

Lesson 97

God Sends Jonah

God used Jonah to show grace to the wicked people of Nineveh.

Studying God's Word

Lesson Time

Don't forget! Review the Optional Supplements and determine where you can use them.

Have the students assemble in a circle away from the tables—either on the floor or in their chairs.

Bring your stuffed animal, Bible, Flip Chart, and any items you prepared for this lesson.

Prayer

This prayer time is designed to help the students begin to understand some simple concepts about prayer and to encourage them to pray.

We start our Bible lesson with prayer. Turn to the Flip Chart Prayer Page. Briefly review the different types of prayer presented there.

Today let's say prayers of thanksgiving and thank God for something.

I'll start. Dear God, thank you for . . . (insert personal prayer here).

Pass a special stuffed animal—prayer bear—around the circle, giving all the students an opportunity to pray, or choose a volunteer to stand beside you and pray.

Very good! Now let's put our stuffed animal away, and we'll answer our Bible Truth questions.

I love you prayers—Adoration
I'm sorry prayers—Confession
I'm thankful prayers—Thanksgiving
Please prayers—Supplication

Bible Truths

These four questions will be repeated each week to help the students learn foundational truths.

Is there more than one true God? No. There is only one true God.
Who deserves our praise and worship? Only God.
What word means God cannot sin and hates all sin? Holy.
God must punish sin because he is what? Just.

Bible Treasure Hunt

Before Bible Treasure Hunt, place a sticky note in your Bible to mark the first passage to be read.

Each week before class, hide your Bible somewhere in the room. Use different methods each week to keep the students excited about finding the Bible. For example, you might set a timer, play music while the students search, tell students when they are getting warmer and colder, or choose a student to hide the Bible and let you or classmates find it.

We are going to start out today by looking into God's Word, the Bible. God's Word is true, and we can always trust what it says. It's like a great treasure that tells us about who God is and what he has done for us. But where is this treasure? You will have to help me with that. We're going to go on a Bible Treasure Hunt. Somewhere in this room, I've hidden the Bible. When I say, "Go," you will need to look for it. Whoever finds the Bible must bring it back to their seat and hold it very carefully until it is time to look in it. When it is time to read, you can bring it to me, and we'll open it to see what we are going to talk about today! Explain the method you chose for today. Ready? Set! Go!

K-1st Lesson continues next.

Pre-K Lesson

K-1st Lesson

Pre-K Lesson

Review

Refer to Lesson 96 Flip Chart. What prophet did we learn about in the last lesson? Amos.

Amos was a shepherd called by God to deliver a message of coming disaster to the people of Israel. The people had ignored the warnings God had already sent and continued to sin. As God's prophet, Amos had to tell the people of Israel that God would send an enemy to surround and capture them.

Jonah Disobeys

Being a prophet was not an easy job. It was hard to deliver messages from God when people didn't want to hear them or obey. In today's lesson, we'll learn about another prophet named Jonah!

Jonah lived in Israel. But when God told him to go deliver a message, Jonah made a very bad choice. Let's find out what happened.

Jonah 1:2-3

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We'll read from the book of Jonah where God was giving Jonah some instructions. Have the student bring up the Bible

and open it to the sticky note. Read Jonah 1:2.

Where did God tell Jonah to go? Nineveh.

What did God say about Nineveh? Their what has come up before him? Evil.

The city of Nineveh was a very big city—and full of evil. The people there were mean and wicked and worshipped false gods. The people of Israel, like Jonah, hated the people in Nineveh—they were enemies!

But God told Jonah to go tell these wicked people that they needed to stop sinning. Do you think Jonah was excited to do this job? No!

So, Jonah made a choice, and it wasn't a very good one. Listen to what Jonah did. Read Jonah 1:3.

Jonah rose to do what? Flee to Tarshish.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. To flee means to run away. Jonah bought a ticket to get on a ship going the opposite direction from where God wanted him to go! Draw a stick man for Jonah on the board then draw a big arrow northeast (up and to the right) and put a star there for Nineveh. Nineveh was this way, but Jonah's ship was going to a place called Tarshish, which was this way across the sea. Draw a big arrow west (to the left) and draw a big dot for Tarshish.

Does it look like Jonah was obeying God? No!

Jonah was trying to run from God! God gave Jonah a job to do, but Jonah disobeyed by trying to get away. Would Jonah really be able to outrun the Lord? God is omniscient, which means God knows everything. He can't be fooled!

Jonah Skit

Have the Jonah Skit printed and props ready.

Some of you may already know what happened next. We're going to act this out as a skit. I need some volunteers. Follow the instructions in the Jonah Skit to choose volunteers for the parts and to set up the scene. Then follow the script as your assistant directs the students. Continue with the lesson when finished with the skit.

What did the Lord cause to happen while the ship was at sea? A storm came.

This was a super strong storm called a tempest. And it made huge waves that could break the ship into pieces.

What was Jonah doing during the storm? He was sleeping.

The Bible tells us that the captain of the ship went to get Jonah. He and the sailors figured out that this storm was all Jonah's fault because Jonah had tried to run from the Lord. God was causing this storm on purpose. He

knew where Jonah was, hiding down inside the ship. Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard so the storm would stop.

Refer to the Flip Chart. Here's Jonah being thrown overboard. He probably thought this was the end—he was going to die. But when he hit the water, the storm stopped!

What did God have waiting in the water to rescue Jonah from drowning? A giant fish!

Jonah 1:17

I'll read what happened next in Jonah 1:17. Read the verse.

What did the great fish do to Jonah? It swallowed Jonah.
How long was Jonah in the fish's belly? Three days and three nights.

Jonah deserved to be punished for his disobedience. God had called Jonah to do something important for him, but instead of obeying, Jonah tried to run away! But God is omnipotent—all-powerful—and he used his power over the wind, the sea, and even the fish to give Jonah a second chance.

Refer to the Flip Chart. When Jonah prayed from inside the fish's belly, God heard and answered his prayer. God spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah (threw him up) onto dry land. Yuck!

Jonah Obeys

Amazingly, Jonah was still alive and back on dry ground. God gave him a second chance to obey, and this time Jonah did! He headed to Nineveh. As he walked through the city, Jonah told the people, "God will destroy this city in 40 days if you do not turn from your wicked ways!"

When the people in Nineveh heard this, they believed Jonah's message. They feared God's judgment and showed God that they were sorry for their sins. Even the king of Nineveh believed Jonah's message. He commanded the people to call out to God and to turn from their evil and wickedness. And God showed mercy to the people of Nineveh. He didn't punish them like they deserved because they asked God for forgiveness. The people were given a second chance to change their ways and obey God.

God also showed mercy to Jonah by rescuing him from the belly of the fish and giving him a second chance to obey.

Think about it: What would have been different if Jonah had done what God said in the first place? Allow discussion.

We can't outrun God if he wants to use us as part of his plan. And Jonah wasn't able to outrun him either. It's much better if we obey the first time.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game below.

K-1st Lesson

Review

Refer to Lesson 92 and 94 Flip Charts. We've been learning about some of God's prophets. We saw how Elijah challenged wicked King Ahab and his false prophets of Baal. Then later, God took Elijah to heaven in a whirlwind.

Who was the prophet after Elijah? Elisha.

Refer to Lessons 94–95 Flip Charts. What were some of the miracles Elisha did to show God's power and mercy? Allow answers. The widow's oil filled all the pots she borrowed, the boy was raised from the dead, Naaman was healed of leprosy, and the Syrian army was blinded.

Refer to Lesson 96 Flip Chart. What prophet did we learn about in the last lesson? Amos.

Amos was a shepherd called by God to deliver a message of coming disaster to the people of Israel. The people had ignored the warnings God had already sent, and they continued to sin. God said he would send an enemy to surround and capture the people of Israel.

Jonah Disobeys

Being a prophet was not an easy job. It was hard to deliver messages from God when people didn't want to listen or obey. In today's lesson, we'll learn about a prophet you've probably heard of before. His name is Jonah!

Jonah lived in the nation of Israel. When God told him to go deliver a message, Jonah made a very bad choice. Let's find out what happened.

Jonah 1:1–3

Refer to the Books of the Bible Poster. We'll read from the book of Jonah in the Bible. Have the student bring up the Bible and open it to the sticky note. Read the first two verses, Jonah 1:1–2.

Where did God tell Jonah to go? Nineveh.

What did God say about Nineveh? Their what has come up before him? Evil.

The city of Nineveh was a very big and powerful city—and full of evil. The people there were mean and wicked and worshipped many false gods. The people of Israel, like Jonah, hated the people of Nineveh—they were enemies!

But God told Jonah to go tell these wicked people that they needed to stop sinning. Do you think Jonah was excited to do this job? No!

So, Jonah made a choice, and it wasn't a very good one. Listen to what Jonah did. Read Jonah 1:3.

What did Jonah do? He fled to Tarshish away from the Lord.

Refer to the Lesson Flip Chart. Jonah went to the town of Joppa to get on a ship going in the opposite direction from where God wanted him to go!

Write Joppa on the board then draw a big arrow northeast (up and to the right) and write Nineveh and put a star beside it. Nineveh was this way, but Jonah's ship was headed to a place called Tarshish, which was this way across the sea. Draw a big arrow west (to the left) from Joppa and write Tarshish.

Does it look like Jonah was obeying God? No!

Jonah was trying to run from God! God gave Jonah a job to do, and Jonah disobeyed by trying to get away. Would Jonah really be able to outrun the Lord? God is omniscient—he knows all things. And he is omnipresent, which means God is everywhere. He can't be fooled!

Jonah Skit

Have the Jonah Skit printed and props ready.

Some of you may already know what happened next. We're going to act this out as a skit. I need some volunteers. Follow the instructions in the Jonah Skit to choose volunteers for the parts and to set up the scene. Then follow the script as your assistant directs the students. Continue with the lesson when finished with the skit.

Jonah 1:4

Let's review what happened when Jonah tried to go to Tarshish instead of Nineveh. Listen as I read Jonah 1:4. Read the verse.

What did the Lord hurl or throw upon the sea? A great wind.

What did this great wind cause, a mighty what? A mighty tempest on the sea.

A tempest is a very strong storm. This storm caused huge waves that could break the ship into pieces.

What did the sailors do to try to lighten the ship? Remember the skit? They threw the cargo overboard.

Cargo means everything the ship was carrying to the next stop.

What was Jonah doing all this time? He was sleeping.

The Bible tells us that the captain of the ship went to get Jonah. He and the sailors figured out that this storm was all Jonah's fault because he had tried to run from the Lord. God was causing this storm on purpose. He knew where Jonah was, hiding down inside the ship. Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard so the storm would stop.

Refer to the Flip Chart. Here's Jonah being thrown overboard. He probably thought this was the end—he was going to die. But when he hit the water, the storm stopped!

What did God have waiting in the water to rescue Jonah from drowning? A great fish!

Jonah 1:17

I'll read what happened next in Jonah 1:17. Read the verse.

What did the great fish do to Jonah? It swallowed Jonah.
How long was Jonah in the fish's belly? Three days and three nights.

Jonah deserved to be punished for his disobedience. God had called Jonah to do something important for him, but instead of obeying, Jonah tried to run away! But God had a plan for Jonah, and his plan would not be stopped. God is omnipotent—all-powerful—and he used his power over the wind, the sea, and even the fish to give Jonah a second chance.

Refer to the Flip Chart. When Jonah prayed from inside the fish's belly, God heard and answered his prayer. God spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah (threw him up) onto dry land. Yuck!

Jonah Obey's

Amazingly, Jonah was still alive and back on dry ground. God gave him a second chance to obey, and this time Jonah did! He headed to Nineveh. As he walked through the city, Jonah told the people, "God will destroy this city in 40 days if you do not repent of your wicked ways!"

When the people in Nineveh heard this, they believed Jonah's message. They feared God's judgment and showed God that they were sorry for their sins. Even the king of Nineveh believed Jonah's message. He commanded the people to call out to God and to turn from their evil and wickedness.

Jonah 3:10

Did God destroy the city anyway? Let's find out in Jonah 3:10. Read the verse.

What did God see the people do? What did they turn from? From their evil way.

Did God destroy Nineveh? No. He did not do it.

God showed mercy to the people of Nineveh. He didn't punish them like they deserved because they asked God for forgiveness. The people were given a second chance to change their ways and obey God.

God also showed mercy to Jonah by rescuing him from the belly of the fish and giving him a second chance to obey.

Think about it: What would have been different if Jonah had done what God said in the first place? Allow discussion.

We can't outrun God if he wants to use us as part of his plan. And Jonah wasn't able to outrun him either. It's much better if we obey the first time.

Continue with the Lesson Review Game.

Lesson Review

We all learn best with review and repetition! We encourage you to play a lesson review game.

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