

TEXT Jonah 1,2,3

OBJECTIVE The students will be able to explain that when God asks us to do something for Him it is in our best interest to do it! We should do it or we will be sorry.

MEMORY VERSE If a man love me, he will keep my words. — John 14:23

Jonah

MEMORY VERSE IN ACTION

IF A MAN — Point to self.

LOVE ME — Cross fists over heart.

HE WILL KEEP — Cup hands, palms down, move side to side.

MY WORDS — Hold left side of extended right index finger in front of lips and rotate in small circle away from body.

John 14:23

MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

A child reading the Bible is the visual depiction of our memory verse for this week. (See pattern at the end of this lesson.) Cut apart the sections as indicated by the heavy black lines, and post the pieces on your board one at a time as the students recite that portion of the verse.

BIBLE LESSON OUTLINE

Introduction: The giant fish which swallowed Jonah has always excited the imaginations of children, and some tangible portrayal of it would be an appropriate visual opener for this lesson. Patterns are given for several possibilities. Consider a large stuffed fish, the powder puff fish, or the paper fish suggested under In-Class Activities or Preschool suggestions. Before you begin your narrative, explain to your class that today your story is about how God used a big fish to help one man learn the importance of obedience.

1. God called Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to repent, but he refused and boarded a ship to Tarshish instead.

2. God sent a storm, and when it was revealed that Jonah was the cause of the storm, he was thrown overboard and swallowed by a giant fish.

3. Jonah repented while in the whale's belly, and after three days and nights the whale vomited him out on the shore.

4. The call came again to Jonah to go to Nineveh and this time he obeyed.

Climax: Jonah sounded the warning of God in the city of Nineveh, and the whole city repented of their evil ways.

Conclusion: It would have been much better for Jonah if he would have obeyed God and gone to Nineveh when God first commanded.

Response: The students should be able to relate the drastic methods God had to use to help Jonah see the importance of obedience, and will be able to understand that if they want God's blessing on their lives they must be obedient to His call.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. According to Genesis 10:11, Ashur the son of Shem, left the land of Shinar and built the city of Nineveh and several others. He was later worshipped by the Assyrians as their chief God. The nation became very idolatrous and their wickedness came up before God.

Jonah was a prophet during the reign of Jereboam II, son of Joash, King of Israel. He was called a servant of God and made a prophecy that came to pass concerning Israel (II Kings 14:25). However, when God called him to go Nineveh and cry against that wicked city, he paid his fare to go to Tarshish, a city thought to have been in southern Spain. It would appear that he was trying to put as much distance as possible between himself and Nineveh. As a prophet, could he have foreseen the destruction of Israel by the Assyrians? In any event, God stopped him in his flight and returned him to his starting point in a rather unique manner. After this Jonah was willing to do as God bid him do.

IN-CLASS ACTIVITIES

Let the children make powder puff fish (see Patterns). You will need two powder puffs — single thickness — for each child. Cut out enough fins and tails from felt for each child. Supply buttons for eyes.

Sandpaper pictures are fun and attractive. Here is an easy procedure for your classroom. Give each child a sheet of sandpaper, some colored chalk, and a small dish of water. Have them dampen the chalk and draw on the sandpaper what they think the whale looked like.

Let your class draw a mural of the story of Jonah.

Cover a bulletin board with butcher paper. Divide the paper into about six sections (depending on the number of scenes you wish drawn). The scenes could include: God speaking to Jonah, the ship to Tarshish, the storm, the great fish, Jonah safe on land, the people repenting. Make sure the scenes are depicted in the correct order. The mural could be drawn with crayons, marking pens, chalk, or even paper cutouts. You might prefer to have each student make a small version of these scenes on 8 1/2" x 11" paper that has been divided into six sections.

Let each student make a paper sailboat and fish (see Patterns). They can use the two figures to tell the story of Jonah.

QUESTIONS

For what reason was Jonah going to Tarshish?

Why should he have gone to Nineveh?

Who caused the big wind on the sea? Why?

What was Jonah doing during the storm? What did the seamen want him to do?

What happened to Jonah? To the sea? To the ship?

Why didn't Jonah die inside the whale? What did he do while there?

How could Jonah have escaped all these problems?

Can you tell of some time when you didn't do as you were told and you got into trouble?

PRESCHOOL SUGGESTION

Give each child a copy of the whale picture (see Patterns). Let the children draw Jonah inside the whale.

For each child, make a fish with a pocket in the back to hold Jonah (see Patterns). Cut out the three pieces for the fish — front, back, and pocket. (Use quilted fabric for the front and a lighter fabric for the back and pocket.) Sew a finished hem in the pocket edge and sew on a button eye. To assemble, lay the front right side up on a table, lay the pocket right side down (so the right sides are together), then lay the back right side down on top of this. Sew on the stitching lines, leaving a four-inch opening at the bottom. Turn right side out and sew the opening shut. There will be a pocket into which you can put Jonah. For Jonah, use a small doll or sew a small gingerbread-shaped man.

Use a simple set of props (Jonah, boat, fish) made from construction paper to illustrate the story of Jonah (see

Patterns). You could also include clouds, lightning, and an arrow with the word NINEVEH on one side and TARSHISH on the other.

Make a large stuffed fish from cloth (see Patterns). Use this with a doll representing Jonah that you can put inside the fish at the appropriate time in your narrative. You may also cut strands of green and brown felt to represent seaweed, and small fish from gold or tan felt to put inside the fish.

On a large piece of construction paper draw circles to fill the page. On each one make a sad or crying face by adding simple features. Explain that this is the way the people of Nineveh felt because they didn't know about the true God.

REVIEW IDEAS

Inflate several balloons (as many as needed to complete the story). Before tying the ends insert a plastic "Jonah" figure (use only one) or a portion of the story summary (Jonah was swallowed by a big fish, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, the people repented, etc.) into the balloons. Attach the balloons to a cork board. Choose different students to toss a dart, break a balloon, and recover contents. When all balloons are broken, have those students put their parts of the story in correct order. The student with the plastic Jonah should read the story aloud.

Give this fish puzzle review. Use a blue background on an easel and make the fish puzzle from gray (see Patterns). Copy the questions listed below onto the blue background. (You might want to draw an outline of the gray pattern on the blue background as a guide for your puzzle pieces.) Space them so they will be covered when you pin the puzzle pieces in place. Pin the puzzle pieces onto the background when the children correctly answer the true/false statements. When the puzzle is together, discuss with the children why the statement that is on the fish is true.

1. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. — T
2. Jonah got on the boat going to Nineveh. — F
3. A great storm arose and scared the men. — T
4. Jonah was swallowed by a great turtle. — F
5. Jonah was inside the fish for a week. — F
6. Jonah went to Nineveh after he was out of the fish. — T
7. The people of Nineveh repented and loved God. — T

Use both the overhead projector and a student, as Jonah, to give this review (see Patterns). As you show each scene and tell the story, have Jonah go through the motions. This means you will have to show the scenes on a wall or a screen that is close to the floor.

(HINT: Use the color of transparencies suggested next to the numbers and it will add more excitement to your production.) Start with the map (No. 1 — green) of the Middle East and show where Jonah lived when God talked to him, where he was to go (Nineveh), and where he did go (Joppa — Tarshish). Next show the sea and port (No. 2 — blue) where he bought his ticket (let Jonah buy the ticket from you). Then show the ship (No. 3 — blue) (he can walk around and then lie down to sleep). Next show the storm by moving the transparency to give the feeling of a boat rocking. The next frame is of the frightened men (No. 4 — green) tossing things overboard (use small squares of paper and scatter them on the transparency to look like boxes being tossed off the ship). Then wake Jonah and throw him into the water (No. 5 — blue) (he should hold his arms above his head and wiggle as he sinks to the floor). He should show fear as he is swallowed by a great fish

(No. 6 — red). As he kneels inside the fish put some “seaweed” on him. The next scene is the shoreline (No. 7 — yellow) after he has been expelled by the fish. Last of all, show the arrow pointing to Nineveh (No. 8 — yellow). As Jonah points his finger and “preaches” add the overlay of the smiling faces to show they repented.

Build your review around the phrase “Are you a Jonah?” Mention several things the Lord might ask the students to do. After each situation, repeat the phrase, “Jonah said No. Are you a Jonah?”

SUPPORT MATERIAL

Jonah’s Journey — Game, Standard Publishing
Return of God’s People — Book, Augsburg
Jonah and the Big Fish — Palm Tree Book, Concordia
The Man Caught by a Fish — Arch Book, Concordia

MEMORY VERSE SONG



MEMORY VERSE VISUALIZED

