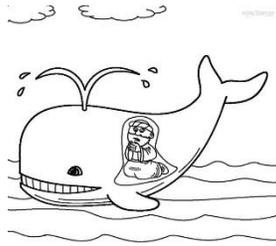


## JONAH AND THE WHALE

A Bible Tale of Hide and Seek



Have you ever played "Hide and Seek"? It's a fun game isn't it? It's fun to try and find a really good hiding place and see how long it takes someone to find you. It wouldn't be very fun, though, if every time you hid somewhere the person looking for you knew exactly where you were, would it? LET'S PLAY AND SEE!

[Play game of hide and seek]

[Give children story pages with pictures. As the story is told, have children put the story pages in order. When the story is over, have children write the story on the pages and create a book using construction paper and staples to bind it together. This can be done in class or as homework. You may also use flannel graphs to illustrate the story.]

### BIBLE STORY

Our story today is about a man who tried to play hide from God, only he wasn't having any fun. This is how it happened.

The people of **Nineveh** were bad news. They didn't live the right way and they did a LOT of bad things. One day God told Jonah that he had a special job for him to do. God told Jonah that he wanted him to go to the city of **Nineveh** and warn the people there that he would destroy them and their city if they didn't stop being bad. **How do you think Jonah felt when God told him that? How would YOU feel if you were Jonah?**

He probably said to himself, "What? God wants me to go to Nineveh? This must be some kind of mistake. Those bad, bad people? There is no way I'm going to Nineveh. I wouldn't make it out of that city alive." He was scared of that city and the people who lived there. **What do you do when you're scared?**

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah decided that he would go as far away from Nineveh as he could. He hoped God would pick somebody else to go and warn the people.

Jonah got on a ship that was going to the farthest city he could find. He was really tired, and once he got on board, he went to the very bottom of the ship to hide, and curled up to take a nap. **Can we really hide from God?**

Soon Jonah found out that he couldn't hide from God and that God doesn't forget about anything. God knew exactly where Jonah was. God wasn't happy with Jonah at all, so He caused a huge storm to come up. The sailors were afraid that their ship would sink. They started throwing everything they could get their hands on into the sea to lighten up the ship. They all started praying to their gods to save them, but the storm kept getting worse. Finally when they realized that Jonah wasn't helping, they went and got him and told him to start praying to his God. But Jonah knew what the problem was; and he knew that there was only one thing to do. God wouldn't stop the storm until Jonah obeyed him. So Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard. As soon as Jonah hit the water the storm quit and all was calm. The sailors were so surprised that the storm had stopped.

Jonah began to sink into the sea, going down farther and farther into the depths. But God didn't want Jonah to drown, he just wanted Jonah to obey him. God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah and take him down to the bottom of the sea. **How do you think Jonah felt now?** He must have felt very scared and alone. He prayed and asked God to forgive him for disobeying him. He probably felt ashamed for not listening to God.

Finally, after three days of being in the dark, stinky, belly of the fish, the fish came up to the top of the sea and spit Jonah out on the shore. How do you think Jonah felt then? He was probably happy and surprised to be out of the fish. He was also probably a little embarrassed by the way he looked.

Then Jonah obeyed God and went and told the people to stop sinning. They believed Jonah, and God saved them.

Jonah sure did cause a lot of trouble for himself didn't he? You know, when you think about it, we're not so different from Jonah. We may never run away and hide at the bottom of a ship and get swallowed by a huge fish, but sometimes we do try to hide from God when we are scared, ashamed, embarrassed, or just don't want to do what he says.

### **LIFE APPLICATION**

Have you ever done something wrong and then tried to cover it up or go hide in your room and hope that nobody would get mad when they found out? If you did, you were acting just like Jonah. It doesn't do any good to hide does it? Sooner or later you have to face up to what you did.

You may be able to hide things from your parents and friends, but you can't hide them from God. The Bible says, "Nothing in all creation can hide from him.

Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. This is the God to whom we must explain all that we have done."

When you are scared about something, instead of running away and hiding, God wants you to come to him and ask him for strength to face up to your fears. And when you do something wrong, instead of trying to forget about it, or hiding from it, God wants you to tell him about it, and to ask him for forgiveness. The Bible tells us that, "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:9 So instead of trying to hide your sins from God, tell God what you did wrong and he will forgive you.

### **MEMORY VERSE**

"If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong." 1 John 1:9

### **ACTIVITY – NEWSPAPER**

Create the front page of a newspaper using the main headline “JONAH SWALLOWED BY BIG FISH”! Write an article about Jonah’s experience. **MAKE SURE TO USE THE MEMORY VERSE.** On the page, include a weather report and a sports headline. You can also include a local news section and anything else you think might interest people in your front page! Make sure to illustrate to provide a photo. You can tea stain it and crumple it up to make it look old. Allow to dry.

### **SUPPLIES NEEDED**

Construction paper/craft paper/plain paper  
Pencils/Pens  
Glue stick  
Scissors  
Tea (to discolor paper)  
Large Ziploc bag to carry project home in

### **COMMITMENT**

Have you ever asked Jesus into your heart? When we do that, it opens up so many new possibility. Jesus helps us learn right from wrong and He helps us live good, righteous lives. He is so good to us. We can tell Him all our problems and He helps us through His word, the bible. Would you like to ask Jesus in your heart?

**Lord Jesus I know I am a sinner.**

**I believe you died for me on the cross so that I might be saved. Right now I ask You to forgive me of all my sins. I open my heart to You.**

Come into my heart Lord Jesus.  
I take this very moment in my life to receive you as my Lord and Savior.

Thank you, Jesus, for forgiving all my sins, and giving me eternal life.

Let my life be dedicated to you Jesus, and help me to be the kind of person you want me to be.

Help me to decrease in myself and increase in you Jesus.

Amen!