



# JONAH PRAYER IN THE DEEP

JONAH 2:1-10

## GOAL

- ▶ To teach children that, even when we disobey God, He still loves us and hears and answers our prayers.

## WORDS TO KNOW

- ▶ **False Idols:** statues made of different materials that were thought to represent different gods. These gods had no power except to distract people from the one true God.

## MEMORY VERSES

- ▶ **Jonah 2:2:** I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me.
- ▶ **Philippians 4:6:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.



## OVERVIEW



**Read Jonah 2:1-10:** After Jonah was swallowed by the giant fish, he prayed to God. He thanked Him for saving him from drowning. He recognized that people who worship false idols do not know or understand the steadfast love of the Lord. He vowed to complete the mission God had sent him on to Nineveh. God spoke to the fish, and it spit out Jonah onto the dry land.

## SUGGESTIONS



- Prayer is a time to confess our sins. Jonah knew he had disobeyed God. He knew exactly why he was sitting in the belly of a giant fish. While he was in there, he used his time to pray.
- Prayer is a time to repeat the promises of God. Jonah knew that God loved him and that he would save him from the scary situation he was in.
- Prayer is a time to remember that God hears us and answers our prayers. Jonah started his prayer saying that he had been banished from God's view because of his sin, but he prayed anyway because he knew that God was his only hope.



## PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY



**Ages 5-7 Musical Prayers | Supplies:** chairs; tape; pictures or words describing things and people that we should pray for, such as soldiers, sick people, family, the church, and those in need; something to play music.

Set up enough chairs so that all but one student in the class can have a seat. On the back of the chairs, tape the pictures or words. Play Musical Chairs. When the music stops, the student who didn't get a seat should choose the chair to pull out for the next round and offer up a prayer for the word or person on the back. Continue until only one student has a chair.

**Ages 5-10 Getting in Touch with God | Supplies:** popcorn

Divide the class into two groups. Have each group line up on opposite sides of the room, about 10 feet apart, and face each other. Give each student on one side of the room a piece of popcorn. On "Go!" students should try to throw the piece of popcorn to the person directly across from them. Pairs that catch the popcorn should take one step toward each other. Continue until all pairs are standing close enough to hand the piece of popcorn back and forth.

This game reminds us that when we "toss" up prayers to God, he "catches" them, and we become closer to God.

**Ages 8-10 Tangled Seaweed | Supplies:** green rope

Cut lengths of rope for the number of teams in which the class will be divided. Tie the ropes in knots that will not be easy to untie.

On "Go!" each team will send one member of the team to try to untie the knot. Each team member will get 30 seconds, and then the next team member in line will get a chance. Continue until all members of the team get a chance to untie the knot or a team successfully unties their knot.

This will remind students of how Jonah was wrapped up in seaweed while he was sinking in the sea.



## MEMORY VERSE MEANING



**Jonah 2:2:** Like Jonah, when we are in trouble, we can call out to God for help, and He will answer.

**Philippians 4:6:** We should bring everything to God so we can praise Him for the good and ask for help to get through the bad.

.....

## POST-LESSON ACTIVITY



**Ages 5-7 In and Out of the Fish | Supplies:** blue plastic cups, hole punch, googly eyes, string, cardboard

Give each student a small piece of cardboard that will easily fit in the cup and punch a hole at one end of it. Tell the students to draw Jonah on the piece of cardboard and decorate it however they want. Give each student a plastic cup, two googly eyes, and a piece of string. Place the googly eyes on opposite sides of the cup near the top. Punch a hole at the top of the cup and tie the string through the hole in the cup and through the hole in the piece of cardboard. Tell students to swing the piece of cardboard to try to get it into the cup. Once they get Jonah in the whale they can toss him back out by swinging the cup.

**Ages 5-10 Big Fish, Little Belly | Supplies:** newspaper

Divide the class into teams of four. Give each team a sheet of newspaper and have them place it unfolded on the floor. All team members must stand on the newspaper without touching the floor, walls, or surrounding objects. Teams that can do this for one minute progress to the next stage. Next have the teams fold their newspapers in half. The last team still standing on the newspaper wins.

This game is to remind students that while the fish was big, Jonah probably wasn't comfortable or walking around while he was in its belly.



**Ages 8-10** Telephone | **Supplies:** notecards

Write down verses about prayer on the notecards before class. Have the students sit in a circle. Ask one student to pick one of the notecards and read it. He or she should whisper what was written on the card to the person on his or her left. Continue until the phrase reaches the student to the right of the student who started the game. The last student to hear the message should say it out loud. The student who started that round should tell the class what the original message was. Have the student to the left of the first student choose one of the notecards and continue until all students have had a chance to start and end the game or until the class needs to move on.

This game will remind students that God hears our prayers and understands what we mean, even when we don't know how to say it right.

TAKE  
HOME



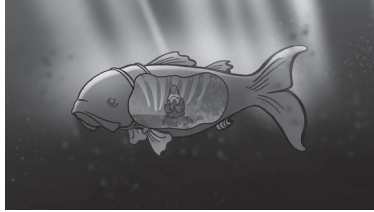
- **Prayer is a time to confess our sins.** God sees everything. There is no point in trying to hide our sins from Him. Confessing our sins gives us a chance to say we're sorry and ask for God's help to not repeat our mistakes.
- **Prayer is a time to repeat the promises of God.** Because God loves us, He has promised us many things, and these promises will encourage us through hard times.
- **Prayer is a time to remember that God hears us and answers our prayers.** Prayer is a chance to connect with God and to remind ourselves that God has the power to help us through anything.





## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 1



**Q1a:** What did Jonah do while he was in the belly of the fish?

**A1:** Jonah prayed while he was in the belly of the fish.

**Q1b:** Do you have a regular time or special place to pray?

**TN:** Let the students answer. It's OK if we don't plan our prayer time or have a special place where we like to pray, as long as we remember to pray. Prayer is a special conversation between us and God. It keeps us connected to what really matters in life so that when we are faced with challenges, we know who to turn to and that our God can handle anything!

### SLIDE 2



**Q2a:** What did Jonah say he would look toward?

**A2:** Jonah said he would look toward God and His holy temple.

**Q2b:** Are you a good swimmer?

**TN:** Let the students answer. No matter how good we are at swimming, there would have been no way we would have been able to swim through the storm Jonah describes. Getting hit with wave after wave would be too exhausting! Jonah knew that, even though he had sinned and disobeyed God, the Lord was his only salvation from this situation.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 3



**Q3a:** What wrapped around Jonah's head?

**A3:** Seaweed wrapped around Jonah's head.

**Q3b:** Have you ever prayed for God to help you?

**TN:** Let the students answer and give examples. Ask them how God answered their prayers. If they aren't sure that God did answer their prayer, ask them how the problem/situation was resolved, and try to help them see God in the solution.

### SLIDE 4



**Q4a:** Just when Jonah thought he was going to die, what happened?

**A4:** Jonah remembered the Lord just when he thought he was going to die.

**Q4b:** Have you ever studied really hard for a test only to forget everything while taking it?

**TN:** Let the students answer. This is so frustrating! We know that all the answers are somewhere in our heads, but we just can't find the answers in there! Jonah was in a tense situation. He thought he was going to drown. He was in trouble and probably panicking. The answer to his problem was always God, but sometimes we focus on the problem and forget the solution. When we start to feel helpless, we should always turn to God. There's nothing He can't help us with!



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 5



**Q5a:** People who worship false idols don't know what?

**A5:** People who worship false idols don't know the Lord's steadfast love.

**Q5b:** Have you ever adopted a dog or a cat?

**TN:** Let the students answer. Stray dogs and cats may never have had families that love them. Sometimes, it takes them awhile to understand and not be scared of their new families. It's sad to think that they've never felt loved. While in the belly of the fish, Jonah had one hope: the Lord. He realized how sad it must be for people to think that no one loves them, but Jonah knew that wasn't true! The Lord loves everyone, and he wanted to tell them that—even the people in Nineveh!

### SLIDE 6



**Q6a:** What did Jonah understand?

**A6:** He understood God's mission and why it was important for him to warn the people of Nineveh.

**Q6b:** Have you ever figured out something you thought you would never understand?

**TN:** Let the students answer and give examples. Finally understanding difficult things is one of the greatest feelings in the world! Jonah absolutely could not understand why God would want to send him to such a terrible place filled with horrible people who did not love or worship God. It took Jonah getting swallowed by a fish to finally understand that that was the whole point! They didn't love or worship God, and someone needed to tell them that they needed to change their ways. Like in cartoons, it was like a light bulb turned on over Jonah's head! He finally got it!





## QUESTION & ANSWER

### SLIDE 7



**Q7a:** What did the fish do after God spoke to it?

**A7:** The fish spit out Jonah on the dry land.

**Q7b:** Who do you trust the most?



**TN:** Let students answer. Maybe we trust our parents, our siblings, or our friends. These people may all be very trustworthy, but God can be trusted above all others. Living life in this world caused Jonah to doubt God and His power and intentions for himself and others. This experience in the whale helped Jonah to see that God

has a purpose for us all, it is good, and God is powerful enough to help us through life. He had to go through some pretty extreme experiences to regain his trust in God, but in the end, it was effective.



## QUESTION & ANSWER

### MEMORY VERSES



**Jonah 2:2:** I called out to the Lord, out of my distress, and he answered me.

**Philippians 4:6:** Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known to God.

.....

### BIG IDEA



God hears and answers our prayers!

.....

### CLOSING PRAYER

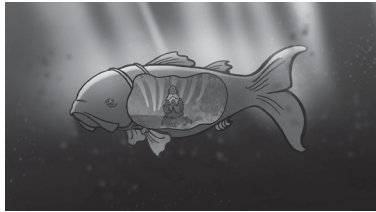


Dear Lord, thank You for hearing and answering our prayers. Please help us to keep our connection strong and to help us to always choose You. We ask these things in Jesus's name, Amen.



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 1



Jonah's efforts to avoid going to the dangerous city of Nineveh led to him being swallowed alive by a giant fish. Clearly, Jonah's attempt to avoid scary situations had not gone according to plan. Now alone in the belly of a fish, powerless to do anything to save himself, he did the only thing he could: pray.

### SLIDE 2



Jonah called out to the Lord, saying, "You threw me into the deep, dark waters of the sea, where all your waves and breakers crashed against me. It seems that I have been driven away from your sight, but I will look toward you and your holy temple again."

### SLIDE 3



Jonah continued his prayer, saying, "As the surface rose higher and higher, seaweed wrapped around my head, dragging me down deeper and deeper until I thought I would sink into the earth where I would stay forever."

### SLIDE 4



"Just when I was sure that my life was about to meet a watery end, I remembered you, Lord," Jonah said. "My prayer came to you, into your holy temple, and you brought up my life from the pit, oh Lord my God."



## LESSON TRANSCRIPT

### SLIDE 5



Even though Jonah had disobeyed God, He had saved him from drowning. While Jonah knew that he wasn't completely out of danger, he was alive. Jonah thought, "People who worship false idols don't know the steadfast love of the Lord." Such people don't know what they are missing – people like those who live in Nineveh.

### SLIDE 6



Suddenly, Jonah understood the mission God had sent him on and why it was important for him to take God's warning to them. Jonah said, "With a voice of thanksgiving, I will do what I have promised to do. Salvation belongs to the Lord!"

### SLIDE 7



And the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spit out Jonah onto the dry land. A grateful Jonah was now ready to carry out his mission for God. Jonah was bound for Nineveh with purpose in his heart and a renewed trust in God.

