



**LET'S
GO!**

**LESSON 2:
God Told Jonah to Go!**

GOD TOLD JONAH TO GO!

LESSON 2

One Old Testament story that gloriously shows God's heart of mercy is the story of Jonah and the Ninevites. God told a very reluctant Jonah to go and give Nineveh a warning about their upcoming destruction. A sea voyage and a big fish later, Jonah delivered the message. To his dismay, the Ninevites repented! Jonah had a pity party for himself. How dare God be SO merciful?! But he is. This lesson helps children see just how much God loves to save sinners like you, me, and the world.

A missionary story, memory verse, game, and other ideas are also included in this guide to help children develop a heart for missions. Whether you're leading at home or teaching at church, you can choose and use the ideas that best fit your teaching situation. Suggested printable visuals and activity pages are included at the end of this document. PPT slides are included separately.

Lesson Overview

Big Idea: God loves to save sinners!

Key Verse: Psalm 96:3 "Declare his glory among the nations,
his marvelous works among all the peoples!"

Lesson: God Told Jonah to Go!

Mission Story: Nate Saint

Activity: Meet the Missionary

Review Game: Country Coin Toss

Song Suggestions: Enjoy these songs as you learn about believing and sharing the gospel.
(Available for family use on YouTube*)

- "Jesus is the Good Good News" by Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEFPress.com)
- "John 3:16 (For God So Loved The World)" by The Rizers (TheRizers.com)
- "Tell Everyone" by Child Evangelism Fellowship (CEFPress.com)

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BIG IDEA!



God loves to save sinners!

Prepare: Big Idea Visual (*printable, PPT*)

Say: Can you think of something everyone on earth has in common? I can think of several! Everyone on earth is made in the image of God, is loved by God, has an amazing human body, has feelings, and one more: everyone on earth is a sinner. That means everyone on earth has thought, said, and done things that are against God. But, our Big Idea tells us a BIG truth: *God loves to save sinners!* God doesn't just leave us alone in our sinfulness. He gave his only Son to save us from our sin, because of his great love!

Do: Have children do different exercises (jumping, running in place, etc.) after you ask "What's the Big Idea?" and have everyone shout, "God loves to save sinners!" Reinforce this key concept throughout the entire teaching time by asking "What's the Big Idea?" in between activities, to regain the focus of the children, or whenever it naturally connects to what you're teaching.



KEY VERSE: PSALM 96:3

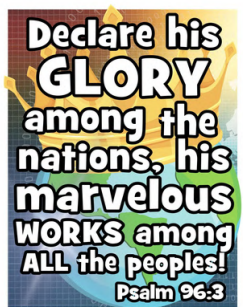
"Declare his glory among the nations, his marvelous works among all the peoples!" Psalm 96:3



Prepare: Bible, Psalm 96:3 Visual (*printable, PPT*), pictures of people from around the world (*printable, PPT*)

Do: Show pictures of different people around the world and marvel at the wonderful variety God puts into every person from all the nations. Read Psalm 96:3 from your Bible as the children listen.

Say: Did you know that there are still over 7,000 people groups around the world that still haven't heard the good news that Jesus died for them? That's about 3 billion people who are waiting to hear about Jesus! This verse is talking about declaring God's glory among the nations - that means telling everyone in the whole world about how wonderful God is and the wonderful things he has done. The most marvelous thing God has done is to make a way for sinners to be close to God now and forever by believing in Jesus. That is the only way for someone to know God. If you know Jesus as your Savior, God wants you to tell about him. You can do that now as a kid, and maybe when you're grown up God might ask you to be a missionary - someone who spends their life telling others about Jesus. The whole world needs to know that *God loves to save sinners!*



Encourage children to regularly bring and use their Bibles as you teach. This helps them become familiar with using their Bible and emphasizes the importance of God's Word. If possible, help them find and bookmark the memory verse in their own Bibles.

Do: Show the pictures of people from around the world and call out a color that they are wearing in the picture. Have the children who are wearing that color stand up and say the verse. You could also use eye color or hair color.



LESSON: GOD TOLD JONAH TO GO!

Prepare: Bible, Lesson Visuals (*printable, PPT*), leafy branch or plant, toy cars, planes, etc. (*optional*)

Do: Show the children a map along with toys or pictures of cars, trucks, planes, and other modes of transportation. Ask which one they would prefer to go in and let them pretend to drive/ride these things on the map if possible. Explain that missionaries use many modes of transportation to go around the world and tell people about Jesus. Lastly, show the picture of a big fish and ask if this is something missionaries would use to go somewhere and tell people about God.

Say: Missionaries travel in many different ways to go tell people around the world about Jesus. The Bible even tells us about one missionary who actually did go somewhere inside a big fish to tell people about God. His name was Jonah and he lived thousands of years ago. He was a prophet who told people messages from God, but one day God told him to go deliver a message and Jonah didn't want to go. (*Read Jonah 1:1-3.*) The people of Nineveh were very wicked. They were also the enemies of Jonah's people, the Israelites. Jonah didn't want to warn them that God was going to punish their sin. He wanted them to be punished! He wanted them to be destroyed! He hated them! He was afraid that if he gave them God's warning, they might turn from their sin and God would forgive them. So Jonah actually ran away from God by going the wrong way on purpose! He knew that God loves to forgive and save sinners and he did not want the people of Nineveh to have a chance to be forgiven. Jonah was wrong to run away, but he was very right about one thing: God does love to save sinners.

Do: Show the location of ancient Nineveh (northern Iraq) on the map as you talk about God's love for the wicked Ninevites. Have children point at several other nations on the map each time you mention sinners as you continue teaching about God's love for sinners around the world.

Say: The people of Nineveh were famous for being wicked and cruel. They deserved to be punished, but God still loved them. (*Read Psalm 86:15.*) God is gracious. This means he shows love to people who do not deserve it. This is good news for everybody because every person in the world is a sinner. All people in every country sin against God by thinking, saying, and doing things that break his rules. All people do many wrong things like lying, cheating, fighting, complaining, and stealing because we are all born wanting to sin. You can point at any country on the map and know that every person in that country has disobeyed God. None of us are perfect. (*Read Ecclesiastes 7:20.*) We are all sinners who need to be saved. The punishment for sin is to die and be separated from God forever in a terrible place. This is what all people deserve because of our sin. It's terrible! But even before God created the world he had a rescue plan to save people all around the world from sin. What's the Big Idea? *God loves to save sinners!* Jonah knew God loves to save sinners, so he ran away when God told him to go to Nineveh. But God did something really strange to stop Jonah and make him go after all.



You may want to fold the picture of Jonah in half and only show this first side of the picture at this point.

Do: Read Jonah 1:4,12-17 and have the children act it out by making storm sounds and rowing hard. Turn the lights off and on 3 times to represent Jonah's time in the fish's belly. Read Jonah 2:10-3:5 and have the children act it out by walking around the room calling out "Nineveh will be destroyed!" Read Jonah 3:10 and have everyone shout, "God loves to save sinners!"

Say: God used a huge storm and a big sea creature to make Jonah go to Nineveh and after Jonah warned them about their sin, the people turned from their sin and were saved! God did this because he is gracious. He loves to show kindness and love to sinners who don't deserve it. What's the Big Idea? *God loves to save sinners!* He told Jonah to go because he enjoys rescuing people rather than punishing them. God stills loves saving sinners today. He sent Jesus Christ to die on the cross for us so we could be saved. He did this because he loves us. (Read Romans 5:8.) Jesus willingly took the punishment sinful people deserve, even though he has never sinned, and then he rose again! Jesus is alive today ruling as the King of Heaven and he promises to save every sinful person who trusts him to rescue them from sin. But he also warns us that anyone who does not believe in him will not be saved. (Read John 3:36.) Because God loves us he warns us that we will be punished forever for our sin if we do not believe in Jesus. This is why it's super important for everybody in the world to hear about Jesus. We all need to be warned about our sin and learn that God loves to save sinners! What's the Big Idea? *God loves to save sinners!* The people of Nineveh must have been overjoyed to discover that God loves to save sinners. But do you know who wasn't happy? Jonah. (Read Jonah 4:1-3.) Jonah was very angry that God had saved these sinful people. He said this was why he didn't want to go. He knew God loves to save sinners, but he didn't care. Do you think this is how a missionary, or any Christian, should act? No! God wants his people to care about people being saved from their sin. He did something unusual to teach Jonah a lesson.

Do: Read Jonah 4:5-11 and use a leafy branch or plant to act out Jonah sitting in the shade on a hill and then getting angry about the dead plant.

Say: Jonah cared more about a silly plant than he did about thousands of people! The story of Jonah helps us learn about God's heart of love for sinful people. If you have never believed in Jesus to save you from sin, this story helps you know that God loves and saves sinners like you. If you want to know more about being saved from your sin, please meet me after the lesson. If you have already believed in Jesus to save you from sin, this story shows you the kind of heart you should have for people all around the world who need to be saved from sin. People being saved from sin should be extremely important to you. God wants you to be part of helping people around the world learn about Jesus so they can be saved.

Respond: Show pictures of missionaries your church partners with and look at the transportation pictures (or toys) again. Find the places where the missionaries serve on the map and ask the children which modes of transportation these missionaries might use to go tell people about Jesus. Discuss ways you can help missionaries go tell people the good news that God loves to save sinners.

If you folded the lesson visual in half, turn it around to show the city of Nineveh as well as the crown and heart symbols.



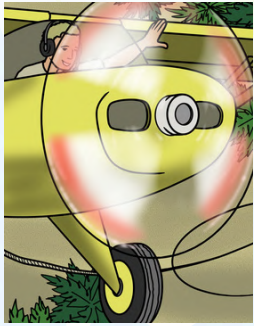
Let the children show you their grumpiest, angriest face as you talk about how Jonah responded to the gracious love of God.

Unfold the lesson visual to show the full picture of Jonah angrily watching Nineveh from the hill. Ask if the children can find the worm in the picture.

Be sure to tell children when and where they can meet you if they want to discuss believing in Jesus. Read and explain John 3:36 as you talk with children who respond. Ask thought-provoking questions like the following to make sure the child understands the truths of the gospel: Who is God? What is sin? Who has sinned? What did Jesus do to save you from sin? Why do you want to believe in Jesus as your Savior?



MISSIONS STORY: NATE SAINT



Prepare: Nate Saint Visual (*printable, PPT*), globe/map

Say: What things are you good at? God gives us all different talents and skills. He can use the things we are good at to help us share the good news of Jesus with others. We're going to learn about a missionary pilot named Nate Saint who used his unique abilities to help people in Ecuador learn about Jesus.

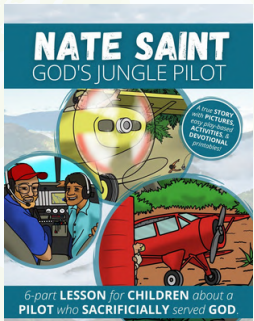
Do: Point at Ecuador on the map and show the picture of Nate Saint.

Say: Nate Saint was good at fixing and inventing things. As a little boy, he enjoyed tinkering with just about anything, but he was especially interested in airplanes. He decided he wanted to become a pilot and airplane mechanic when he grew up. But even though Nate loved airplanes and inventing a lot, he loved Jesus even more. He had trusted Jesus as his Savior and wanted to follow God with his whole life. When he began to realize God might want him to be a missionary, Nate prayed and told God he was willing to give up his dream of being a pilot to be a missionary for God. But God had a plan for Nate to do both! He eventually became a missionary and a pilot in the jungles of Ecuador!

Millions of people live in jungles or other areas with no roads, hospitals, stores, factories, or churches. It might take weeks or even months to travel to these places on the ground, but a missionary who could fix and fly an airplane could fly over mountains, jungles, or rivers to quickly reach people who needed help. Nate served God as a missionary by using his airplane to help people learn about Jesus. He also invented ways to make planes safer for jungle travel, and ways to help people in the plane communicate with people on the the ground!

One day Nate heard about some people living deep in the jungle who were so dangerous that almost everybody was afraid of them. They had attacked and killed many people and even killed each other! Instead of being afraid of these people, Nate wondered if maybe he could use his airplane to help them learn about Jesus. He used his airplane to fly over their village and drop gifts down to them. Eventually, he flew some more missionaries into the jungle near this village where they met some of the people! Nate knew these people might kill him, but he was willing to risk his life to help them hear about Jesus.

Sadly, the people did kill Nate and his friends, but that's not the end of the story. The people had never met anyone like Nate and his friends. They wanted to know what made these men so kind and brave, so they actually invited missionaries to come live in their village to teach them about Jesus! Eventually, many of them believed in Jesus as their Savior and become close friends with Nate's family. Nate's courageous sacrifice as a missionary helped these people hear about Jesus for the very first time! But that's not all. The story of Nate and his friends has also helped thousands of other Christians become missionaries. God used Nate Saint to help millions of people learn about Jesus! How could God use you and your talents to help others learn about Jesus?



For more information about Nate Saint and more ideas and pictures to help you share this story with children, download this free missionary story at KidsEnjoyingJesus.com.

Encourage the children to pray for opportunities to tell other people about Jesus. Challenge them to also ask God if maybe he wants them to serve as a missionary someday.



ACTIVITY: MEET THE MISSIONARY

MEET the MISSIONARY!

What's your favorite food?

What's your favorite color?

What's your favorite animal?

What's your favorite kind of ice cream?

What's one of your favorite Bible verses?

When is your favorite time to read the Bible?

What do you enjoy about being a missionary?

How can we pray for you?

Prepare: Meet the Missionary Questions and Lesson Activity page (*printable*)
Email these questions to some missionaries your church partners with ahead of time, asking them to answer them for the children you teach.

Say: Can you guess my favorite color? What about my favorite animal? It can be fun to get to know more about people by finding out what they like or dislike. We're going to get to know some missionaries today! I've asked some of our missionaries (show a picture and share their names) to answer some fun questions and you have to guess their answers to help us get to know them.

Do: Cut the questions apart and put them in a container ahead of time. Let children take turns grabbing and reading questions while everyone tries to guess the missionary's answers. Use the missionary's responses to give the correct answers and let children share whether or not they like the same things as the missionary.

- What's your favorite food?
- What's your favorite color?
- What's your favorite animal?
- What's your favorite kind of ice cream?
- What's one of your favorite Bible verses?
- When is your favorite time to read the Bible?
- What do you enjoy about being a missionary?
- How can we pray for you?

Respond: Have the children take turns praying for the missionary. Encourage them to tell someone else in their family or church what they learned about the missionary and encourage that person to pray for the missionary too. If time allows, have children color the Activity Page while answering the questions on it.



ACTIVITY PAGE

Prepare: Lesson Activity Page (*printable*), art supplies

Do: There is an activity page with discussion questions, the key verse, the Big Idea, and a picture to color for each lesson in this series. You can use this as a final activity to engage children at the end of your class, as a discussion guide for a small group time, or you could send it home with them and encourage families to complete it at home. Challenge them to use the picture to tell someone else about what they learned.

Idea: You could offer an incentive such as stickers, candy, team points, or other small prizes for everyone who brings back their completed activity page to the next class.





REVIEW GAME: COUNTRY COIN TOSS

Prepare: Map, coin, review questions

Say: God loves people in every part of the world and wants them to hear about Jesus. We're going to play a game that uses the names of countries in the world to review what we've learned and help us remember that God loves to save sinners all over the world!

Do: Divide the children into teams and let the teams take turns answering review questions. When a child correctly answers a question, let them toss a coin at a map on the floor and award 1,000 points for each syllable in the name of the country that most of the coin lands on (ex: EC-UA-DOR = 3,000 points). If the coin lands on an ocean, award points for each syllable of the ocean's name (ex: PA-CI-FIC = 3,000 points). After each toss, have the children say the Big Idea, "God loves to save sinners!" together.

Review Questions:

1. What's the Big Idea? (*God loves to save sinners!*)
2. Can you say Psalm 96:3? (*Have children say the verse.*)
3. What did God tell Jonah to do? (*To go to Nineveh and tell them God was going to punish them, so they would have a chance to repent.*)
4. What did Jonah do instead? (*He got on a ship and tried to run away from God.*)
5. How did God bring Jonah back? (*God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah and then spit him out so he could go back to Nineveh.*)
6. How did God show how gracious he is to the people of Nineveh? (*When they repented, God didn't punish them.*)
7. How did God use Nate Saint to tell people about Jesus? (*Nate was a missionary pilot who died trying to tell people about Jesus. The people he was trying to reach eventually came to know Jesus!*)
8. How can you help a missionary this week? (*Answers will vary, but may include praying, writing a card, etc.*)

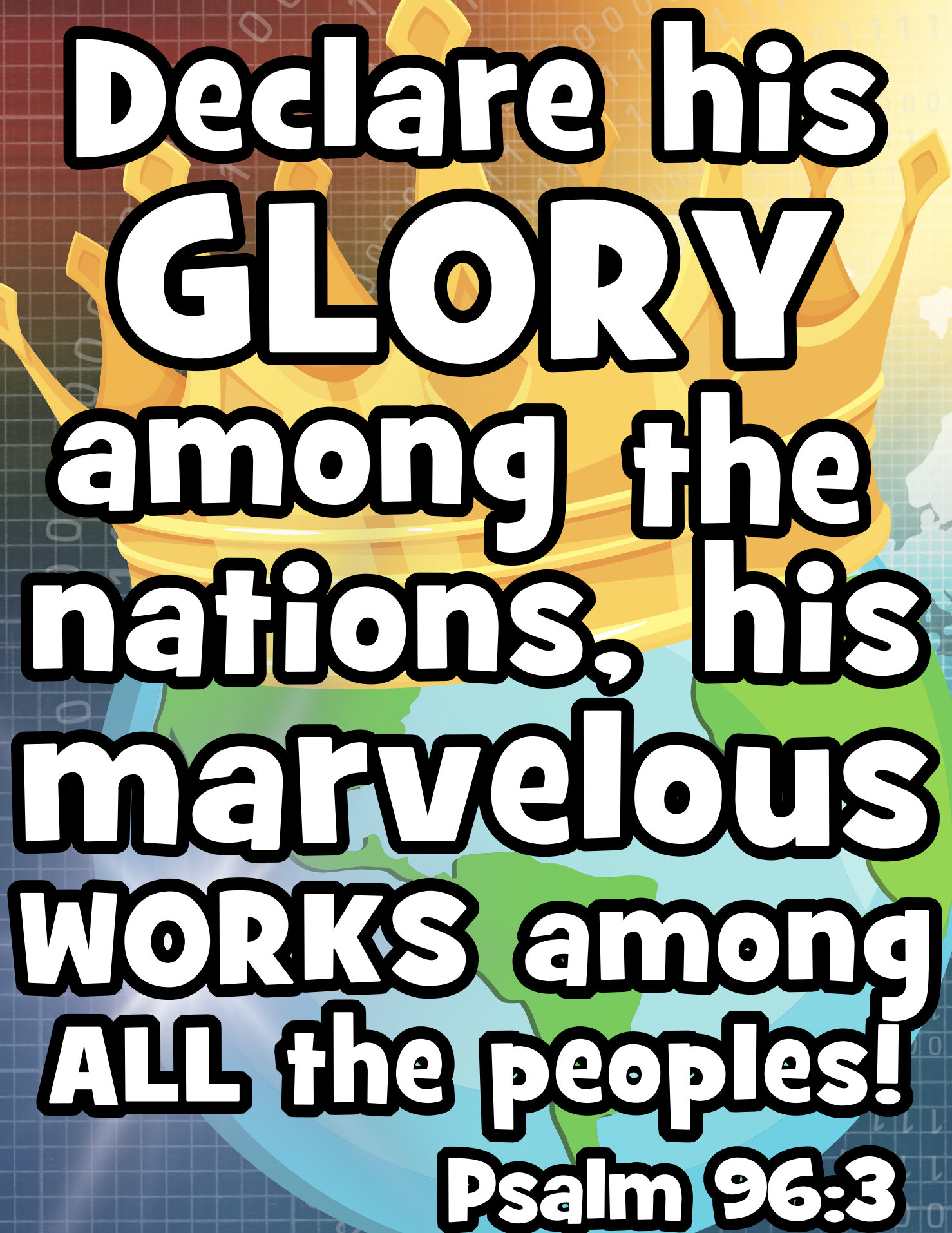


GOD

LOVES to

SAVE

SINNERS!



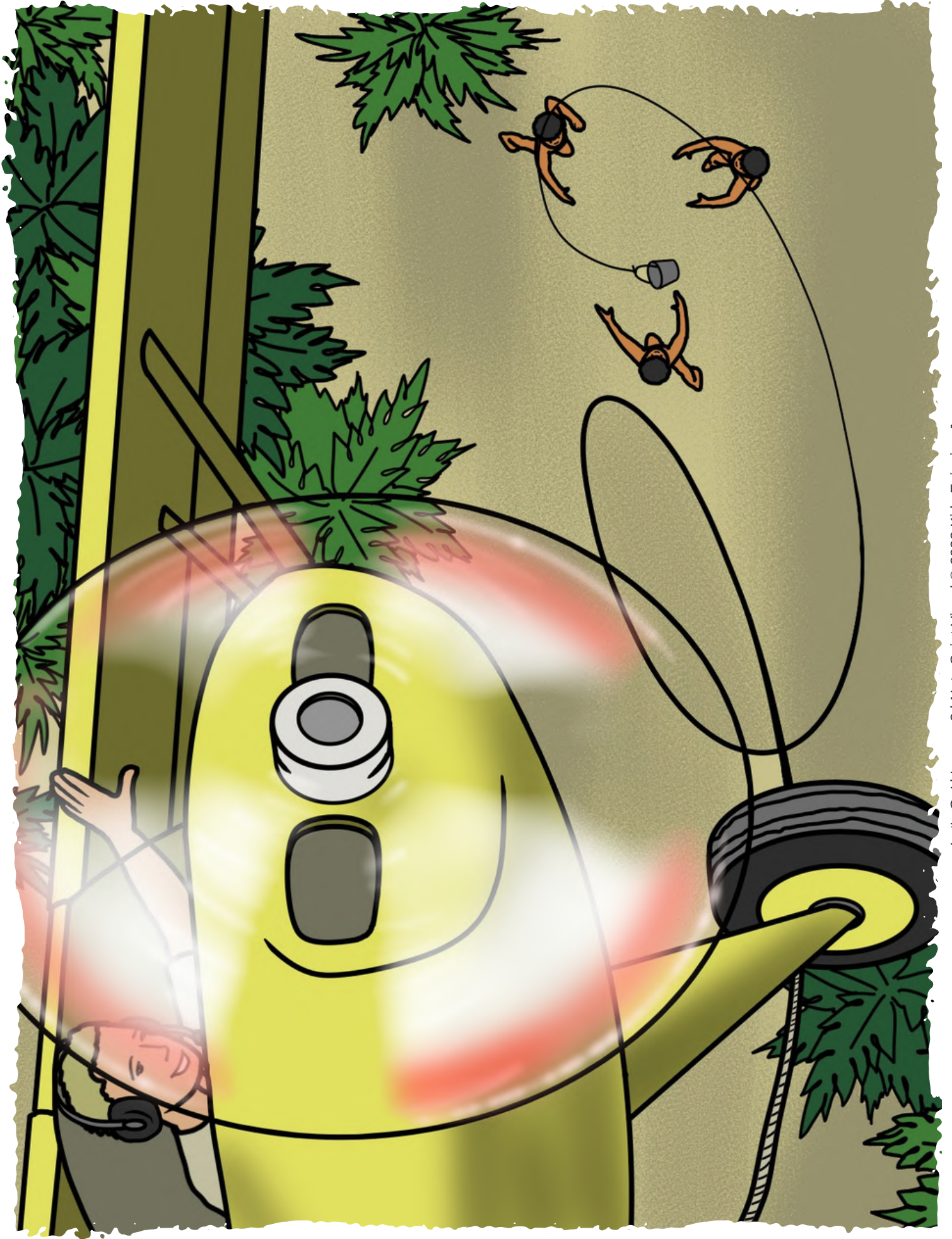
**Declare his
GLORY
among the
nations, his
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ALL the peoples!**

Psalm 96:3









**BIG
IDEA!**

God loves to save sinners!

**"Declare his glory among the nations, his
marvelous works among all the peoples!"
- Psalm 96:3**

**KEY
VERSE**



THINK ABOUT IT!

Key Passages: Jonah 1-4

Why did God tell Jonah to go to Nineveh?

How did God show his gracious mercy to Nineveh and Jonah?

How can you be part of helping people around the world learn about God's rescue plan to save them from sin?

Can you pray for more missionary pilots like Nate Saint who can go tell people about Jesus who have never heard?



MEET the MISSIONARY!

Ask a missionary to answer these questions ahead of time. Cut the questions apart and put them in a container. Let children take turns grabbing and reading questions while everyone tries to guess the missionary's answers.



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