

THE BIG GOD STORY

TRU Wonder Preschool & Kindergarten

Lesson 3.3: Jonah 1-4

Ponder Point: God Saves, pt 1

Props: Bible, running shoes

I can't wait to learn more about The Big God Story. Before we go any further, let's pray and ask God to help us understand what he wants to teach us today.

Friends, where do we find The Big God Story? Children respond. **That's right, we find it in the Bible. And we know the Bible is true!** Open Bible to Jonah 1.

Many years ago, there was a prophet named Jonah. What's a prophet? Wait for children to answer. **That's right! A prophet is a person to whom God gives a special message that he wants shared with his people. God may send a message for many people, or just one or two. No matter what God says in his message, it's the prophet's job to obey God and get the message to the right people.**

Jonah was a prophet who lived in the Promised Land of Israel. One day God told Jonah to take a message to the people in the city of Nineveh. Can you say that with me? NIN-e-veh. Children repeat. **God saw how badly the people of the city were acting and knew something had to be done. God told Jonah to take a message to the people. But Jonah ran away from the Lord instead.** Take out your running shoes. Pump arms as if running, and cue children to follow along. **Why do you think I brought a pair of running shoes? Is someone running in The Big God Story?** Pause for answers. **Yes, you're right! Jonah was trying to run away from God. Let's see what happened.**

Jonah got on a boat that would take him far, far away from Nineveh, because he didn't want to take God's message to the people there. Wave goodbye. **Friends, can we ever really run away from God?** Children answer. **No (shake heads no), we can't! We can turn away from him and try not to listen, but we can't ever really run away from God. And that's a good thing, because we need God. While the boat was sailing away, a great storm hit the sea. Waves crashed and the boat swayed back and forth (sway from side to side). The sailors on the ship were very scared. They didn't know what had caused this great big storm.**

The captain went looking for Jonah and found him sleeping below deck! Jonah told them it was his God, the Creator of the heavens, sea, and land, who had sent the storm. Jonah told the men that he was running away (pump arms) from the Lord. The sea kept getting rougher and rougher (sway from side to side). "What should we do to calm the sea?" they asked. "Pick me up and throw me into the sea," replied Jonah, "and it will become calm. I know it's my fault this storm has come to you." The men didn't like Jonah's answer, not one bit. So, first they tried to row the boat back to shore (row pretend oars), but the storm was getting worse. Finally, the sailors did what Jonah said, and they threw him overboard. Once Jonah was off the boat, the storm quieted (big sigh of relief). When the men saw this, they knew God was mighty and powerful. God saved them.

What do you think happened to Jonah? Interact with children's answers. **God didn't forget Jonah and let him die in the sea. He sent a great big fish to swallow Jonah.** Make swallowing motion. **A giant fish! Can you imagine that? Only God could send a giant fish to save someone! And that's where Jonah stayed for three whole days and three whole nights.** Hold up three fingers. **What would you do if you were in the belly of a great big fish?** Pause for responses. **Those are all very good ideas! Jonah prayed! He thanked God for saving him. Jonah knew he could've drowned in the sea, but God saved him. As he**

prayed, Jonah told God he was sorry for disobeying, asked for forgiveness and said he'd take God's message to the people of Nineveh. Then the Lord commanded the fish, and it spit Jonah out onto dry land. **Who saved Jonah?** Children answer. **God did!**

God told Jonah a second time, "Go to the city of Nineveh and tell them the message I give you." So, Jonah went. He told the people the message God gave him, and the people believed God. They stopped doing harmful things and turned away from their bad choices. When God saw this, he showed them mercy. God saved the people and their city from being harmed.

Who saved the sailors from the great storm at sea? Children answer. **God did!** **Who saved Jonah?** Children answer. **God did!** **Who had mercy and saved the people of Nineveh from being harmed because of their sin?** Children answer. **God did!** **God saves!** **When we call on him, God will save us.**

God saves us by sending Jesus to be our Savior. One way we can think of Jesus related to today's story is as the greater Jonah who didn't rebel. What do you think that means? Good thoughts. Unlike Jonah who ran away when God sent him to Nineveh, Jesus perfectly obeyed God the Father by coming to earth as a baby and dying on the cross to save us from our sins.

Here are three things from the story of Jonah that point to Jesus. Jonah offered his life for the sailors in the storm when he told them to throw him overboard. Jesus offers his life to save our sins.

The second thing is something Jesus said himself, "For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." (Matthew 12:40)

The last thing is Jonah's "resurrection" from the belly of the fish points to Jesus' resurrection (coming back to life) from the dead.

God, thank you for this story and how it points us to Jesus. We praise you for sending Jesus to save us.

I WONDER QUESTIONS

I wonder...why didn't Jonah listen to God and go to Nineveh right away?

I wonder...how did Jonah feel when God sent the storm?

I wonder...what did it smell like inside the fish?