



## STORY: God Chased Jonah (Jonah 1:4-16)

### INTRODUCTION:

Today, we're continuing our story from the Book of Jonah.

Who is Jonah? *A Prophet*

Where did God ask Jonah to go to preach? *Nineveh*

Did Jonah want to go? *No!*

Why? *Because the people of Nineveh were very wicked, and Jonah didn't want them to know God.*

Where did Jonah go instead? *Tarshish*

Let's see what happens next ...

### READ: Jonah 1:4-16

**TELL THE STORY:** (source: <http://www.essex1.com/pages/paul/bible37.html>)

So Jonah went down to Joppa and jumped on a ship that was sailing for Tarshish — about as far away as a person could go. Jonah probably thought, "God will never find me there."

But God knows where every gnat, ant, and bug on the face of the earth is. He knows when a mosquito lands on your nose. He knows where it came from, and where it goes. Of course God would know where Jonah went!

So the ship put out to sea, with Jonah hiding from God below the deck.

But God wasn't going to let Jonah get off that easy.

Just as the last bit of land disappeared from view, God sent a terrible storm.

*This was not a storm of judgment but a storm of grace. It was not a storm to punish, but a storm to bring Jonah back to Him. But no matter how terrible the trouble, God's power is always greater. God is always with us — sometimes in amazing ways.*

Jonah was about to learn that.

It was the worst storm the sailors on Jonah's ship had ever seen. The sky turned black. The winds roared. Rain stung the sailors' faces. Wave after wave lifted their ship high into the air and sent it crashing down again.

The sailors were terrified! They were sure their ship would break in two, and so they started grabbing all the stuff they didn't need and throwing it over the sides to keep from sinking. They prayed and cried out to their "gods" to save them.



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Meanwhile, Jonah was sound asleep below the deck.

*(Do you know anyone else in the Bible who slept through a terrible storm?)*

The captain crawled down under the deck and shook Jonah, "Wake up, man! We are all going to drown! Pray to your God to save us!"

Above the deck, the sailors were fighting the storm with all their might. "Let's draw straws," one of them shouted through the storm, "Maybe we'll find out who is causing all our trouble." And so they all scrambled below the deck and got some straws ready.

Jonah drew the shortest straw. "This is all my fault!" Jonah said.

"My name is Jonah, and I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord God, the God of Abraham, the creator of the earth and the sea and all that there is."

"What have you done?" the sailors asked. "What can we do to save ourselves?"

"Throw me into the sea and you will be saved," Jonah said.

Jonah knew it was the only thing they could do. He would have to take his punishment. **One person would have to die so that the others could live. Many, many years later Jesus was going to do the very same thing. Only, he took OUR punishment. He died for us, so that we could live with him forever.**

But the sailors weren't willing to throw Jonah into the churning sea. **They thought if they tried real hard, they could save themselves without God's help.** And so they rowed with all their might to try to get the ship back to dry land.

But it was no good. The winds just blew all the harder, the rain stung their faces all the more.

Finally, they cried out, "Please, O God of this man Jonah, forgive us for what we are about to do!"

And then the sailors picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea.

At once the winds stopped, the waves rolled away, and the sea became as smooth as glass. Now those sailors knew who the real God is, the God who can calm the seas.

## LESSON

**1. God knows where we are**

Just like Jonah could not hide from God, we cannot hide from God. He knows us inside out. His eye is on the smallest sparrow, and His eye is on us. He loves us and will pursue us even when we choose to go our own way.

**2. Jesus calms the storms**

Jonah was the cause of the terrible storm. Jesus was in a similar storm Himself, and He slept through it until his disciples work Him up. Then He stood up and spoke to the wind and waves and calmed the storm. Whenever we go through tough times and challenges, always remember, Jesus is in our boat and He calms the storms!

**3. Jesus gave His life for us**

"What can we do to save ourselves?" the sailors asked.

But no matter how hard the sailors tried, they could not save themselves.

Jonah knew he was the cause of the storm; he knew he had to be thrown overboard so that all the others could live.

Many, many years later, a rich young man asked Jesus, "What must I do to inherit eternal life?"

The truth is, no matter how hard we all try, we cannot save ourselves and earn eternal life.

Jesus had to give His life so that all of us could live. (refer John 11:49-52)

He took OUR punishment. He died for us, so that we can live with Him forever.

Would you like to receive Jesus into your heart and live with Him forever?

**MEMORY VERSE:**

**1 Thess 5:10** *He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together with him.*



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## ACTIVITY SUGGESTIONS

### **GAME: "I Spy"**

Get kids to take turns spying objects and identifying them by colour, shape, letter of alphabet etc. e.g. "I spy with my little eye something red in colour/beginning with P/long and thin." Rest of kids to guess what it is.

Winner gets to spy next.

Variation: use a rolled-out tube/paper as a "telescope" to "spy".

Lesson: God knows and sees us wherever we are.

### **MEMORY VERSE ACTIVITY**

Any hiding, fishing or running activity to tie in with the lesson.

e.g.

Hiding: Hide words from the verse around hall and have kids look for them and arrange them in order

Fishing: Fish out the words from a pile using magnet/paper clips.

Running: Relay race — pick up a word from a pile, run to the front and stick word to form the verse.