

LESSON 69

# Jonah & Nineveh

JONAH 1 – 4



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

**GOD'S GRACE EXTENDS BEYOND ISRAEL'S BORDERS**

LESSON SNAPSHOT

**1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** Optional: water-soluble black marker or ink pad, paper, moist towelettes for cleanup, puppet

**2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 69)

**3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

**Where Is Jesus?**

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

**4. SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

**SUPPLIES:** Snack food/water

**5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5–10 MIN**

**6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN**

**Coloring Page 69**

**SUPPLIES:** markers/crayons

**Just Like Jonah**

**SUPPLIES:** sticks or drinking straws—one short and many long; masking tape

**You Can’t Run Away from God**

**SUPPLIES:** blindfold

**7. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN**

**TOTAL 60–75 MIN**

## THE LESSON

## OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION

5 MIN

In today's lesson the children will hear the story of Jonah.

Tell the children that you want volunteers who think they can hide where you cannot find them. Choose three but send them to hide one at a time.

While they go to hide, do not cover your eyes or turn away. They may complain that you are watching them, but keep encouraging them to try to find a place. If they are delaying, count to ten. Once the child settles on a spot, simply call it out or go over there directly.

Ask the class why the children had such a hard time hiding from you. (Your eyes were open the whole time and you were watching.) What can they learn from this? (If someone is watching you all the time, then you can't hide from them very well.)

Ask the children how what you did in this exercise is a lot like God working in our lives. (God sees and knows everything. We cannot hide from God.)

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

## BIBLE STORY

10 MIN

Read story 69, Jonah and Nineveh, from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

## BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION

5 MIN

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- What happened in the story?

*(God asked Jonah to bring a message to the people of Nineveh, but Jonah didn't want to and tried to run away from God. God brought a large storm upon him at sea. When the sailors threw Jonah overboard a large fish swallowed him and eventually brought him to safety. Jonah learned his lesson and obeyed God.)*

- Why didn't Jonah want to tell Nineveh God's message?  
*(Jonah didn't like Nineveh and he knew that if they listened and were sorry, God would forgive them. Jonah did not want them to be forgiven.)*
- What happened to the storm after the sailors threw Jonah overboard?  
*(The wind died down and the storm ended.)*

**SNACK QUESTIONS**

**10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- Why can't we run away from God?  
*(God is all-powerful: he can use anything to stop us; he used the sea and a great fish to stop Jonah. God is all-knowing: he always knows where we are so we cannot hide; he knew exactly where Jonah was.)*
- How can we be tempted to hide from God?  
*(When we hide things from our parents—like something we do wrong—it is like hiding from God.)*
- What is your favorite part of this story? Why?  
*(Accept any answer.)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY**

**5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. . . . . 20-30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page 69—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Where is Jonah in the picture?  
*(in the belly of a huge fish)*

## Where Is Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: Matthew 12:39–40

Jesus tells us that the three days Jonah spent in the belly of a fish was a picture foretelling the time that Jesus' crucified body would be in the grave before the resurrection.

God had a plan to rescue Jonah from his sin of disobedience. God's plan for Jonah involved three days swallowed up in a fish. Jonah found his salvation in God. In the end, Jonah was released and went on to preach repentance to Nineveh.

God has a plan to rescue us from our sin through Jesus. Jesus died on the cross for our sins and spent three days in the grave swallowed up by death. But death could not hold him and on the third day he rose again. Now the message of repentance and faith in Christ is proclaimed all over the world. The question for us is, will we trust in him?

- **What lessons did Jonah learn while he was in the belly of the fish?**  
*(He learned that God is all-powerful; God controls the sea. God is all-knowing; God knew where Jonah was. God is merciful and loving; Jonah did not drown but was rescued by the fish. Jonah also learned you can't run away from God.)*
- **What would you do if you were caught in the belly of a fish?**  
*(Elicit that one should pray.)*
- **How are we like Jonah?**  
*(We are sinners in need of a Savior. We depend on God to help us. We need to obey God.)*

## Just Like Jonah

### SUPPLIES:

- ✓ sticks or drinking straws—one short and many long
- ✓ masking tape

Reenact the story of Jonah using children for the nonhuman elements, such as the great fish or the plant that gave Jonah shade.

The first chapter of Jonah is the story of Jonah running away from God, trying to escape by ship to Tarshish. God sends a great storm that threatens the ship until Jonah is thrown overboard. Have a helper read the story while you help the children act it out.

You can create the ship with chairs or a masking tape outline on the floor. Have the children mimic the storm by leaning this way and that.

Jonah sleeps throughout the storm until the captain wakes him up. Walk them through the casting of lots (one long straw or stick for each child and one short straw or stick for Jonah). Help Jonah with his lines, and in the end, have all the children toss him out of the boat.

One child can be the fish and use his arms as jaws coming up quickly to swallow Jonah and take him away.

After you are finished with the reenactment, ask the children the following questions:

- How did acting out the story help you to learn what happened?
- What do you think it would be like to be on the ship in a storm?
- What do you think the sailors learned about Jonah's God?

*(The sailors learned that Jonah's God is alive and real and not just an idol made of clay or wood or stone. When Jonah was thrown overboard, the sea grew calm. The sailors may even have seen the fish swallow Jonah.)*

## You Can't Run Away from God

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ blindfold

The Bible describes us as being blind in our sin (John 12:40). Although we can see with our eyes, we often live sinfully in this blindness of soul. Jonah was blind to God's power when he thought he could run away from God. Keeping our sinfulness in mind, have one of the children act as Jonah who was blind in his sin. Using a blindfold to cover his or her eyes, place Jonah in the middle of the room. Use the rest of the class to represent God's presence. Have them spread out around the room. (Position some of the children in front of obstacles that Jonah might trip over or walk into.)

Tell Jonah to go preach to Nineveh and instruct him to walk away from your voice like Jonah did in running away from God. Tell Jonah that God's presence (represented by the other children) is all around him. Tell him to try to get away from God. Of course he will run into the other children. When this happens announce, "See, you cannot run away from God." Give several children a chance at playing Jonah. Each time repeat the phrase, "See, you cannot run away from God." Afterward talk about how God knows everything and can see everything we do.

**PRAY****5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

LESSON 69 - JONAH AND NINEVEH

