

TEACHER GUIDE

Noah's Ark at the Skirball™

Pre-K–Grade 2 School Tour



A Program of the Education Department
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WELCOME

On your class's tour of Noah's Ark at the Skirball, you and your students will bring to life one of the world's most well-known stories—that of people and animals experiencing a great flood, creating shelter and community, and finally seeing a rainbow, a symbolic second chance to preserve and improve the world. Storms, Arks, and Rainbows are the “chapters” of our Noah's Ark exhibition. By working together and caring for each other, your class will experience the values of weathering life's storms and building a better world.

BIG IDEAS

collaboration
community
creativity
diversity
recycling
responsibility
second chances
sharing
stewardship
storytelling

TEACHER RESOURCES

Before Your Visit

Watch an **Introductory Video** about Noah's Ark
Learn What to Expect
Prepare Your Students—Lesson Plan: Community Council

After Your Visit

Continue the Journey—Lesson Plan: Build a Better World
Connect with Community Partners

To learn more about planning your trip to the Skirball, visit skirball.org/plan-your-school-visit or e-mail education@skirball.org.



WHAT TO EXPECT

Before you arrive at the Skirball, familiarize your students with what they can expect during each of the three chapters of Noah's Ark.

Storms

Listen and look for changes in the weather. The animals know a great storm is coming, and they are moving to find a safe place.

- Divide students into three groups: Elephants, Owls, and Coyotes.
- Work together to create the storm.
- Collaborate to help finish building the ark.
- Load up the animals two by two.

Arks

It is time to get on board the Ark! So move on in, unpack, and explore.

- Climb into the crates to see what the animals are taking on their journey.
- Bring the animals to life using puppetry.
- Work as a team to keep the community clean, safe, and peaceful.
- Comfort the animals by cleaning up, feeding, and taking care of them.

Rainbows

The storm has stopped, and the land is dry. You made it! Look for a sign of hope in the sky. Now is the time to celebrate, innovate, and make the world better together.

- Celebrate the journey by making music with instruments from cultures all over the world.
- Move like the animals under the rainbow.
- Continue making our world a better place!



LESSON PLAN: COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Tour Connections: This lesson can be used either prior to your Noah’s Ark school tour or after to reflect on the themes and activities explored during the tour in the classroom. During the Noah’s Ark school tour, your class will embark upon a journey featuring three chapters: Storms, Arks, and Rainbows. Each chapter introduces a different concept, from working together to overcome life’s challenges, to learning to live as a community, to building a better world. During the tour, students might participate in “council,” a community-building, listening, and speaking activity used to reflect on tour themes and share experiences.

Big Ideas:

collaboration
community
sharing
storytelling

Objective: Introduce the concept of council: a powerful social and emotional learning strategy that promotes an environment of trust and respect in the classroom. Council is a mindful practice that invites students to share personal experiences, memories, and feelings with each other by actively listening and speaking honestly. Council helps students become more aware of themselves, while also establishing connections and appreciation of differences among their peers.

Set-Up and Materials: On the floor, create a space that is open, nurturing, and without interruption, where students can sit together in a circle. In the center, place a meaningful object to be used as a talking piece.

Instructions:

- Students and teachers will sit in a circle. The facilitator will present the talking piece and explain that only the person holding the talking piece may speak, while everyone else will listen.
- The facilitator will share the council agreements: that the students will speak and listen from the heart, be respectful of one another, and keep an open mind.
- The facilitator will give a council prompt that allows students to make personal connections to the Noah’s Ark tour concepts and themes. For example, “Share a time when you made a new friend.” Students will have a moment to think of a story, and then they will be asked to share by using one sentence once they receive the talking piece. (Note: The response can be modified for different age levels; students can share one word or phrase, or briefly retell the story.)
- At the end of the sharing round, the facilitator will point out the similarities or diversity in students’ stories. For example, “I heard many different ways of making friends in your stories—over a meal, on the playground, by helping one another, etc. The animals on Noah’s Ark might have also made friends at meals, while playing, and working together.” These connections allow students to get to know their classmates better while also understanding the context of the Noah’s Ark story. Council can also be used in the classroom to better understand course content and/or to resolve conflict.
- End your council with a closing gesture (e.g., a group thank you, cheer, or moment of silence).

Vocabulary:

Talking piece: A meaningful object passed around between participants to identify whose turn it is to speak.

Council agreements: Guidelines that all participants promise to keep during the exercise, such as speaking from the heart, listening with the heart, being respectful and open-minded, and keeping answers as short as possible.

Council prompt: A simple instruction to encourage participants to reflect on the past, express themselves in the present, and view the future. Prompts often begin with phrases like “Tell the council about a time when ... ” or “Tell a story of a time ... ”

Sample Prompts:

Storms

- “In one word, tell council about a time when you experienced a storm.”
- “Tell a story of a time when you had to do something that was challenging or difficult.”

Arks

- “In one word, share a story about when you made a new friend.”
- “Tell council about a time you went on a trip.”

Rainbows

- “In one word, tell council about a time you celebrated something.”
- “Share a story about a time you celebrated someone else.”

Reflection: Council can be followed by an art project or physical activity to further explore the stories and experience students shared. Drawing, painting, and movement activities give students opportunities to express their thoughts and experiences of council in other ways.

For more information on using council in the classroom as well as additional lesson plans, visit councilinschools.org, provided by [The Ojai Foundation](#).



LESSON PLAN: BUILD A BETTER WORLD

Tour Connections: Following your Noah’s Ark school tour, this lesson will invite students to think in greater depth about how individuals and communities make an impact on the world and one another and what they specifically can do to build a better world.

Big Ideas:

collaboration
creativity
responsibility
stewardship

Objective: Students will brainstorm with their classmates about problems they would like to solve in the classroom, school, or community. Teachers will help weigh the importance, feasibility, complexity, and impact of a variety of ideas in order to choose which one they will collectively work on.

Set-Up and Materials:

- “Kids in Action” service learning article
- “Build a Better World Brainstorm” handout
- “How Our Class Will Build a Better World” handout



Instructions:

1. Ask students to share what they remember from the Noah's Ark school tour. Facilitate an open discussion about the many ways they were able to help each other and the animals while on the tour.
2. Share some of the highlights from the "Kids in Action" service learning article, which showcases local schools and student-created service learning projects.
3. Discuss with your students how they would like to build a better world. Brainstorm what issues they are interested in addressing. The following are potential areas where your students can make an impact:
 - helping others and showing kindness (sending postcards of positivity or notes of gratitude to parents/grandparents or initiating a donation drive of books, clothing, food, etc.);
 - taking care of the environment (recycling, cleaning up the beach, planting a garden, etc.);
 - helping animals or wildlife (raising awareness or supporting local organizations);
 - making the classroom or school more beautiful in big or small ways.
4. Provide students with the "Build a Better World Brainstorm" handout and give them time to write and draw one idea for a project that will help build a better world.
5. As a class, choose one project to do together and fill out the "How Our Class Will Build a Better World" handout.
6. Set a deadline, and build a better world!

Reflection: Ask your students, "Why is it important to [help others/take care of the environment/comfort animals/etc.]" Discuss how their actions are making a difference.

We always love seeing the impact of the Noah's Ark tour and the ways your students continue making our world a better place. Feel free to share photos, videos, student writing and drawing, or other projects by e-mailing buildabetterworld@skirball.org.



KIDS IN ACTION

The Noah's Ark Build a Better World program teaches Grades 1 and 2 students about empathy and civic responsibility. Each tour includes a service-learning project focused on helping people in need, taking care of the earth, or comforting animals. Teachers and students then return to their classrooms and create a project of their own.

This article offers a sampling of projects previous students and teachers created to continue building a better world.

Buchanan Street Elementary

By selling candy grams school-wide for fifty cents apiece during the month of October, second grade students at Buchanan Street Elementary raised \$600 to donate to **Children's Hospital Los Angeles**. Find out more about their story [here](#).

Beethoven Elementary School

First graders from Beethoven Elementary donated creativity bags to **Children's Protective Services of Los Angeles**. Each bag included student-created coloring books, erasers, crayons, and mechanical pencils.

Tarzana Elementary

Tarzana Elementary first graders wrote cards of kindness to children at **No Estas Solo: San Fernando Valley Children Refugee Center**. These cards contained pictures and messages of welcome, friendship, and hope for the future.

Grant Elementary School

Grant Elementary first graders created beautiful illustrations of their visions of a better world. Students wrote about ways in which they could help the world around them, including promises to recycle and speak kind words.





Baldwin Hills Elementary Pilot

Eight-year-old Kloe, founder of **Kloe Kares**, inspired second graders at Baldwin Hills Elementary to lead a school-wide collection drive to help the homeless. Read the full article [here](#). Continuing these efforts in the spring semester, students held another collection drive of personal care items that were donated to local organization **LA Family Housing**.

Clover Avenue Elementary

Four Grade 2 classes at Clover Avenue Elementary led a school-wide sock drive, donating over 280 pairs of socks to **Chrysalis**, a nonprofit dedicated to providing a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless and low-income individuals. Students also created postcards of positivity for Chrysalis participants, filled with images and messages of encouragement and confidence.

Sylvan Park Elementary School

First grade students at Sylvan Park created their very own Build a Better World book filled with promises and illustrations of how they will make the world a better place, including tending to their very own community garden.

BuFord Elementary

After learning about the negative effects of plastic in our oceans, two classes of first graders at BuFord Elementary worked together to create informative posters, scripts, and flyers to place around their school. They also shared what they learned with fifth graders and other teachers.

Maple Primary Elementary

Maple Primary first graders thought about ways they could help their community and drew pictures of themselves carrying out these acts of kindness. Pledges included donating clothes, food, and toys to those in need.

BUILD A BETTER WORLD BRAINSTORM

Name:

My idea for building a better world is:

Here is a drawing of what I will do to make the world a better place:

A large, empty rectangular box with a dashed pink border, intended for a drawing.

HOW OUR CLASS WILL BUILD A BETTER WORLD

We, the students of

[name of teacher(s)]

From

[name of school]

have this goal to help make the world a better place:



We have these ideas for getting started:

1.

2.

3.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Children's Hospital Los Angeles | chla.org

Dating back to 1901, Children's Hospital Los Angeles is the first and largest pediatric hospital in Southern California. CHLA provides compassionate patient care, leading-edge education of the caregivers of tomorrow, and innovative research efforts that impact children at their hospital and around the world.

Chrysalis | changelives.org

Chrysalis is an LA-based nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a pathway to self-sufficiency for homeless and low-income individuals by providing the resources and support needed to find and retain employment. Since 1984, Chrysalis has served more than 58,000 low-income and homeless individuals.

Heaven on Earth Society for Animals | heavenlypets.org

Heaven on Earth aims to improve quality of life for homeless cats, particularly those who are often overlooked because of special needs and who may have a low potential for adoption.

K9 Connection | k9connection.org

K9 Connection's programs offer teens in continuation high schools the chance to break through learning and life barriers by training and bonding with homeless dogs. Experiential learning enables the teens to build self-esteem, self-determination, and empathy while they in turn enable homeless dogs to develop the skills to be adopted into permanent loving homes.

LA Family Housing | lafh.org

LA Family Housing helps people transition out of homelessness and poverty by providing a continuum of housing enriched with supportive services. Since 1983, LAFH has become one of the largest comprehensive real estate developers and homeless service providers in Los Angeles and a regional leader providing solutions to end homelessness.

No Estas Solo | noestassolonorthhills.org

San Fernando Valley Refugee Children Center Inc. No Estas Solo welcomes unaccompanied children from Central America seeking refuge in the United States, and offers hope and healing in the form of legal assistance, emotional support, tutoring, and other resources to help meet the basic needs of these children.

Theodore Payne Foundation | theodorepayne.org

The Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants Inc., established in 1960, is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the understanding, preservation, and use of California native flora. Open to all, TPF is one of the longest-running educational, environmental organizations in Southern California.