

## 4th-5th Lesson

### Unit 14, Session 1

# Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh

## Jonah

**Story Point:** God loves all people and showed mercy to the Ninevites.



*Watch the Bible Story video.*

God told the prophet Jonah, “Go to the great city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing evil things.” The people of Nineveh were enemies of God’s people. **Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh.** So he got on a boat heading the other way! God sent a terrible storm, and the sailors were afraid. They cast lots to figure out who caused this trouble. The lot fell on Jonah. **The sailors asked Jonah, “Who are you? What are you doing here?”**

Jonah replied, “I worship the one true God who made everything.” The sailors did not know what to do, so **Jonah told them to throw him into the sea. When they did, the storm stopped.** From that moment on, the sailors worshiped the one true God.

God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. **Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land.**

God told Jonah, “Go to Nineveh and preach My message.” So Jonah went into the city shouting: “In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!” The people turned from their evil ways. The king repented. God decided not to destroy Nineveh.

“I knew it!” Jonah said. “You are a gracious God. You show mercy to people. You are slow to anger, and You are loving. **I knew You would decide to not destroy Nineveh. I am so mad!**”

“Is it right for you to be angry?” God asked. Jonah left Nineveh and made a shelter where he could still see the city. God provided a plant to shade Jonah. But the next day, God sent a worm that attacked the plant, and the plant died. Then God sent a hot wind. Jonah almost fainted. “I want to die,” he said.

God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?” **“Yes!” Jonah said.**

God said, “You cared about the plant, but you did not take care of it or make it grow. **Nineveh is a big city with thousands of people. I created them and care about them.** Aren’t they and the animals in the city more important than a plant?”

*Christ Connection: God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.*



# INTRODUCE the Story

## WELCOME TIME

[Intro Music](#)

Play intro music and greet each kid as he or she arrives. Help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to talk about the importance of following directions. What happens when we ignore directions?

## Countdown

*Show the countdown video as you transition to the Large Group game.*

[Video: Countdown](#)

## Large Group Game: Simon Says

**SAY** • Hello everyone! Welcome to KidCity. Before we get started I want to let you know that today is baptism day! Some of our friends here at church have decided to follow Jesus and they want to share that with everyone. Does anyone here have a sticker with a water drop on it? If so, celebrate with applause. Either way, encourage everyone to go outside right after they get picked up to watch baptisms.

Okay, let's play a classic game. It's called Simon Says. You all know how to play it, yes? Well in case you don't, the rules are very simple. If I tell you to do something like touch your head but I don't say Simon Says first and you do it, then you're out! You only do what Simon Says to do.

*Play Simon Says until there's one winner. Make sure to have the Small Group Leaders help referee the game as well.*

*Optional Variant: Play the Donnie the Elf video(s) on the screen instead. Donnie is very good at leading this game!*

[Video: Simon Says Part 1](#)

[Video: Simon Says Part 2](#)

[Video: Simon Says Part 3](#)

## Sing

**SAY** • Let's take some time to worship our merciful, loving God, who waits patiently for us to love obey Him.

[Song: This Little Light](#)

[Song: O Taste and See](#)



## TEACH the Story

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. All of the stories in the Bible fit together to tell us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

God sent prophets to warn the people that God would punish their sin if they didn't turn back to Him. Jonah was a prophet who lived in Israel. God called Jonah to take a message to his enemies in Nineveh. Whether this is your first time or your tenth time hearing this story, there is always something new to learn in God's Word.

Watch the Bible Story Video.

[Video: Jonah Prophet to Nineveh](#)

- What does this story teach us about God?

[CG: Question 1](#)

Jonah was angry when God showed mercy to the Ninevites, but God taught Jonah that He made people and He cares about them. We are all sinners who need God's mercy. **God loves to be merciful!** He showed mercy to us by sending Jesus to call us—His enemies!—to repent.

- How is Jesus greater than Jonah?

[CG: Question 2](#)

Jesus came calling all sinners to repentance. **He submitted to God's will with joy and laid down His own life for our sins.** God shows His mercy in the gospel, forgiving those who trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior.

### CHRIST CONNECTION

*God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.*



## TEACH the Story

### Big Picture Question

### CG: Big Picture Question

Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.

### PRAY

God, thank You for Your Word. We hear the story of Jonah and are reminded that You show mercy to sinners. Soften our hearts so we rejoice when You show grace to sinners. Help us remember the gospel. Thank You for Jesus! Amen.

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## THE GOSPEL: GOD'S PLAN FOR ME

The gospel is the good news, the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use Scripture and the guide provided below to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.



**GOD RULES.** Ask: “Who is in charge at home?” Explain that because God created everything, He is in charge of everything. Read Revelation 4:11.



**WE SINNED.** Ask: “Have you ever done something wrong?” Tell kids that everyone sins, or disobeys God. Our sin separates us from God. Read Romans 3:23.



**GOD PROVIDED.** Explain that God is holy and must punish sin. God sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment we deserve. Read John 3:16.



**JESUS GIVES.** Ask: “What is the best gift you’ve ever received?” Say that Jesus took our punishment for sin by giving His life, and He gives us His righteousness. God sees us as if we lived the perfect life Jesus lived. This is the best gift ever! Read 2 Corinthians 5:21.



**WE RESPOND.** Explain that everyone has a choice to make. Ask: “Will you trust Jesus as your Savior and Lord? You can turn from self and sin and turn to Jesus.” Read Romans 10:9-10.



## APPLY the Story

### Big Picture Question

**Why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.**

God loves all people and showed mercy to the Ninevites. God promises to judge sin, but He is patient in keeping His promise because He wants everyone to repent.

- Why should we care about people we don't get along with?
- How can loving others point them to Jesus?

Distribute Bibles. Guide preteens to open their Bibles to the Book of Jonah. Choose a volunteer to read aloud Jonah 4:10-11. Remind kids that the Ninevites were enemies of God's people. We trust that God will keep His promise to one day end all evil and make everything right. He is being patient; He wants everyone to repent and turn to Him.

Choose another volunteer to read aloud Jonah 4:10-11 again. Then lead the group to discuss the following questions.

#### 1. Why did Jonah try to run away from God?

*Guide kids to recall that the people of Nineveh were enemies of the Israelites. Jonah did not want his enemies to hear God's warning because Jonah knew God is gracious, compassionate, and full of mercy. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Ps. 145:8.)*

#### 2. Why can it be hard to love people who are unkind or unloving to us? How does that help you understand what Jesus did for us?

*Help kids recognize that we were enemies of God. God sent Jesus to call us to repent and be forgiven. Jesus obeyed God completely and died on the cross in our place. On the third day, He rose again. We can love others because we have been loved so much. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Rom. 12:14.)*

#### 3. Is there anyone too sinful for God to forgive?

*Assure preteens that God will forgive anyone who confesses their sin and trusts in Jesus. Emphasize the mercy God showed to both Jonah and the Ninevites. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 1:9.)*



## APPLY the Story

### KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY

*Supplies: Bibles, sticky notes, marker*

Write the words of the key passage on separate sticky notes. Attach them to a focal wall. Instruct kids to open their Bibles to 2 Peter 3:9. Lead the kids to read the key passage together. Ask a volunteer to choose one of the words from the key passage. Remove the sticky note containing that word and challenge the volunteer to read the key passage, supplying the missing word. Then choose another kid to remove a second word. He should read the key passage, supplying the two missing words.

Continue with additional kids, removing words one at a time as kids learn to say the key passage from memory.

### PRAY

Invite volunteers to share prayer requests. Then pray, thanking God for making the way for us to turn from our sin and turn to Him through Jesus.

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITY: Compassion actors

*Supplies: index cards, marker*

Before the session, write the following scenarios on separate index cards:

- A classmate dropped his tray in the cafeteria.
- A friend is worried about a sick relative.
- A sibling is feeling left out after not being invited to a birthday party.
- A friend is feeling hurt by something someone said.

Form three or four groups of kids. Give each group a scenario card. Instruct them to discuss with their group how they might show compassion in that situation.

Give kids several minutes to develop a short skit acting out the scenario and role playing people in the scenario. Then invite groups to share their skits. Point out specific ways kids showed compassion.

Review that God loves all people and showed mercy to the Ninevites. One way to show others the love of Jesus is by showing compassion. We can show concern for others, offer to pray, and encourage people who are hurting. Prompt kids to look for ways this week to show love and compassion to those around them.