



LESSON 47

3rd and 4th Grade

Principle: We cannot run from God. God's discipline is good for us.

God's love is for us and others.

Bible Character(s): Jonah

Scripture Reference: Jonah 1-4



PERSONAL PREPARATION: Before this weekend, please read through Jonah 1-4.

This is our last lesson in the Old Testament. God commanded Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh, which was full of sin and evil, to warn them of His wrath. Jonah instead tried to run from God by ship to Tarshish, but God disciplined him for his sin by sending a storm and Jonah was thrown into the ocean. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah up, thereby saving him. After Jonah recognized God's mercy and forgiveness for saving him, he obeyed God's command to go to Nineveh and warned them of God's plan to destroy the city. The people changed their ways and turned from their sin. God was merciful and forgave them of their sin. Jonah was then angry that God would be gracious to them.

God used discipline to change Jonah's heart and help him recognize his sin and need for salvation. How has God revealed your sin and need for Him? Are you continually thankful for God's salvation? How do you respond when someone in sin is shown mercy and forgiveness – do you struggle with the fact that they were not punished for what they deserve? Do you reflect God's mercy and love to others around you?

PLUG IN TIME - 5-10 minutes as the kids begin to arrive

Arrive early to check the supplies in the bin and review the lesson. Write today's principle on the whiteboard. Remember to greet all campers upon arrival; meet their parents; welcome and introduce all visitors. Create a welcoming cabin for all campers!

What's in the Belly of A Whale? Word Search

Supplies:

Worksheet – word search side (1 per camper)



BIG GROUP TIME - 35-40 minutes

As you line up, remind campers we are going to have fun as an entire Camp Grace group! We are going to live out GRACE by **Glorifying God** through worship, **Respecting All Leaders**, and **Accepting Responsibility** to listen with attentive ears, minds, and hearts - fully **Celebrating Christ** with passion! We should **Encourage Others** to do the same, by not distracting them from their worship of God.

The Bridge to Small Group

Today we will finish our study of the Old Testament. We will study about Jonah's life. We will see our need for salvation, how God uses discipline to change our hearts, and that His love is for everyone.



SMALL GROUP TIME - 25-30 minutes

Getting Started

If your cabin did well in Big Group, acknowledge it. If not, take a couple of minutes to talk about how they can do better next time.

What did you learn about in Big Group? What happened to Jonah? (He disobeyed God, but God showed mercy by sending a big fish to save him.) **Can you imagine being inside a fish? What did you learn from Jonah?** (He disobeyed God and God disciplines him to reveal his sin; God showed mercy on Jonah; God loved the people of Ninevah just as much as He loved Jonah.)

Last week, we studied about Daniel. What choice did Daniel have to make? (Daniel had to choose to continue worshiping God and disobey the law to only pray to King Darius, or obey the law and turn from God.) **What did Daniel do?** (He continued worshiping God.) **We saw how Daniel was characterized by integrity, and he stayed faithful to God no matter what. He trusted God with his life. What happened to Daniel because he stayed faithful to God?** (He was thrown in the lions' den. God saved Daniel from the lions, and when the king found out, he ordered everyone to worship the God of Daniel.)

Today is our last day in the Old Testament. We have spent a lot of time learning about different people who worshiped God, and about who God is. We are going to finish our Old Testament study by looking at the life of Jonah. We already know that Jonah was in the belly of a big fish. Let's take a closer look to find out why.

Let's begin reading the Bible in Jonah chapter 1.

Jonah 1:1-4 [NLT]

1 The LORD gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are."

3 But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the LORD. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the LORD by sailing to Tarshish.

4 But the LORD hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart.

What did Jonah do? (Allow responses.) He listened to God's instructions, but he ran away from God. Which way did Jonah go? (Allow responses.) He went in the opposite direction of Nineveh!

Why do you think God sent a storm? (Allow responses.) As the story continues, we learn that the sailors found out that Jonah was running from God, so Jonah told them to throw him in the sea. Jonah tried to run away from God; he did not want to follow God's instructions. God used the storm to discipline him because He wanted Jonah's heart to change. He wanted Jonah to turn from his sin and follow Him because God loved Jonah and knew what was best for him.

Are you ever like Jonah? Do you try to run away from God and His plan for your life? (Allow responses.)

Am I Running?



The purpose is to identify how the campers try to run from God.

Supplies:

Whiteboard

Teachers guide – "Verses Guide" side (2 per bin)

Ask the campers if they can think of some ways that they might be running from God. Read through the verse cards to help them think about how they disobey specific commands God gives us. Also ask them about how they disobey their parents and other people in authority over them. Write down their ideas on the whiteboard.

Tie It Together



Anytime we disobey what God commands us to do, we are turning away from, or running from, God. God has a plan for us and He gives us commands on how to live our life because He knows what is best for us. He loves us. When we disobey God, sometimes He uses discipline to help us recognize our sin. Have you ever wondered why you are disciplined when you do something wrong? (Allow responses.) This is why people in authority over you, like your parents, discipline you. They want you to recognize your disobedience. What are some things your parents have disciplined you for? (Allow responses.)

God desires for you to turn from your sin and follow His plan for your life because He loves you and knows what is best for you. He gives your parents the authority to discipline you if you are disobeying Him. Their discipline is out of love for you, and to show you how you are not obeying God.

The sailors on the ship were afraid of the storm, and they cried out to their gods for help. They found out that Jonah was running away from his God, and became terrified. They asked him what to do to make the sea calm, and he said to throw him out of the ship. They threw him overboard, and prayed to Jonah's God to not hold them responsible for Jonah.

Let's continue reading the Bible to see what happens to Jonah.

Jonah 1:17, 2:1

17 Now the LORD had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

1 Then Jonah prayed to the LORD his God from inside the fish.

How did God respond to Jonah being thrown overboard? (Allow responses.) God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah and save him from the storm. He showed Jonah mercy. What was the first thing Jonah did? (Allow responses.) He prayed to God. No matter where we are, God is with us. We cannot run from Him. Instead, we should run to Him. This is what Jonah did inside the belly of the fish. It was probably really scary to be inside of it, but Jonah turned to God. We can do the same thing when we are in a tough, scary situation. We can pray to God, knowing that He is always with us because He is everywhere.

Let's see what Jonah prayed.

Prayers of Thanksgiving



The purpose is to show that we can be continually thankful to God for our salvation.

Supplies:

Teachers guide – Jonah excerpts side (2 per bin)

Bookmark (1 per camper)

Have campers turn their word searches over to the side with Jonah's prayer. Read through what Jonah prayed while he was in the belly of the fish. Give each camper a bookmark to keep as a reminder that salvation is from the Lord. Go over the verses on the bookmark.

Tie It Together



Even when Jonah was in a dark, wet, nasty place, he was able to see God's faithfulness and provision. God is always faithful and never leaves us. Remember Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego? In the fiery furnace, there were four men seen inside when only three were thrown in. God was with Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego in the fiery furnace. He was also with Daniel in the lion's den.

Sometimes life can be hard, but God is always the same. We can trust in a God who never changes. God is also merciful and gracious. He provides a way of salvation for us through His Son, Jesus. What did Jesus do for us? (Allow responses.) He came down to earth, lived a perfect life, died for our sins on the cross, and was resurrected. We can thank God for the cross, and know that God loves us and cares for no matter what our circumstances are.

We saw that God changed Jonah's heart through discipline and saving him from the stormy sea by having a big fish swallow him. Do you think Jonah stayed in the belly of the fish? (Allow responses.)

Let's continue reading the Bible to take a look at what happened next.

Jonah 2:10-3:5

10 Then the LORD ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

1 Then the LORD spoke to Jonah a second time: 2 "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh, and deliver the message I have given you."

3 This time Jonah obeyed the LORD's command and went to Nineveh, a city so large that it took three days to see it all. 4 On the day Jonah entered the city, he shouted to the crowds: "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" 5 The people of Nineveh believed God's message, and from the greatest to the least, they declared a fast and put on burlap to show their sorrow.

What happened to Jonah? (Allow responses.) Jonah was spit out of the fish, and then God commanded him again to go to Nineveh. This time Jonah obeyed God and went to Nineveh. Nineveh was a really large city. Jonah walked around the city warning the people that God was going to destroy Nineveh in 40 days. The people believed Jonah, and changed their ways.

What do you think is going to happen to the city? (Allow responses.) Let's read more in the Bible to find out.

Jonah 3:10

10 When God saw what they had done and how they had put a stop to their evil ways, he changed his mind and did not carry out the destruction he had threatened.

Did God destroy Nineveh? (Allow responses.) No, God did not destroy the people of Nineveh. Why not? (Allow responses.) They repented of their sin and worshipped God. 1 John 1:9 says, "If we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness." God was merciful and forgave the people of Nineveh. They deserved to be punished for their sin, but God had mercy on them because they repented and turned from their sin.

How did Jonah experience God's mercy and forgiveness too? (Allow responses.) Even though Jonah tried to run from God, God used discipline to change his heart and showed mercy by sending the fish to save him. God could have let Jonah pay the consequences of his sin, but God loved Jonah.

How do you think Jonah responded to seeing God pour out his mercy and forgiveness to the people of Nineveh? Do you think he thanked God for showing mercy and forgiveness, or do you think he was mad that they did not get punished for their sin? (Allow responses.)

Let's read the Bible to see how Jonah responded.

Jonah 4:1-2

1 This change of plans greatly upset Jonah, and he became very angry. 2 So he complained to the LORD about it: "Didn't I say before I left home that you would do this, LORD? That is why I ran away to Tarshish! I knew that you are a merciful and compassionate God, slow to get angry and filled with

unfailing love. You are eager to turn back from destroying people. 3 Just kill me now, LORD! I'd rather be dead than alive if what I predicted will not happen."

4 The LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry about this?"

Jonah was upset; he did not want the people of Nineveh to receive God's mercy and forgiveness. Do you think Jonah had the right to be upset? Do you think it was right of him to be angry that God did not punish the people of Nineveh for their sin? (Allow responses.)

Jonah was so angry that he left the city and waited to see what would happen to the city. God took this opportunity to use a plant to teach Jonah. He caused a plant to grow up over Jonah and give him shade from the scorching sun. Jonah was happy under the shade of the plant. Then, God sent a worm to eat the plant and leave Jonah under the heat of the burning sun. Jonah felt compassion for the plant, and anger that it was destroyed. God asked Jonah how he could go from happiness to anger so easily. God could show mercy to the people He created. God loved the people of Nineveh as much as He loved Jonah. God wanted them to come to Him. They deserved God's mercy no more than Jonah deserved it. Jonah did not want others to receive mercy and love from God in the same way he did for his sin. God corrected him, and showed him that God's love is for everyone.

God's love is for us and for others. God desires for everyone to repent, to turn from their sin and accept His love. He calls us to share our faith, our belief in God, with others. He uses us to show His love and mercy to others just like He used Jonah to call the people of Nineveh to repentance. We are not to keep our faith to ourselves. We are to share it with those around us so that they can turn from their sin and have a relationship with God.

Wrapping Up

Jonah's message is not just for the Old Testament or just for the people of Nineveh. Matthew 12:40-41 tells us,

40 For as Jonah was in the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights, so will the Son of Man be in the heart of the earth for three days and three nights.

41 "The people of Nineveh will stand up against this generation on judgment day and condemn it, for they repented of their sins at the preaching of Jonah. Now someone greater than Jonah is here—but you refuse to repent.

Jesus is the greater one mentioned in this verse. He taught that all should repent and turn away from their sins. He also taught about God's forgiveness and mercy. Jesus brought this message of salvation to all of the people, not just the Israelites. God's salvation through the death of Jesus is for us and for others. We can share this message with everyone around us. Who is someone you can tell about God's great love? Let's each write down the name of someone who we want to tell about God's great love on the back of our bookmarks so that when we use them we can be reminded and encouraged to share God with that person. They can also write or draw pictures showing ways they can show/tell others about God's love and mercy.

Prayer Time

Spend some time in prayer to close small group time. Thank God for His love and mercy, even though we do not deserve it.



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