

JONAH MAKES THE WRONG DECISION

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

RIGHT DECISIONS CONSEQUENCES JUST

BIBLE REFERENCE

Jonah chapters 1 and 2

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn that making bad decisions brings consequences.

MEMORY VERSE

“Blessed are those who act justly, who always do what is right” (Psalm 106:3, NIV*).

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

The story of Jonah shows us the consequences of disobeying God. But, at the same time, it reminds us of the patience and loving forgiveness of the Lord.

Jonah was a prophet in Israel and Assyria from 793 to 753 B.C. When God ordered him to go to Nineveh, the idea did not please him. Nineveh was an important city, which would become the capital of the Assyrian empire. For the Jews, the destruction of Nineveh would have been seen as a gift from God. Jonah did not want to give God the opportunity to save the inhabitants of that place. How much did a ticket to go to Tarshish cost? Jonah probably paid a lot of money. However, when Jonah set foot on the ground again, he was tired, hungry and on the way to Nineveh. Important changes happened in his life during those events. First, God used Jonah’s disobedience to show his glory to a group of sailors. Second, Jonah was about to lose his life, so he begged God for his forgiveness and worshiped him. Sometimes the great fish in the story of Jonah is considered a punishment from God. However, it was really an act of mercy, since it saved Jonah’s life. How many times have you experienced the saving grace of God? Meditate on some occasion when the mercy of God saved you from the consequences of sin, giving you a new opportunity to obey.

ADAPTATION

By telling the story of Jonah to children, it gives them the opportunity to know God's character. Perhaps this story could inspire feelings of fear towards God, but through this teaching, children will understand that he took care of Jonah, even in the midst of his rebellion. Help them understand that God is near, even when they make bad decisions.

As preschoolers grow, their perception of God is based on what they perceive in their homes and in the church. Evaluate your actions and words carefully while teaching. Pray asking God to allow you to be a blessing to your children, so that they see in you an example of obedience to God.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

A big fish

During the week, draw the figure of a large fish on a large sheet of paper or cardboard.

Ask the children to color the fish together and decorate it to their liking. Meanwhile, tell them that today they will be studying what happened to a man named Jonah with a big fish.

TEACH THE LESSON

Different fish

For this activity, you will need molding clay or Play-Doh of different colors, and tablecloths or plastic bags.

Protect the work area with tablecloths or bags, and give the clay to your children. Allow enough time for them to form fish of different colors and sizes. As you work, explain that in today's story God used a big fish to teach Jonah a lesson.

When they are finished, allow each one to show their fish and prepare a small exhibition of the artwork for parents.

Ask your children to sit on an "imaginary ship" while narrating the Bible story.

Jonah makes a wrong decision

One day, God spoke to Jonah and told him, "Go to the great city of Nineveh and tell them to repent of their evil." Jonah listened to God's words, but did not obey him. He did not like the people who lived in Nineveh, so he thought of a plan to escape.

Jonah planned to go as far as possible. Then he went to the port of Joppa and looked for a ship to flee in. Jonah knew that God does not like to be disobeyed. However, he decided to go on the ship anyway.

Jonah was not happy about what he had done, so he preferred to sleep to avoid thinking about it. But, something terrible happened while he was sleeping.

A strong wind began to push the ship around. It moved from one side to the other as if it were paper. The wind was getting stronger and stronger. The sailors and passengers were very frightened and began to cry out to their idol gods, but the force of the storm continued to rise.

Then the ship's captain woke up Jonah and said, "How can you sleep so calmly? Get up and cry out to your God. Maybe he can help us and save us from this terrible storm."

The sailors wanted to know who was to blame for what was happening and asked Jonah. He answered, "I serve God, who made the sea and the land, and I am fleeing from him." The storm was getting worse and the sailors asked Jonah what they should do to calm it down. "You should throw me into the sea," said Jonah. "It is my fault. I should not have disobeyed God." The sailors did not want to throw Jonah into the sea, so they tried with all their might to take the ship ashore but they could not. The storm was very violent and they could not control the ship. Finally, they took Jonah and threw him into the sea. Then they prayed to God, praising him for saving them from death. The storm ended, and the sea was calm.

Meanwhile, Jonah was in the depths of the sea. Then God prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. He was in its stomach for three days and three nights. Inside the fish, Jonah felt ashamed for running away. He prayed, asking God for forgiveness for disobeying him. He also thanked the Lord for saving his life.

God knew that Jonah was sorry for his wrong decision and heard his prayer. So, he ordered the big fish to go near the beach and spit Jonah out.

Next week, we will study what happened when Jonah made the right decision and obeyed God.

CONNECT THE LESSON

The great storm

Prepare Student Activity Sheet #89-A and #89-B prior to this session. Cut out the fish in Student Activity Sheet #89-B for each child. Distribute the activity sheets, the pictures and colored pencils for the children to draw the boat, the sailors and Jonah in Student Activity Sheet #89-A. Allow the children to trace the word of faith of this unit (obey) and write their name.

Follow the instructions on Student Activity Sheet #89-B to complete the activity.

The consequences of disobedience

Discuss with your children what happens if they disobey their parents. Listen carefully to their answers and refer to what they learned in the Bible story. Remind them that obedience is very important in the lives of those who love God. Encourage the children to discuss this lesson with their parents or guardians.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

[Download Additional Memory Verse Activities PDF](#)

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In large letters, write the memory verse on the big fish that they colored at the beginning of the class, and read it aloud several times. Ask the children to form a circle and pass the fish from hand to hand while you silently count to ten. When you say “stop!” the child with the fish must say the memory verse. Continue the game until everyone has participated.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Pray asking God to help everyone to always obey, and intercede for prayer requests.

Encourage

Before saying goodbye, sing about the story of Jonah and the big fish. Encourage them to obey their parents, teachers, and other leaders, especially God.

Invite

Give the children items they need to take home and invite them to the next session to continue learning about decisions.