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FIRST READING: *Genesis 9:8-15*

This is a reading from the book of Genesis.

God said to Noah and his children:

I am making a covenant with you,
and with your children for all time,
and with every living creature on earth.

This is my covenant with you
that will last forever:

I promise that never again
will a flood destroy the earth
and all living creatures.

As a sign of this covenant,
I am putting my rainbow in the sky.

When I bring clouds over the earth,
and a rainbow appears in the sky,

I will remember the covenant

I have made with you,

and with all living creatures.

This is the Word of God.

RESPONSE: *Psalms 89*



GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:



GOSPEL: *Mark 1:12-15*

This is a reading from the Gospel of Mark.

After his baptism,
the Holy Spirit sent Jesus out into the desert.
He stayed there for forty days
and was tempted by Satan
to do what was wrong.
And the angels were with Jesus to help him.
When Jesus returned to Galilee,
he told everyone the Good News of God:

"The time has come!
Change your lives
and believe in the Gospel!"

This is the Good News of the Lord.

REFLECTING ON THE READINGS
WITH CHILDREN:

Before the first reading, explain the meaning of the word "covenant." Children understand the meaning of promise. Help them see a promise may be made by one person, but a covenant is made between two. Each person promises the other. In God's covenant with us, God promises to always be there for and with us. We promise to believe in and obey God. It is sufficient that they understand covenant in the light of "promise."

Ask the children to describe rainbows they have seen. When do they appear in the sky? After the children have shared, invite them to listen to the first reading.

After the first reading, you may wish to engage the children in the reading by asking questions such as:

- Why do you think God chose a rainbow as a symbol of the covenant?
- What does God promise in this covenant?
- How do you feel about God's promise?

The Psalm Response for today is particularly appropriate. It should be one that the children "take to heart" and remember.

After the Gospel, ask the children:

- What did you hear in today's Gospel?
- What did Jesus ask us to do?

When the children have shared, summarize for them. Jesus says, "Change your lives. Believe in me." Jesus asks us to follow him.

- What do you think Jesus wants us to change in our lives?
- How can we show Jesus that we believe in him?

Remind the children that the word Gospel means "Good News."

- What is the Good News that Jesus asks us to believe in?

Help the children understand that we change our lives gradually. Jesus too was tempted and so he knows that sometimes it is hard for us. But he is always there to help us when we try. Remember, God made a covenant with us and is always true to it.

Lent is a special time in the church. It is a time when we think even more about changing our lives and believing more in Jesus. How can we do that? Help the children focus on the reality of their everyday lives. They are not responsible for the sins of the world and cannot change things on a large scale. Help them focus on the small, but real ways they can try in their own lives.