

Jonah 2

The Prayer

Scripture: Jonah 2

Memory Verse: Jonah 2:9b “*Salvation is of the LORD.*”

Lesson Focus: We left off last week with Jonah in the belly of a giant fish. What we will see in our lesson this week is that this is what it took to get Jonah to finally repent of his rebellion and turn back to God. For it was only at this lowest point of absolute desperation that he appears to finally understand the grace of God. We hope his prayer to God in the belly of the fish will inspire these kids to turn to God and also pour out their hearts to Him!

Activities and Crafts: Jonah Praying in the Fish Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Find the Treasure Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Catch Jonah in the Fish

Starter Activity: Who Is Missing?

Consider getting the lesson started off with a quick and silly game to capture the kids’ attention. Pick a child in class to be “It” and have him/her close their eyes (no peeking!). Explain to “It” and the class that you are now going to walk around the room and silently pick one kid in the class to hide somewhere out of sight. You will select them by just touching their head and that will be your silent signal for that kid to quietly get up and sneak into the hiding place. Afterwards, have “It” open their eyes and see if they can guess which kid is missing. *

Consider trying a few rounds and mix it up by picking more than one kid, having the kids move around after picking the kid to go missing, or having more than one “It”. As always, make it fun!

Afterwards, transition into the lesson by having some discussion about who “went missing” in our study last week.

Q: Who remembers who sort of “went missing” in our Bible study from last week?

A: Jonah, that’s right!

Q: Where was he when we left off?

A: In the belly of a giant fish! Wow!

Let’s see what happens next as we continue the book of Jonah. Let’s open our Bibles together and find out!

Bible Study:

Jonah 1:17: If you missed our study from last week this probably sounds absolutely crazy to you! Therefore, let's review a little bit of what happened in the first chapter.

Jonah was a Jewish prophet of God who lived about 750-800 hundred years before Jesus.

Q: What did God tell him to do? *

A: Go into enemy territory (Nineveh of the Assyrians) and warn them to repent or turn away from their evil ways and turn toward the one true and living God.

Q: Did Jonah listen and obey?

A: NO! Not only did he not listen, but he got onto a ship sailing in the OPPOSITE direction thinking he could hide from God. *

Q: What happened next?

A: God engulfed his ship with a huge storm. After he was thrown overboard by the crew the storm stopped. But Jonah?

Instead of drowning, God miraculously preserved Jonah by this great fish and that brings us to this verse!

I think you could call this great fish "Jonah's **timeout** spot"! Many of you probably remember as preschoolers having a "spot" where you went for "timeout". * (**Teachers:** Consider sharing a funny personal "timeout" story of yours or of your own kids)

Q: Why would your Mom or Dad send you to your "timeout spot"?

A: Because you did something wrong or naughty and you needed loving correction. * And that time alone not only gives you space to cool off but also to reflect on what you've done.

Well, how about Jonah! He disobeyed God just like a naughty 2-year old disobeys his Mom (imagine Jonah having a temper-tantrum at God). Jonah also needs some loving correction by God and this time alone in the belly of the fish will give him some time to reflect and what he's done. (**Teachers:** We will leave a little toy enclosure in your class. Consider dressing it up a little * to represent the big fish and invite a kid to come sit in it pretending to be Jonah and ask them what it is like to be in the belly of a giant fish!) *

Jonah 2:1: This is a good start!

Q: What does Jonah do? A: For the first time, he turns back to God and talks to Him! * Just like that wonderful moment the naughty 2-year old reaches out to his Mom expressing that he is sorry, Jonah reaches out to God in repentance and brokenness.

Jonah 2:2a: And notice that God responds with open arms to Jonah's cry just like that Mom would to the truly sorry 2-year old! Behold, the gentleness and lovingkindness of our God! *

Jonah 2:2b: Jonah mentions out of the belly of "Sheol" God heard his voice. "Sheol" is not the name of the fish, but an ancient word that describes the grave. Jonah was saying he was "as good as dead" and yet God rescued him from death. Jonah was so hard-hearted toward God he had to be brought to the brink of death before he would surrender!

This is a good opportunity to pause for a second and talk about prayer.

Q: What is prayer? A: It's simply talking honestly to God!

Psalm 62:8 describes prayer as “pouring out your heart to God”. This means sharing all that is on the inside honestly with God (worries, fears, disappointments, joys, etc.).

(Teachers: Consider bringing in a pitcher of water and pour out the water to demonstrate the pouring out of all of our feelings unto God). This is exactly what Jonah is doing.

Jonah 2:3: Wait a minute! It was the sailors that threw Jonah into the sea.

Q: Who did he say cast him into the deep? A: God! Jonah knew he was guilty before God and it was He who was behind all of the consequences that brought him into the belly of the fish.

Jonah 2:4-5: Imagine for a second what it would have been like in the belly of this giant fish! Dark, smelly, and all alone! *

Q: Yet, was he actually all alone? A: NO! Even here God knew and heard his prayer!

Jonah 2:6a: Since the beginning of this book, we've only seen Jonah go downward in his rebellion. **Down** to Joppa and **down** onto the ship (**Jonah 1:3**), **down** into the lower parts of the ship (**Jonah 1:5**), and here **down** into the depths of the sea!

Jonah 2:6b-7: Yet, it was only after he hit “rock bottom” that he was surrendered and “brought up” by the God that he had remembered and turned back toward. His back was no longer toward God for he declares God to be HIS God! *

Jonah 2:8: Jonah also expresses how his God, the God of the Bible, is the ONLY God. No other false god or idol could have possibly done for Jonah what the true and living God has done!

Jonah 2:9: And here we see Jonah truly come to his senses and resolve to walk with God in obedience and thanksgiving. For he has been touched by the grace of God! * Grace is getting something good you don't deserve!

Q: Did Jonah deserve to be rescued by God? A: NO! God was not required to save a man who was so hard-hearted against him. Yet God's grace was strong enough to touch and soften Jonah's heart so that he proclaims, “*Salvation is of the Lord!*”

Jonah 2:10: And just like that Jonah was no longer missing! He was lost in his sin and rebellion, but now he has been found!

Key Point: Indeed, salvation is of the Lord! That was true then, and it is true now. * Have you been touched by the amazing grace of God? (**John 3:16**) If not, maybe you need a “time out” with God to reflect on your sin, how it separates you from God, and that only through repentance and faith in Jesus Christ can you be restored and saved.

Psalm 62:8 tells us to pour out our hearts to God in prayer.

Q: How can you pour out your heart to God this week in prayer? He wants relationship with you! Follow Jonah's example this week and share with God all your joys, sorrows, and feelings no matter where you are!

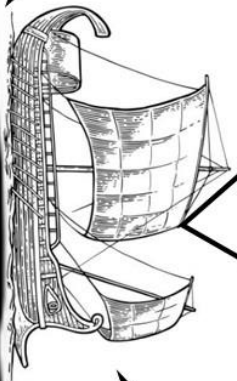
FIND THE TREASURE

Mediterranean World
Countries or Areas and Islands



Read Jonah 2:9
How did Jonah experience
the grace of God?

PARENT CHALLENGE
How long was Jonah in the belly of the
giant fish?



Read Psalm 62:8
What does it mean to "pour
out your heart" to God?