about how Noah must have felt. *How did Noah's wife feel? Were they frightened? Did they think that the rain would ever stop? How did they feel to be alone in the world? How might they feel to be the only people to survive?*
  - Discuss Noah's trust in God. *Who should you trust?*
  - Add to the frieze: flood.

- use simple words to explain what trust means to them
- make connections with Noah's trust in God and explore this through discussion

### WHAT IS A PROMISE?

- that the rainbow was a sign of God's promise to Noah
  - about the concept of making and keeping promises
- Revisit the end of the story of Noah. Show the children pictures of rainbows. *Why do you think that God chose a rainbow as a sign of his promise in the story of Noah? What did God promise in the story?*
  - Discuss: *What is a promise? What kind of promises do we make? Are they difficult to keep?*
  - Paint a class rainbow to add to the frieze and display with some of the children's realistic promises.

- explain that the rainbow was a sign that God promised never to flood the whole world again
- give an example of a promise and explain what it means to keep a promise

- To avoid a sense of failure, children's promises should be realistic, *eg 'I promise to hang up my coat', rather than 'I promise to be good'!*

### WHAT DOES THE STORY OF NOAH MEAN?

- to ask questions and think about the meaning of the story of Noah
- Retell or act out the whole of the story of Noah.
  - Discuss what has been learnt about the story, and what the children think we can learn from it.
  - Using the frieze as a visual aid, encourage the children to ask further questions about the story, *eg Why did God choose Noah? How did Noah collect all the animals? Did the ark smell? Why was everybody else wicked? Why do we still have floods? Would children have drowned in the flood? Why did all the other animals die?*
  - Finish the lesson by reminding the children that the story of Noah is a very old story that can be found in the Old Testament part of the Bible.
  - Finish the frieze by displaying some of the children's questions.

- share their thoughts about the story of Noah through discussion
- recognise that some questions are puzzling and do not have easy or even 'right' answers

- This unit is designed to promote questioning and thinking skills – important skills for the further study of RE.
- This unit could be extended by using a question from the children, and exploring it in greater depth.

## FUTURE LEARNING

Children could go on to:

- study the story of Noah at key stage 2, alongside other ancient flood stories, eg *the Babylonian story of Gilgamesh*
- explore in greater depth some of the difficult questions raised by the story