

Noah the 'scientist'

Suggested lesson plan for

KS1_Year 1

Aims: To encourage pupils to bring imaginative thinking to engagement with a biblical story; to see science as something that can happen in the context of religious faith

Outcomes: ability to think about the individual characters in the story and consider the reasons for their actions; ability to think about science as a natural human activity

*The story of Noah [tell the story]: Genesis 6.11–22, 7.12–18 & **8.1–12***

This is an abbreviated version of the full story of Noah. The verses in bold are those that will be the focus of the lesson – what Noah did when he wanted to open the ark after the flood.

What does a scientist do? [class discussion]

When discussing what a scientist does, it is important to note that we all ask questions about how the world works and why things are the way that they are. Human beings have always done this, including trying new ways of doing things and solving problems. This means that science – asking questions and testing things – is a natural human activity. The people we call 'scientists' are people who follow a specific method, or way, of asking questions and trying to find answers, which we call 'experiments'.

What is an experiment and why do we do experiments?

An experiment is a way of testing a belief that we have about the world ("I think if I do this, that will happen") or a way of finding an answer to a question about how the world works.

Activity: with the children, map out the steps of an experiment:

- 1. Question to be answered / theory* to be tested*
- 2. Develop a method to explore the question / test the theory*
- 3. Use the method to collect data*
- 4. Use the data to answer the question/ confirm or disprove the theory*

**Theory = an idea about how things are/how things work*

Engaging with the story [wondering questions]

I wonder what Noah's question was when he sent out the different birds...

I wonder what Noah expected to happen...

I wonder if Noah was worried about anything...

What do we think?

Did Noah do an experiment?

Activity: *get the children to plot Noah's actions on the experiment 'map'. Can they identify the question to be answered, the method used, the data collected and the answer it gave?*

If we think Noah did do an experiment, did it tell him what he needed to know?

A new way of telling the story

Some stories, like the story of Noah, have many different parts to them, and different parts of the story can tell us different things. The story of Noah has many different parts that tell us different things about Noah:

One part of the story is about Noah listening to, believing and obeying God.

One part of the story is about rescuing and caring for animals.

One part of the story is about Noah having to make important decisions, like if it was safe to open the door and leave the ark, and having to find the facts to help him make his decision.

When we tell the story of Noah, we aren't telling just one part of the story, but we are telling the story of Noah the scientist, and also the story of Noah the boat-builder, Noah the animal rescuer, and Noah the man who trusted God. All the different parts of the story are important, as are the different things that Noah did.

Something to think about

People who believe in God are said to have 'faith' – human beings can't see God and can't do any experiment to prove that God exists, but people of faith trust that God is there and cares about this world and the life on it. To learn about the world around us and how the world works, we can do experiments – we can look at the world and think about what we see, and we can test things. Some people, like Noah, do both – they have faith in God *and* they want to test things to get answers to questions about the world.

Activity: *Ask the children to think about someone who loves them (a parent, grandparent, sibling or close friend). Ask them if they have done experiments to find out if that person loves them, or to find out what love is (they will probably answer 'no'). Discuss how we know that people love us if we can't prove it scientifically (we know it because they tell us and we believe them, or because they do good/nice things for us, or because we know that we love them). In many ways, it's a matter of faith. Thinking of the same person, ask the children what kinds of things they could discover about that person using science (science includes measurements of different kinds, so we could find out how tall the person was or how much s/he weighs, we could use observation to know what colour eyes and hair s/he has, etc; if we had access to the right tools, we could find out blood type, DNA profile, etc). So faith and science help us to understand in different ways, and using science doesn't automatically mean we can't also take some things on faith.*