



Authorised Mess — GENESIS

Your details

Name: Judyth Roberts

Church: Uniting Church, Sydney

Bible book	Genesis
Theme of session	Messy beginnings
Notes	Because of the large number of stories and characters in Genesis, this is a broad sweep of God's action in creating the world, continuing to reach out to save and bless people, and God's ability to turn what was meant for bad into good. The creative experiences begin in the garden and continue through the flood, through the desert to Egypt.

Session details

Categories of activities to get a mix	Activity name	Instructions	Resources needed	Reason for doing this activity
Younger participants	Float a boat	Make boats out of juice cartons by cutting them in half lengthwise. Put some plastic animals inside. Fill a baby bath or large tub with water so the boats can be floated.	Clean waxed juice cartons, cut lengthways. Some string to attach to the front to pull along. Small plastic animals to go inside.	Talk about what it would be like if it rained for 40 days and nights and you were stuck on a boat with lots of animals... or even worse if you weren't in a boat. Talk about Noah and his family trusting God.



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Older participants	Ribbon weaving	Weave ribbon together to make something beautiful.	<p>A large assortment of colourful ribbons of different widths. Include some sparkly gold ribbon. Scissors, needle and thread, and possibly a hot glue gun.</p> <p>This website is useful: http://sewing.about.com/library/blribweav.htm.</p>	<p>This activity could be related to the rainbow in Genesis 9:12–17, reminding God of his promise to Noah and us. It can also be linked to the story of Joseph's coat in Genesis 37:3. And could also be a reminder of the way God 'weaves' our lives together, the golden threads representing God's action in our lives.</p>
Girls	Cooking flat bread	Mix flour, water and oil to make flat bread in an electric frypan. Pancakes could be substituted for bread; an electric breadmaker could be used to make dough.	<p>An electric frypan or griddle. A large bowl. Flour, water, oil and salt.</p> <p>See the Internet for recipes for flat bread.</p>	<p>This can be used to remember Sarah preparing food for the three mysterious visitors in Genesis 18:6. It also ties in with the story of Joseph's family coming to Egypt to get grain for food (Genesis 42).</p>



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Boys	Tents	See who can make the best/biggest/strongest tent.	An assortment of light building materials (poles and canvas/plastic).	God told Abraham to leave his home (Genesis 12:1) and go to another land that God would show him. Abraham spent the rest of his life moving around and living in tents (such as Genesis 18:1). Imagine what this would be like.
Word-based	Decorating posters of the stories	Use four large sheets of paper or card with the following headings printed/written at the top: Garden of Eden The Flood In the Desert Egypt Get people to decorate the posters with comments, snippets of stories, pictures, cartoons, and so on.	Four large sheets of paper or card. Materials to decorate the posters.	This activity will enable people to bring together the 'big' stories and see the progression through Genesis. Encourage lots of people to express themselves as these posters will be a key part of the worship.



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Food-based	Icing cupcakes	Decorate cupcakes with sugar flowers or leaves using sweets, marshmallows or marzipan. Fragrant colouring could be added to the icing—strawberry or peppermint—to add to the sensory experience.	Either purchase plain cupcakes or bake them but cool before icing (see the Internet for recipes). Supermarkets have good supplies of icing and sweets. Party books and the Internet provide many ideas for creative decorating.	It is yummy creative fun. While doing this activity, you could talk about how beautiful plants are, how it makes you feel to be in a beautiful garden, and so on.
Explores global aspect of faith	Newspaper	Look for photos or stories about refugees in newspapers. Display these on a notice board.	Some current newspapers. Scissors. A pin-up board and pins or a magnetic board and magnets.	Reflect on all the stories of leaving homes—Adam and Eve, Noah and his family, Abraham and Sarah, and Joseph were all displaced. In our world today, many millions of people are displaced each year because of war, disaster or need.



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Opens up great art	Rublev's icon of the Trinity	Study the picture and ask people for their observations. What can they see in it? What does it tell them?	A good quality print of Rublev's painting. The Wellspring website provides some helpful ideas to facilitate the experience: www.wellsprings.org.uk/rublevs_icon/rublev.htm	This painting is famous because of the layers of meaning it reveals, if you know how to interpret it. Share the thoughts from the website with the people as they look at it.
Quiet	Starry night	Prepare a large sheet of black cardboard with Genesis 15:5–6 displayed to the side, and silver stars stuck all over to give the impression of a starry night. Encourage everyone to reflect on how many stars there are in the sky and God's promise to Abraham and Sarah.	Large black or dark blue sheet of paper or card. Sticky silver stars. Genesis 15:5–6 printed out.	Reflection on God's promises in Genesis 15:5–6.



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Really messy	Planting seeds	Fill containers with potting mix and encourage people to plant a few seeds.	Recycle small plastic pots or use the type that break down in the soil when planted, or recycle egg cartons. Potting mix. Some small scoops (laundry power plastic scoops are ideal) to fill the containers. Some plain wooden lolly sticks to label the pots. Permanent markers. A spray bottle of water. A supply of large seeds like beans, nasturtiums or sunflowers.	Focus on growing things, getting fingers dirty (messy), the smell of gardens, the taste of fresh food if you are planting edible seeds. This can be related to Joseph in Egypt organising the wheat crop (Genesis 41:49) and his family coming to him for wheat (Genesis 42:1–3). A reminder in Genesis 2:8 that God planted a garden.

Celebration suggestion

Sing 'We are marching in the light of God' as you enter the worship area. Maybe use some musical instruments like drums or bells as accompaniment.

Reflect on the beginning of Genesis—God as creator and then gardener, planting a garden. Maybe use the parable of the mustard seed told in a Godly Play style to reflect on what Jesus said about the Kingdom of Heaven. Ask the wondering questions:

- ✿ What part of this story did you like the best?
- ✿ What part do you think is most important?
- ✿ Where are you in this story?

Use this last reflective question to lead into a reflection of the Genesis stories explored during the creative time. Use the four decorated poster stories people made and ask four people to bring them up and stand holding them at the front.



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- ✿ Ask which order they should be in and which story people liked the best?
- ✿ Which are the most important?
- ✿ Where are you in these stories?
- ✿ Where is God in these stories?

People might like to bring their work forward—weavings, a tent, flat bread, seeds in a pot, decorated cakes, and so on as part of prayers or praise or thanksgiving. The poster of the starry night and Rublev's icon could also be displayed at the front.

Meal suggestion

- ✿ A salad like Adam and Eve would have eaten in Eden.
- ✿ A family barbeque like Noah prepared following his safe landing.
- ✿ A 'wrap' meal like Abraham and Sarah prepared for their visitors.
- ✿ An Egyptian feast like Joseph prepared for his family.
- ✿ A novel way of baking cakes is to use ice cream cones as the cup cake 'holder'. Buy the small cones that have a flat base. Half-fill them with a plain cupcake mix and bake normally. They puff up inside the cones and look like 'ice cream'. Decorate with icing and sprinkles. This makes a fun dessert.

Faith in Homes suggestion

Go for a family walk in a beautiful garden (public or private) and 'feel' the atmosphere.

- ✿ Is it busy or peaceful?
- ✿ Can you smell nice smells (flowers) or maybe not so nice smells (fertiliser)?
- ✿ Is it a good place to be?
- ✿ Would you like to live there?
- ✿ Where would you play hide and seek?

Primary School RE idea

Some of the ideas above would work well in a school setting.