

When I See a Rainbow

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I have set my rainbow in the clouds . . .

Genesis 9:13

Noah listened to God's voice
And built himself a boat
Soon the rain came pouring down
And it began to float

The animals were safe inside
For forty days and nights
When the skies were clear again
Noah saw a beautiful sight . . .

Red is autumn leaves on frosty maple trees
Orange is a full moon hanging in the midnight sky
Yellow is a buttercup that stains my toes and knees
Green is rows of corn stalks growing up so high

Blue is water in the lake where I swim and play
Indigo is huckleberries in the morning dew
Violet is the little flow'r that brightens up my day

First time: Noah saw the colors, and we can too! (repeat back to **RED**)

Second time: These colors all remind me that God's promises are true

Now the rain is gone
The sun shines bright
And I look up above . . .

When I see a rainbow
It reminds me of God's love

When I see a rainbow
I think about God's love

When I see a rainbow
I'm looking at God's love

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Teaching Resources

Background

My wife and I were making the long drive to Pittsburgh one Saturday morning to go to a baseball game. Along the way, we got to thinking about the colors of the rainbow and how all the magnificent colors God created can be found all around us and can point us to God's love for us. That's how "When I See a Rainbow" was born!

Rainbows are beautiful and fun to see after a rain shower when the conditions are just right. Because God created an orderly, predictable universe, physical phenomena like rainbows can be described and explained by principles of physics such as refraction, reflection, dispersion, and so on. Furthermore, rainbows always display the basic colors of the light spectrum in a certain order: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet.

When children see a rainbow in the sky, we hope they understand the science behind it. We believe God wants us to understand the universe He created. No laws of physics will ever contradict or undermine the amazing reality of God's creative hand. But in addition to understanding the "science" of rainbows, we also hope that children will recognize their Biblical significance – that is, how God used the rainbow as a visible sign to Noah and his family that He would never destroy the earth again.

When children (and adults) are delighted by the sudden beauty of a rainbow in the sky, they can be reminded that when God makes a promise, He keeps it. All of God's promises are true and dependable – just like the dependability of the rainbow to appear under certain conditions and the certainty of all the colors to appear in a dependable order. We can depend on God to keep His promises to us because He loves us. So when we see a rainbow, we are actually looking at a visual sign of God's love for us. That's what this song is all about.

Preparing Activities

1. Read the account of the flood from the book of Genesis (6 – 9:17). Of course, you will want to use a translation or version of the story that is age-appropriate for your children.
2. How have different artists attempted to create visual depictions of Noah's Ark? Find images of Noah's Ark on the internet to share with your children – there are lots of them! How are the images similar? How are they different?

3. Questions for conversation: (a) What were some of the challenges Noah faced with caring for all those animals for 40 days during the flood and then another 150 days while the waters receded? (b) Have you ever had to stay inside because of a storm or blizzard? What was it like not to be able to go outside or do your normal every-day activities? What would this be like for Noah on the ark? (c) How do you think Noah and his family felt when the ark finally came to rest and they saw the rainbow in the sky?

4. There are many easy ways to re-create rainbows using simple objects. You can find these activities with a quick internet search. As you demonstrate with your children how rainbows are created, emphasize how light is comprised of the different colors we see in a rainbow and note how the colors are always in the same order, regardless of the method we use to create the rainbow. God's creation is orderly and predictable!

5. Many children will likely already know the mnemonic strategy for remembering the colors of the light spectrum in order: ROY G BIV. For those who do not know it, introduce the name, ROY G BIV, and explain how the letters can help them remember the colors in order. This would be a good opportunity to throw in a little cognitive psychology, using the mnemonic to help children understand that the key to remembering pieces of information is how we actively build connections to it in our minds – not how many times we say it over and over to ourselves mindlessly! Putting ideas to rhymes and songs is also a great mnemonic strategy. Hey, that's exactly what "When I See a Rainbow" does! And it's a lot more fun than ROY G BIV!

Extending Activities

1. Noah listened to God's voice when he was told to build the ark. There was no rain in sight, and he must have felt foolish – especially when his friends and neighbors ridiculed him. How do we hear God's voice? Is there something God might be telling you to do (consistent with His Word) that might seem foolish or really hard to accomplish? Will you follow Noah's example and trust God by doing it anyway? This would be a good connection to one of my other songs, "Look What Small Can Do."

2. Because Noah was human, just like the rest of us, it's easy to imagine how difficult all that time was on the ark, feeding and cleaning up after a lot of hungry, smelly animals! Another wonderful song that gets at that idea is called, "Humbly Grateful of Grumbly Hateful?" by Kathie Hill and Janet McMahan. Find the song and have fun singing it with your children!

3. The rainbow was a sign that God would keep His promise not to flood the earth again. Make a list of God's promises to us, along with their scripture references (see below for some starters). Create a large poster or mural with these promises listed beneath a big colorful rainbow.

4. Make a chart with all the colors of the rainbow in columns. Under each color heading, begin with the items mentioned in “When I See a Rainbow.” Then challenge the children to think of more examples of each color from God’s creation.

5. This song just cries out for more verses with more color examples! So invite the children to use the additional colors from the chart to create more verses for the song.

Related Scripture

- Revelation 10:1
- Ezekial 1:28
- Revelation 4:2-3

Some promises of God

- Deuteronomy 31:8
- Matthew 11:28
- Philippians 4:19
- Romans 8:37-39
- I John 1:9
- Jeremiah 29:11
- Proverbs 3:5-6
- Isaiah 26:3