

Oak Arbor New Church Sunday School: Lessons for Preschool – Kindergarten

Lesson 1.28: JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH — Jonah 1, 2, 3, and 4

TEACHER PREPARATION

Read over Jonah: 1-4.

WORSHIP CIRCLE

STORY AND DISCUSSION

One time long ago the Lord spoke to a man named Jonah. He said, “Jonah, I want you to go to a city called Nineveh. The people who live in Nineveh are doing very bad things. I want you to go and tell them to stop doing bad things, or else they will be destroyed.”

But Jonah didn’t want to do what the Lord told him to do. He wanted to run away and hide from the Lord. He went and got on a ship that *was* sailing to a different city. He hoped the Lord wouldn’t know where he was.

Can anybody hide from the Lord? Of course not. The Lord knows everything. While Jonah was riding on the ship, a great big storm came along. The wind blew wildly, and huge waves formed on the sea. All the men on the ship were very afraid - they thought their ship might break and sink down into the sea! They all prayed. They threw some things off of the ship so it wouldn’t be so heavy. They hoped that would help the ship to stay up.

Jonah didn’t know about the storm, yet. He was asleep in a lower part of the ship. The other men ran and woke him up. They said “Come up and pray to your God to save us!”

Soon the men began to think that maybe somebody on the ship had done something bad, and that was why this terrible storm had come. To find out who had done something bad they did something called “casting lots”. This probably meant that they took some stones and put them into a bowl. One stone had a special mark or color on it. They took turns shaking the bowl until a stone fell out. Whoever shook out the stone with the special mark or color would be the one who had done something wrong. This is how they found out that Jonah was the one.

The men asked Jonah: “Who are you? What happened?” Jonah said, “I am a Hebrew man. I worship the Lord God. He told me to go to Nineveh, but I tried to run away and hide from Him. That was a bad thing to do, and that is why this storm came.”

Jonah told the men to throw him into the sea. He said that then the storm would stop. The men on the ship didn’t want to throw Jonah into the sea. They tried very hard to row the ship to land, but the storm kept getting wilder and wilder.

Finally the men saw that the only way to save the ship would be to throw Jonah into the wild water. They were sad to do it, but they picked him up and threw him into the sea. As soon as they did that, the storm stopped.

Jonah went down, down, down into the water. But even though Jonah had not done what the Lord said, the Lord would take care of him. The Lord sent a great big fish that came and swallowed Jonah up! Jonah stayed alive in the fish's belly for three days and three nights. While he was in the fish's belly, Jonah prayed to the Lord. He said that he knew that the Lord had saved him. He said that he would do what he was supposed to do.

Then God spoke to the fish and told it to spit Jonah out onto the dry land. Jonah got up and started walking to the city of Nineveh. It took him three days to walk there. When he got to Nineveh he told all the people there what the Lord had said. He told them to stop doing bad things, or they would be destroyed. When the people of Nineveh heard that, they were very sorry. They stopped doing bad things, so the Lord did not destroy them.

Jonah felt angry. He said "Lord, I walked all this way to tell the people about how bad they were. I think you should destroy them!" But the Lord said, "Jonah, I love all people. I do not want to destroy them. I just want them to be sorry and stop doing bad things, so they can be happy."

REPEATING

Now we will say something from this story in the Lord's Word. I will say a part, and then you say it after me.

Now the LORD had prepared
a great fish
to swallow Jonah.
And Jonah was in
the belly of the fish
three nights and three days.

PROJECT

Let the children color the picture of Jonah and the great fish.

God tells the great fish
to release Jonah.

