

1st Sunday of Lent (Year B)

Genesis 9:8–15

God formed a covenant with Noah, promising to care for all of us – every single living creature on the Earth. However, we know that natural disasters still happen in the world today. God's promise reminds us that He never forsakes or abandons us – we can always rely on Him. Therefore, how we respond to help others when a crisis strikes reflects our part of the covenant to love and honour God, to share His love with everyone and to act as good stewards of all creation.

Sharing Scripture

Ask the children if they are familiar with the story of Noah and the Ark. You may ask a confident child to share a short summary of the story. Tell the children that in today's readings, we hear about what happened *after* Noah built the ark, filled it with two of every animal, and escaped the great flood.

Read **Genesis 9:8–15** with the children.

As you read this encourage them to think about the passage by asking questions such as:

- + What promise did God make to Noah?
- + What do you think it would have been like for Noah to see the rainbow in the sky after the flood?
- + How do you think Noah and his family felt when they saw the rainbow?
- + Why did God choose a rainbow as a sign of the covenant?
- + What does it mean for us today that God made this promise?

Tell the children that even though God promised to never flood the earth again, we know that floods do still happen. This isn't because God has gone back on His promise, it's because the promise symbolised God's commitment to never abandon us again.

That's why when a natural disaster happens, we should reflect God's love to others by not forgetting or abandoning them either. We can organise and act to protect our sisters and brothers and help them, and the environment, to recover. Our actions and prayers can be like a rainbow, providing hope for all who need it.

SCIAF

As part of Caritas Internationalis, the Catholic Church's international network of charities from over 200 countries, SCIAF helps people recover when disaster strikes.

One way that we help those in need is by launching an appeal here in Scotland. We may raise funds or offer prayers for the affected community.

By doing this, we can support local Caritas staff, people with local knowledge and expertise, to take action. Working as part of the Catholic Church, they know the local people, parishes and groups, and find the best way to help people. They provide emergency aid for everyone, whatever their faith.

After providing emergency supplies like hygiene kits, and food and cooking utensils, SCIAF and our partners stay to help people recover for the long term, rebuilding their lives and communities.

Let's look at how SCIAF supported our partners, Caritas Mozambique, to respond to destructive flooding.

Share the pdf case study 'Floods in Mozambique' or watch 'Flooding in Mozambique' on our YouTube channel: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CtOT01_ouUc.

Respond

For this activity, you may choose either of the following options, depending on your time, resource and age of the children.

Option 1: Covenant craft

Materials required:

- + Paint/Markers/Crayons
- + 1 covenant colouring in page per child

Give each child a covenant colouring in page and the art supplies of your choosing. Remind them that a rainbow was God's chosen symbol to remind us of His promise to always love and care for creation. Today, rainbows continue to be a symbol of hope.

They can add a rainbow design. Then, on the strips at the bottom write their promises between them and God, or between them and their parents. They might choose to write things like 'share my toys with others', 'be kind' or 'help with the dishes'.

Option 2: A Prayer for our earth reflection

Materials required:

- + 'A prayer for our earth' video
- + 1 copy of the covenant colouring in page
- + Paint/Markers/Crayons optional

Gathering the children together in a moment of silence, ask them to think about all of the beautiful things we can find in creation. You may want the children to share some things aloud or simply provide some examples as they remain in prayerful meditation.

Lead the children in a prayer thanking God for all creation and asking that we become better stewards of it. Next, share with the children the 'A prayer for our earth' video reflection. This prayer is taken directly from Pope Francis' 2015 encyclical, *Laudato Si'*.

Give each child a covenant colouring in page to complete before ending your time together.