



April 17-18, 2021 Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh

Bible Passage: Jonah 1–4

Main Point: God showed mercy to the Ninevites.

Bible Verse: Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind.

He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Joel 2:13

YOUNGER/OLDER
LARGE GROUP

 PLAY Opening Video & Countdown

 PLAY Worship Songs

Worship leaders sing two songs with the children and collect the offering.

 SAY LEADER Script: Opening

Last week we looked at the life of the prophet Hosea to learn that God loves people when they do not deserve it. God goes after sinners, just like Hosea went after his wife. This week we are going to learn about another prophet named Jonah!

Maybe you have heard this story before, but do you know how it fits into the big story of the Bible—the story of God’s plan to rescue people from sin through His Son, Jesus? If you don’t know, that’s OK because we are going to find out!

 PLAY Big Idea Video

 SAY LEADER Script: Recap *Big Idea*

K-5th Recap:

Jonah had a very important message from God, but he didn’t want to deliver it. He went the opposite direction God told him to go! Despite Jonah’s disobedience, God showed compassion and gave Jonah a second chance to obey. God sent a giant fish to change Jonah’s plans into God’s plans.

Sadly, even after Jonah had obeyed, he showed that he didn’t really understand God. You see the Ninevites were enemies of God’s people. Nineveh was an evil city, and Jonah didn’t think they deserved God’s mercy. And ... well, technically they didn’t!

Jonah was angry when God showed mercy to the Ninevites. But God made people, and He cares about them. We are all sinners who need God’s mercy, and none of us deserves it. God loves to be merciful! He showed mercy to us by sending Jesus to us while we were still His enemies. Jonah wanted to see his enemies punished, but Jesus wants to see us repent and be restored to God. Jesus died on the cross and rose again to make the way for that to happen.

Ask the following review questions:

1. Where did God tell Jonah to go? (to Nineveh, Jonah 1:2)
2. How did God stop Jonah from running away? (He sent a terrible storm, Jonah 1:4)
3. What did Jonah tell the sailors to do with him to stop the storm? (throw him into the sea, Jonah 1:12)
4. What happened to Jonah when he was thrown into the sea? (A big fish swallowed him, Jonah 1:17)
5. How long was Jonah in the fish? (three days and three nights, Jonah 1:17)
6. What happened after Jonah prayed to God from inside the fish? (The fish spit Jonah onto dry land, Jonah 2:10)
7. What message did Jonah tell the people in Nineveh? (In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed; Jonah 3:4)
8. What did the Ninevites do when they heard Jonah’s message from God? (They turned from their evil ways and repented, Jonah 3:5-9)

9. When God saw the actions of the Ninevites, what did He do? (God showed mercy to the Ninevites and did not destroy them, Jonah 3:10)
10. How did Jonah feel when God showed mercy to the Ninevites? (Jonah was angry, Jonah 4:1)
11. God used a plant to teach Jonah a lesson. What happened to the plant? (A worm attacked the plant, and the plant died; Jonah 4:7)
12. What is God like? God is slow to anger, merciful, and loving.

Now we are going to say our Bible verse together.



PLAY *Bible Verse* Video

Bible Verse: Return to the LORD your God. He is gracious. He is tender and kind. He is slow to get angry. He is full of love. Joel 2:13



SAY LEADER Script: Prayer and dismiss to small group

[Invite kids to pray before dismissing to small groups.]

Pray: God, Your Word tells us that You are compassionate, slow to anger, and full of love. We see these truths in the story of Jonah and the Ninevites. Father, help us to return to You and make You first in our lives. Show us Your mercy as we give our hearts and our lives to You. Amen.



YOUNGER
SMALL GROUP

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Welcome:

As kids arrive, ask them if they have ever been in a situation where they knew what they should do, and chose not to do it. Ask them how it turned out.

Say • Sometimes we are asked or told to do things we don't want to do but know that we should. It can be really tempting to ignore the things God wants us to do, but in the end that is always a sinful choice. And we can't run from problems either; today we will learn about a man who disobeyed God and tried to run away!

Transition to Large Group / Transition back to Small Group

Activity: Immediate Obedience

Materials Needed: None

Give the kids a command, such as "sit down," "untie your left shoe," or "clap three times." Try to watch for who is able to obey the command the fastest. Whoever is the fastest to obey will give the next command. Continue until all kids have had a chance to give a command or as time allows.

Say • When God tells us to do something, we should obey immediately. Do we always obey immediately? No! We do not! Today we will learn about a man named Jonah, who did not obey God immediately or joyfully. I can't wait to hear what happened next!

Activity: Circles of Compassion

Materials Needed: sets of 4 concentric construction paper circles (1 per kid), markers or pencils, hole punch, brass fasteners (1 per kid)

Before class, cut concentric circles of four different sizes. You will need one set of four circles for each kid. Instruct the kids to label the circles from smallest to largest: My home, My city, My country, and My world.

Guide kids to think about who in those circles might need to see God's mercy and love this week and write down a prayer. When they finish, hole punch each circle and fasten them together with a brad.



Say • Jonah was called to leave his people to warn people of another country about God's anger at their sin. The Bible tells us that Jonah did not want to go. Jonah didn't want his enemies to be forgiven! But God showed mercy to the Ninevites. God loves us and wants to forgive even the people we don't want to forgive. Use this circle booklet to help you remember to pray for people and to love them like God does.

Pray

SAY • God is loving and slow to anger. He is compassionate toward sinners. We experience God's compassion through Jesus, who obeyed God completely and yet died on the cross for our sins and rose again. Jesus obeyed God willingly instead of running away.

Pray, praising God for His compassion and mercy toward sinners. Thank Him for sending Jesus, who obeyed willingly, unlike Jonah. Ask jGod to help the kids show compassion to others as He does.