

Grown Up Children Stories – Jonah Week 3

Main Point: **You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.**

Main Passage: Jonah 1-3 (Matthew 12:40-41, 2 Kings 14:25)

The Beginner's Bible Page: pg 257 Jonah and the Big Fish

Jesus Connection:

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
- Matthew 12:40-41
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated

Message Start:

Welcome friends. If you've been with us the past few weeks, we are in this series 'Grown Up Children Stories.' We are looking into some common, well known children bible stories to see more layers to the story. When we were kids growing up, it was good for us to get an idea of these stories and characters. If we only stay there, we miss out on the 'MORE' that is offered in the bible. More depth. More understanding. More of Jesus.

[AUTHOR NOTE – I set up an oversized recliner on stage, and I sat in it while giving the intro. I also gave the first part of the intro with the tone of a kindergarten teacher. When I got to the next part of the intro, I stood up and resumed my normal speaking tone to emphasize the transition from "kid stuff" to a more grown up approach.]

Today we are going to chat about Jonah and draw a connection to Jesus. Who has heard of the story of Jonah before? This is a pretty well known bible story. Real quick, what do you remember about Jonah... (take a few answers) YES he was eaten by a giant fish. There's so much more to this story to dig into. There are only 3 verses that talk about the fish.

Before we read this, many of us have thought or even asked – Did this really happen? Is it fact or a story/ parable? Good the news, where you stand on that, it leads to the same place... God's grace.

However, I strongly believe that Jonah is a book that should be taken literally, here's why:

1. There are no other parables in the OT (Old Testament)
2. Jesus only spoke in parables in the NT (New Testament)
3. If you believe in the life, death, resurrection of Jesus (a much bigger miracle), then believing this story of Jonah is much easier.
4. OT book – 2 Kings 14:25 (a historical book) mentions the prophet Jonah. We know Jonah was a real person, a real prophet of God

Story Time

[AUTHOR NOTE –Give as much energy as you can to reading the story like you would to a group of children. Tell the story as if your group was hearing it for the first time.]

[Read from The Beginner's Bible (accessible from the Nursery/ Young Children's in KidCity)

[Read story on page 257 – Jonah\]](#)

READ CHILDREN BIBLE STORY OF JONAH

What's going on in this story? God told Jonah – He spoke to Jonah – this is a direct order to GO to Nineveh.

As we get started, let's understand a little bit about Nineveh.

Nineveh was BAAAAAAD. Like the worst. Think for a moment, what is the most WICKED or EVIL group of people you could think of today?

Examples: *(use your own/ relateable to your students)*

- Play sports – your rival
- We hear about wars, a country taking over another country.
- Terrorists

You see, Ninevites were bad. They were ruthless. Jonah's response of going to Nineveh was NOPE, I would imagine he was scared AND he felt they didn't deserve God's compassion. Nineveh had a reputation for their brutality & terrorism.

But God cared enough for Nineveh to warn them about the coming judgement. Jonah was the messenger that God chose.

As we start out in the book of Jonah, we see God's mercy. Let's open our bibles and dig in to what your bible says about Jonah, a little more than the children's bible will share.

Let's see Jonah's story arc:

1. Jonah's Disobedience

- a. Jonah Hears directly from God. How many of us, say something like, 'If God would just tell me... I'd follow' This is what happened to Jonah.
- b. Look at his response... Jonah 1:1-3a - The word of the Lord came to Jonah son of Amittai: ²“Go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me.” ³ But Jonah ran away from the Lord and headed for Tarshish (The other way!)
- c. Jonah tries to 'Do this ON HIS OWN!' Have you ever tried that? Most of us have been guilty of DOING on OUR OWN, and NOT doing what God would have for us.
- d. Most of us can relate to this, we lean to our OWN way and NOT on God's ways.

2. Glimmer of Compassion (from Jonah)

- a. The seas are getting rough, storm is getting worse. Jonah sees he is the problem.
- b. Jonah 1:11-12 - ¹¹ The sea was getting rougher and rougher. So they asked him, “What should we do to you to make the sea calm down for us?” ¹² “Pick me up and throw me into the sea,” he replied, “and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.”
- c. These Guys TRY to save him, TRY any other way than throw him overboard. Jonah 1:13-16 - ¹³ Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not, for the sea grew even wilder than before. ¹⁴ Then they cried out to the Lord, “Please, Lord, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man, for you, Lord, have done as you pleased.” ¹⁵ Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. ¹⁶ At this the men greatly feared the Lord, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows to him.

- d. These sailors started following God! Jonah recognized he was the problem by disobeying God. He didn't want the sailors to suffer, in this moment Jonah has compassion for the sailors and sacrifices himself.
- e. God can use humility! When we have a humble response, God is ready to meet us in that place, this is what happens to Jonah.

3. Cry to God

- a. Jonah is thrown overboard and this giant fish swallows Jonah for 3 days and 3 nights.
- b. Once again we see a person crying out to God, pleading to Him in his low moment. God shows up. God has mercy.
- c. Jonah 2:2-10 - ²He said: "In my distress I called to the Lord, and he answered me. From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help, and you listened to my cry. ³You hurled me into the depths, into the very heart of the seas, and the currents swirled about me; all your waves and breakers swept over me. ⁴I said, 'I have been banished from your sight; yet I will look again toward your holy temple.' ⁵The engulfing waters threatened me, the deep surrounded me; seaweed was wrapped around my head. ⁶To the roots of the mountains I sank down; the earth beneath barred me in forever. But you, Lord my God, brought my life up from the pit. ⁷"When my life was ebbing away, I remembered you, Lord, and my prayer rose to you, to your holy temple. ⁸"Those who cling to worthless idols turn away from God's love for them. ⁹But I, with shouts of grateful praise, will sacrifice to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'Salvation comes from the Lord.'" ¹⁰And the Lord commanded the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.
- d. When we cry out to God, HE LISTENS! God Hears us! We have a present and REAL God.
- e. Jonah had been running from God, and it was only after he reached his lowest point, at the end of all he could physically do, that he was delivered. He realized he couldn't do any more on his own.

4. Second Chance to Obey

- a. God gives Jonah a second chance! This is such great news, with sin present in our lives, we all need a second chance. When we mess up, God pursues us and gives us another chance.
- b. Jonah 3:2 (ESV) - ²"Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it the message that I tell you."
- c. Arise! Get up! There's work to do. Don't focus on your past, your disobedience, yourself. Get up, there's work to do. I'm have a plan for YOU.

When we read about Jonah we see Jonah's problem was that he didn't TRUST God. He doubted God's wisdom, goodness, and justice. So, he ran from God. In Jonah's humility, God saved Him and gave him a second chance to obey.

I hope you see in this whole story, God PURSUES! God pursues me. He pursues you. He pursues YOUR ENEMIES! Woah. God's pursuit of His people, He sent Jesus.

Let's pay attention to where Jesus shows up in this story; let's build a connection to Jesus.

Jesus Connection:

- Sacrifice Story (relate back to Abraham & Isaac, point to Jesus)
 - Adam & Eve – Animal sacrifice to pay for their sin

- Abraham & Isaac – Abraham was asked to sacrifice his first born son, which hints to Jesus
- Jonah – sacrifices himself to save the people on the boat
- Jesus – sacrifices Himself to save His people and make a way back to God
- Matthew 12:40-41
 - ⁴⁰ For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, so the Son of Man will be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth. ⁴¹ The men of Nineveh will stand up at the judgment with this generation and condemn it; for they repented at the preaching of Jonah, and now something greater than Jonah is here.
- Jesus & Jonah 3 Days Darkness/ Separated
 - Jesus spent 3 days in the tomb, dead for 3 days. Jonah was in the belly for 3 days & nights, then spit up on dry land.
 - Jesus made a way for us to be in a relationship with God. Jesus displayed mercy, compassion, kindness. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The great news, Jesus doesn't stay there.
 - Jesus is resurrected – we celebrate Easter! He is Risen.

Let's wrap up here today.

We like stories with plot twists. The story of Jonah is pretty incredible. God sent Jonah to preach to his enemy. Jonah ran away. God sent a storm then a fish to get Jonah. Jonah was vomited up and finally went to preach. Then, the entire city repented of its wicked ways!

Here's what's interesting, **the most encouraging thing to be about this story, is if God can change Nineveh, God can change _____!**

- Our city – Raleigh, Holly Springs,
- Our State –
- Our Enemies
- You fill in the blank –
- Your own heart...

One last note, we see from Jonah in this belly of the fish, that is very relatable for each of us:

Main point: You never realize Jesus is all you need until Jesus is all you have.

Let's Pray and head into small groups.