

God made a covenant with Noah.

WE GATHER

✝ *Father, help us to be just in all our ways.*

Justice means respecting the rights of others and giving them what is rightfully theirs. Just comes from the word *justice*.

Who in your neighborhood or school would you describe as a just person? Why?

WE BELIEVE

As the Book of Genesis continues, we learn that God is greatly displeased with humankind. They were not being the faithful stewards of the world that they were created to be.

📖 *Genesis 6:7—9:17*

So to Noah, who was a just man, God said, “I have decided to put an end to all mortals on earth; the earth is full of lawlessness because of them. So I will destroy them and all life on earth” (Genesis 6:13). Then God commanded Noah to build a great ark, a kind of ship. Noah was to fill it with two of every living thing, male and female, along with his wife and family.

When Noah had everything ready, God sent forty days and forty nights of continual rain. God allowed the seas to spill over onto the land and the floodwaters to slowly rise above the highest mountains. All life outside the ark was lost.

Eventually the floodwaters went down, and God allowed Noah, his family, and all the animals to leave the ark. In gratitude, Noah built an altar and offered God a sacrifice on it. God was pleased with this sacrifice and made

a covenant, or agreement, with Noah. In this covenant God promised that even if humanity failed him again, he would never send another flood to destroy life on earth. The symbol of this promise was a rainbow. God told Noah, “This is the sign of the covenant I have established between me and all mortal creatures that are on earth” (Genesis 9:17).

This story, which is found in Chapters 6—9 of the Book of Genesis, revealed an important religious truth: God’s forgiveness and love, and humanity’s goodness, can overcome all evil. Through Noah God made an everlasting covenant with the whole of humanity. For that reason all people are called to friendship with God. All people are invited to enjoy God’s love and forgiveness.

Yet humanity lost something because of its responsibility for the flood. It lost its unity with the rest of creation. It became more difficult for humanity to be stewards of God’s creation.

To symbolize God’s justice and his love and forgiveness, the biblical writer used the powerful symbol of water in the story of the great flood. Water is always a very meaningful symbol. Water can be forceful and even threatening, yet it can be cleansing and calming.

A story of a great flood that almost destroys all life is very common among the ancient peoples of the world. The Genesis account of Noah and the flood is perhaps the most famous of these stories, but it is not original. It goes back to a much more ancient tale of a great flood. A version of this tale is preserved in the Epic of Gilgamesh, which was written sometime between 2000 and 1000 B.C.

Christian Symbolism: The Flood There is great meaning in the symbols found in the story of Noah. Some Christian writers think that the ark is a symbol of the Church: just as the ark saved Noah and all who were with him, so through the Church we are saved.

In the Church, the flood is a symbol of the waters of the sacrament of Baptism. Through Baptism we are freed from original sin and all personal sins. Through Baptism God offers us his forgiveness and his love.

Just as Noah and his family were brought to a new life through the flood, in the waters of Baptism we are brought to a new life in Christ. Through the waters of Baptism, God begins a covenant relationship with each Christian. Just as the world was washed and made clean by the flood, we are washed and made clean in the baptismal water.

🎨 Design a stained-glass window that reminds you of God’s friendship with all people.

WE RESPOND

🎵 **Water of Life/Agua de Vida**

Refrain:

Water of life, holy reminder;
touching, renewing the body of Christ.
Water of life, holy reminder;
touching, renewing the body of Christ.

All generations, come forth and receive
the blessing of this holy water;
making us one with the God who forgives,
the one who is faithful and just. (Refrain)

Refrain:

Agua de vida, santo recuerdo;
Une y renueva al cuerpo de Cristo.
Agua de vida, santo recuerdo;
Une y renueva al cuerpo de Cristo.

Vengan, reciban el agua de paz,
revivan su santo bautismo.
Dejen atrás los rencores de a yer
y vivan la nueva a lianza. (Refrain)