

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE CHILDREN'S CURRICULUM

Preschool The Prophets





JONAH LEARNS A LESSON

Lesson 1 - Preschool

Bible Basis: Jonah 1–4
Key Verse: Titus 3:5 (NirV): “He saved us.”
Key Idea: God is merciful.

Master Supplies List

- Sea Life pictures
- scissors
- paper clips
- kiddie pool or laundry basket
- dowel
- string
- magnet
- Bible
- *My Bible Story Coloring Book*
- Family Page (1 per child)



Optional Supplies

You will need the following supplies based on which option(s) you choose in Step 3 | Explore More.

- Option 1: flip chart with easel or chalkboard, marker or chalk
- Option 2: Jonah and the Big Fish coloring sheet (1 per child), crayons
- Option 3: several balloons, traffic cones
- Option 4: audiovisual equipment to play music or project a video
- Option 5: Jonah's Plant script (3 copies)

STEP 1 | Come Together (10 min)

Supplies: Sea Life pictures, scissors, paper clips, kiddie pool or laundry basket, dowel, string, magnet
Teacher Prep: Print the Sea Life pictures and cut apart. Attach a paper clip to each piece and spread them out in the kiddie pool or laundry basket. Create a fishing pole by tying a magnet to a dowel (or yardstick).

- SHOW children the kiddie pool filled with sea life.
- DEMONSTRATE how to use the fishing pole to catch something out of the pool.
- GIVE each child a turn at fishing. Pay attention to the one who pulls out Jonah.
- SHOW the Jonah piece to the children after everyone has had a turn.
- SAY: We wouldn't expect to find a man inside a fish when we go fishing, but that's what happened to Jonah. Jonah was a prophet. A prophet's job was to deliver God's messages to people. Today, we'll hear Jonah's story from the Bible.

KEY VERSE

- INTRODUCE this week's Key Verse. Repeat the verse slowly a few times along with the hand motions.
(Note: You also may choose to review last week's Key Verse together.)

Titus 3:5

He

(point toward heaven)

saved us.

(hug self)

PRAYER

- PRAY aloud with the children: Heavenly Father, as we listen to the story of Jonah today, help us understand your mercy and show mercy to others. Amen.



STEP 2 | Hear the Story (20 min)

Supplies: Bible



- SAY: Today's story has lots of ups and downs. When I give you the thumbs-up signal, cheer for something good that's happening.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal and ask children to practice cheering.
- CONTINUE: When I give you the thumbs-down signal, boo for something bad that's happening.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal and ask children to practice booing.

JONAH RUNS AWAY

- BEGIN: The city of Nineveh was in trouble. The people were doing lots of bad things. God noticed all of their sin.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal.
- SAY: So God told his prophet Jonah to go to the city and tell them their sin was wrong.
- READ aloud Jonah 1:3.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal.
- COMMENT: God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. But Jonah tried to go far in the other direction, to Tarshish.

THE STORM AT SEA

- READ aloud Jonah 1:4–5a.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal.
- SAY: More bad news! The sailors found out God sent the storm because of Jonah. They asked Jonah who he was and what he had done to make God angry.
- READ aloud Jonah 1:9–12.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal.
- GO ON: Jonah told the truth even though it meant being thrown overboard. The sailors did what Jonah told them to do. The storm stopped.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal.
- LAMENT: But Jonah was lost at sea. He probably thought he would die.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal.
- READ aloud Jonah 1:17.
- GIVE children one thumb up and one thumb down.
- ASK: What do you think it was like inside the belly of a giant fish? (painful, scary, smelly, dark)



A SECOND CHANCE

- CONTINUE: Jonah prayed to God from inside the fish.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal.
- READ aloud Jonah 2:9–10.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal.
- READ aloud Jonah 3:1–2.
- SPECULATE: What do you think Jonah will do this time? Has he learned his lesson? (take responses)
- READ aloud Jonah 3:3–5, 10.
- GIVE the thumbs-up signal.
- SAY: The sinful people of Nineveh listened to Jonah’s warning. They repented, which means they stopped sinning. So God didn’t destroy the city. He showed them mercy.
- ASK: How do you think Jonah might have felt about this? Why? (take responses)

JONAH’S ANGER

- EXPLAIN: Jonah wasn’t happy about God’s mercy for the people of Nineveh because people of Nineveh had hurt many other people. He was angry.
- GIVE the thumbs-down signal.
- SAY: Jonah thought God should punish the people of Nineveh for their sins, not forgive them. But Jonah had no right to be upset. After all, when Jonah sinned, God showed him mercy.
- CONCLUDE: We can be like Jonah sometimes. We get upset when things aren’t fair. But we should thank God that he isn’t fair. If we got what was fair, it would be punishment. Instead, he often gives us mercy.

STEP 3 | Explore More

Choose from these activity options to help children explore the lesson further.

Option 1: Jonah Song (10 min)

Supplies: flip chart with easel or chalkboard, marker or chalk

Teacher Prep: Write J O N A H on the flip chart or board.

- ASK children to read each of the letters you’ve written.
- SAY: That spells Jonah.
- LEAD children in several rounds of the “Jonah Song” (below, to the tune of “B-I-N-G-O”), progressively clapping in place of letters.



*There was a man inside a fish
And Jonah was his name-oh
J-O-N-A-H
J-O-N-A-H
J-O-N-A-H
And Jonah was his name*

*There was a man inside a fish
And Jonah was his name-oh
[clap] -O-N-A-H
[clap] -O-N-A-H
[clap] -O-N-A-H
And Jonah was his name*

*There was a man inside a fish
And Jonah was his name-oh
[clap] [clap] -N-A-H
[clap] [clap] -N-A-H
[clap] [clap] -N-A-H
And Jonah was his name*

And so on...

- RECOUNT why Jonah was inside a fish.

Option 2: Let's Color! (15 min)

Supplies: Jonah and the Big Fish coloring sheet (1 per child), crayons

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Jonah and the Big Fish coloring sheet.

- GIVE each child a copy of the Jonah and the Big Fish sheet to color.
- INVITE children to tell you some of the ups and downs of Jonah's story as they color.

Option 3: Overboard! (15 min)

Supplies: several balloons, traffic cones

Teacher Prep: Divide a large, open play area in half with a row of cones. Blow up and tie the balloons.

- DIVIDE the class in half, with one half standing on each side of the cones.
- SAY: You are the sailors on two different ships during a terrible storm. Your job is to throw cargo overboard.
- DISTRIBUTE the balloons evenly across the play area.
- INSTRUCT children to throw as many balloons as they can "overboard" across the row of cones. Both teams try to get the "cargo" off of their "boat" by returning the balloons that land on their side.
- RECALL why the sailors were throwing cargo overboard.





Option 4: Praise and Worship (15 min)

Recommended song: “Who Did (Swallow Jonah)” by Cedarment Kids

© 1995 by Cedarment Kids

Potential sources: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UZ5UeNOXb0Q> and CCLI #4992800

Purpose for this song: Children will love bouncing up and down to this simple sing-along.

Recommended song: “Jonah Was a Prophet” by VeggieTales®

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Potential sources: YouTube <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XoYk6CtBEvM> and CCLI #4337269

Purpose for this song: This silly song tells the story of Jonah with favorite characters children are sure to enjoy.

Option 5: Act It Out (20 min)

Supplies: Jonah’s Plant skit (3 copies), Jonah puppet, cardboard tube

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Jonah’s Plant skit. Enlist an adult or older child to help you.

- ACT out the skit, using the puppet as Jonah and the cardboard tube to make the voice of God.
- REVIEW today’s Key Verse with motions to help the children understand how God shows us mercy.

STEP 4 | Going Home (5 min)

Supplies: Family Page (1 per child)

Teacher Prep: Print and photocopy the Family Page.

- GIVE each child a copy of this week’s Family Page.
- SAY: Give this page to your family when they pick you up. It will remind you to tell your family about our merciful God.
- ENCOURAGE children to practice telling you what they remember about Jonah.
- REVIEW today’s story and Key Idea as you wait for the children to get picked up.
- HELP children practice saying today’s Key Verse along with hand motions.
- REMIND children to prepare for next week’s lesson by doing The Prophets Week 2 in *My Bible Story Coloring Book* with their parents.
- REMIND each child to take home any activity sheets or craft projects and the Family Page.

FAMILY PAGE

Lesson 1: Jonah Learns a Lesson

Bible Basis: Jonah 1–4

Key Verse: Titus 3:5 (NIRV): “He saved us.”

Key Idea: God is merciful.

How to Use This Page

This week, your family can read the Bible Basis passage from your Bible to help your child remember the lesson. Use the Table Talk questions to start a discussion around the dinner table, while driving in the car, or just about anywhere. The Living Faith activity is designed to remind your child of the Bible lesson through a drama or other engaging activity. The Extra Mile idea provides interactive ways for your child to connect with the story.

Table Talk

1. What did Jonah do right?
2. What did Jonah do wrong?
3. What does mercy mean?
4. How can you show mercy to others?

Living Faith

Option 1

Take to the bathtub to act out the story of Jonah. You'll need some plastic figures, a ship (maybe a plastic food container), and a giant fish (even a washcloth will do). Narrate from the Bible or a Bible storybook as your child acts out the story. Don't forget to include the important lesson about God's mercy. Point out that Jonah had seen the people of Nineveh hurt other people. So this is why he was sad at first.

Option 2

Interview Jonah from inside the fish. Help your child crawl inside a sleeping bag or under a table draped with a blanket. Interview Jonah, asking how he got there and how he's feeling.

Extra Mile

- What other Bible stories teach repentance and mercy? Read Jesus' parable of the lost son (Luke 15). Discuss who deserved punishment, who showed mercy, and who was angry for no reason (just like in the story of Jonah!).
- How can your family show mercy? Look for an opportunity to feed the hungry, clothe the poor, or help a widow. Remind your child it doesn't matter whether a needy person deserves your help. The idea of mercy is to give even when it is not deserved.
- Look for a "teachable moment" when you can refer back to the story of Jonah. It might be a circumstance in which your child disobeys God, receives mercy, is unforgiving, or complains, "It's not fair!" Compare their situation with one from the story of Jonah to reveal a truth about our merciful God.

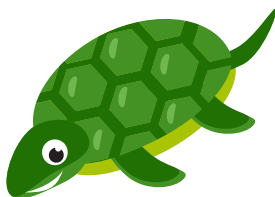
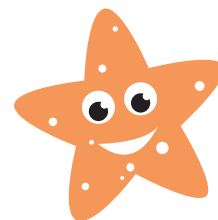
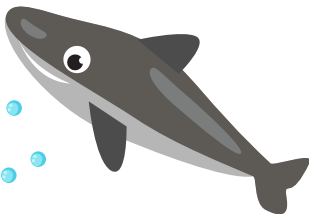
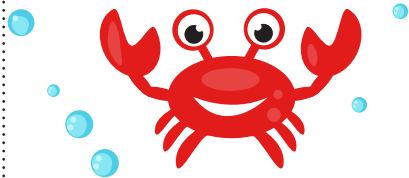
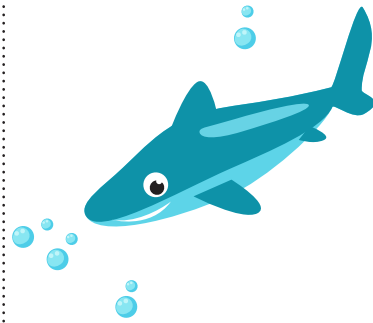
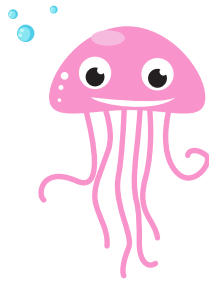
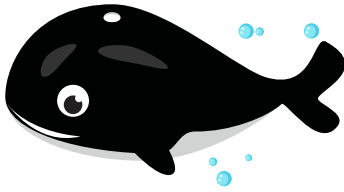
Prepare for Next Week

Help your child prepare for next week's lesson by reading *My Bible Story Coloring Book*, The Prophets Week 2 together, and encourage your child to respond with coloring.

If you are reading *The Books of the Bible*, *The Prophets* with your small group, you are discussing your questions and insights with them from week to week. Include your family in the conversation about this week's reading, using the following discussion-starters:

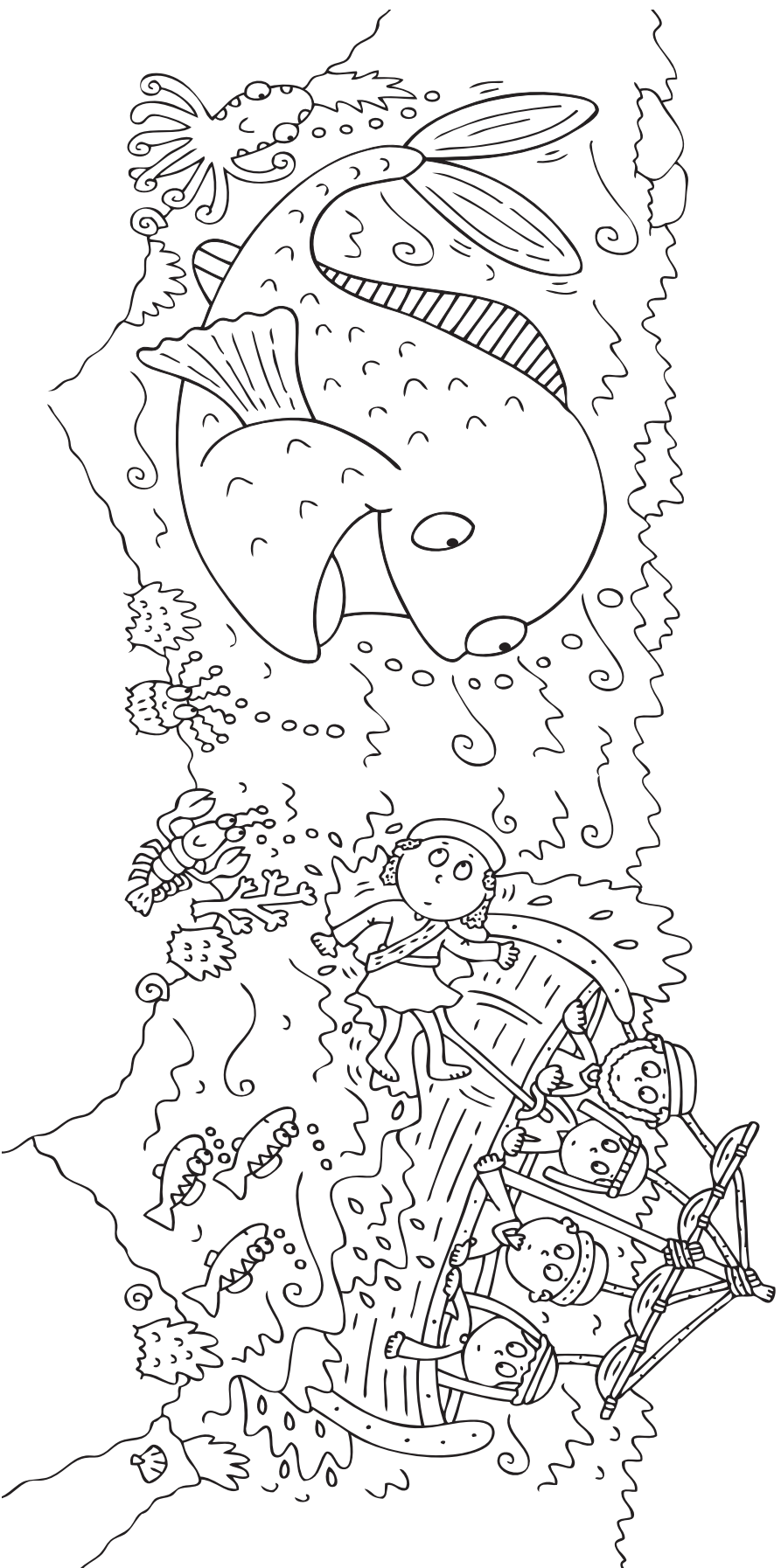
- What is this story about?
- How did [character name] love God?
- How did [character name] love others?

SEA LIFE



JONAH AND THE BIG FISH

Name _____ Date _____



SKIT: JONAH'S PLANT

Characters

Narrator

Jonah

Voice of God

Narrator: Jonah the prophet went to Nineveh to tell the people to stop sinning. The people of Nineveh listened. They felt bad about their sin and they stopped. So God did not destroy the city.

Jonah: What? That does not seem right! You should punish them! I'm really angry about this.

Narrator: So Jonah prayed to the Lord.

Jonah: Lord, I knew this would happen! That's why I tried to run away. I knew you are kind and full of love. You are a God who shows mercy to people. You don't want to destroy them. I'm so mad right now!

Narrator: The Lord answered Jonah.

Voice of God: Is it right for you to be angry?

Narrator: Jonah left the city. He sat down and put some branches over his head. He sat in their shade. He waited to see what would happen to the city.

Voice of God: I'll send a leafy plant and make it grow up over Jonah to give him more shade for his head.

Narrator: This made Jonah more comfortable. Jonah was happy he had the leafy plant. But before sunrise the next day, God sent a worm.

Voice of God: I've sent a worm to chew the plant so much that it dries up. Now I'll send a burning east wind.

Narrator: The sun beat down on Jonah's head. It made him weak. He felt awful.

Jonah: I don't even enjoy being alive.

Voice of God: Is it right for you to be angry about the

plant?

Jonah: It is. In fact, I'm so angry I wish I were dead.

Voice of God: You care about this plant. But you did not take care of it. You did not make it grow. It grew up in one night and died the next. Shouldn't I care for the great city of Nineveh more than you care for this plant? The city has many people in it.

Narrator: And so, Jonah learned a lesson of God's mercy. God saves us from our sins even though we don't deserve it.