

GOD'S RELENTLESS PURSUIT OF JONAH



Chapter Two

A Note to the Parents/Teachers

At some point during Jonah's 3 day and 3 night stay in the belly of the fish, he came to a point of at least partial repentance and wrote a poem of prayer. This is somewhat of a turning point, but as we'll see in later chapters Jonah still hardens his heart toward God. So as we focus on Jonah's prayer in chapter 2, remember to help the kids see that Jonah is not the true hero of the story... God is!

- **Big Idea:** God uses what can seem like destruction to bring salvation to His people

Starter

- **Question:** *Have you ever had a time where you felt completely stuck? Or helpless? A moment when you felt like all you could do was cry out to God and ask Him to help? That's what we see in today's story. Jonah is in the deepest, darkest place and cries out to God and God saves him!*
- **Game:** 'Lights Out'
Tell everyone they can get up, shake, and move around while the lights are on. But when you turn off the lights, they have to sit perfectly still in a ball on the floor and stay silent. See who can get in their spots quietly the fastest.

Sing Together

He's Got the Whole World In His Hands - <https://youtu.be/-T1CLIMjiTw>

Story

Jonah was inside the belly of the great fish for 3 days and 3 nights. Remember, he got there because he had been running away from God and what God wanted him to do. He was supposed to go to Nineveh and tell them to turn away from being violent so that God would forgive them. Instead, he got on a boat to travel all the way across the other side of the world. When God sent a storm to get Jonah's attention, he decided he'd rather get thrown into the sea and die than listen to God. So, then God sent a giant fish to swallow him up! This wasn't the death of Jonah, although it would seem like if a giant fish ate you you would be dead. Instead, this was how God provided salvation for Jonah. The fish swallowing Jonah whole saved him from drowning in the sea.

Can you imagine being cramped inside the stomach of a fish? How dark it would be and how slimy and smelly? Well, on the third day, God had finally gotten Jonah's attention. Then, Jonah confessed:

"I called to the LORD in my distress and he answered me. I cried out for help from deep inside the stomach of death; God heard my voice. When you threw me into the depths of the seas, God, the current overcame me. Your waves swept over me. I said, 'I have been banished from the LORD's sight, but I will turn back toward Your holy temple.' Your water covered me up to my neck, threatening my life. Seaweed wrapped around my head. I sank to the foundations of the mountains, the earth closed its gates to me forever! Then You raised my life from the pit, LORD, my God! As my life was fading, I remembered the LORD and You heard my prayer. Those who worship idols and false gods abandon true faithful love in You, but as for me, I will sacrifice to You and be grateful. I will do what You ask. Salvation belongs to the LORD."

After he said this, the LORD commanded the fish to vomit Jonah out onto dry land.

[Dialogue Questions - you may use some or all]

- The inside of a fish stomach sounds gross, right? But it was God saving Jonah from drowning. Being vomited out of a fish sounds gross too, right? But it was God saving Jonah from the fish. Do you think God might also be at work in the hard things in your life today?
- What other story does this remind you of? Can you think of anyone else who went down into the pit or into death for 3 days and 3 nights? What was different about that person's story? What was the same?
- On the third day, Jonah was saved out of the bottom of the sea and the fish. On the third day, Jesus rose from the belly of the grave. Jonah's salvation was for him and Nineveh. Jesus' salvation was for the entire world and all of creation!

- What else do we learn about God in this story? Who was in control of the storm? The sea? The fish? All of creation belongs to God!

Breakout Time

- **Prayer:**

God, thank you for salvation. Thank you for saving us from death and from our sin. Help us to trust you are at work even during the difficult times of life. Amen.

- **Craft:**

Use the coloring sheet attached and discuss how one day all kinds of people will declare what Jonah said, "Salvation belongs to our God!" (See Revelation 7:9-10)

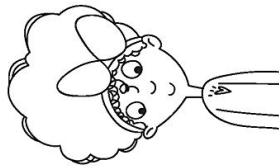
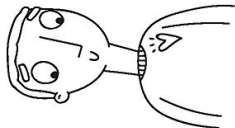
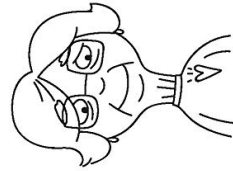
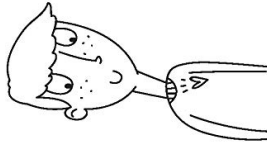
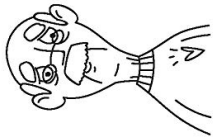
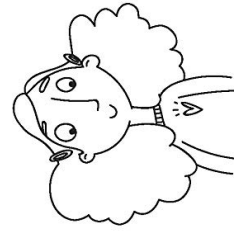
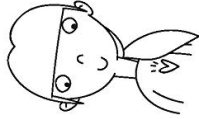
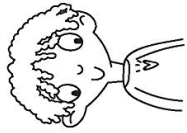
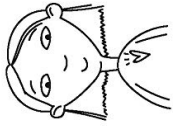
- **BLESS Activity:**

For kids to do during the week

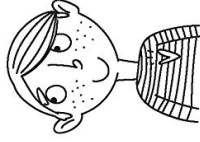
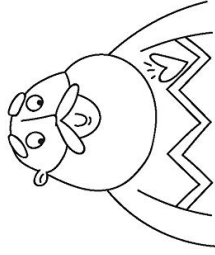
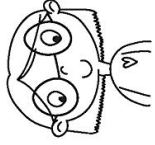
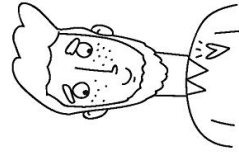
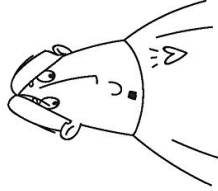
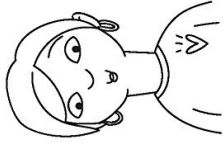
Because this Story is true, we want to be faithful to live in it. We ask the Spirit to help us to *Bless, Listen, Eat, Speak, and Sabbath* (rest & celebrate) in ways that tell the good news of God's Story.

This week, focus on the **Listen** rhythm. God was trying to get Jonah's attention and get him to listen to Him. Could He be trying to get your attention too? Take some time to listen to God speak this week. Read the Scripture, sit in silence, and ask the Spirit to speak to you.

God's idea was to make **PEOPLE**...
lots of people... lots of different people...
who would all enjoy loving him and
all enjoy loving each other.



Complete the picture by
drawing lots of different
people on these pages.



Draw yourself
here!

