

Creating an Altar at Home

by Beth Beall



In the Bible, Noah and his family and many animals were on a boat for a long time while God was making the world new. When Noah finally stepped off of that boat, he built an altar to say "thank you" to God. In this activity, you'll hear Noah's story, and learn how to make a simple altar in your home.

For

Just for Kids

Season

Summer

Needed

The Bible story on the last page of this activity.

Any materials (found or created) that symbolize your thankfulness to God.

Activity Plan

1. Begin with a prayer. You might like to place your hands over your heart as you pray silently or aloud. If you'd like to use words, you could try these: *"Loving God, you hold me in your heart. I am safe in your love. I give you my thanks. Amen."*
2. On your own or with an adult, read the Bible story on the last page of this activity.
3. When Noah and the others finally got off the ark, Noah wanted to say "thank you" to God. I wonder if there's something that has happened to you or your family that makes you want to say "thank you" to God?
4. Instead of only saying "thank you" with his words, Noah built something called an altar to show his thanks. Noah's altar was probably a collection of rocks, with a space for a fire on top. You and your family can create an altar, **but one without fire!** An altar can be any place in your home that you turn into a special place for God. Here are some ideas for creating an altar at home:
 - **Find a place that feels special to you.** Perhaps there's an empty space on a bookshelf. Or perhaps the middle of a table could become your altar. If you want the altar to be just for you rather than for your entire family, maybe you could find a spot in your bedroom.
 - **Begin by putting one or two symbols of thanks to God on your altar. For example:**



- Did you have a great time playing soccer today? You could draw a picture of your game or draw a picture of a soccer ball. Then place your drawing on the altar.
 - Did you find a special rock when you were out walking with a friend? Put the rock on your altar and thank God for the amazing world we live in.
 - Did someone send you a wonderful card on your birthday? You might want to add the card to the altar, too, as you thank God for the people who love you.
- **Add items to the altar or remove them as you would like.** The important thing about your altar is that it reminds you of why you want to give thanks to God. You may add more items to the altar whenever you like. You may also remove items when that feels like the right thing to do. Maybe you'll want to keep your altar assembled for a few days, a few weeks, or longer. And when you are ready to take the altar apart altogether, that's OK, too.

Example

Here is a picture of the altar that I have in my home right now. You can see that I created my altar in a wide windowsill. The piece of driftwood reminds me of a wonderful vacation at the beach. The feathers remind me to thank God for the beautiful birds that fly near my house. The beaded object is a gift from a young friend, and it reminds me of her. The statue reminds me of Jesus. And the bowl of water reminds me to thank God for the gift of clean water.



photo by Beth Beall, April 2013

A Re-telling of the Story of Noah (Genesis 6:5-9:17)

A long, long time ago, God looked with sadness upon the world. People were not living as God wanted, and the world was falling apart. So God decided to make the world brand new. There was one man, Noah, who walked in God's ways. God told Noah to build a very large boat called an ark. Noah took his entire family and lots of animals onto the ark. Once Noah, his family and the animals were safely inside, God opened the heavens and the rain began to fall, and fall, and fall. The rain washed away the rest of the world.

The rain lasted a long, long time. Rain fell for forty days and forty nights. Even after the rain stopped, Noah and his family and all the animals had to stay on the ark because the world was still covered in water.

After almost a year, dry land emerged. Noah and his family and the animals came out of the ark and looked upon the beautiful new world that God had created. Noah built a special fire called an altar to say "thank you" to God. God looked upon the altar and was pleased. Then God blessed Noah and his family, and the animals. Finally, God put a rainbow in the sky as a sign of his faithful love to the new creation.

