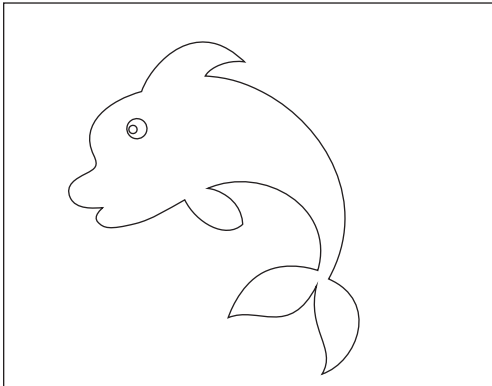
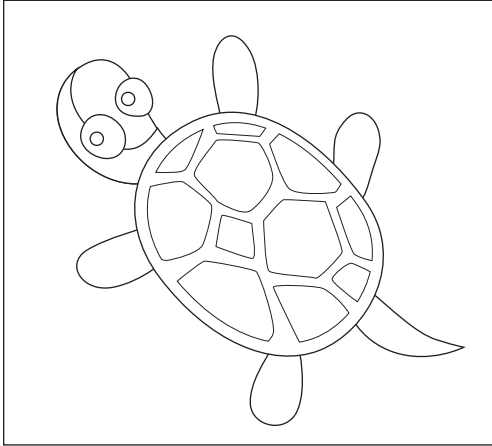
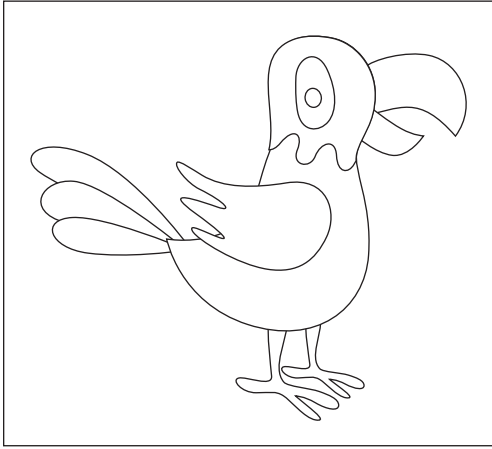


The Great Flood



Colour me!



Genesis 6:5-22

The Lord saw how bad the people on earth were and that everything they thought and planned was evil. He was very sorry that he had made them, and he said, "I'll destroy every living creature on earth! I'll wipe out people, animals, birds, and reptiles. I'm sorry I ever made them."

But the Lord was pleased with Noah, and this is the story about him. Noah was the only person who lived right and obeyed God. He had three sons: Shem, Ham, and Japheth.

God knew that everyone was terribly cruel and violent. So he told Noah:

Cruelty and violence have spread everywhere. Now I'm going to destroy the whole earth and all its people. Get some good lumber and build a boat. Put rooms in it and cover it with tar inside and out. Make it four hundred fifty feet long, seventy-five feet wide, and forty-five feet high. Build a roof on the boat and leave a space of about eighteen inches between the roof and the sides. Make the boat three stories high and put a door on one side.

I'm going to send a flood that will destroy everything that breathes! Nothing will be left alive. But I solemnly promise that you, your wife, your sons, and your daughters-in-law will be kept safe in the boat.

Bring into the boat with you a male and a female of every kind of animal and bird, as well as a male and a female of every reptile. I don't want them to be destroyed. Store up enough food both for yourself and for them.

Noah did everything the Lord told him to do.

Commentary

If something precious that you had made got broken, might you not want to repair it by starting all over again? This is how God felt about his creation, as things went from bad to worse following the first sin. There is great sadness in this story, as God even says he is sorry that he ever made people because of the way they are now behaving to one another. God's anger at cruelty and injustice is also expressed in this story, because his people no longer reflect his image.

The solution is a drastic one, but there is hope. When God finds Noah living a good life, he is ready to help him escape; and this rescue will include Noah's whole family. The beauty and variety of the animal life that God has created won't be lost either. So Noah is instructed to build a huge boat to house a floating zoo that will survive the great flood.

This familiar story is certainly one of terrible judgement, but it is also about a God who rescues and will always provide a safe place for those who trust in him. It is about a God who offers the world and those in it a second chance, with the opportunity to start over again.

Questions

- ▶ What sorts of things do you think made God sorry that he had created people?
- ▶ How do you think Noah pleased God?
- ▶ What do you imagine his friends and neighbours said about Noah as he started building the boat?
- ▶ Do you think Noah's family had as much faith in God as he had?
- ▶ How easy would it be for you to trust in God if you were asked to do something strange, as Noah was?



Visual aid

Take a blow-up globe and cover it with sticky notes showing words that sum up what is spoiling our planet. Include things like war, pollution, greed and so on. These are the sorts of things God saw as he looked down on the world he loved. But he also saw a good man. Replace each of the negative sticky notes with others that mention the good things God is doing in the world through people today.



Activity idea

Choose an old toy, or maybe a small piece of household furniture that needs a good clean. Share the pleasure of washing it so that it sparkles like new. Talk together about how this could be done for a world that gets spoiled and dirty. How can bad thoughts, jealousy and anger be washed away from inside people?



Prayer idea

Using some washable felt tip pens, make random marks on your hands as a sign of the mess we all get into; alternatively, get hands muddy or messy in some other way. Now have a great clean-up together and turn this into prayer as you thank God with spotless hands for the deep cleaning he offers through Jesus Christ.

Key verse

“Noah did everything the Lord told him to do” (Genesis 6:22).

New Testament story link

Mark 1:1-8: John the Baptist prepares the way for Jesus, and people are washed clean through baptism as a sign that they want to make a new beginning.



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