

Lesson 53 - Jonah and the Big Fish

Aims

- * To learn what happened to Jonah when he didn't listen to God
- * To learn that good things happen when we listen to God

Materials

- * The Beginner's Bible Jonah ch.1:1 - ch. 3:10
- * Visual aids - picture cards of the story
- * Jonah puppet game - puppet pattern of Jonah, card, glue, scissors
- * Jonah action story

Lesson Outline

1. Story
2. Questions about the story
3. Discussion
4. Activities - a picture to colour, puppet story, action story, memory game
5. Review the aims
6. Prayer

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1) Story

Jonah and the Big Fish (Jonah 1:1 - 3:10)

Jonah was a prophet of God. One day God said to Jonah, "Go to the big city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing bad things."

But Jonah ran away. He did not want to go to Nineveh. Instead he got on a boat to sail across the sea. God sent a big storm to stop Jonah. The sailors on the boat were afraid. They thought the boat was going to sink!

Jonah told the sailors, "My God has sent the storm. If you throw me in the water, the sea will become calm again."

So the sailors threw Jonah into the raging sea. Instantly, the sea became calm.

Just then, Jonah saw a big fish coming! Gulp! The fish swallowed Jonah.

For three days and nights, Jonah was inside the fish. He prayed to God. "Please forgive me."

The God told the fish to spit Jonah onto dry land. For the second time, God said to Jonah, "Go and tell the people of Nineveh to stop doing bad things."

This time, Jonah obeyed God. The people of Nineveh were sorry for doing bad things, so God forgave them.

2) Questions about the story

- * What did God want Jonah to do?
- * What did Jonah do?
- * What happened when Jonah was on the ship?
- * Why were the sailors afraid?
- * What did Jonah tell the sailors?
- * What happened when Jonah was thrown over board?
- * How many days was Jonah inside the fish?
- * What did Jonah do he was inside the fish?
- * What did Jonah do after the fish spit him out?
- * Did the people of Nineveh listen to Jonah?

3) Discussion

- * What happened to Jonah when he didn't listen to God?
- * What happened to the people from Nineveh when they listened to God?
- * How can we listen to God? (obey our parents)
- * What good things happen when you listen to your parents?
- * What does God want us to do when we do something wrong?

4) Activities

- * Retell the story using picture cards
- * memory game
- * a picture to colour
- * Jonah puppet game
- * Jonah action story

5) Review the lesson aim

- * To learn what happened to Jonah when he didn't listen to God
- * To learn that good things happen when we listen to God

6) Prayer





Jonah and the Big Fish



Jonah was a prophet of God. One day God said to Jonah, “Go to the big city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing bad things.”

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The Story of Jonah

(more details)



Jonah was a prophet from Israel. God spoke to him, telling him to go to Nineveh and warn the people of the judgment that was to come upon them because of their wickedness.

Jonah didn't want to go. So he tried to run away. He went to Joppa and boarded a ship bound for Tarshish, went below the deck and fell asleep.

A violent storm arose, so fierce that the ship was in danger of breaking up. Frightened, the crew members called upon their gods and threw the cargo overboard to make the ship ride the waves better. Nothing worked. The captain woke Jonah and said, "Get up and call on your God." The captain hoped that Jonah's God would help them and they wouldn't die.

Jonah said he was running from the LORD. The crew asked what they should do, and he told them to throw him overboard. They didn't want to do this and tried rowing harder. They finally prayed to Jonah's God, asking him not to be angry with them for taking Jonah's life, and threw him overboard. As soon as they did this, the storm stopped. When the sailors saw this, they feared the LORD and made vows to him.

God didn't want Jonah to die. He sent a great fish to swallow him. Jonah lived inside the fish for three days and three nights. While in the fish's belly, Jonah prayed to God. God heard his prayer and made the fish spit Jonah out on land.

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell them their city would be destroyed. The people heard Jonah's message and changed from their wicked ways. God showed them mercy and didn't destroy their city.

Jonah Puppet Game



This puppet and action rhyme help children understand and remember the story of Jonah

Preparation

Make copies of the Jonah puppet pattern, one for the teacher and for each child. Cut out the patterns and glue them on to light-weight card. Cut out the marked circles. Children will put their index and middle fingers through these holes for Jonah's legs. Give coloured pencils or crayons to colour Jonah.

How to play

1. Before playing give each child a puppet and pencils/crayons to colour and tell the story.
2. Show children how to hold their puppets, so that their fingers become Jonah's legs.
Explain that if they move their fingers quickly, Jonah will appear to be running. Let children practise making Jonah walk and run.
3. Say the following action rhyme, and encourage the children to follow your actions with their puppets. After hearing the rhyme several times the children will be able to say the words with you.

Old Jonah sailed upon the sea - *(Move Jonah up and down as if on waves)*

From God he ran away - *(Move fingers to make Jonah run)*

But God sent up a great big fish - *(Make fish's mouth with left hand. Move towards Jonah)*

To swallow him that day - *(Grab Jonah with fish's mouth)*

(Keep Jonah in the fish's mouth for this part)

From the fish old Jonah prayed,

"Please get me out, oh Lord,

And I will go to Nineveh,

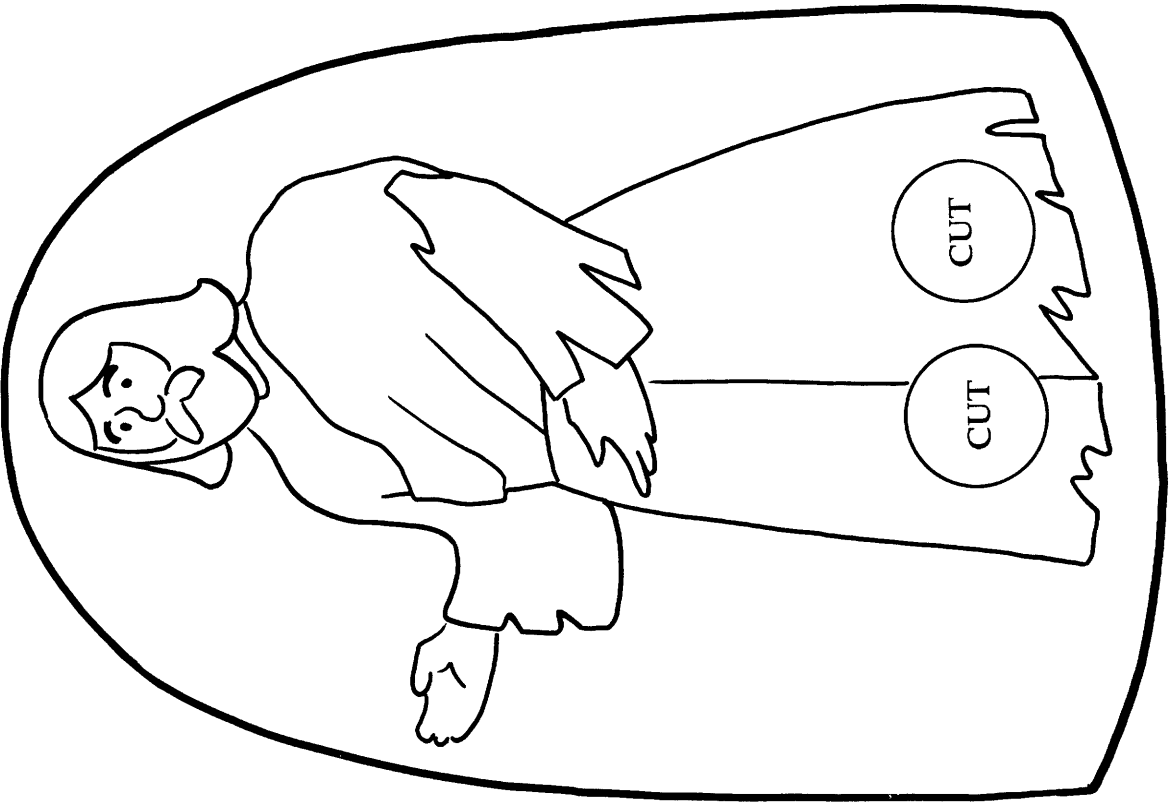
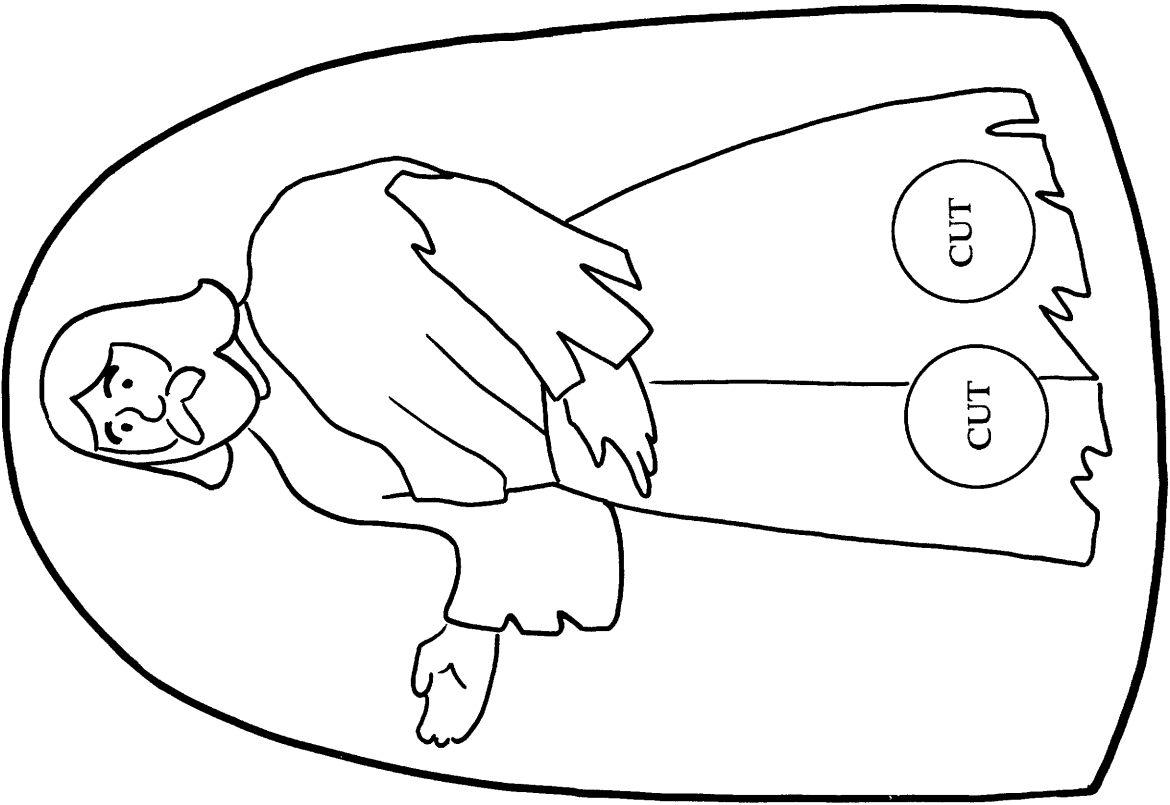
And preach to them your word."

The fish, he coughed and sputtered - *(shake left hand vigorously),*

Spit Jonah on the sand - *(Quickly lift Jonah out of left hand)*

So Jonah went to Nineveh - *(Jonah walks away)*

And preached throughout the land - *(Walk Jonah around in a big circle)*



Jonah Action Story



This action story helps children visualize the story of Jonah. Seat the children on the floor so they are all facing you. Tell the story dramatically. Encourage the children to add actions where indicated.

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Once there was a man named Jonah. He was a prophet. Let's make believe we're Jonah.

One day God said, "Jonah, I want you to go to Nineveh (*point to a far corner of the room*) and talk to the people.

The people in Nineveh were very bad, and Jonah didn't want to go there. Jonah said, "No, no, no; I won't go. (*Shake head.*) I won't go to Nineveh." (*Point to far corner.*)

Jonah went down to the sea and got on a boat. He was going far away from Nineveh. He said, "No, no, no; I won't go. (*Shake head*) I won't go to Nineveh." (*Point to far corner.*)

Jonah went down to the bottom of the boat and fell asleep. (*Lay head on hands. Close eyes.*) All of a sudden a big storm came. There was lightning, thunder and rain. The waves got higher and higher. A sailor woke up Jonah. "Get up, Jonah; get up!" he cried. Jonah woke up. (*Raise head and look around.*)

Jonah told the sailors, "God sent this storm because I said, 'No, no, no; I won't go. (*Shake head.*) I won't go to Nineveh.' (*Point to far corner.*)

So the sailors threw Jonah out of the boat. (*Stand up, hold noses, and jump.*) He landed in the water. (*Stand up straight.*)

He began to sink. (*Bend knees and pretend to sink.*)

Just then a great big fish swam toward him.

The fish opened his mouth, and GULP! into his mouth went Jonah. *(Jump up.)*

Jonah slid down the fish's slippery tongue and landed KERPLUNK! in his stomach. *(Sit down hard on chair or floor.)*

Seaweed was wrapped around Jonah's head.

Let's get it off! *(Pretend to unwind seaweed.)*

It was dark down in that fish, and it didn't smell good. PHEW! *(Hold noses.)*

So Jonah prayed to God, *(bow heads and close eyes)* "Dear God," Jonah prayed, "please help me."

Jonah said, "I will go; I will go; *(nod head emphatically)* I will go to Nineveh." *(Point to far corner.)*

So the fish spit him out. *(Jump up.)*

Jonah went to Ninevah *(walk to far corner of room)* and preached to all the people there.

Jonah

and the Big Fish

