

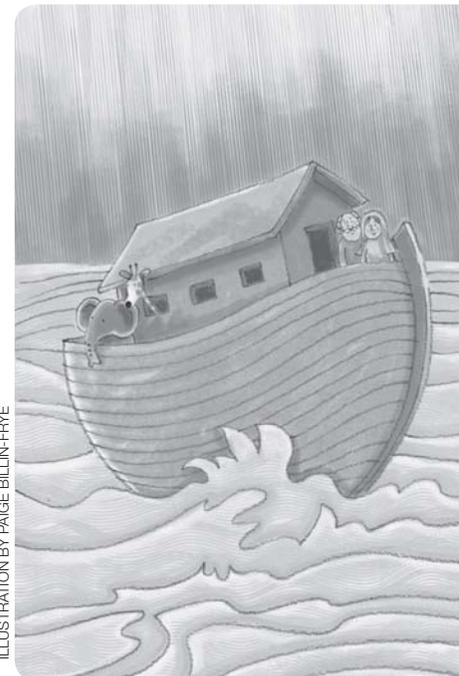
GOD TELLS US TO BE DILIGENT TO OBEY

DILIGENCE IS... focusing on the work God has given me.

When God was disappointed with how evil His creation had become, He decided to start over. He told Noah to build an ark, and Noah diligently obeyed God by building the ark. As a result, Noah saved his family from the flood. If Noah had obeyed half-heartedly, it's likely that the ark wouldn't have survived the flood. As a result, all of humanity and the animal kingdom would've been wiped out. Use this lesson to help children learn that God wants us to diligently obey Him.

Genesis 6:5–7:5:
God Tells Noah to
Build the Ark

WHAT KIDS DO	WHAT YOU'LL NEED
<p>God Sightings (5 minutes) Share ways they've seen God at work.</p>	
<p>Bible Experience (10 minutes) Think about the "static" in their lives that keeps them from hearing God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible • radio
<p>Favorite Animal Sculptures (10 minutes) Consider if Noah hadn't obeyed God with his whole heart.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • modeling dough or clay • dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk)
<p>Listen and Draw (10 minutes) Look at the importance of listening closely to God.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bible • paper • markers
<p>Squeeze In (10 minutes) Squeeze everyone into a small space and discuss how difficult it must've been for Noah to obey God.</p>	
<p>Life Application (15 minutes) Perform a skit about God and the flood.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 copies of the skit (found at the end of this lesson)



*Photocopy the Take-Home page at the end of this lesson for each child.

DILIGENCE DEVOTION

God tells us to obey Him in both the big and little things—in the looming huge decisions and in tiny acts of obedience such as daily honesty and everyday generosity. We can choose to hold our tongue rather than gossip, to hold the door rather than barge through first, to forgive and let go rather than stew on a wrong. We obey God because we love Him.

How is God nudging you toward obedience today? What big decision can you surrender to Him? What “little” detail is God asking you to obey Him in? Will you, like Noah, live a standout, obedient life?

BIBLE FOUNDATION FOR TEACHERS

Genesis 6:5–7:5: God Tells Noah to Build the Ark

THE GREAT DO-OVER

The cycle of sin set into motion in the Garden of Eden was spinning forward. The disobedience and deception of Adam and Eve (Genesis 3) made way for murder when Cain killed his brother Abel (Genesis 4). Now there was a society full of wickedness, evil, and violence; like a virus, sin had corrupted the human race and the planet. Things were so bad that God decided to destroy humankind and most animal life in a flood. But there was one person who stood out from the ugly crowd. God would use this man and his family to start human society afresh.

THE STANDOUT

Scripture describes Noah as a man who “found favor with the Lord,” who was “righteous” and “blameless,” and who “walked in close fellowship with God.” This is the very first time in Scripture that *righteous* and *blameless* are used. What does it mean that Noah was blameless? It certainly doesn’t mean he was without sin. Being called “blameless” simply means that Noah was a morally upright person who lived with integrity; blameless is also used to describe Job, another moral standout (Job 1:1).

IN THE LITTLE THINGS

Genesis 6–7 highlights one specific trait Noah had that set him apart from the crowd: obedience. Against all logic, Noah diligently obeyed God. He built a massive boat (one-and-a-half football



ILLUSTRATION BY PAIGE BILLIN-FRYE

fields in length!) without any observable sign of the coming flood. This, in and of itself, is stunning and amazing obedience.

But what makes Noah's big act of obedience even more compelling is that it is filled with "little" acts of obedience: Noah doesn't just build an ark; he builds it exactly to spec. He makes it precisely as God asks him to make it. And if we didn't notice it ourselves, Genesis makes sure we get the point: Noah is righteous because he "did everything exactly as God had commanded him."

GIVE IT UP

Noah didn't just take God's general idea and run with it, doing everything else on his own. This wasn't Noah's version of the ark; he knew God was the engineer, and he followed God's blueprint. Noah's example of obedience emphasizes the importance of true surrender to God—our obedience involves a sense of trust that God knows best and that His plans and purposes supersede our own ideas and desires. When we obey, we give up our own ideas and choose to follow God's instead.



GOD SIGHTINGS

As a group, share God Sightings—ways you've seen God at work. Then celebrate how God is at work in your lives through a prayer of thanksgiving.

BIBLE EXPERIENCE

See the Teacher Prep in the margin for this activity.

Read Genesis 6:5–7:5. Talk about: **Tell when it's hard to do what you're told.** Allow time. **God tells us to be diligent to obey. What does it mean to be diligent?**

Say: **The Bible tells us that God saw that people's hearts had become evil.** Play the radio static loudly. **Show me what you do when you hear something ugly or bad, like this static.** Allow time; then turn the radio down. **People's wickedness was loud and ugly and broke God's heart, so He decided to start over.**

Say: **But Noah found favor with God. The Bible says Noah was God's close friend. Show me what you do when**

THE LESSON

YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ Bible
- ✓ radio

TEACHER PREP

Find a radio station that will come in clearly (instrumental music would be best if you can find it), and then set the dial off that station to a lot of static or noise.



someone is your good friend. As kids do their actions, tune the radio to a clear station.

Say: **Like our radio clearly tuned to a station, Noah tuned his ear to listen to God's voice. Noah heard God's instructions and obeyed.** Tune the radio to static.

Say: **Noah's neighbors maybe thought he was nuts, since they hadn't tuned their ears to God.** Have kids make a loud static noise as you repeat "God tells us to be diligent to obey" at a normal level.

Say: **You couldn't tell what I was saying over all that noise. And like that, the people's ears listened to sin instead of God.**

Lead this discussion: **Why do you think Noah listened to and diligently obeyed God? What may've happened if Noah hadn't diligently obeyed God? Why does God tell us to diligently obey Him?**

Talk about: **It would've been easy for Noah to go with the crowd rather than what God said was right. ● God tells us to be diligent to obey Him.**

YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ modeling dough or clay
- ✓ dry erase board and marker (or chalkboard and chalk)

FAVORITE ANIMAL SCULPTURES

Say: **When God was disappointed with how evil His creation had become, He decided to start over. He told Noah to build an ark, and Noah diligently obeyed God by building the ark.**

Have kids find partners. Then say: **Think about a time you obeyed God.** (Pause.) **Share with your partner about that time. What happened when you obeyed God?**

Next, give kids each some modeling dough or clay, and say: **● God tells us to be diligent to obey Him. We learned that Noah diligently obeyed God and built an ark for all the animals and his family. Use the clay to sculpt your favorite animals.**

Lead this discussion: **What animals did you sculpt? And why are they your favorites? Imagine if Noah hadn't obeyed**

God diligently, with his whole heart. What would've happened to your favorite animals?

Next, draw half a heart on a dry erase board or chalkboard so kids can see it. Ask: **Why is it important that we obey God diligently instead of with half a heart?**

Say: **If Noah hadn't obeyed God with his whole heart, maybe the boat would've sunk when the rains came, or Noah might not have had enough food for all the animals. God had the best instructions for Noah—and God has the best instructions for us, too. That's why God tells us to be diligent to obey Him.**

LISTEN AND DRAW

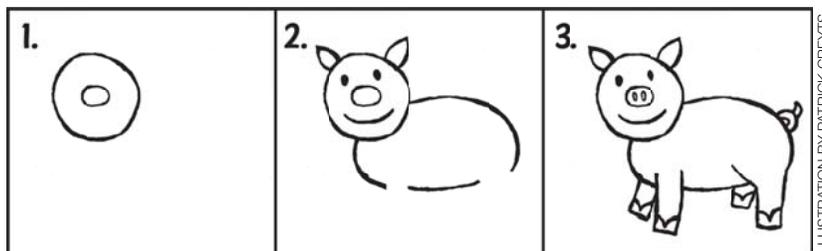
Help kids find partners. Say: **Noah diligently obeyed God by building the ark. Share with your partner about a time you had trouble obeying God.**

Next ask partners to discuss: **How easy is it for you to follow instructions? Why?**

Give everyone a sheet of paper and a marker. Say: **I'm going to give you a set of instructions to draw something.**

Give kids verbal instructions for the drawing shown below (don't let them see the picture). For example, say, "Draw a circle on the top left of your page. Then draw a smaller circle inside the first circle." And so on. Once children are done drawing, show them this picture for comparison.

Ask: **How well did you follow the instructions? What would've made it easier to draw your picture exactly like the original?**



YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ Bible
- ✓ markers
- ✓ paper

Say: **God doesn't leave us alone; He gives us a pattern to follow.** Ask for a volunteer to read 1 Thessalonians 1:6-10.

Lead this discussion: **What does it mean to imitate God? How is Jesus the perfect example of diligent obedience? How can we listen to and obey God diligently?**

Say: **Noah had to listen carefully to God. God knew what the ark should look like, and Noah had to diligently obey to create it. In the same way, God knows what is best for us. If we listen and obey Him, He'll help us see how He wants us to live. ● God tells us to be diligent to obey Him.**

SQUEEZE IN

Squeeze the entire group into a chosen space. Sit in the space for a few minutes without going anywhere.

Ask: **How is this experience like or unlike when Noah and his family were on the ark for such a long period of time?**

Point out that Noah and his family didn't know how long they'd be on the ark or when they'd be able to get off.

Lead this discussion: **What it's like to obey God, even when you don't know where God's taking you in your life, or why God asks you to obey in certain ways?**

Pray and thank God that you can trust Him. Ask God to help you obey Him no matter what.

YOU'LL NEED:

- ✓ **2 copies of the skit (found at the end of this lesson)**

LIFE APPLICATION

Talk about: **The Bible tells us to diligently obey God, but how do we know exactly what that means? Let's see what two ordinary kids think it means. They'll need your help so everyone can really see what it means to obey God. Will you do what they tell you to do—even though it's all pretend?**

Have kids act out the skit "The Sky Is Falling!" found at the end of this lesson.

Afterward, lead this discussion: **What are reasons we diligently obey God—other than fear? Tell about a time you did the right thing because you loved someone. How can you diligently obey God this week to show Him you love Him?**

Talk about: ● **God tells us to be diligent to obey Him. He's not trying to make our lives difficult. Instead, He knows what's best for us and how we can serve and live for Him. We obey God to show Him we have a deep respect and love for Him. The people during Noah's time didn't obey God at all and it made God very sad. Let's be different from those people by obeying our wonderful God!**

PRAYER

Dear God, help us obey You each day in everything that comes our way. Let us be obedient, just as Noah was. In Jesus' name, amen.

TAKE-HOME PAGE

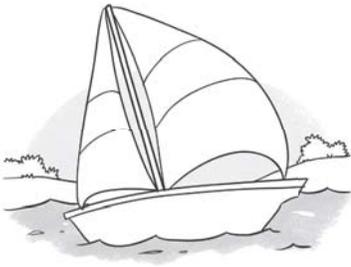
Give each child a Take-Home page to take home. Encourage kids to select one of the six challenges for the week ahead.





PRACTICING DILIGENCE

Keep growing in your faith and character. Choose one of the following challenges this week to diligently obey God.



CHALLENGE 1

Be on the lookout for bodies of water—lakes, ponds, streams, puddles, swimming pools, or bathtubs. Each time you see one of these bodies of water, use it as a reminder to pray, asking God to help you obey Him as Noah did.



CHALLENGE 2

As you go to bed, think back through your day and talk to God about how you obeyed or disobeyed Him.



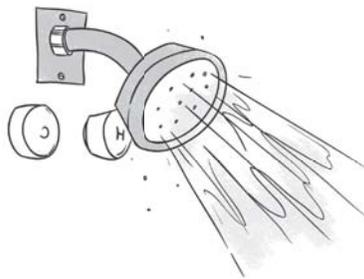
CHALLENGE 3

Play a game with a sibling or friend. On slips of paper, write simple challenges such as “Do five jumping jacks” or “Straighten the pillows on the couch.” Fold the papers and mix them up. Time each other obeying all the instructions, one challenge at a time. Talk about how you obeyed each other, and then tell each other ways you can obey God.



CHALLENGE 4

When your parents tell you to do something that you don't want to do, remember this week's Bible passage and obey them.



CHALLENGE 5

As you take a bath or shower, remember how God saved Noah from the flood because Noah trusted and obeyed God. Ask God to help you obey Him.



CHALLENGE 6

Read Romans 12 for ideas on how to obey God. Challenge yourself to obey God by following one thing you read in that chapter.



THE SKY IS FALLING!

Two friends discuss how God responds to disobedience.

KID 1

(Runs into the room, trying to get people to pay attention.) The sky is falling! The sky is falling! Quick, everyone, run for your lives! *(Has people pretend to run for their lives.)*

KID 2

(Jogs in, out of breath.) Whoa, whoa, slow down. *(Has people sit down where they are, and then turns to Kid 1.)* What makes you think the sky is falling? You're freaking our friends out.

KID 1

(Winded) My brother and I were playing in the backyard, and he tried to take the football away from me. So I hit him. And then God dropped a piece of sky right on my head because I was mean to my brother. I saw a red flash, and something hit my head. Then I woke up on the ground! *(Rubs head.)*

KID 2

Really? *(Suddenly figuring it out)* Wait a minute, I've been in your backyard. You have three apple trees. Don't you think it might have been an apple?

KID 1

(Pauses, and then laughs sheepishly.) Boy, do I feel silly. *(Turns serious again.)* But still, God hit me with an apple. I wasn't obeying Him and He must've been punishing me. *(Looks over shoulder nervously.)* Can a giant flood be far behind?

KID 2

(Confused) A flood? *(Figuring it out)* Oh, yeah. Like the time God sent the flood because of all the sin in the world. Right! Listen, God isn't looking for reasons to attack you.

THE SCENE

an imaginary
outdoor setting

THE CAST

✓ **Kid 1**

✓ **Kid 2**



**KID 1**

But doesn't the Bible say we should diligently obey God—or else?
(Squats behind something to hide.)

KID 2

You don't need to be scared—it's true that the Bible says to obey God. But that doesn't mean we should be scared of Him. When we obey God, we show that we respect and love Him. *(Pauses.)*

God is a forgiving God who'd rather forgive us than punish us. But the thing He wants the most is for us to act out of love and obedience in the first place.

KID 1

(Stands up.) So you don't think God dropped that apple on my head?

KID 2

It's more likely that when you hit your brother, he fell back and shook the tree and the apple just fell.

KID 1

Whew! Glad to hear that!

