

Lesson 4: The Prophet Jonah

Objectives: Students will...

- 1) Learn of Jonah the prophet from the book of Jonah
- 2) Do activities to recognize that God is merciful and compassionate
- 3) Understand that God provides second chances because He loves us all and wants us to turn to Him.

Accommodations: How will I accommodate individual needs of students? See Lesson 1

Supplies:

Teacher Materials (provided in classroom)

- Bible(s)
- Markers/Pencil Crayons
- Pens/Pencils
- Attendance Chart (See Template)
- Stickers for Attendance
- Lesson Review Visual Aids – one for teacher to share at the beginning of each class
- Prophets Timeline Chart – one per student to keep in class for duration of lessons
- Prophets Timeline Chart Answer Key – one for teacher
- Jonah Activity Sheets – one set per older student
- Jonah Activity Sheets – one set per younger student if needed

Optional:

- Storybook or visuals of this story to show students
- Jonah Color Page/Visual Aid – one per student if coloring

Choose one activity below if time:

Lessons from Jonah – one for class to see and share or one per student if desired

Or

Jonah Sock Paper Bag Craft

- Paper Lunch Bag – one per student
- Black Yarn – some for each child for Jonah's hair
- White Glue – to share
- Scissors – to share
- Ruler – to share
- Wiggly Eyes – 4 per student
- Markers – to share
- New White Sock – one per student
- New Brown Sock – one per student



Snack:

- | | |
|-----------------|-----------------------|
| - Fish Crackers | some for each student |
| - Napkins | one per student |
| - Water/Cup | one per student |

Lesson:

1) Introduction to Lesson

5 minutes

As students enter, welcome them and help find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance.

*Have Bibles for those who need them and Lesson Review Visual Aid Sheet to show students.

Show the lesson review visual aid sheet.

Can anyone remember what we have studied so far? Look at each picture, name what happened for the lesson we have already studied, and what we learned from that lesson.

Lesson 1: The prophets were those that spoke the word of God. They spoke to bring the people back to God and taught about Jesus. There are many prophets in the Old Testament all are important.

Lesson 2: Elijah was cared for by God through the ravens and widow and Elijah stood up for God when he opposed the false prophets of Baal. We learned that God is the Only True God.

Lesson 3: Elisha received a double portion because of his boldness and willingness to serve God. Because of God Elisha helped a widow, stopped the Syrian army, and raised a boy from the dead. We learned that God is powerful and willing to provide.



2) Jonah

10-15 minutes

Optional: Have visual aids ready to show students

Optional: Have a blank sheet of large paper or an easel with marker and while asking questions below you can play hangman with your class. (See instructions below)

Say: **Does anyone remember who is a prophet?** A person who spoke the words of God.

What was the qualifications of a true prophet? Their prophecy would have to come true and be in line and agree with what God already commanded. (For example: if a prophet said to follow after other "gods" they were not to be listened to and in fact were to be killed.)

What if someone told you to go help someone who was really, really mean – would you want to?

Let students answer.

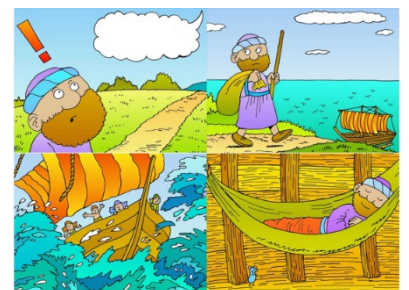
What if God tells you to go help someone who is really, really mean – would you obey and go help?

Let students answer.

Today we are going to study Jonah. Jonah lived in a time when the Assyrians were a strong power. They were mean and cruel and Jonah knew that they were going to hurt Israel because Israel was being rebellious. In fact, Hosea and Amos, who prophesied at the same time as Jonah, whom we will study next week, both told the Israelites that Assyria was going to come against the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to help them and didn't think God should either. Let's turn to the book of Jonah (which is after Obadiah and before Micah near the end of the Old Testament).

Today we will read the entire book of Jonah. It is four chapters long.

*Show visual aids as you go through each chapter.



Read Jonah 1:1-17

Jonah Rebels

What happened to Jonah? Why? He refused to obey God and tried to run away because he didn't want to help the mean Ninevites receive God's mercy because Jonah knew God is very loving and kind and willing to forgive.

What was God trying to do? Give the people of Nineveh a second chance – a chance to repent and turn away from their wicked sins.

Knowing that the people of Nineveh were wicked, Jonah naturally wouldn't want to go there to preach. Perhaps, even us today, we'd be hesitant to go to somewhere chaotic and full of wickedness to preach the Gospel. But that doesn't mean we shouldn't or that they don't deserve to hear the saving message of Jesus.

How many days and nights was Jonah in the fish? Three days and nights.

Jesus tells us that this account was true. This is not a made-up story. Jesus himself refers to Jonah in Matthew 12:39-41. The book of Jonah is factual history. Turn to Matthew 12 now. Jesus is talking to religious unbelievers who are asking for a miraculous sign from Him, even though many had already been done. Jesus tells them the sign will be when, just like Jonah was in the fish 3 days and nights, Jesus will die, be buried and raise again in 3 days and nights. That is the most wonderful sign any of us will ever need to know of – that Jesus Himself, rose from the dead just as He predicted He would.

Matthew 12:39-41

³⁹ But He answered and said to them, "An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here.

So if anyone ever says the account of Jonah is not true we can confidently say that Jesus Himself attested to Jonah's book.

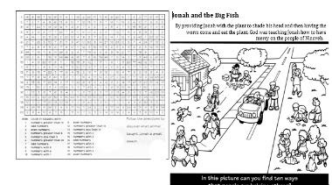
Jonah 2:1-10 Jonah's Prayer

What did Jonah pray for? Declared that God is merciful and helped in Jonah's time of need, even though he was rebelling from God, just like the Ninevites were! Jonah was thankful that God saved him from drowning.

3) Activity Sheet

10 minutes

Hand out one activity sheet to each student along with pencils. Let students do the first activity only. Read directions aloud and help students as needed. Then put aside and continue the lesson. They will finish the remaining activities at the end of the reading the book of Jonah.



Jonah 3:1-10 Jonah Obeys

*Show students visual aids if able

Was Jonah successful in trying to run away from God? No!

What did Jonah have to do? Do what God originally said – go preach to Nineveh.

What do you think is the result for us when we try and ignore, disobey or run from God? Let students answer. Bottom line: it doesn't work!

When the Ninevites heard Jonah's message what was the result? Everyone repented and turned to God for mercy.

The book of Jonah answers the question, 'How do you neutralize an enemy world power?' The answer: Evangelize that nation with the truth of God." – Richard Rogers

What can we learn from this?

- 1) That while our love for others fail, God's compassion knows no ends
- 2) That there's no point in striving to achieve something that isn't God's will

Based on what happened to Jonah's life, we can simply conclude that there's no point in trying to run away from God, from running away from His purposes, and in trying to achieve our own will and not His. If anything, it will just have negative effects on us and the people around us!

Nineveh was given forty days to repent. As a result, the nation was spared destruction for about a century and a half (150 years). Later, however, when Assyria degenerated again, it was destroyed and the prophet, Nahum, foretold it. Nineveh fell to the Babylonians in 612 B.C.

Jonah 4:1-11 God's Powerful Compassion

Why was Jonah mad? Because he didn't want God to be kind to the Ninevites and he was also mad that the plant God provided died.

Who was Jonah showing more concern for? The plant or the people? The plant.

Was Jonah being selfish? Yes.

What can we learn from this? Let students answer. Accept reasonable responses.

What does this show us about the wonderful nature of God? He is loving and compassionate and willing to give second chances to those who repent and turn back to Him.

Unlike Jonah, God, had compassion on the people of Nineveh. Not only was he concerned about the people, but about their children who did not know about the evil they were being raised in, or the innocent livestock that would suffer if Nineveh suffered because of drought, famine, etc. This is shown beautifully in Jonah 4:11.

"And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock?" (Jonah 4:11)

So if anyone says God is mean from the Old Testament. We can show them this verse to prove that God loved even wicked people who were doing wrong and God never wants to be mean to people but to be loving and kind toward them. But if they refuse to obey, He will punish them for their wickedness. God is and never will be mean or wicked. But He is just and fair.

We also learn that God's compassion easily surpasses our love for others.

Although the prophet's brief declaration to Nineveh was one of judgement, nonetheless, Jonah was aware of the fact that Jehovah is a "gracious God, and merciful, slow to anger, and abundant in loving kindness" (Jonah 4:2).

So when the Ninevites were responsive to his message, Jonah knew that Heaven would certainly spare them. And Jonah did not want that.

Let's remember to ask God for help and boldness to serve Him every day even when it is difficult and even when we don't think the person we are helping deserves it. Let's remember that we all sin and all need the love of God and His mercy. We all need a second chance.

Optional Hangman

We're going to play hangman. I am going to draw a gallows (see right for image). I am going to ask you questions. Raise your hand, if you think you know the answer. If you get the question right, I don't draw any part of the hangman, but if you don't get the question right, I will draw a part of the hangman. If I draw the head, body, arms and legs I win, but if you can answer all the questions before I do, you win!

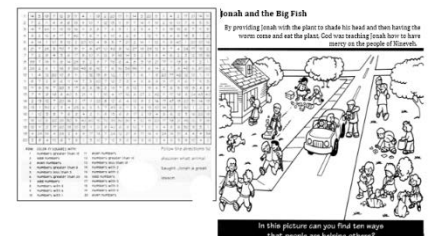


4) Activity Sheet

Give back activity sheet to each student along with pencils and crayons to color as well.

20-25 minutes

Read directions aloud and help students as needed. Check answers to questions asked and discuss as a group if able.



5) Optional: Lessons from the Book of Jonah

Hand out one sheet per student along with crayons. As a class try and figure out what each lesson to learn is saying. Then discuss how the point relates to the story. When finished, if time you can let students color the page.

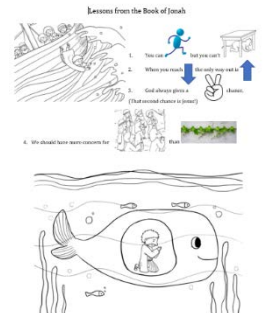
5-10 minutes

Lesson 1. You can run but you can't hide: Jonah, even though a prophet, tried to run away from God. But as his story proves – no one can run from God.

Lesson 2. When you reach bottom, the only way out is up: Jonah once thrown in the sea realized the need to turn to God, repent, and was thankful for God's mercy and recognized his need to rely on God's forgiving nature. This is what the Ninevites did as well for which Jonah was upset about. Jonah enjoyed God's mercy but not want to share God's mercy with those Jonah thought were to evil to receive it.

Lesson 3. God always gives a second chance. (That second chance is Jesus!): We all sin and need forgiveness, those who turn to Jesus, believe, repent, confess and are baptized and remain faithful to Jesus receive that second chance! Jonah and the Ninevites both were blessed with a second chance when they realized their sins and repented of it.

Lesson 4. We should have more concern for people than vines/plants: Jonah was more concerned for his comfort and the plant that brought it, than for the lost souls of Nineveh, especially the young who did not yet know right from wrong and for the livestock. God again was showing Jonah that his behavior was hypocritical. He wanted all the benefits that God provided for him, but he did not want God to care for others whom Jonah considered “enemies”.



What lesson did you learn from the life of Jonah?

Go around room and ask students to respond. While doing that, if time, allow students to color the pictures and ask students what they thought of Jonah, his behavior, choices, reactions and God's compassion on both Jonah and the Ninevites while they do.

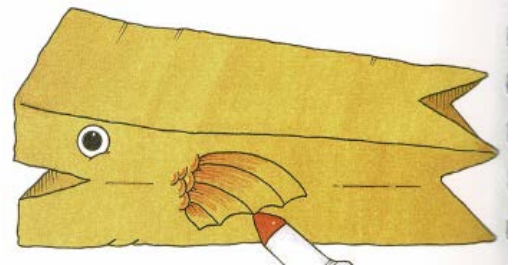
6) Optional: Jonah in the Fish Puppet Craft

15-20 minutes

*Have materials ready before class. Show visuals below to help students visual the finished craft.

To Make Fish

- Hand out one lunch bag and scissors to each student.
- Have them cut a triangle out of the open end to form a tail.
- Cut an opening across the bottom of the bag approximately 1 inch or 2.5 cm up each side to make the open mouth of fish. (See image)
- Hand out markers to make fins and scales.
- Hand out two googly eyes to each student with white glue to place on either side of the bottom of the bag. (See image)



To Make Jonah

- Take brown sock and cut out 2-inch (5cm) circle out of the top of the toe.
- Put the white sock inside the brown sock so the white shows as a face of Jonah and the brown is his clothing.
- Cut bits of black yarn and glue them on for hair and the beard. Glue on two wiggly eyes or draw on with a marker.
- Put the Jonah puppet on your hand and arm. You can cut the bottom of the socks if they are too long and go too far up your arm.
- To use the puppet, first put Jonah on your hand, then put your hand in through the back of the fish so that Jonah peeks out of the mouth. As shown in picture.



Discuss questions if able while making this craft. Have students help clean up before moving on.

7) Prophets Timeline

5 minutes

Hand out one sheet to each student. You will gather them up again for later use. Read through the top part of the sheet showing the prophets studied so far and in which phase of history.

Ask them:

What did we learn last time about Elisha? See Teacher Answer Key

What can we fill in under Jonah for major events? See Teacher

Answer Key

What did we see in today's lesson about the power of God? See Teacher Answer Key

Prophets

Prophets who spoke during times of the divided kingdom and what area

*Times and order are based on Scriptural estimates and events

Divided Kingdom	Fall of Israel	Fall of Judah	Babylonian Captivity	Raised by Governors
Isaiah	Jeremiah	Ezekiel	Daniel	Haggai
Amos	Jonah	Zechariah	Malachi	
Joel				
Obadiah				
Jonah				
Amos				
Isaiah				
Jeremiah				
Ezekiel				
Daniel				
Haggai				
Zechariah				
Malachi				

Prophet	King/Ruler	Chronological	Relative Rank in List Order
Isaiah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	1	1
Jeremiah	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	2	2
Ezekiel	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	3	3
Daniel	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	4	4
Haggai	Darius	5	5
Zechariah	Darius	6	6
Malachi	Darius	7	7
Jonah	Asshurbanipal	8	8
Amos	Jeroboam II	9	9
Isaiah	Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah	10	10
Jeremiah	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	11	11
Ezekiel	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	12	12
Daniel	Jehoiakim, Jehonadab, Zedekiah	13	13
Haggai	Darius	14	14
Zechariah	Darius	15	15
Malachi	Darius	16	16

God is loving and compassionate. He is merciful and forgiving and cares deeply for everyone. Including each and every one of you! We need to be loving and compassionate to others too. Even our enemies and even when it is hard to do. We all sin, so we all need God's mercy and guidance. God is willing to forgive us, so we need to be willing to forgive others.

Who are the next two prophets on our list? Amos and Hosea. We will study them together next time. Help students fill in or draw correct events they remember of today's account. Put sheets away and keep for next week.

8) Learning from the Time of the Prophets

5 minutes

Say: **What did we learn today?** Let students answer.

What do you think this story teaches us about God's power? God is all-powerful. He was able to rescue Jonah from being thrown into the sea by providing a large fish. He was willing and able to provide the Assyrians with a way to repent of their sins and turn to Him. He is able to affect the weather in that He made a plant grow, a worm eat it, and the sun to be scorching hot at His command.

What was Jonah's problem? He didn't want the evil Assyrians to be forgiven.

What can we learn from this today? Do we have a right to not share the good news of Jesus to those we think don't deserve it? No

What is our responsibility? To be kind to all, reach out to everyone and let God determine the outcome of someone's sins. We don't have the authority or right to condemn people – only Jesus does. **Jonah told the people of Nineveh to save themselves from God's wrath by recognizing they need God and to repent for their sins. Who can you thank for helping you learn about God. His love, mercy and the need to obey Jesus to be saved? This week or today, write a thank you card or a letter to them for all they've done in showing you the love and need for Jesus.**

Optional questions to ask:

What did you like best about today's Bible reading?

What questions do you have about today's lesson?

I encourage you to read the book of Amos at home this week which will prepare you for the next prophets we will learn about.

9) Learning the Prophets Through Song

5-10 minutes

This quarter we are going to study many prophets. We are going to look specifically at prophets who spoke from the time of the divided kingdom in 1 Kings all the way to Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament.

We are going to memorize the books of the prophets. Remember there are what are called the "Major" and "Minor" prophets. The only difference between these two categories is that the Major prophets had longer books, not that they were any more important than the prophets who wrote smaller books.

Go to the front of your Bible and find the Table of Contents. You will see a long list of books of the Bible in the Old Testament. Remember that the order in the Bible is not necessarily the order in which the prophets lived and worked. But to make it easy for us, we will learn the books in the order listed in the Bible.

Sing the Old Testament books to the tune of the Alphabet song. “Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers” (A,B,C,D,E,F,G)... you will have to repeat the alphabet tune twice to get through all the books.

When you get to Song of Solomon, that is when the alphabet tune starts again, that is where you will start each week, even though Song of Solomon is not a prophet book.

Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi.

Repeat this section 2 times each week as a way to practice learning. Encourage students to practice at home as well. You may even decide to offer a prize or praise for each student who can recite all the books of the prophets from memory as you go through the quarter.

Point out to students that Lamentations is a book of sadness that Jeremiah wrote concerning the fall of Jerusalem. All the other names after the book Song of Solomon, are a name of one of the prophets we will be looking at this quarter.

10)	Optional: Memory Verse	2-5 minutes
------------	-------------------------------	--------------------

For this quarter, each week have the students go to **Hebrews 1:1-2** in their Bibles and read the verse allowed as a class 2 times. Other options include:

- You saying a word and having them repeat it as you go through the verse
- Have students repeat a small phrase ex: “God, who at various times” a few times before working on the next phrase.
- Have students repeat after each other
- Ask students to think of hand gestures. Ex: Point up when you say “GOD”, point to their mouths when they say “SPOKE”, etc. and then go through verses as a class with gestures.

Hebrews 1:1-2

God, who at various times and in various ways spoke in time past to the fathers by the prophets, ² has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds.

11)	Optional – Snack: Fish Crackers	5 minutes
------------	--	------------------

Ensure you check for allergies first. Hand out a few pieces to each student and say, **What does this snack remind of us?** Jonah being swallowed by a fish and being protected until the fish could return him to land. **Why was Jonah in the fish?** Because he disobeyed God and tried to run away. **Can we run away from God?** No. **How should we handle situations when God asks us to do something we don’t want to?** Go to Him in prayer, study His word to get assurance that it is the right thing to do. Pray for boldness, courage, etc. to do God’s will even though it is hard or means we will have to show mercy and forgive others, etc.

Let’s remember to ask God for help and boldness to serve Him every day even when it is difficult and even when we don’t think the person we are helping deserves it. Let’s remember that we all sin and all need the love of God and His mercy. We all need a second chance.

Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands if needed. Review with students by asking them questions from the lesson again and discuss any questions they have while snacking. What did they like best about today’s Bible reading? What questions do they have about today’s lesson? How was God’s power shown?

12) Close in prayer

*If desired, ask the children if they have any prayer requests and write them down to help you remember. Then ask all children to bow their heads and fold their hands to pray.

Thank You Lord for all You provide us. Thank You for Your Son who has given us Your complete Word and will through the Bible. Forgive us when we sin and help us to learn Your words by looking in the Bible. Help us to take the time to devote and dedicate our lives to You, as the prophets did, eager to share Your word with others, for You are worthy, good, awesome and loving towards us. Help us be merciful and forgiving as You are. Thank you for providing second chances. Give us wisdom Lord so we can serve others and You, even now at our young age. Pray for those who could not be here today, and pray for those here who have special issues in their life. Be with them, guide, comfort, and bless them. In Jesus' name, amen.