

Scripture and Background Information for September 8-14

The 40 Day Lab

When you look throughout the Bible, there is a pattern where God uses time periods of 40 days to invite people to encounter Him in a new way or for the very first time. Those 40 days were not just about learning facts about God, but they were *real-life experience* with God.

A special BONUS for this series: We are providing daily prompts by text message which will give you practical ways to experience God beyond the lectures. We encourage you to sign up by texting **40DAYLAB** to 33222.

To prepare for your group discussion each week, group members should use the **Community Group Discussion Guide** to complete the **GOD'S WORDS** and **MY WORDS** columns using the scriptures at the bottom of this page.

Remember we are using the updated **Discussion Guide** (available from your leader or from the Next Steps Center). Because we are using longer narrative passages, we have adapted the prompts to keep the time commitment between 20 & 30 minutes. In the **GOD'S WORDS** section, rather than copying the scripture "word for word", you'll write down a few of the details that you might need to retell the story to a friend or a neighbor. In the **MY WORDS** section, take a few minutes to retell the story in your own words.

Background for Genesis 6:5-7:5

Noah's encounter with God was much longer than 40 days. In fact, 40 days here only represents the number of days that it rained. Noah was encountering God both before the flood when God told him to build the ark and after the rain stopped as they waited for the waters to subside. This story always elicits many more questions than the Bible answers, but what the Bible does make clear is the way that God already is at work to fix a world that humanity had already ruined. Beginning with humanity's first sin in the Garden of Eden to choose himself over God, humanity had been on the road to ruin. God's intercession here is just one of many examples of the way he will continue to chase after the ones that He loves. God's promise to never cause such *widespread destruction* again foreshadows a time in which He will destroy one man for the *widespread benefit* of all.

Scriptures for the upcoming weeks:

September 15	Moses	Exodus 24:12-18; 32:1-8
September 22	Joshua	Number 13:1, 17-33
September 29	Elijah	1 Kings 19:1-18
October 6	Jesus	Matthew 4:1-11
October 13	Celebration	