

"We should Obey God"

Jonah Runs from God.

Bible Story: Jonah & the Whale – Jonah 1-2

Introduction:

Bible Lesson: Jonah Runs From God

When we sin against God there will always be negative results. Sin always has consequences. God is holy and He must punish sin. God is also merciful which means He is kind and compassionate. He wants people to turn from their sin and turn to Him so they can live a life that pleases Him.

Read: Jonah 1:1-2:10

¹ The Lord spoke his word to Jonah son of Amittai: ² "Get up, go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it. I see the evil things they do."

³ But Jonah got up to run away from the Lord. He went to the city of Joppa. There he found a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish. Jonah paid for the trip and went aboard. He wanted to go to Tarshish to run away from the Lord.

⁴ But the Lord sent a great wind on the sea. This wind made the sea very rough. So the ship was in danger of breaking apart. ⁵ The sailors were afraid. Each man cried to his own god. The men began throwing the cargo into the sea. This would make the ship lighter so it would not sink.

But Jonah had gone down into the ship to lie down. He fell fast asleep. ⁶ The captain of the ship came and said, "Why are you sleeping? Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe your god will pay attention to us. Maybe he will save us!"

⁷ Then the men said to each other, "Let's throw lots to see who caused these troubles to happen to us."

So the men threw lots. The lot showed that the trouble had happened because of Jonah. ⁸ Then the men said to Jonah, "Tell us what you have done. Why has this terrible thing happened to us? What is your job? Where do you come from? What is your country? Who are your people?"

⁹ Then Jonah said to them, "I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord, the God of heaven. He is the God who made the sea and the land."

¹⁰ Then the men were very afraid. They asked Jonah, "What terrible thing did you do?" They knew Jonah was running away from the Lord because Jonah had told them.

¹¹ The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming much stronger. So the men said to Jonah, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

¹² Jonah said to them, "Pick me up, and throw me into the sea. Then it will calm down. I know it is my fault that this great storm has come on you."

¹³ Instead, the men tried to row the ship back to the land. But they could not. The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming much stronger.

Jonah's Punishment

¹⁴ So the men cried to the Lord, "Lord, please don't let us die because of taking this man's life. Please don't think we are guilty of killing an innocent man. Lord, you have caused all this to happen. You wanted it this way." ¹⁵ Then the men picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. So the sea became calm. ¹⁶ Then they began to fear the Lord very much. They offered a sacrifice to the Lord. They also made promises to him.

¹⁷ And the Lord caused a very big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

² While Jonah was in the stomach of the fish, he prayed to the Lord his God. Then the Lord spoke to the fish. And the fish spit Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

Discussion:

- Jonah is an Israelite and he has received a message from God. Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. How do you think Jonah felt about the

Ninevites? *He did not like them because they were enemies of Israel. God is a compassionate God.*

- He knew that the Assyrians were wicked and cruel. He also knew that there were over 600,000 people living in Nineveh. (Nineveh was the largest city in the world at the time Jonah lived.) If they did not turn from their sins they would be punished by God.
- Because God is compassionate He gives people a chance to turn from their wickedness so they will not suffer His punishment. ([Ezekiel 18:32](#), [2 Peter 3:9](#))
- God chose Jonah to go to the Ninevites and tell them that unless they turned from their wicked ways they would face God's punishment. If you are a follower of Jesus, *God has given you instructions to take the message of the Good News to others (Matthew 28:19-20). People need to hear that Jesus died on the cross for their sins, was buried and rose again on the third day. When people believe in Jesus they are rescued from God's punishment for their sins which is death (separated from Him for all eternity).*
- Jonah was not happy with this assignment God had given him. He did not like the Ninevites because they were Assyrians and wanted them to be punished for all the hurtful things they had done to the Israelites over the years.
- Jonah chose to disobey God's instructions and went completely in the opposite direction that he was told to go. *If Jonah would have obeyed God immediately his trip to Nineveh would only be 550 miles. Instead he went to Joppa and found a boat that was heading to Tarshish located 2500 miles away.*
- Jonah may have breathed a sigh of relief as he settled in for his long trip to Tarshish. He would be so far away from Nineveh there would be no way he would ever have to preach to them! *Jonah may have thought he could run from God but that is not possible!*

- When a person believes in Jesus as their Savior they have been adopted by God. That person now belongs to God and He is their heavenly Father. *Earthly fathers discipline their children for disobedience because they want their children to make wise choices and do what is right. Jonah belonged to God. God was His heavenly Father and He would discipline Jonah for his disobedience.*
- Re-read [Jonah 1:4-5](#). *"But the Lord sent a great wind on the sea. This wind made the sea very rough. So the ship was in danger of breaking apart. ⁵ The sailors were afraid. Each man cried to his own god. The men began throwing the cargo into the sea. This would make the ship lighter so it would not sink.*
- These sailors were minding their own business doing what they normally do by sailing from Joppa to Tarshish carrying people and packages (cargo) that were being shipped from one port to another.
- Jonah's sin of disobedience caused the sailors' lives to be endangered. They were so afraid the ship would sink they all began to cry out to the different gods they worshiped. They also began to throw cargo overboard to help the ship not sink.
- These sailors did not know the One True God and yet a man sleeping down below the deck did know Him. The captain of the ship must have been amazed not to see Jonah up on the deck praying and crying out to his god as they all feared death. See [Jonah 1:6](#).
- How many of you have had a callous (blister) on your hand? If you haven't raked before or haven't raked in a long time when you use the rake it may cause you to have blisters on your hands. The blisters hurt a bit and make your hands uncomfortable. The more you rake the tougher your hands become and where you used to get blisters you get hardened skin called a callous.

- **When we obey God our hearts are tender.** *If we sin we become uncomfortable like the blister on our hands.* That discomfort should cause us to go to God and confess to Him the sin we have done. *He forgives our sin and our hearts are still tender to His voice and instructions to us.* On the other hand, if we sin and don't confess our sins our hearts begin to become calloused and we are no longer sensitive to God's voice. **We become sleepy and insensitive to the needs of people around us and cannot serve in God's kingdom as He wants us to.**
- **Jonah's disobedience caused him to be sleepy and insensitive to the needs of those around him.** The sailors did not worship the One True God and if they were to die in that storm they would be separated from God for all eternity.
- **If we allow sin to control our hearts we will be sleepy and insensitive to those around us who are not saved and if they were to die they would be separated from God for all eternity.** *We need to have a clean heart before God so that we can be sensitive to the needs of others. God wants us to be His instruments to share the Good News with those who do not believe in Jesus.*
- The sailors wanted to know who was responsible for the danger they were in. They cast lots to find out who was responsible. Casting lots is like flipping a coin and the person who says 'heads' gets to go first. It also could be like putting names in a hat and the name that is drawn first is the person responsible. When the sailors cast lots they realized it was Jonah's fault that they were suffering this terrible storm. They asked Jonah who he was and where he came from.

- The sailors were frightened and as the storm gets worse and they ask Jonah what they should do to make the sea calm down.
- Jonah knew why these people were suffering this difficulty and he told them to throw him into the sea and everything would calm down.
- The sailors who didn't worship the One True God had more compassion for Jonah than he did for others. They didn't want to throw him overboard so they tried everything they could to try to sail back to the land. The storm only got worse. These sailors prayed to the One True God. After praying they took Jonah and threw him overboard and immediately the sea became calm. *The sailors were in awe at God's power and they offered a sacrifice to Him and made vows to Him.*
- As Jonah sinks into the sea God provides a great fish to swallow him. Jonah stays inside this fish for three days and three nights.
- Jonah prays to God asking for forgiveness for not obeying Him and promises to do what God calls him to do. Then the Lord spoke to the fish. And the fish spit Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

Our next lesson will continue in the book of Jonah so we hope you will be able to come back.

- We have seen in our lesson today how Jonah's disobedience had negative effects upon those around him. *As we go through each day let's pray for God to give us strength to be obedient to Him.*
- **Living an obedient life for God will have a positive impact on the lives of others.**

Review Questions:

1. Where did God tell Jonah to go? *(Nineveh)*
2. Why did Jonah run away from God? *(He didn't want to go to Nineveh because they were Israel's enemies)*
3. What city was Jonah sailing to? *(Tarshish)*
4. How did others suffer because of Jonah's disobedience? *(The storm was causing the ship to break apart and the sailors were afraid)*
5. What was Jonah doing while all the sailors were praying to their gods? *(Sleeping)*
6. How did the sea become calm? *(Sailors threw Jonah overboard)*
7. What did God provide for Jonah? *(A great fish)*

Final Thoughts:

We began our lesson with negative examples and their effects. Let's close our lesson with ways positive examples affect others. *(Allow students to volunteer positive things they can do.)*

- Share the Good News-people will know how they can be rescued from the punishment of sin.
- Say kind words-encourage others.
- Reach out to the person who has no friends in your class-encourage that person and also be an example to those who haven't tried to be his/her friend.)

Something to think about:

1. What person do you not want to share the Good News with because they have been very hurtful to you? *Will you pray that God will help you have compassion for that person as He does? He will enable you to love that person and give you the power to share the Good News.*
2. What actions or attitudes do you need to change so that others can see Jesus more clearly in your life?
3. If you have been disobedient and have been a bad example to others around you will you confess that sin to God? *He will forgive you and cleanse you from your sins and help you to do what is right.*

Close in Prayer:

Lord, thank you for your love and forgiveness. Help us to be followers of you and to obey your word and calling. Give us courage to share your word and love with others. In Jesus Name, Amen

Memory Verse:

"In my distress I called to the Lord, and He answered me."

Jonah 1:1-2

Videos:

Here is a video to help explain the story as well:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WOSadLyqshg>

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RlvuWMqAPTQ>

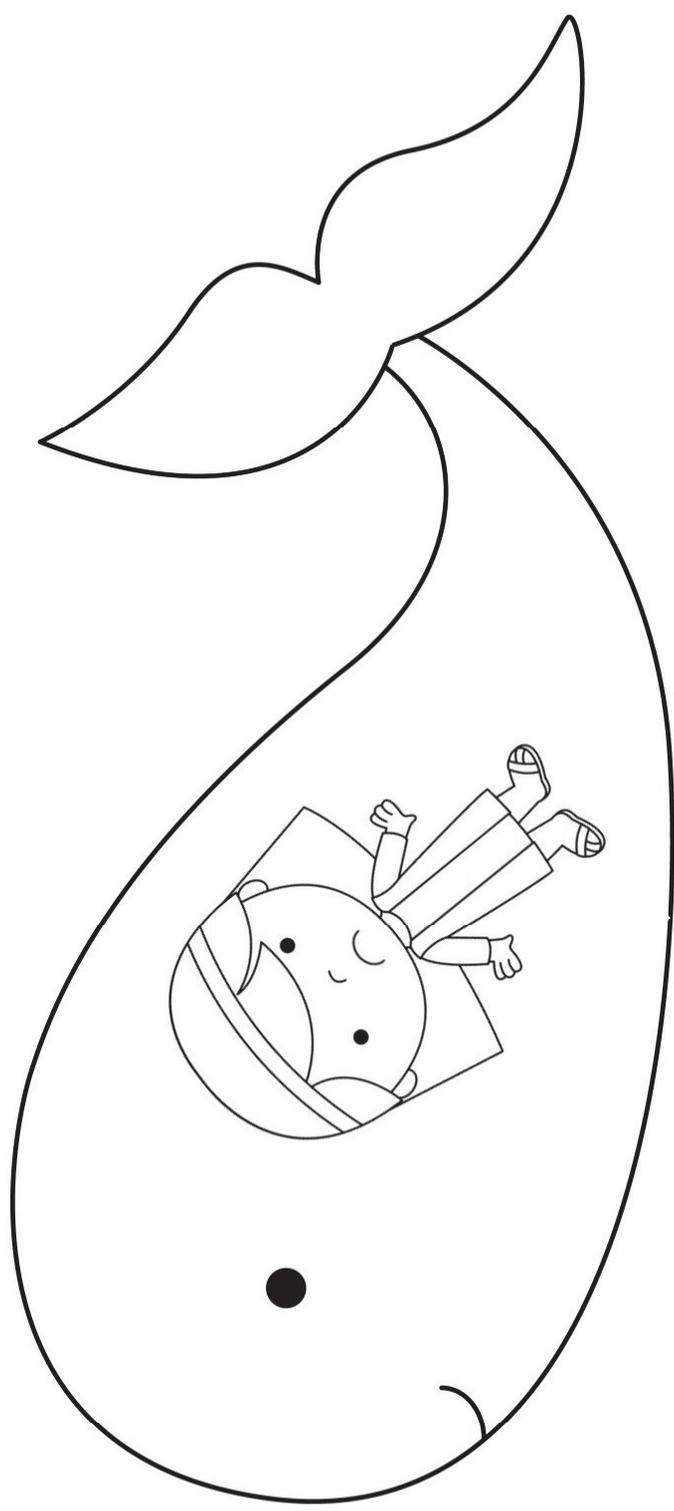
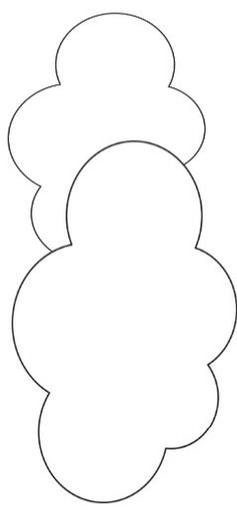
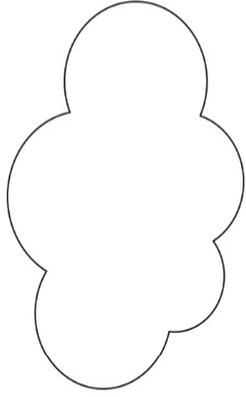
Activity Sheets:

- Jonah Memory Verse Coloring page
- Jonah WordSearch
- Jonah Coloring page

Feel free to take a picture of their art work or share how your activity went!
Post it on our Facebook page or share it on GroupMe. Have a Blessed Day &
Week! Until we can meet again

~ *Teacher Chrissy*

Thank you to <https://ministry-to-children.com/> and saddleback kids videos for their resources and helping share the gospel with all children.



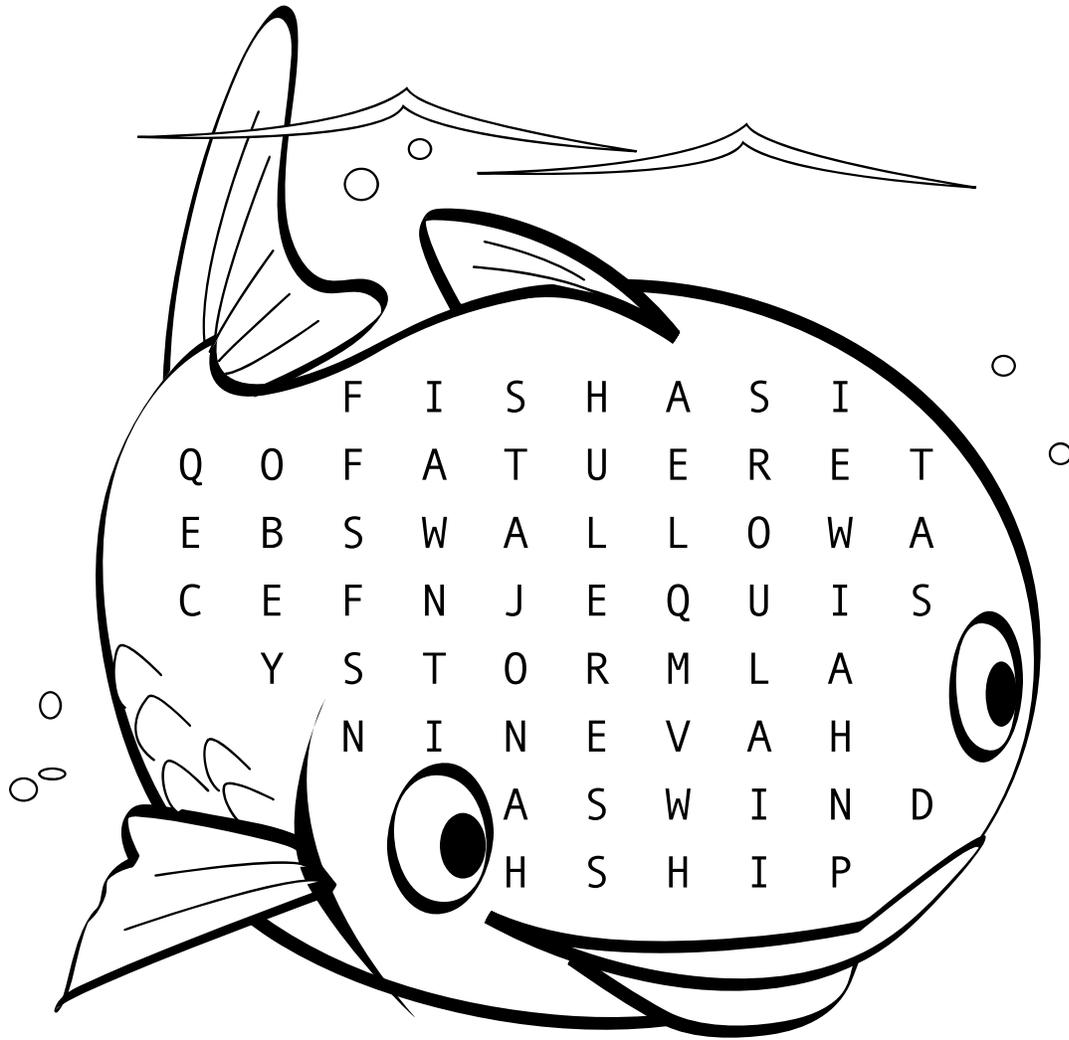
**“In my distress I called to the Lord,
and he answered me...” - Jonah 1:1-2a**

**Draw some fish, sea creatures, and seaweed to complete the picture.
Then color it.**

Jonah and the Big Fish

Word Search

Find the words on the list that are hidden in the puzzle. The words can be left to right, up and down, or diagonally.



FISH
JONAH
NINEVAH

OBEY
SEA
SHIP

STORM
SWALLOW
WIND

Jonah disobeys God.

Jonah 1—2:10

