

Jonah

Jonah 1- 4

The Story

Parents: Review this lesson with your child.

God told Jonah to go to a very large and very wicked city called Nineveh and tell its people that God would destroy them because of their sins and their unbelief. Instead of obeying God and going to Nineveh, Jonah tried to run from God. He got onto a ship sailing very far from the city of Nineveh.

The Lord knew what Jonah was doing and He made a storm come up which made the water full of waves. The sailors were afraid their ship would sink, and they prayed to their false gods for help. The storm did not stop. The captain of the ship asked Jonah who he was and what he was doing. Jonah told the sailors that he was running away from God and that the storm was because of his sin. God was teaching him not to run away and disobey Him. Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea so that the storm would stop. The sailors threw him over the ship into the water. Immediately the storm stopped.

But God did not let Jonah die. He loved Jonah and wanted to forgive him and save his life. God caused a large fish to swallow Jonah alive! For three days and three nights Jonah lived in the belly of the fish. Jonah was sorry for his sins and he prayed to God to forgive him. God heard Jonah's prayer and caused the fish to spit Jonah up onto dry land.

God told Jonah again to go to the wicked city of Nineveh and tell them God was angry with them because they did not believe in Him and did bad things. This time Jonah obeyed God and told the people of Nineveh what God had said. The Lord caused the people to be sorry for their sins and to trust in Him to forgive them and save them. Even the king of Nineveh was sorry and turned to God. God saw their hearts and knew they trusted in

Him and He did not destroy them.

Jonah should have been happy that God forgave so many people, just as God had forgiven him. But instead, he was angry that God did not destroy them. God told him that he should show love and kindness to all people because God wants all people to believe in Jesus and be saved. In the Bible we hear God tell us the same thing. We will want to love others and tell them about Jesus' forgiveness also.

God wants all people to know about Jesus and be saved.

Passage

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - "God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth."

Hymn - TLH #400 v. 5 (Sup. #786 v. 5)

Take my will and make it Thine,
It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
It shall be Thy royal throne.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, Help me to see my sins and feel sorry for them. Help me to trust in You for forgiveness. Thank You for dying for all people. Help me to love all people and tell them about You. Amen.



Classroom Activity - Review Lesson Action Songs - Sing these songs and make up actions for the first song and do the actions of the second to review the lesson.

Jonah and the Big Fish

(sing to "I'm A Little Teapot" tune)

Jonah ran from God to get away
He didn't want to hear what God had to say.
He climbed on board a boat and sailed to sea
Jonah wanted God to let him be.

God knew that Jonah tried to hide
He sent a storm they were scared inside.
As soon as the sailors threw Jonah in
A great fish came and swallowed him.

Jonah prayed to God three nights and days,
"I have sinned in many ways."
The fish spit Jonah to the land and then
On to Nineveh Jonah went.

Jonah

(sing to "London Bridge" tune)

Jonah was swallowed by a great fish,
By a great fish, by a great fish.
Jonah was swallowed by a great fish.
Swallowed whole! (*rub tummy*)

Jonah prayed to God above
God above, God above.
Jonah prayed to God above
And was forgiven! (*fold hands in prayer*)

Classroom Art Activity - Lunch Bag Fish

- Have the children color a lunch bag (preferably white) and make fish eyes. Staple the crease of the bag to make a tale. Color and cut out Jonah at right. Tape inside of lunch bag as shown.





Jonah is swallowed by a great fish and asks the LORD for forgiveness.

Jonah

Jonah 1- 4



Jonah is swallowed by a great fish before he carries out the Lord's call to repentance to the city of Nineveh.



The Story

In the days before Jesus came to live on earth, God chose certain men to preach His Word to the people. These men were called prophets. One of God's prophets was named Jonah.

God told Jonah to go to a very large and very wicked city called Nineveh and tell its people that God would destroy them because of their sins and their unbelief. Instead of obeying God and going to Nineveh, Jonah tried to run from God. He got onto a ship sailing to the city of Tarshish, which was very far from the city of Nineveh.

The Lord knew what Jonah was doing and He made a storm come up which made the water full of waves. The sailors were afraid their ship would sink, and they prayed to their false gods for help. The storm did not stop. The captain of the ship asked Jonah who he was and what he was doing. Jonah told the sailors that he was running away from God and that the storm was because of his sin. God was teaching him not to run away and disobey Him. Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea so that the storm would stop. The sailors threw him over the ship into the water. Immediately the storm stopped.

But God did not let Jonah die. He loved Jonah and wanted to forgive him and save his life. God caused a large fish to swallow Jonah alive! For three days and three nights Jonah lived in the belly of the fish. Jonah was sorry for his sins and he prayed to God to forgive him. God heard Jonah's prayer and caused the fish to spit Jonah up onto dry land.

God told Jonah again to go to the

wicked city of Nineveh and tell them God was angry with them because they did not believe in Him and did bad things. This time Jonah obeyed God and told the people of Nineveh what God had said. The Lord caused the people to be sorry for their sins and to trust in Him to forgive them and save them. Even the king of Nineveh was sorry and turned to God. God saw their hearts and knew they trusted in Him and He did not destroy them.

Jonah should have been happy that God forgave so many people, just as God had forgiven him. But instead, he was angry that God did not destroy them. God told him that he should show love and kindness to all people because God wants all people to believe in Jesus and be saved. In the Bible we hear God tell us the same thing. We disobey God too, just like Jonah did, and yet God loves us and forgives all our sins because of Jesus who died to take our sins away. Now we will want to love others and tell them about Jesus' forgiveness also.

God calls us to deliver the message of repentance to the unbelieving world.

Passages

Matthew 4:10 - 'You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.'

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

Psalms 143:10 - Teach me to do Your will, for You are my God.

Hymn - TLH #400 v. 1, 5 (Supplement 2000 #786 v. 1, 5)

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Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;
Take my moments and my days,
Let them flow in ceaseless praise.

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It shall be no longer mine;
Take my heart, it is Thine own,
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The Lord knew what Jonah was doing, and He made a storm come up which made the water full of waves. The sailors were afraid their ship would sink, so they prayed to their false gods for help. The storm did not stop. The captain of the ship asked Jonah who he was and why he was along. Jonah told the sailors that he was running away from God, and that the storm was because of his sin. God was teaching him not to run away or to disobey Him. Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea so that the storm would stop. The sailors threw him over the ship into the water. Immediately the storm stopped.

But God did not let Jonah die in the sea. He loved Jonah and wanted to forgive him and save his life. God caused a large fish to swallow Jonah alive! For three days and three nights Jonah lived in the belly of the fish. Jonah was sorry for his sins and he prayed to God to forgive him. God heard Jonah's prayer and caused the fish to spit Jonah up onto dry land.

God told Jonah again to go to the wicked city of Nineveh and tell them God was angry with them because they did not believe in Him and did bad things. This time Jonah obeyed God and told the people of Nineveh what God had said.

The Lord caused the people of Nineveh to be sorry for their sins. They trusted in God to forgive them and save them. Even the king of Nineveh was sorry and turned to God. God saw their hearts and knew they trusted in Him, and He did not destroy them.

Jonah should have been happy that God forgave so many people, just as God had forgiven him. But instead, he was angry that God did not destroy them. God told him that he should show love and kindness to all people because God wants all people to believe in Jesus and be saved. In the Bible we hear God tell us the same thing. We disobey God, too, just like Jonah did. Yet God loves us and forgives all our sins because of Jesus who died to take our sins away. Now we will want to love others and tell them about Jesus' forgiveness also.

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Activity One - Draw a line to match the beginning with the correct ending.

- | | |
|------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| 1. God told Jonah to go | ... swallowed Jonah alive. |
| 2. Jonah tried to go | ... God would destroy them. |
| 3. God sent the storm | ... to Tarshish. |
| 4. The big fish | ... to Nineveh. |
| 5. Jonah told the people of Nineveh that | ... were sorry and trusted in God. |
| 6. The people of Nineveh | ... Jonah and to the people of Nineveh. |
| 7. God gave His love and forgiveness to | ... to teach Jonah a lesson. |

Activity Two - Take turns answering these questions out loud.

1. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh the first time, what should Jonah have done?
2. Why did God let the big fish swallow Jonah?
3. How do you think Jonah felt when he knew he had sinned against God?
4. What did God do when Jonah prayed that he was sorry for his sins?
5. How should we feel when we have sinned against God?
6. What did Jesus do to take away our sins?
7. How should we feel about all the people Jesus died for?
8. What should we tell them about?

Passages

Matthew 4:10b - You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.

1 Timothy 2:3-4 - God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.

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What things in life are really hard for you to do?

What makes it hard for you to accomplish those tasks?

Does fear play a large part? How about not caring about the task?

Today's lesson about Jonah shows us that we humans often let our fears and personal feelings get in the way of trusting and obeying God and His Word.



Prayer

Dear Heavenly Father,

You have given us this day to study Your Word and learn about Jonah. Help us to listen about Jonah and learn the lesson You taught him. Help us to apply that lesson to our lives. In Jesus' name. Amen.

The Story - Jonah 1:1-2:1, 2:9-4:11

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, {2} "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me."

{3} But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid the fare, and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD.

{4} But the LORD sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. {5} Then the mariners were afraid; and every man cried out to his god, and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load.

But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast

asleep. {6} So the captain came to him, and said to him, "What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God; perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish."

{7} And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

(8) Then they said to him, "Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?"

{9} So he said to them, "I am a Hebrew; and I fear the LORD, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land."

{10} Then the men were exceedingly afraid, and said to him, "Why have you done this?" For the men knew that he fled from the presence of the LORD, because he had told



them.

{11} Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?"; for the sea was growing more tempestuous.

{12} And he said to them, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me."

{13} Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. {14} Therefore they cried out to the LORD and said, "We pray, O LORD, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood; for You, O LORD, have done as it pleased You." {15} So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. {16} Then the men feared the LORD exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the LORD and took vows.

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

(2:1) Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from the fish's belly...

{10} So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.

(Jonah 3) Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the second time, saying, {2} "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you."

{3} So Jonah arose and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the LORD. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly great city, a three-day journey in extent. {4} And Jonah began to enter the city on the first day's walk. Then he cried out and said, "Yet forty days, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!"

{5} So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them...

{6} Then word came to the king of Nineveh; and he arose from his throne and laid aside his robe, covered himself with sackcloth and sat in ashes...

{10} Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it.

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exceedingly, and he became angry. {2} So he prayed to the LORD, and said, "Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. {3} "Therefore now, O LORD, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!"

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{5} So Jonah went out of the city and sat on the east side of the city. There he made himself a shelter and sat under it in the shade, till he might see what would become of the city. {6} And the LORD God prepared a plant and made it come up over Jonah, that it might be shade for his head to deliver him from his misery. So Jonah was very grateful for the plant. {7} But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. {8} And it happened, when the sun arose, that God prepared a vehement east wind; and the sun beat on Jonah's head, so that he grew faint. Then he wished death for himself, and said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

{9} Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And he said, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!"

{10} But the LORD said, "You have had pity on the plant for which you have not labored, nor made it grow, which came up in a night and perished in a night. {11} "And should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left; and much livestock?"

Outer Aim - Jonah is called, flees and is swallowed by a great fish before he carries out the Lord's call to repentance to the city of Nineveh.

What the Story Tells Us - Answer the following questions.

1. At the beginning of the lesson, what did God tell Jonah to do?
2. What did Jonah do instead?
3. Why do you think God caused the storm at sea and the great fish to swallow Jonah?
4. What did Jonah learn about God from his experiences?
5. How does Jonah's lesson apply to us and to our lives as Christians?

What God's Word Tells Us & Passages - Study each Bible passage, then write or tell how it applies to today's lesson.

1. *Galatians 6:7 - Do not be deceived, God is not mocked; for whatever a man sows, that he will also reap.*
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Inner Aim - God calls us to deliver the message of repentance to the unbelieving world.

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Take my voice and let me sing
Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

Take my love, my Lord, I pour
At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.

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Lord God, Heavenly Father,

I confess that like Jonah, I have often thought that my way of doing things was better than Your way. I pray that You would move me to humbly submit to Your will. Increase my faith that, although I cannot see everything that You can, I will be able to trust that You know best. Forgive me also for being cold and loveless toward my neighbor. Help me to speak Your words of Law and Gospel from a loving heart – a heart that desires all men to be saved. Amen.

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Always, only, for my King;
Take my lips and let them be
Filled with messages from Thee.

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At Thy feet its treasure store;
Take myself, and I will be
Ever, only, all, for Thee.

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Lord God, Heavenly Father,

I confess that like Jonah, I have often thought that my way of doing things was better than Your way. I pray that You would move me to humbly submit to Your will. Increase my faith that, although I cannot see everything that You can, I will be able to trust that You know best. Forgive me also for being cold and loveless toward my neighbor. Help me to speak Your words of Law and Gospel from a loving heart – a heart that desires all men to be saved. Amen.



STORY

Jonah - Jonah 1-4

TEACHER PRAYER

Dear Lord Jesus, there are times when I do not feel like obeying Your will. There can even be reluctance as I go about my work in this blessed call to feed Your lambs. Forgive me I pray, and give to me a heart that says (as You said or prayed in the Garden of Gethsemane), "Thy will be done." Amen.

VOCABULARY

Nineveh - The capital city of the Assyrian Empire located on the east bank of the Tigris River. The city was founded by Nimrod (Genesis 10:11) and was utterly destroyed in 612 BC by an army made up of Babylonians, Medes, and Scythians. Though the walled part of the city was three miles long and a mile and a half wide, the term "Nineveh, the great city" might well have included various outlying cities (compare "the Twin Cities," which include not only Minneapolis and St. Paul, but also the many other surrounding municipalities in that area).

Joppa - An ancient city located on the Mediterranean Sea about 30 miles NW of Jerusalem. Originally a city assigned to the tribe of Dan, Joppa served as the port for Jerusalem, receiving all the timber used in the construction of Jerusalem's great buildings. From here Jonah sailed in flight from the Lord. Peter later lived in Joppa with Simon the Tanner.

Tarshish - A city located on the extreme west end of the Mediterranean Sea (probably in Southern Spain). Jonah evidently tried to get as far away from the Lord as possible. The word, *Tarshish*, comes from the ancient Akkadian language and means "*smelting plant*" or "*refinery*." The ship on which Jonah sailed was very likely one of many ships that carried refined ore from the smelting plants in Tarshish to Jerusalem (through Joppa).

tempestuous - turbulent or stormy.

Sheol- The Hebrew name for "the place of the dead."

sackcloth - A course, rough cloth made of goat or camel hair, flax, or hemp, and worn as a symbol of mourning or repentance.

OUTER AIM

Jonah is called, flees, and is swallowed by a great fish before he carries the Lord's call to repentance to the great city of Nineveh.

INNER AIM

Our omnipotent God exercises His power in love, desiring all men to repent and be saved.

BACKGROUND *(Rupprecht Volume 1, pages 371-379)*

Most Bible scholars and historians place Jonah's ministry at about 782-772 BC. This fits well with the historical fact that the Assyrian kings of that period were less ruthless and aggressive than later kings, most notably Tiglath-pileser III who came to power in 745 BC. At this time, the Assyrian Empire had spread to the very borders of Israel, and Israel's destruction must have seemed inevitable to many.

Although the book of Jonah is best known for the incident with the great fish, the Scriptures emphasize the loving compassion of our omnipotent God. It is different from the other books of the prophets in that it is made up more of the biography of the prophet himself (Jonah) rather than the messages of God which that the prophet was to proclaim. Though Jonah was an actual prophet, many believe that he is here also symbolic of the nation as a whole. Israel had wandered from her mission of calling sinners to repentance and sought instead the destruction of all her enemies.

Chapter 1

Exactly why Jonah fled (or tried to flee) from the Lord's presence is a matter of some debate. There are several possibilities: 1) he feared the legendary cruelty of the Assyrians, 2) he prejudged the lack of effectiveness his message would have on the heathen nation, 3) he prejudged that his message would have the desired effect and did not want Assyria to be saved, but destroyed, 4) he knew his message would have the desired effect on the people of Nineveh and that his prophesy of destruction would come to naught, causing him personal embarrassment in the eyes of the Assyrians. Given Jonah's words in 4:2, one of the last two possibilities seems likely.

Since the connection between Israel and Tarshish was the smelting capabilities of the latter, the cargo thrown overboard by the sailors in an attempt to save their ship probably had something to do with the refining of ore or the re-supply of the refinery outpost.

Jonah's sleep brings to mind the time Jesus slept in a boat during a storm (Mark 4:38), yet Jonah's sleep was not the sleep of faith demonstrated by Jesus since Jonah was running from the Lord.

The casting of lots was used in ancient times both for gambling and to answer certain questions. Whether the lot in this case was directed by God, the devil, or chance, it rightly fell to Jonah and he did not hesitate to tell his shipmates about his God and his plight.

The sailors were honorable men - even calling on God by his personal name, Jehovah. They tried valiantly to save the ship with Jonah intact, but they were struggling against the will of God. Reluctantly they threw Jonah overboard according to his own recommendation.

Much is made of the great fish that swallowed Jonah, though that part of this story plays a relatively minor role in the overall message. The word used here is correctly translated "fish" rather than "whale." Though Jonah's preservation is certainly miraculous by all accounts, the relatively tiny throats of known whales are too small to allow the swallowing of an entire man. (*See Rupprecht Vol. 1, page 375 for his discussion of the "great fish."*)

The word translated "prepared" is used in connection with the great fish, the shade plant, the worm that destroyed it, and the scorching east wind. All these things God "prepared." The word itself carries the picture of a military officer giving an order to a subordinate.

Chapter 2

The Lord here teaches Jonah that not even through death can a man escape from His hand. It is quite possible that Jonah imagined that once thrown into the sea his inner turmoil would cease. His misery not only continued, it was magnified many times over. We can only imagine how terrible three days and nights in the dark belly of the great fish must have been.

Finally Jonah stops running from the Lord and instead turns to Him in praise and worship. He recognizes not only the futility of running from God, but also the folly of looking to any other source for help. He said, "Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy."

As petty and wrong-hearted as Jonah appears to be before and after this event, here he demonstrates great faith in the midst of what must have been terrible suffering. He not only acknowledges that "salvation is of the Lord," he also here offers a prayer of thanksgiving.

Chapter 3

God calls to Jonah a second time, indicating that although God took no pleasure in Jonah's suffering, He did not allow His word and will to be ignored or thwarted. (See application below.) This time Jonah obeyed.

The reference to Nineveh as "that great city" might also carry with it the idea of "greater Nineveh." Though the walled part of the city was only about four and one half square miles, Jonah's three-day journey could well have taken him to the outlying communities. (*See note on Nineveh above under Vocabulary and Rupprecht's notes in Volume 1, page 372.*)

When the Bible talks of "believing God" (as did the people of Nineveh) it does not refer simply to a mental acceptance of facts. "Believing" carried with it the inclusion of action, as the believer felt appropriate. Knowing the facts and yet refusing to act in harmony with them was considered the height of foolishness, while true wisdom was the prudent exhibition of knowledge through appropriate actions.

The national repentance of the heart of the Assyrian Empire was nothing short of miraculous. It is a testament to the power of God's Word and the need to preach law and gospel without prejudging what effect God's Word will have.

History and archeology bear out the assumption that violence and barbaric cruelty were among Nineveh's greatest sins. This is borne out in the King's command that every citizen "turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands." Assyrian pottery and relief carvings depict unimaginable cruelty, including the gouging out of eyes, severing of tongues, flaying of live captives, and the impaling of prisoners upon sharpened poles.

It is important to recognize God's complete consistency, not fickle inconsistency. His consistent desire is that sinners everywhere repent and turn to Him. His desire is to bless us. Whenever man repents, God is always merciful, always forgiving.

Chapter 4

It is difficult to understand Jonah's displeasure at the Lord's mercy toward Nineveh. It could have been motivated by hatred of Assyria for which Jonah wanted destruction, not pardon. Perhaps in pride he felt that his warning of calamity would not be fulfilled. We do not know if Jonah asked to die out of a sense of humiliation, pride, or stubborn hatred of the gentiles. What is remarkable is that God demonstrates the same patient love toward Jonah that he displayed toward Nineveh.

Jonah went and sat on the east side of the city to see what would happen because Nineveh was protected on the west and south by the Tigris River. Any attack would have to come from the east or north.

God prepared and destroyed the shade plant as an object lesson for Jonah. Through the rise and destruction of the plant (for which Jonah greatly cared) God demonstrated His own loving concern for the 120,000 souls he had created in Nineveh.

The statement that Nineveh's inhabitants "cannot discern between their right hand and their left" refers to their natural spiritual ignorance apart from the Lord and His Word.

STUDENT PRAYER

Lord God, Heavenly Father, I confess that like Jonah, I have often thought that my way of doing things was better than Your way. I pray that You would move me to humbly submit to Your will. Increase my faith that, although I cannot see everything that You can, I will be able to trust that You know best. Forgive me also for being cold and loveless toward my neighbor. Help me to speak Your words of law and gospel from a loving heart—a heart that desires all men to be saved. Amen.

PRESENTATION

This Bible account could possibly be read in class, but it would be best to again assign its reading the week before it is presented. You could then retell or summarize the story for your students in your own words.

APPLICATION

1. We can neither run from God nor hide from him. Use Jonah's initial flight to demonstrate how foolish it is to try to hide from an all-powerful, all-knowing God. Then apply this fact to the life of a child. (God knows when we are lying; God sees when we take money from Mom's purse; God hears when we say a bad word, even if no one else does.)
2. Lead the students to imagine the horror of living for three days inside of the great fish. What would it be like? (pitch black, confined, smelly, irritating, nauseating, etc.) Then point out how Jonah turned to the Lord during this dark hour and was saved. We should learn to recognize hard times as the Lord's way of calling to us. The Lord tried to call to Jonah in less painful ways, but he refused to listen. Listen to God when He calls.
3. Jesus himself draws the comparison between Jonah in the great fish and Jesus in the tomb (Matthew 12:39-40). Jesus goes on in Matthew 12 to condemn those who in His day rejected His message of repentance and salvation through faith, even though someone greater than Jonah was delivering the message. We too have been warned. The people of Nineveh will also rise up on the Last Day to condemn us if we reject His call to repentance and faith.
4. God does not take pleasure in our suffering. He allows hardships so that we might take notice and obey. So also when Jonah had suffered through his ordeal, God called to him again.
5. Bringing the Word of God will very seldom make us popular with the world, for God's Word begins with the condemnation of the law. No one likes to be condemned, but only the hammer blows of the law can break the stubborn, rebellious pride of our sinful hearts. Think of how much courage it took for Jonah to speak law to the cruel inhabitants of Nineveh. What things today make us afraid to speak God's Word?
6. This lesson demonstrates how eager God is to forgive sinful mankind and to shower us with His blessings. Yet forgiveness comes only through repentance.
7. As God demonstrated to Jonah just how much more valuable human beings are than material things on this earth, so the students should be led to recognize that all our hearts are filled with the same selfish nonsense that clouded Jonah's understanding. (We might, for example, hope that the star player on the other team gets hurt so that our team might win; or we might lose sight of the fact that the life of a human being is more important than the earthly inheritance others might leave for us.)
8. Point out how foolish it would be to "not know your right hand from your left," and then help the student to realize that that is how unbelievers are spiritually. Even young children can be teachers of those who do not know God's Word or Jesus as their Savior.

PASSAGES

These passages can be assigned as memory work or simply discussed in class as to how they fit the lesson.

Lower

Deuteronomy 6:4 - Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.

Proverbs 3:5 - Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding;

Psalms 143:10 - Teach me to do Your will, For You are my God

Middle

Matthew 4:10 - You shall worship the LORD your God, and Him only you shall serve.

Matthew 7:24 - Therefore whoever hears these sayings of Mine, and does them, I will liken him to a wise man who built his house on the rock

Matthew 16:24 - Then Jesus said to His disciples, "If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me.

Upper

Psalms 90:2 - Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.

Jeremiah 23:28 - He who has My word, let him speak My word faithfully. What is the chaff to the wheat?" says the LORD.

Colossians 3:17 - And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.

HYMN CHOICES

Take My Life and Let It Be - TLH #400

Jesus Lead Thou On - TLH #410

What God Ordains Is Always Good - TLH #521:1-4