



UNIT 15 | SESSION 1

JONAH WARNED OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

JONAH

CHRIST CONNECTION:

God told Jonah to go tell people to stop making wrong choices. Jonah did not want to go. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to tell people to stop making wrong choices. Unlike Jonah, Jesus wanted to obey God.

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

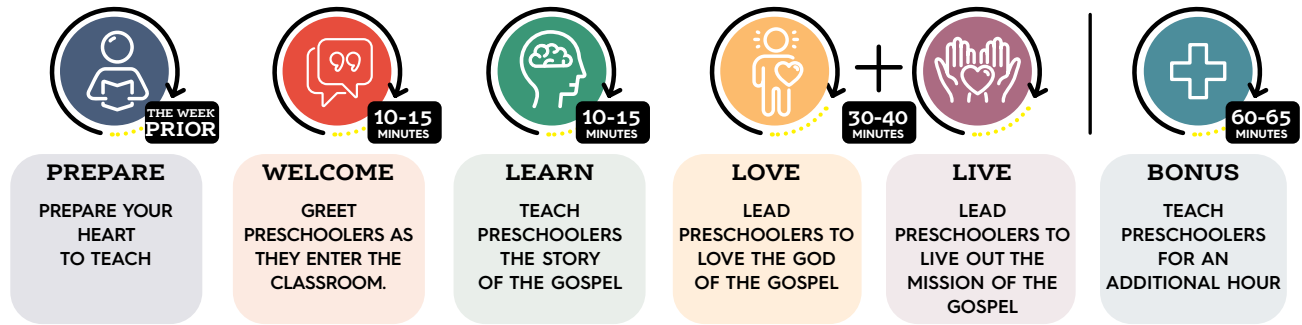
What makes people special? People are special because God made us.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE:

I will praise God because He made me. Psalm 139:14



YOUR HEART TO TEACH



LEADER Bible Study

If we spend time contemplating what it means to belong to Jesus, the reality is a mystery. How can we who are sinners be forgiven and redeemed? The more we recognize the depth and darkness of our own sin, the greater we understand the magnitude of God’s gift to us: Through His Son, He reached down to display His great love and mercy. Because of Jesus’ wounds, we can have full and forever forgiveness.

The Book of Jonah demonstrates this powerful truth on at least two occasions. One is highlighted in Jonah’s prayer in the midst of his desperation. After running from God and being hurled into the sea, fully expecting to die at the bottom of the ocean, Jonah is swept up and swallowed by a great fish. It is from there that he cries out, “I called to the LORD in my distress, and he answered me” (Jonah 2:2). Jonah, knowing the extent of his own sin and the issue of his own disobedience, cries out in desperation to the Father and finds great comfort in a loving God receiving His desperate plea.

Later, in Jonah 3, we find a similar movement of God’s reaching down and bringing about repentance among the people of Nineveh. In His grace, He relented from the looming punishment they deserved in light of their change of heart.

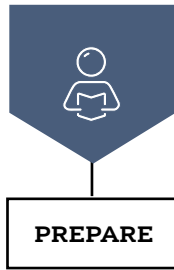
In both instances, the mercy and grace of God to withhold punishment due to vile sinners brought hope, and this hope ought to be ours today as well.

Isaiah 59:1 says, “Indeed, the LORD’S arm is not too weak to save, and his ear is not too deaf to hear.”

Though much has changed in our world since Jonah’s day, the Lord has not changed. He is not too weak nor too distant to save. No matter how far you or someone you know has strayed, no matter how distant the Lord might feel, His arm is not too short to save. His love can reach down to even the darkest and vilest of all sinners. Praise be to God.

PLACES TO KNOW

Nineveh: enemy city to which God called the prophet Jonah in the eighth century BC



YOUR HEART TO TEACH

GATHER Supplies

Keep a supply of the following items available during all teaching sessions: Allergy Alert, Bibles, washable markers, crayons, scissors (adult use), blunt-tipped scissors, construction paper, copy paper, glue sticks, glue, tape, baby dolls, blocks, play dough, and a beanbag.



WELCOME

Look at my feet

- Big Picture Question Poster
- full-length nonbreakable mirror or a few handheld nonbreakable mirrors (keep to use throughout the unit)



LEARN

Watch a boat

- toy boat
- deep plastic container
- water
- towel

Review the Bible story

- Bible Story Picture

Learn the key passage phrase

- Key Passage Phrase Poster
- Key Passage Phrase Marker



LOVE

Build a city

- colored tape
- people figures

Paint a water scene

- plastic tablecloth
- large sheets of white paper
- blue washable paint (thinned)
- paintbrushes
- smocks



LIVE

Sing praise songs

- empty water bottles, 1 per child
- water
- duct tape
- familiar praise and worship music

Snack and transition

- snacks
- Activity Page, 1 per child



BONUS

Say the key passage phrase

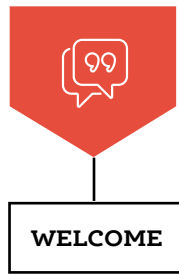
- Key Passage Phrase Marker

Make a beach scene

- light blue construction paper, 1 page per child
- tan or brown construction paper, 1 page per 2 children
- white crayons

Talk about obeying

- empty cube-shaped tissue box
- solid colored gift wrap paper



Provide as many learning activities as possible from the *Love* and *Live* sections to give preschoolers choices to learn. Incorporate the Bible story, the Christ connection, and key passage phrase in your conversations as the preschoolers engage in learning activities throughout the session.

WELCOME

Use the following activity to greet children as they enter the classroom. Talk about the big picture question and answer. After each child completes the welcome activity, encourage him to participate in the activities provided from the *Love* and *Live* sections of the leader guide.

LOOK AT MY FEET

Provide a full-length nonbreakable mirror or a few handheld nonbreakable mirrors to use during the welcome activities throughout the unit. Arrange and secure the mirror so children can see their feet. Display the big picture question poster nearby the mirror.

Greet each child at the door and show him the big picture question poster and talk about the big picture question and answer. Encourage each child to look at his feet in the mirror. Encourage them to watch their feet as they jump, walk, hop, and tiptoe. Be sensitive to any children who may need the activity altered due to their mobility. Keep the mirror to use in the other sessions of this unit.

SAY “ You can jump, walk, hop, and tiptoe because God gave you feet to move. Do you know **what makes people special? People are special because God made us.** In our Bible story, God told a man named Jonah to go to Nineveh. God wanted Jonah to tell the people in Nineveh to stop doing wrong things. ”





THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

LEARN the Bible Story

1 WATCH A BOAT

Place a toy boat in a deep container half full of water on a towel in the group time area. Encourage children to take turns stirring the water with their fingers to create a storm. When all children have had a turn, move the supplies behind you so children will not be distracted during the story. Ask the children to form a circle and listen to the story.

SAY “ Did the boat float smoothly when we stirred the water? No, the boat was moving around. It would be scary to be on a boat in stormy, rough water! In our Bible story, God told a man named Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah did not go. Instead he boarded a boat. Listen to hear what the Bible says happened next. ”

2 TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Jonah and tell the following Bible story.

JONAH WARNED OF GOD’S JUDGMENT

SAY “ One day, God told Jonah, “Go to Nineveh. Tell the people there to stop doing wrong things.”

Jonah did not go to Nineveh like God told him to do. Instead, he got on a boat to go far away.

God sent a storm. The sailors on the boat asked Jonah, “Who are you? Where did you come from?”

Jonah said, “I worship the one true God who made everything.”

Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. The sailors picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea and the storm stopped. From that moment on, the sailors worshiped the one true God.

God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish’s belly for three days and three nights. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish. Then the fish spit Jonah onto dry land.

God said, “Jonah, go to Nineveh. Tell the people My message.” This time, Jonah went to Nineveh and told them God’s message.

The people in Nineveh listened. They stopped doing wrong things and showed God that they were sorry. ”

Christ Connection: God told Jonah to go tell people to stop making wrong choices. Jonah did not want to go. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to tell people to stop making wrong choices. Unlike Jonah, Jesus wanted to obey God.



THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

3 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

Show the Bible story picture to the children. Ask the children to point to different items in the picture and tell what they remember from the story. Ask the following questions to review: “What did God tell Jonah to do? What did Jonah do? What happened on the boat? Why did the sailors throw Jonah in the sea? What swallowed Jonah? How did Jonah get out of the big fish? What did God tell Jonah to do after he was back on dry land? What did Jonah do?”

SAY “Jonah should have listened to God and obeyed Him the first time God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah did not go. Instead, he got on a boat to go far away. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish’s belly for three days and three nights. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish. Then the fish spit Jonah onto dry land. God said, ‘Jonah, go to Nineveh. Tell the people My message.’ This time, Jonah went to Nineveh and told them God’s message. The people listened and started making right choices. They showed God they were sorry.”

4 SING A SONG

Sing the song to the familiar tune of “Did You Ever See a Lassie?”

“Did you know that you are special, you are special, you are special?
Did you know that you are special because God made you?”

5 LEARN THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker in the Bible at Psalm 139:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Read the phrase aloud. Place the key passage phrase poster on the floor. Guide preschoolers to say the phrase together, pointing to each word on the poster as they say it. Encourage the children to say the phrase several times as they pretend to swim around the room.

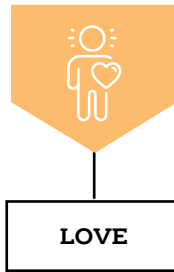
SAY “Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. They did and the storm stopped. From then on, the sailors worshiped the one true God. We can worship the one true God too. While we pretend to swim around the room saying our key passage phrase, we can praise God because He made us. Because He gave us arms and legs, we can pretend we are swimming. He gave us minds to make right choices and obey Him.”

6 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for sending Jesus who showed us God’s love and obeyed God. Ask God to help us obey when He asks us to do something.

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

LOVE God because of what we learned

1 LISTEN AND MOVE



Name different actions for the children to do such as jump, run in place, clap, pat your head, and turn around. Change from one direction to another direction quickly. Compliment the children for listening and obeying quickly. Continue playing the game as time allows. Extend the game by choosing children to name an action for the other children to follow.

SAY “ We moved in many different ways. When I said, ‘Hop,’ you all hopped. When I said, ‘Nod your head,’ you nodded your head. You did a great job of obeying. In our Bible story, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh to tell the people His message. Did Jonah obey? Not the first time God told him to go. He got on a boat to go far away. After the storm and being swallowed by a big fish, Jonah finally obeyed God. When God sent Jesus to tell people to stop making wrong choices, Jesus wanted to obey God. Jesus can help us obey God like He did. ”

2 BUILD A CITY

Encourage the children to use blocks to build a city. Move several feet away from the block city and use colored tape to make a road toward the city. Encourage children to use people figures and follow the roads to their block city. Comment that God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and tell people to stop doing wrong things and tell them God’s message.

SAY “ You built a city with the blocks. Many people live in cities and they need to hear about God. God loves everyone. He loves the people in the cities. God wants everyone to know about Him and to obey Him and make right choices. When God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh, did he obey? No, he did not the first time. Later when Jonah did obey and go to Nineveh, the people in the city listened. They decided to stop doing the wrong things and showed God they were sorry. ”

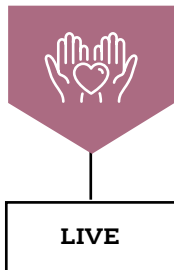
3 PAINT A WATER SCENE

Cover a table with a plastic tablecloth. Provide large sheets of paper and encourage the children to use crayons to draw fish on the papers. Encourage them to color the fish with bright colors. After children finish drawing fish, provide thin blue washable paint and paintbrushes for them to paint over the fish pictures. Help preschoolers put smocks on over their clothes. Talk about the children’s experiences visiting lakes and oceans. Be sensitive to children who may not have had experiences visiting lakes and oceans. Comment that God provided a very big fish to swallow Jonah when the sailors threw him into the water. Mention that Jonah prayed while he was in the fish.

SAY “ You created a water picture. I see fish swimming in the blue water. How do you think Jonah felt when he was thrown into the water and when the fish swallowed him? God cared for Jonah and listened and answered his prayers. Jonah chose to obey God and go to Nineveh. ”

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

LIVE for God out of love

1 SING PRAISE SONGS

Sing familiar praise songs. Fill clean, empty water bottles half full of water. Secure the lids with duct tape. Encourage the children to shake the water bottles as you sing. Name each child. Say, “God made _____.”

SAY “ Our key passage phrase is, ‘I will praise God because He made me. Psalm 139:14.’ We praise God when we sing about Him. We can sing to God and show that we love Him. God made each one of us. The noisy water in the bottles sounds like a storm. We learned in our Bible story that God sent a storm when Jonah did not obey and go to Nineveh. Many years later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to tell people to stop making wrong choices. Jesus wanted to obey God. ”

2 TEACH SIGN LANGUAGE



Teach preschoolers the American Sign Language (ASL) signs to say “Jesus loves you.” Jesus—use the middle finger to touch the opposite palm of each hand; loves— cross both arms with hands fistled across the middle of your chest; you—point with your index finger to the person you are talking to. Practice the signs a few times. Tell preschoolers to find a partner and tell the person “Jesus loves you” in sign language. Pray for people starting churches for the Deaf and for people who are deaf to learn that Jesus loves them.

SAY “ Deaf people use sign language to communicate words and ideas in a way they can understand. Do you know any other words in American Sign Language? We can learn words in American Sign Language and use our hands to tell people about Jesus. What words would you like to learn in sign language? ”

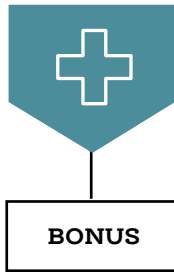
3 SNACK AND TRANSITION



Post an allergy alert. Serve the snack. As children eat, review and talk about the Bible story. When children finish their snack, lead them to complete the activity page. As they work, continue talking about the Bible story and emphasize the Christ connection.

SAY “ God told Jonah to go tell people to stop making wrong choices. Jonah did not want to go. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to tell people to stop making wrong choices. Unlike Jonah, Jesus wanted to obey God. ”

Remember to communicate helpful information to the bonus teaching hour leaders. If parents are picking up children at this time, tell them something their child did well during the session. Distribute the big picture cards for families. Encourage parents to engage with the family discussion starters and family activities during the week.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Group Time

1 MOVE IN DIFFERENT WAYS

Ask children to move to group time, suggest they jump, hop, swim, dance, tiptoe, and twirl in the group time area. Remind them that God told Jonah to go to Nineveh.

2 TALK ABOUT THE BIBLE STORY

Open your Bible to Jonah and tell the following Bible story.

JONAH WARNED OF GOD'S JUDGMENT

- One day, God told Jonah, "Go to Nineveh. Tell the people there to stop doing wrong things."
- Jonah did not go to Nineveh like God told him to do. Instead, he got on a boat to go far away.
- God sent a storm. The sailors asked Jonah, "Who are you?" Jonah said, "I worship the one true God who made everything."
- Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. When the sailors threw Jonah into the sea, the storm stopped.
- God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah. For three days, Jonah was in the fish's belly. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish. Then, the fish spit Jonah onto dry land.
- God said, "Jonah, go to Nineveh. Tell the people My message." This time, Jonah went to Nineveh and told them God's message.
- The people in Nineveh listened. They stopped doing wrong things and showed God that they were sorry.

3 SING A SONG

Sing the song below to the tune of "Did You Ever See a Lassie?"

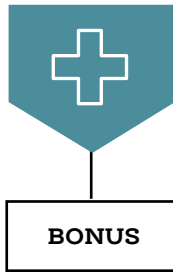
"Did you know that you are special, you are special, you are special?
Did you know that you are special because God made you?"

4 PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE PHRASE

Place the key passage phrase marker at Psalm 139:14. Invite a child to open your Bible to the key passage phrase. Lead the children to walk around the room as you say the phrase together. Say that God loves all people, even when we are making wrong choices. God sent Jonah to Nineveh because God loved them. Jonah decided to obey God and go to Nineveh.

5 PRAY

Pray, thanking God for making us special and loving us even when we disobey Him.



TEACHING HOUR

BONUS Teaching Hour Activities

6 FOLLOW A PATH



Create a path with tape on the floor that winds around the room. Guide the children to take turns following the path. Review the story as the children follow the path.

SAY “ God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah did not go to Nineveh the first time God told him to go. He got on a boat instead. What happened next? When Jonah finally went to Nineveh, what happened? The people listened and stopped making wrong choices. Later, God sent His Son, Jesus, to tell people to stop making wrong choices. Jesus obeyed God. We can obey God and make right choices. ”

7 MAKE A BEACH SCENE

Demonstrate for preschoolers how to tear tan or brown construction paper and use glue sticks to glue it across the bottom of light blue construction paper to make a beach. Guide children to make their own beaches with paper and draw lines with white crayons on the blue water to make waves. Suggest they use washable markers to draw Jonah either in the water or on the land. Review the story as the children create their beaches.

SAY “ Jonah did not go to Nineveh the first time God told him to go. He boarded a boat and tried to go the other way. God sent a storm. When the sailors threw Jonah into the water, God saved Jonah by sending a big fish to swallow him. Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish. When the fish spit Jonah on to the beach, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah obeyed and went to Nineveh. God wants us to obey Him. He made us and loves us. ”

8 TALK ABOUT OBEYING

Before the session, cover an empty cube-shaped tissue box with solid colored gift wrap paper. Print obey on three sides. Draw smiles on the other three sides. Instruct the preschoolers to sit in a circle on the floor. Explain that each child will have a turn to roll the cube. If the cube lands with obey on top, instruct the children to say together, “I can obey God.” If the cube lands with a smile on top, lead the child who rolled the cube to say a way he can obey God. Give suggestions as needed such as praying, reading the Bible, singing songs, bringing money for an offering, loving people that are hard to love, and telling others about God. Play the game as time allows, making sure each child has a turn tossing the cube.

SAY “ Did Jonah obey God? He did not obey God at the first of the story. He did obey God at the end. It is important for us to learn to obey God. We talked about different ways we can obey God. Jesus obeyed God and showed us how to live and love others. He can help us obey. ”

Release preschoolers to parents according to your church’s security procedure. Tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session.