#### Lesson 5:

#### Jonah

#### SCRIPTURE REFERENCE:

Jonah

#### MEMORY WORK:

Bible skills 1-6 Psalms 119:105

PERSONAL APPLICATION:

God wants me to treat everyone the same and to teach them about Jesus.

**LESSON STARTS HERE**



INTRODUCTION:

Have you ever tried to run from your mom or dad or tried to hide from them? Did they find you? Have you ever been mean to someone? In our lesson today, we will learn about a man, a prophet, named Jonah.

#### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Nineveh was the capital city of the powerful Assyrian empire, and they were extremely wicked (Jonah 1:2). God wanted Jonah to preach to the people of Nineveh. This huge city was about 500 miles east of Israel. Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh because he did not want the Ninevites, enemies of Israel, to have the opportunity to repent and be forgiven by God (Jonah 4:2). The Assyrians were a cruel and ruthless people that Jonah did not think worthy of God’s love and forgiveness.
2. Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah went the opposite direction, to Tarshish, a small Phoenician colony in southwestern Spain—about 2,000 miles from Israel! He knew that God was the Creator of everything (Jonah 1:9), but he thought he could somehow sail away and escape the presence of God. He was soon reminded that God is everywhere (omnipresent), all-knowing (omniscient), and all-powerful (omnipotent).
3. A great storm came upon the ship and threatened to break it apart. The men sailing the vessel called to their gods, and nothing, of course, happened. Jonah, apparently unconcerned about the storm, was asleep in the ship. The captain of the ship woke him up and told him to pray to his God like the rest of the men were, to see if Jonah’s God would stop the storm. The men “**cast lots**” to determine who was causing the storm, and the lot fell on Jonah (1:7; cf. Proverbs 16:33).

**Cast Lots:** “[T]he lot was regarded as a solemn appeal to God, for his direct interference in cases which they could not themselves decide. Proverbs 16:33, ‘The lot is cast into the lap; but the whole disposing thereof is of the Lord.’ The choice of an apostle was an event of the same kind, and was regarded as a solemn appeal to God for his direction and guidance in a case which the apostles could not determine. [cf. Acts 1:26] The manner in which this was done is not certainly known. The common mode of casting lots, was to write the names of the persons on pieces of stone, wood, etc., and put them in one urn; and the name of the office, portion, etc., on others. These were then placed in an urn with other pieces of stone, etc., which were blank. The names were then drawn at random, and also the other pieces, and this determined the case.” [*Barnes’ Notes on the New Testament Explanatory and Practical* (2012), WORDsearch Corp., Acts 1:26]

1. The men immediately began to ask Jonah many questions about himself and what might be causing the storm. Jonah confessed that he was an Israelite and that he believed and followed “the Lord (i.e., Jehovah), the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land” (Jonah 1:9). Jonah admitted to the men that he had run away from God. They asked him what should be done to stop the storm, since the storm was getting even worse. Jonah said the men should pick him up and throw him into the sea, and the storm would stop.
2. The men did not want to throw Jonah overboard, knowing that Jonah would certainly drown, and not wanting to be guilty of shedding innocent blood. So they prayed to God, “please do not let us perish for this man’s life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O Lord, have done as it pleases You” (1:14). Then they threw Jonah into the sea—and the sea became calm. The men then feared God and offered to Him a sacrifice and took vows. Meanwhile, God had prepared a great sea creature (Jonah 1:17) for the special purpose of swallowing Jonah and saving him from drowning.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the articles “[**Jonah and the**](https://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=69&amp;topic=100)[**‘Whale’?**](https://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=69&amp;topic=100)” by Dave Miller and “[**Was Jonah Swallowed by a Fish or a Whale?**](https://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=11&amp;article=2830)” by Eric Lyons on the Apologetics Press Web site for a discussion about the nature of the creature that swallowed Jonah and responses to common allegations against the Bible regarding this story.

1. Having to spend time in the belly of the great fish for three days also taught Jonah some valuable lessons. One important lesson Jonah had to learn was that God wants everyone in the world to be saved—no matter how “evil” they may be, where they live, what they look like, how they dress, or what language they speak. God loves everyone everywhere the same.
2. Jonah prayed to God while in the belly of the great fish and repented of his behavior. So God “spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land” (2:10). This time, when God spoke to Jonah, he obeyed God and went to Nineveh to preach to the city.
3. Discuss the size of Nineveh (cf. 3:3)—“a three-day journey in extent.” Discuss the magnitude of Jonah’s job. Talk with the children about the number of people in the world and the magnitude of the job of teaching all of them about Jesus. There are many places around the world, even places in the United States, where many people need to be taught about Jesus (Acts 17:24-31).
4. Jonah’s message was simple: God would destroy Nineveh in 40 days. No doubt the people of Nineveh had heard about what happened to Jonah and the sea creature. Jesus referred to Jonah as a “sign to the Ninevites,” comparing Himself being in the grave for three days to Jonah’s being in the belly of the sea creature for three days (Luke 11:29-30; Matthew 12:40). So due to the miracle that the men on the ship had witnessed, the message of Jonah to the Ninevites had been proven to be from God. Remember that the purpose of miracles, first and foremost, was to confirm the message of the speaker as being God-sent (Mark 16:20; Hebrews 2:3-4).
5. The people, including the king, believed Jonah’s message and repented. The entire city repented of their wicked deeds, prayed to God, and fasted (did not eat), begging God to have mercy on them. So God heard them and did not destroy them. The great news is that as He did with the Ninevites, God will forgive **all** who turn from their wicked ways, turn to Him, and do those things He requires. Read Acts 26:20 and compare it to the actions of the people of Nineveh.

**RECOMMENDED READING FOR TEACHERS:** See the article “[**Why does God**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=1166&amp;topic=314)[**Sometimes Repent?**](http://www.apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=6&amp;article=1166&amp;topic=314)” on the Apologetics Press Web site for a response to an allegation against the nature of God from this story.

1. This short book is not about the prophet himself (who is mentioned 18 times). It is about God (mentioned 38 times), about His will and how we should respond to Him, about His love and how we should share it with others.

**NOTE:** “Research tells us that between ages 2 and 5, children become aware of gender, race, ethnicity, and disabilities. They also become sensitive to both the positive attitudes and negative biases attached to these four key aspects of identity, by their family and by society in general. Young children develop ‘pre-prejudice’: misconceptions, discomfort, fear, and rejection of differences that may develop into real prejudice if parents and teachers do not intervene…. Many adults…would prefer to believe that young children are blissfully unaware of the differences between people upon which prejudice and discrimination are based. But young children not only recognize differences, they also absorb values about which differences are positive and which are not. How we as parents and teachers react to the ideas that young children express will greatly affect the feelings they will form. If we want children to like themselves and to value diversity, then we must learn how to help them resist the biases and prejudice that are still far too prevalent in our society.” *(from a brochure of the National Association for the Education of Young Children; statement echoes James 2 and other biblical passages)*

RECOMMENDED ADDITIONAL VISUALS (**note disclaimers**):

* + - Betty Lukens’ felt pieces
    - Jonah ABeka Flash-a-Card Series (DISCLAIMER: use the cards, not the lesson book;
    - Free Bible Images on flash drive – Show on classroom tv. Suggested script in lesson file
    - Bible Study Guide for All Ages (BSGFAA) Lessons 396-397. It is recommended to stop on #3 of lesson 397. These visuals will look like a black and white comic strip on one large piece of cardstock. To use these attach it to the magnetic dry erase board. Use dry erase markers to follow the directions. Let students take turns marking on the page.
    - *Jonah and the Big Fish*, A Read and Learn Bible Story Book

SONGS AND FINGERPLAYS :

**“Who Did?”**

Author: Unknown

Who did, who did, who did, who did,

Who did swallow Jo-jo-jonah,

Who did, who did, who did, who did,

Who did swallow Jo-jo-jonah up?

Fish did, fish did, fish did, fish did,

Fish did swallow Jo-jo-jonah,

Fish did, fish did, fish did, fish did,

Fish did swallow Jonah up.

# SUNDAY

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* “[Jonah Maze](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-26-34-178Jonah%20Maze.pdf)” (provided in activity sheets)
* Help the children make a “Big Fish[” puppet. [See patterns at http://www.dltk-kids.com/](http://www.dltk-kids.com/) animals/whales.htm]
* Balloon Fish Craft – Blow up a blue balloon. Put a teddy graham cookie inside to be Jonah. Let students glue on wiggly eyes. Decorate

### WEDNESDAY NIGHT

#### POINTS TO EMPHASIZE:

1. Review Sunday’s lesson. (See [Review Questions](http://www.apcurriculum.com/dcirfol/4-24-32RQ.pdf) for example questions.)

LEARNING CENTERS AND ACTIVITIES:

* Play “Hide and Seek.” When finished, discuss with the children how Jonah tried to hide from God but could not because God always knows where we are and what we are doing
* Review Game – Use Corn Hole Board. Decorate board to look like fish. The bean bags are Jonah. Ask a question, if the student answers correctly he can try to throw the bean bag into the fish’s mouth. It would be neat to find or make Bible person bean bags for these type of games.

### Review Questions

1. Where did God want Jonah to preach?
   1. Ninevah
2. Why did Jonah not want to go to Ninevah?
   1. He didn’t want the people of Ninevah to have to opportunity to repent and be forgiven by God.
3. Where did Jonah go instead of Ninevah?
   1. Tarshish
4. Why did Jonah travel so far away?
   1. He thought he could sail to a place where God could not find him.
5. How did God remind Jonah He is everywhere?
   1. God send a storm that would have destroyed the boat Jonah was on, if he had not told the sailors to throw him in the water.
6. What did God prepare to swallow Jonah?
   1. A great fish
7. How long did Jonah spend in the belly of the fish?
   1. Three days
8. What happened to Jonah after the three days?
   1. God told the fish to spit Jonah out onto the land
9. What di Jonah do after the fish spit him out?
   1. He went to Ninevah and preached to the people.

### Additional Notes / Activities Performed & Curriculum Feed Back

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