

Animated: Elementary & Preteen

Week 2: Online

BIG IDEA

God loves me even when I feel ashamed.

BIBLE

Jonah Swallowed by a Fish: Jonah 1:17–2:10; 1 Timothy 1:12–17

SCRIPTURE | Jonah 1:17–2:10 (Jonah Swallowed by a Fish)

- **What's your favorite thing about animated movies or cartoons?** My favorite thing is how exaggerated everything is. When someone is sad, they don't just cry — they gush out a fountain of water! When someone is in love, their heart literally pops out of their chest! It makes us feel the feelings in a major way. For example, tell me how you feel after watching this clip.
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** Show [this clip](#) from "Despicable Me." For more information on how to legally use copyrighted material for educational purposes, [read this!](#)
 - **PRETEEN HACK:** Invite some of your preteens to sketch images from each part of the story on a dry erase board or large piece of paper as you narrate. Then, select other preteens to retell the story using images as a guide. Here's a [video](#) to help with sketch noting.
- The woman in this clip was trying to make the girls feel ashamed when they really didn't need to feel that way at all. She was hoping that shame would make the girls sell more cookies.
- Even though Margot, Edith, and Agnes had no reason to feel ashamed, there are times in our lives when we do, right? Feeling ashamed is pretty normal, especially when we know we did something very wrong. But the good news is, we don't have to hide our face in shame — or go in a shame box — because God doesn't want us to!
- That reminds me of a story from the Bible about a guy named Jonah.
- Jonah had some very animated feelings. Remember, that means he had some really ginormous feelings! Jonah was a prophet, but he wasn't thrilled about something God told him to do.
 - God told Jonah to go to a place called Nineveh — the people there were doing bad stuff and God wanted Jonah to tell them to stop and turn to God instead.
 - But Jonah didn't want to do it. He didn't think they were very nice people and a part of him didn't think they deserved a second chance.
 - So, Jonah ran the other way. He boarded a boat hoping to get away from God. Like that's possible!
- But then, while Jonah was on the boat, the boat got hit by a big storm. Everyone on the boat wondered why this was happening, but Jonah knew.
 - He knew it was because he disobeyed God. Jonah realized that trying to run from God was a really bad idea and he felt ashamed for the choices he made.
 - Jonah told everyone on the boat what he did and that the storm was his fault. Then, he told everyone on the boat to throw him overboard into the stormy sea!
 - They wouldn't do it, but the storm got worse and worse. So, even though they didn't want to throw Jonah overboard, it was the only thing left to try. And the moment they threw Jonah into the water, the storm stopped!
- But God wasn't done with Jonah. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. And there, inside this big, stinky fish and full of shame, Jonah prayed. And this is what he said . . .
 - *[Read Jonah 1:17-2:09.]*
 - In his prayer, Jonah said thank you to God for saving him and promised he would tell others about how good God was.
 - Jonah wanted another chance and he got one. And when God gave the signal, the big

fish spat Jonah up on a beach.

- Instead of just sitting there covered in fish spit and shame, Jonah got up and headed to Nineveh, where he unashamedly told the people about their mistakes and how God would forgive them if they prayed and changed their ways. And the people of Nineveh did just that . . . all because of Jonah's message!

BIG IDEA | God loves me even when I feel ashamed.

- Let's all say the Big Idea together: **God loves me even when I feel ashamed.**

VIDEO | Animated, Episode 2

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Play this week's episode of [Grow TV](#).*

SCRIPTURE | 1 Timothy 1:12-17

- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17.*
- **Do any words or phrases stick out to you?**
- Paul, who wrote this, called himself the "worst of sinners," which seems like a statement full of shame. But then, in the very next verse, Paul said that it was for that very reason he was shown mercy.
 - Paul had good reasons to feel ashamed. Before he knew Jesus, Paul would hunt down and capture people who believed in Jesus. But after he came to know God himself, Paul turned his life around and started doing the very thing he used to arrest people for.
 - Paul understood that feeling shame about his mistakes — which were huge, by the way — would be missing the point. The point is God still loved him and sent Jesus for him and for everyone. God forgave the things Paul did in the past and gave him the chance to do things for God. That's mercy!
- **What are some things we can do when we feel shame to help us feel unashamed? Who is someone you can think of you can go to when you feel shame?** *[Give kids time to think about these questions. If they're having a hard time coming up with ideas, suggest talking to a parent, friend, or small group leader.]*
- That's a great list of people you can each go to! And remember, you can always go to God!

REFLECTION | Shame and Sorries

- We all feel shame sometimes — even Paul felt shame — because shame isn't a completely useless emotion.
- Feeling distress or pain when we did something wrong helps us to not make the same mistakes again. We learn from that experience and it helps us grow.
- The feeling of shame can even help us think about the people we may have hurt. That's why we probably feel ashamed in the first place — because someone felt disappointed or

upset as a result of our actions.

- **Who is someone you might need to reach out to and let them know you're sorry?**
- **INSTRUCTIONS:** *Pass out index cards and something to write with to the kids and encourage them to write a simple apology note. You don't have to collect these but the practice of writing these should help kids form words when the situation calls for it. For younger kids, give them a simple prompt they can use to fill out their cards, such as "Dear _____, I'm sorry for _____. I hope you accept my apology."*
- Instead of sitting with shame, we can allow that experience to teach us something and help us make better choices in the future, especially when it comes to how our choices affect others.
- And just like these people will no doubt forgive you and still love you, you should feel even better knowing God will always love you.
- Let's say this truth together: **God loves me even when I feel ashamed.**

MEMORY VERSE | Romans 15:13a (NIV)

- **"May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him."**

PRAYER

- God, we thank you for removing our shame. Please help us remember we're forgiven and that you love us even when we feel ashamed. Help us go, without shame, and tell others about how awesome you are. Amen.

DISCUSSION

- **What mistake did Jonah make?**
- **What did Jonah do when he was inside the big fish?**
- **What did he do after the fish spit him out on the beach?**
- **Read 1 Timothy 1:12-17. What did the writer say about himself, and what did the writer say is the reason he was shown mercy?**
- **What's something that might make you feel ashamed? You don't have to share this aloud if you don't want to.**
- **You know how when you have a big burp, it clears out space for more food? Imagine releasing shame is like a big burp in your soul. What might you be able to put there instead?**
- **What can you tell someone who's feeling ashamed because of who they are or something they did?**