God’s Rescue Plan

The Bible Lesson at a Glance
Noah and his family spare no effort in trying to convince the people to join them in obedience to God’s word. Finally they have no alternative but to enter the ark and leave the others to their own choices. It must have been a difficult decision to make, and yet Noah understood that God has both a plan for salvation and a plan for destruction. The choice to be saved or destroyed is left to the individual. Noah chooses to encourage those around him, no matter what their choice.

This is a lesson about community.
God protected Noah and everyone in the ark. This community had put their trust in God, and God in turn blessed and protected them. We are living in a very similar time. Once again we can experience the blessing and protection of God in our community when we place our trust in Him. God works through people, and when we help and encourage others, we are part of His plans to offer rescue and safety.

Teacher Enrichment
“But Noah stood like a rock amid the tempest. Surrounded by popular contempt and ridicule, he distinguished himself by his holy integrity and unwavering faithfulness. A power attended his words, for it was the voice of God to man through His servant. Connection with God made him strong in the strength of infinite power. . . . And now the servant of God made his last solemn appeal to the people. With an agony of desire that words cannot express, he entreated them to seek a refuge while it might be found. Again they rejected his words, and raised their voices in jest and scoffing” (Patriarchs and Prophets, pp. 96, 97).

What attempt am I making to encourage people around me? What storms are raging in my life today? How do they help to point me to Jesus?

Community
We discover God’s purpose for our lives.

POWER TEXT
“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11).

KEY REFERENCES
- Genesis 7:14-24
- Patriarchs and Prophets, chap. 7, pp. 98-104
- The Bible Story (1994), vol. 1, pp. 113-115 (“Heaven’s Floodgates Open”); pp. 116-119 (“Strangest Voyage in History”)
- Student story on page 42 of this guide.

OUR BELIEFS
- No. 10, The Experience of Salvation
- No. 22, Christian Behavior
- No. 11, Growing in Christ

OBJECTIVES
The students will:
- Know that God’s plan rescues us from the sorrow and death brought by sin.
- Feel hatred for sin and love for the sinner.
- Respond by finding specific ways to encourage others.
Welcome
Welcome students at the door and direct them to their seats. Ask them how their week has been. Encourage learners to study their Sabbath School lesson regularly. You may debrief students on the previous lesson to help them see the chronological continuity of the Bible stories from one week to another. Then ask students to share a few things they have learned from the current lesson prior to Sabbath School. Ask: **What was the most interesting part of the Bible story? What activity did you find the most helpful?** Invite students to share their experiences and/or the handiworks they created for Sabbath School during the week.

Transition into the Readiness activity of your choice.

### Program notes

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LESSON 3

READINESS ACTIVITIES

Select the activity or activities that are most appropriate for your situation.

A  Encouraging People

Have two pop bottles with balloons over the top. Say: I want you to imagine that you are this bottle. Let’s see what happens if we place you into a Christian environment where there is fellowship and encouragement. Put one bottle with balloon over the top in a pan of hot water. (Note: The water must be very hot.) Add a heaped teaspoon of baking soda and mix well. Then add the juice of one lemon and quickly stretch a balloon over the mouth of the bottle. As you add the lemon juice say: We’ll use the lemon to illustrate encouragement. Let’s see how you react.

(Note: In both cases it is better to stretch the balloon before you use it for the experiment.)

Say: What are the kinds of things that encourage you? Brainstorm with the students. Say: Now let’s see what happens when you are placed in an environment of sin without the warmth of Christian fellowship. Put the other bottle in a pan with cold water or ice cubes.

Ask: What are the kinds of things that you are discouraged by? Brainstorm with the students. Point out that most of the things they mention are the result sin in our world.

Ask: What has happened to the balloon that is being encouraged? The air inside the bottle will have warmed up and risen, blowing up the balloon.

Debriefing

Ask: What helps your faith to grow—encouragement or discouragement? How can we encourage others? Would anyone like to share with us the power text? Let’s say together the power text, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11:

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11).

God will use us to help and encourage others.

B  Moving Mountains

Say: This pile of papers on the table represents discouragement. How can you move it out of the way using the balloon of encouragement? Allow the students the option of trying to move the papers with the balloon.

Then give the balloon to one of the students and ask that person to deflate the balloon. Say: Let’s go round the group. Each person is to say something encouraging to the person next to them who is facing a certain problem (illnesses, family conflict, other physical, mental, or physical struggles). As each person says something encouraging to their neighbor, the student holding the balloon blows into it, keeping it on the table next to the pile of papers. As the air comes into the balloon it expands, acting as a force that pushes the papers along the table.

Debriefing

Ask: What made the difference when we added a breath of encouragement to the balloon? What are some of the things that make us discouraged? What are some of the things that encourage us? Say: Let’s say together the power text, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11:

“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11).

God wants us to encourage others. He is trying to send a message of hope and encouragement to anyone who will listen. He wants to use you to help spread that message.

God will use us to help and encourage others.
Fellowship
Allow students to report things that they are pleased or troubled about. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special, warm greeting to all visitors. Get contact information from the adult who brought them to church. Early in the following week, send a postcard or e-mail letting the visitors know how much you enjoyed having them in your class and that you would like to see them again.

Suggested Songs
“Side by Side” (He Is Our Song, no. 123)
“Love, Love” (He Is Our Song, no. 132)
“We Are His” (He Is Our Song, no. 140)

Mission
Use Adventist Mission for Youth and Adults (go to www.juniorpowerpoints.org and click on MISSION) or another mission report available to you. For the mission story, have a map of the world where the students can identify the location of the mission story and compare it to where they are. You could use pushpins to mark where the mission story takes place.

Offering
Say: Another way of encouraging people is giving practical support. Practical support can come in many different ways, we can give our time and energy, and we can also give our money. Our offerings go to help provide facilities where they are needed.

Prayer
Say: What happens when you place a plant near a window? It will grow toward the light. What happens when the sun shines on a flower in bud? The bud opens. When we encourage people, it is the same as opening a window and letting light stream into their life. As we pray, think of people who need encouragement. During the prayer I will say, “We want to remember those who need encouragement,” and then pause. You can either say their name out loud or pray for the person silently. Close with a prayer for the students’ prayer requests, for the birthday and other special event celebrants, as well as for the visitors.
Introducing the Bible Story
Ask: Have you ever been on a boat trip? What was the weather like? What does it take to be a good sailor? How would you like to have been in a storm for 40 long days? That was exactly what Noah and his family experienced.

Experiencing the Story
Tell the students that the following activity is to enhance the telling of the story, but is still to be a reverent and respectful part of experiencing God's Word. The students may enjoy "practicing" one time, and then going through the activity again in a more orderly fashion. (They might also enjoy "reading" this story to younger children in Sabbath School or children's church.)

Assign a good reader to read the Bible passage with expression, Genesis 7:14-24. Also, choose a "choir director." The reader will read aloud, and the choir director will point to the group who is to perform at a given time (according to what the reader is reading). See the note below.

Divide the rest of the students into three groups. Group one are the "animals" of the choir. Each person is to choose a specific animal sound to imitate and always make that sound when called on by the "choir director." The second group will be the "birds" of the choir. Each of them is to choose a specific bird call to imitate and always make that sound when called on by the "choir director." The third group is to be given the bottles with water. They are the "water" of the choir. When designated by the "choir director," they are to make swishing water sounds with their bottles.

Note for the "choir director": Point to the animal group to "perform" when the reader reads the words: animal, livestock, creature, or living thing. Point to the bird group to "perform" when the reader reads the words: birds, creature, or living thing. Point to the water group to "perform" when the reader reads the words: water or waters.
Exploring the Bible

Say: Noah followed God’s leading, and he encouraged others to do the same. Yet, he is not the only person in the Bible who saw the value of encouragement when others were faced with the discouragement brought about by sin. Let’s look at other people who encouraged those around them.

Break into small groups to examine the texts. Ask each group to discuss the following questions in relationship to their Bible passage, and then share their findings with the larger group.

1. Who encouraged whom?
2. How did they encourage them?
3. What can we learn?
4. Can you think of any other examples of people in the Bible who were encouraged?

1. Exodus 3:4-10; 4:1-17 (Moses)
2. Matthew 14:22-34 (Peter)
4. John 20:24-31 (Thomas)

Debriefing

Ask: Let’s find and read 1 Peter 1:3-6 together. How are these verses words of encouragement that you could use for people who are having a “flood” experience? How do these words encourage your heart?

Say: Just as God used the people we have been discussing,

God will use us to help and encourage others.

Accommodations for students with special needs

Make available a handout with the list of Bible references and questions from this activity if there are students with visual impairments or other special needs in your Sabbath School class who would benefit from having it.

Getting It Together

Divide the students into groups and give each group a paper cutout of a person (see pattern, p. 145). Say: Pass the paper person around the group, tell something that the consequences of sin brings into people’s lives to destroy them, and tear off a piece of the person. Keep the piece and pass the person to the next student. (Students may say such things as sickness, divorce, learning disabilities, war, etc.)

When the person has been around the circle at least once (or when there is hardly anything left of the person), say: Now let’s send the person back around the other way. When the person comes to you, say a word of encouragement about God’s plan and offer to save them. Say an encouraging word and tape the piece back onto the person.

After each piece is taped back on, discuss the following.

Debriefing

Ask: How is this cutout like a real person? How is it unlike a real person? How is what it just went through like or unlike real life?

Say: Sin discourages and destroys. And God will eventually destroy sin. But God wants to encourage and ultimately save everyone who will listen and accept His rescue plan. He asks us to help Him put people back together through encouragement and a chance to accept His rescue plan from sin.

God will use us to help and encourage others.
United We Stand
Invite students to share the experiences they had during the past week, as they wrote notes to encourage people to accept Jesus as their personal Friend. Ask students to form pairs and give each pair a sheet of paper. Have partners take turns attempting to use only one finger to hold the sheet of paper up on its end.

Ask: How is trying to hold this sheet of paper up by yourself like or unlike trying to live for God in a world of sin? (It’s difficult; sometimes people are too weak or too discouraged to stand by themselves.)

Then have each partner use one finger on one side of the paper to help hold it up.

Ask: How does this illustrate what it is like to receive encouragement from fellow Christians? How does a Christian help someone else accept God’s offer of safety and rescue from sin? Who is a person who struggles with the results of sin whom you can help encourage? Give students time to think of specific people who need their encouragement. Help each student decide on a plan for encouraging and helping someone.

Say: Encouragement is like sunshine. God gives us encouragement in the Bible and brings people into our lives to encourage us. In turn God also wants us to help and encourage others. When we encourage others, we give them an opportunity to accept God’s rescue plan and to grow in Him. Let’s repeat our power point together.

God will use us to help and encourage others.

Prayer and comments:
Ask students to re-form their pairs and pray together for God to guide them and give them strength as they seek to encourage others.

Reminder to parents:
Say: Check out the student Bible study guide to find Parents’ Pages for your use in family worship, or however you wish to use them to spiritually guide your children. You may listen to the podcast of the lesson online at www.juniorpowerpoints.org/podcast.php?channel=1.

Coming up next week:
Say: God offers new beginnings. We should offer others second chances as well.
A man named Harry lived near an active volcano named Mount St. Helens. Harry ignored all warnings to leave the area when it appeared the volcano would erupt.

Schoolchildren in Yakima, Washington, started writing to Harry. “Please leave your house and go where it’s safe,” they said. Harry wrote back to them: “Thanks for thinking about me,” he replied, “but I like it where I live, and I want to stay here.”

One day a helicopter landed in Harry’s front yard. He hopped in and flew to town to visit with his pen pals at the school. They clapped, cheered, and loved his sense of humor. As he entertained them during assembly with stories about his years spent living in the shadow of a volcano, he told them once again that he planned to stay there no matter what. When Harry left, they waved until he was out of sight, wondering what would happen to him.

The story of the Flood is one you’ve heard many times. We think about how Noah spent 120 years building the ark, how the animals entered the ark, and how Noah and his family were the only human beings who went in after he had preached and warned people for 120 years.

The next part of the story, the ugly part, we sometimes skim over. But that’s what our story is about this week. The ugly time. The time God followed through with what He said would happen. The time almost everyone died, because they chose to die.

Noah was not the only one trying to convince people to come into the ark. As we discussed last week, every person who walked up that plank had to make a choice whether or not to get on board. And every person’s life is a witness either for God or against Him every day. So it’s pretty certain that Mrs. Ham, Mrs. Shem, and Mrs. Japheth were talking to their friends. No doubt their husbands were doing the same. When the time came either to go in or to stay out of the ark, it had to be a heartbreaking experience for them. As they watched their friends choose their own destiny, it hurt, because they loved those friends. “Won’t you please join us?” begged Noah. “God has told me that it’s time to get on board.”

Rolling their eyes and shaking their heads, the people scoffed at his last pleas. And then the ark door was closed by invisible hands.

Scientists, photographers, tree planters, and thrill seekers all spent time close to Mount St. Helens. As the days passed, most of them worked their way to what they thought was a safe distance from the summit.

However, when the volcano finally erupted, it didn’t do what volcanoes usually do. Instead of blowing straight up into the air, the lava shot out the side of the mountain with so much force that in some places nothing within 15 miles was left alive. Not the photographers taking pictures for a magazine. Not the people taking data for scientific study. Not Harry. They all had heard the warnings. They had had time to evacuate. But they chose to stay. And the people who loved them wished that those who died had made a different choice.

During the horrible fury of the Flood everyone inside the ark was safe only because of the protection of God. It didn’t have anything to do with the strength of the wood or how much pitch they had smeared on the bottom of the big boat. They were safe because God kept them that way.

Satan himself was afraid that he would die right then, according to Ellen White in her book Patriarchs and Prophets. (Read all about it in the chapter called “The Flood.”)

Today we’re all making life-or-death choices. What about you? After you make your choice to let Jesus into your heart to save you from sin, you will want to help and encourage others around you to be safe too. Ask Jesus to keep you safe and to give you the strength to help and encourage those around you to make the right choice too.
**KEY REFERENCES**
- Genesis 7:14-24
- *Patriarchs and Prophets*, chap. 7, pp. 98-104
- Our Beliefs nos. 10, 22, 11

**POWER TEXT**
“For God did not appoint us to suffer wrath but to receive salvation through our Lord Jesus Christ. . . . Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing” (1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11).

**POWER POINT**
God will use us to help and encourage others.

**Sabbath**
- **DO** Do the activity on page 32.
- **LEARN** Begin learning the power text.

**Sunday**
- **READ** Read Genesis 7:14 and this week’s story, “God’s Rescue Plan.”
- **DRAW** Draw a storm cloud and sunshine. Mark the cloud “wrath” and the sunshine “salvation.” Then write out the power text, 1 Thessalonians 5:9, 11, and place it where you can see it throughout the week.
- **REVIEW** Review the power text.
- **PRAY** Pray for someone you know who has not accepted Jesus.

**Monday**
- **READ** Read Genesis 7:15, 16.
- **THINK** Try to picture the animals going into the ark by themselves. How does this miracle reveal God’s power? What does this picture tell about God’s love and His desire to preserve a diverse animal life on earth?
- **WRITE** In your Bible study journal, write a prayer asking God to rescue you from sin and to keep you safely when you will be facing storms in your life.
- **REVIEW** Review the power text.
- **PRAY** Choose God above everything else and thank Him for rescuing you from sin.

**Tuesday**
- **READ** Read Genesis 7:12, 17-20, 24.
- **CALCULATE** How long did it rain in months? in hours (verse 12)? How long did the floodwaters stay on the earth (verse 24)?
- **TALK** Talk with an adult about how the troubles brought about by sin are like cloudy weather and the joys of knowing Jesus are like sunshine.
- **REVIEW** Review the power text.
- **PRAY** Ask God to help you encourage others to accept the Sun of Righteousness into their lives.

**Wednesday**
- **READ** Read Genesis 7:21-24.
- **THINK** Think about all the people who did not choose to accept God’s rescue plan in Noah’s day. Imagine how many may not choose to accept it today.
- **WRITE** Write a note to someone whom you would like to encourage to accept Jesus. Tell that person about what Jesus means to you.
- **REVIEW** Review the power text.
- **PRAY** Ask God to bless someone through your letter.

**Thursday**
- **READ** Read 2 Timothy 1:3.
- **THINK** What two methods of encouraging others does this verse suggest to you?
- **CHOOSE** Think of someone for whom you can pray, and share with them that God has a rescue plan for all of us.
- **CREATE** Make a gift that you can share with someone along with your words of encouragement.
- **REVIEW** Review the power text.
- **PRAY** Praise God for His great mercy in providing a rescue plan.

**Friday**
- **READ** Read 1 Peter 1:3-6.
- **REVIEW** Review the Bible story with your family.
- **DO** If there are younger children in the family, have them make sound effects in the appropriate places as you read the story from Genesis 7:14-24.
- **TALK** Discuss with an adult an experience they have had when someone or something encouraged them to trust in God’s rescue plan even though they were suffering grief and trials brought about by sin (as mentioned in 1 Peter 1:5, 6).
- **SHARE** Share the power text with your family.
- **PRAY** Thank God together for His great mercy to your family.