

JONAH MAKES A RIGHT DECISION

All Activity Sheets

KEY WORDS

OBEY MERCY JUSTLY RIGHT FISH EVIL

BIBLE REFERENCE

Jonah 3:1-10

LESSON OBJECTIVE

To help the children learn to obey God.

MEMORY VERSE

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

PREPARE YOURSELF TO TEACH

While inside the great fish, Jonah prayed to God, asking for forgiveness and restoration. God heard and answered his prayer.

In chapter 2 of the book of Jonah, it is not indicated that God spoke to Jonah while he was in the belly of the fish. Jonah had to wait for three days for God’s response. It was not until he was on solid ground that he heard the voice of the Lord. We know that God had really forgiven Jonah, because he gave him the same command: “Go to Nineveh.”

The story of Jonah is so amazing that on occasion we forget the mercy that God showed the people of Nineveh. But, Nineveh is like a picture of what happened to Jonah. The people of Nineveh were doing evil in the eyes of God. When the message of destruction was announced to them, they abstained from food and water for many days and dressed in mourning as they cried out for mercy from God. The people of Nineveh only needed a wake-up call to hear God’s message and repent. He forgave them and put them on the path of righteousness.

Do your actions show that you are obeying God? Pray to the Lord that, through your words and actions, your children will learn to obey God at all times.

ADAPTATION

Surely your children have experienced what happens when they make a bad decision and then have to ask for forgiveness. Through this lesson, your children will learn that Jonah made a bad decision, but then asked for forgiveness and God gave him a new opportunity to obey.

Also, it is important that they understand that if they make a bad decision, they must repent and ask for mercy from God, who is always willing to forgive.

Children often hear stories in which there are good and bad characters. In this lesson, you will see that good people sometimes make bad decisions too. Help them understand that God can change people and help them make good decisions.

As preschoolers grow, they feel more of a need to know God. Use this story to highlight God's unconditional love. Jonah did not win the love of God, nor did the inhabitants of Nineveh, but God showed them his love from beginning to end. Help them understand that God wants them to love and obey Him at all times, and that he is willing to forgive and restore them if they ever make any bad decisions.

INTRODUCE THE LESSON

Let's build a city

You will need molding clay or Play-Doh of different colors and tablecloths or plastic bags. Protect the work area with bags or tablecloths and provide the material for your children to build a city. As you work, tell them that the Bible story is about a city called Nineveh, where many people lived.

TEACH THE LESSON

Study Jonah 3:1-10 before the session and be ready to tell the Bible story. Help children have a better understanding of the biblical truth. Briefly review what you learned in the previous session so that the children can connect the two stories.

Jonah obeys God

After the great fish swallowed Jonah and held him in his belly for three days and three nights, he threw him on the beach. Jonah was very sorry for disobeying God and asked God for forgiveness.

"Get up and go to Nineveh," God told Jonah again. This time Jonah decided to be obedient and do God's will, so he started the journey to Nineveh. God had given him a special message for the people who lived there.

"God does not like the life you lead; there is a lot of evil among you, and within 40 days this city will be destroyed!" Jonah told the inhabitants of Nineveh.

The people of the city repented of their sins and asked God for forgiveness. The king said that everyone should pray and wear rough clothes (show the cloth) as a sign of repentance. They did not eat or drink anything either. They wanted to show God that they were sorry for all the bad things they had done.

God heard the prayer of the people of Nineveh. He knew that they were sincerely repentant and forgave their sins. The city was not destroyed and all the inhabitants decided to obey the Lord.

Jonah made a good decision by doing what God had commanded him. Also the people of Nineveh made a good decision by repenting and asking for forgiveness. And, we can make good decisions by obeying God's will.

CONNECT THE LESSON

I can obey God too!

Prepare Student Activity Sheet #90-A, #90-B and #90-C prior to this session. Cut out the pictures for this lesson from Student Activity Sheet #90-C to give a set to each child.

Hand out the activity sheets for this lesson, and have the children write their name and trace the word of faith on Student Activity Sheet #90-A. Help them cut back the two lines of the upper part following the dotted lines, and to fold the leaf in half.

Add the pictures from Student Activity Sheet #90-C to the corresponding place, and in the blank space make a drawing that

illustrates obedience. Allow time for them to also color the remaining areas.

Use the completed activity sheets to review what they studied today in the lesson. Also encourage the children to take home the activity sheets to share the lesson with their families and friends.

PRACTICE THE MEMORY VERSE

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Put several papers in a container that have the following instructions: "Say the verse on your way to your seat", "cry the verse", "scream the verse", etc.

Put the container in the center of the room. Ask the children to come by one by one and take a piece of paper. It will probably be necessary for you to read it so they can say the memory verse.

WRAP-UP

Pray

Gather the group to pray and intercede for their needs.

Encourage

Have the class pick up and put in order all the materials they used for the session. Encourage them to find ways to show obedience to their parents, teachers and God during the week.

Invite

Send the children with off by showing appropriate affection and inviting them to the next session.