

All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, some sing higher; some sing out loud on a telephone wire, some just clap their hands or paws, or anything they got now.

Familiar with this song? If not, it's ok. You'll learn quickly as we sing it. Let's start by dividing up parts. Are you ready? I'll sing the first line, but then we need some singers who like to sing low. Raise your hand if that's you. Your line is "some sing low." Ok, and who likes to sing higher? Raise your hand. Your line is "some sing higher." And how about those who think it would be really cool to be a bird and sing from a telephone wire? Your line is "some sing out loud on a telephone wire." Under the age of 50, your next line is "some just clap their hands or paws." Don't worry, we won't be asking for your birth certificate. Anyone older than 50, your line is "or anything they got now." Let's try it! **(Sing song)** Very nice. Be ready because we will be singing it more.

Although we celebrated Easter last Sunday, is Easter over? No way. Absolutely not. Easter is too big and wonderful to only celebrate one day a year. What do we celebrate on Easter? (Jesus rose from the dead). Right. Christ is risen! He is risen indeed. **This is good news. This is the best news!** When I say "this is good news." Your response can be "this is the best news!"

The greatest joke ever is the one God played on death on Easter morning. Death does not have the last word, death is not the end. Just as Jesus is with us now, we are promised we will be with Jesus forever! We can celebrate every single day. We can be joyful, happy, and laugh...even in church, especially in church. We take God seriously but not ourselves. Because Jesus rose from the dead the gospel becomes comedy, not tragedy, it's happy, not sad. **This is good news. This is the best news!**

Now we have been doing some laughing together, but let me hear you really laugh. C'mon, let me hear you laugh! Sometimes we need help laughing. Where do you go to learn how to make ice

cream? Sundae school. What did the grape say as it was squished? Nothing. It just let out a whine. Knock, knock...who's there? Little old lady. Little old lady who? Hey, I didn't know you could yodel. Knock, knock...who's there? Luke. Luke who? Luke all around you and smile at your neighbors. Knock, knock...who's there? Gladys. Gladys who? Glad it's Sunday, aren't you? One more...knock, knock...who's there? Rita. Rita who? Read a Bible if you want to hear the good news!

So are you ready to hear some good news? Any guesses on who we are going to talk about today? I'll give you a hint—he was an old man, wore a tunic like mine, probably sandals, and he loved animals. Who do you think that was? Noah! You're right. Let's read our good news **(Spark Story Bible)**.

So the animals came to the ark...two by two and the ark was filled with animals of all kinds. I'm guessing there were (pull out masks)...cats, and dogs, rabbits, alligators, owls, and even foxes. I think we can help tell the story better if we put on these masks, don't you think? **(Pass out masks)**

The ark was a place for ALL the animals in God's choir. (SLIDE) *All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, some sing higher; some sing out loud on a telephone wire, some just clap their hands or paws, or anything they got now.* For the animals **this was good news. This was the best news!**

Noah and his wife and their sons and their sons' wives were the only people on the ark. This wasn't such great news. God was really mad at the world when he sent the flood. But then God made a promise. God made rainbow. Have you ever seen a rainbow? (SLIDE) How many colors are in one? Seven. An easy way to remember the colors is the phrase "Richard Of York Gave Battle In Vain"; Richard starts with an "R" what would that stand for which color? (SLIDE) (Red) Of? (Orange) York? (Yellow) Gave? (Green) Battle? (Blue) In? (Indigo/bluish purple) Vain? (violet) (SLIDE) Red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

I like to think of the rainbow and its many colors like the many colors of you and me. We are all so beautiful, even though each of us is very different. And God loves each and every one of us no matter what we look like, no matter what we are feeling, no matter how many times we sin or mess up, no matter what. Just like the animals on the ark, we all have a place in God's choir, always and forever. (SLIDE) *All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, some sing higher; some sing out loud on a telephone wire, some just clap their hands or paws, or anything they got now.* **This is good news. This is the best news!**

(SLIDE) **Rainbows are a promise.** The rainbow is a symbol, just like the cross and the empty tomb, of God's love for all people. God said, "Whenever I bring clouds over the earth and the rainbow appears after a storm, I will remember my promise between me and you and all living creatures of every kind. Never again will the waters become a flood to destroy all life." The rainbow is a reminder that God will be there for us always.

Sometimes we have troubles or storms in our lives, like when we get sick, or someone we know is hurt, or we have a fight with our parents...or our kids, or we feel sad or lonely, or worry about our job, or our friends, or having enough food or money. During these times, we sometimes forget about rainbows and God. We feel alone and don't feel like much of anything, let alone being in God's choir. Sometimes we think God has given up, but no matter what, we can trust God, because God promises to never give up on us. **This is good news. This is the best news!**

Just think, if Noah and his family *hadn't* survived, Jesus would have no reason to be born. None of us would be here. There would be no Christmas, or Easter, or even church. But God had a plan for Noah, and God has a plan for us. God sent us Jesus, a child born in a manger to live and die for all of us, so that we can live with hope and joy, and someday live forever in heaven. Just like when Noah's

family got off the boat and ran and twirled and danced, and thanked God, we too, can live each day in celebration and run and twirl and dance and laugh and thank God. **This is good news. This is the best news!** Every day God says, "You have a place in my choir." (SLIDE) *All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, some sing higher; some sing out loud on a telephone wire, some just clap their hands or paws, or anything they got now.*

When we take the time, we can see God's promise in each other and in the world. (SLIDE) God's uses colors of the rainbow everywhere! God the Creator is here in negative twenty-degree wind chills in January and sixty-degree days in April. We can see God in all 10,000 lakes, in each evergreen tree, in autumn's colorful leaves, in blue skies and red skies at night when fishers delight, in green grass and yellow sunflowers. We can see God in all of us. God made us in a spectrum of shapes, sizes, and shades. Maybe you have your mom's blue eyes or your dad's black hair. Maybe your skin is dark like your Auntie Sue's or pale like your cousin Bob's. Maybe your face is pink and rosy and smooth with youth or gray and marks of age. No matter, God loves you. As God made a promise to Noah and his family, God gives you the same promise. **This is good news. This is the best news!**

Whether the rainbow is actually in the sky or just in our hearts, it is always there. Everything we need to know about life, we can learn from Noah's Ark...adapted from an anonymous letter, here are some tips:

-
1. Don't miss the boat.
 2. Remember we are all in the same boat.
 3. Plan ahead. It wasn't raining when Noah built the ark.
 4. Stay active. When you're 600 years old, someone may ask you to something really big.
-

5. Travel in pairs.
6. Speed isn't always an advantage, a way to get ahead. Remember, the snails were on board with the cheetahs.
7. When you're stressed or sad, float a while.
8. Remember the ark was built by amateurs, the Titanic by professionals.
9. No matter the storm, God is with you. There's always a rainbow waiting.
10. All God's creatures got a place in the choir.

*All God's creatures got a place in the choir. Some sing low, some sing higher; some sing out loud on a telephone wire, some just clap their hands or paws, or anything they got now. **This is good news. This is the best news!** Thanks be to God. Amen.*