

A P P L Y W I T H I N

Sunday School
Curriculum for Kids

JONAH



God Calls, and Jonah Flees!

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

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." - Jonah 1:1-3

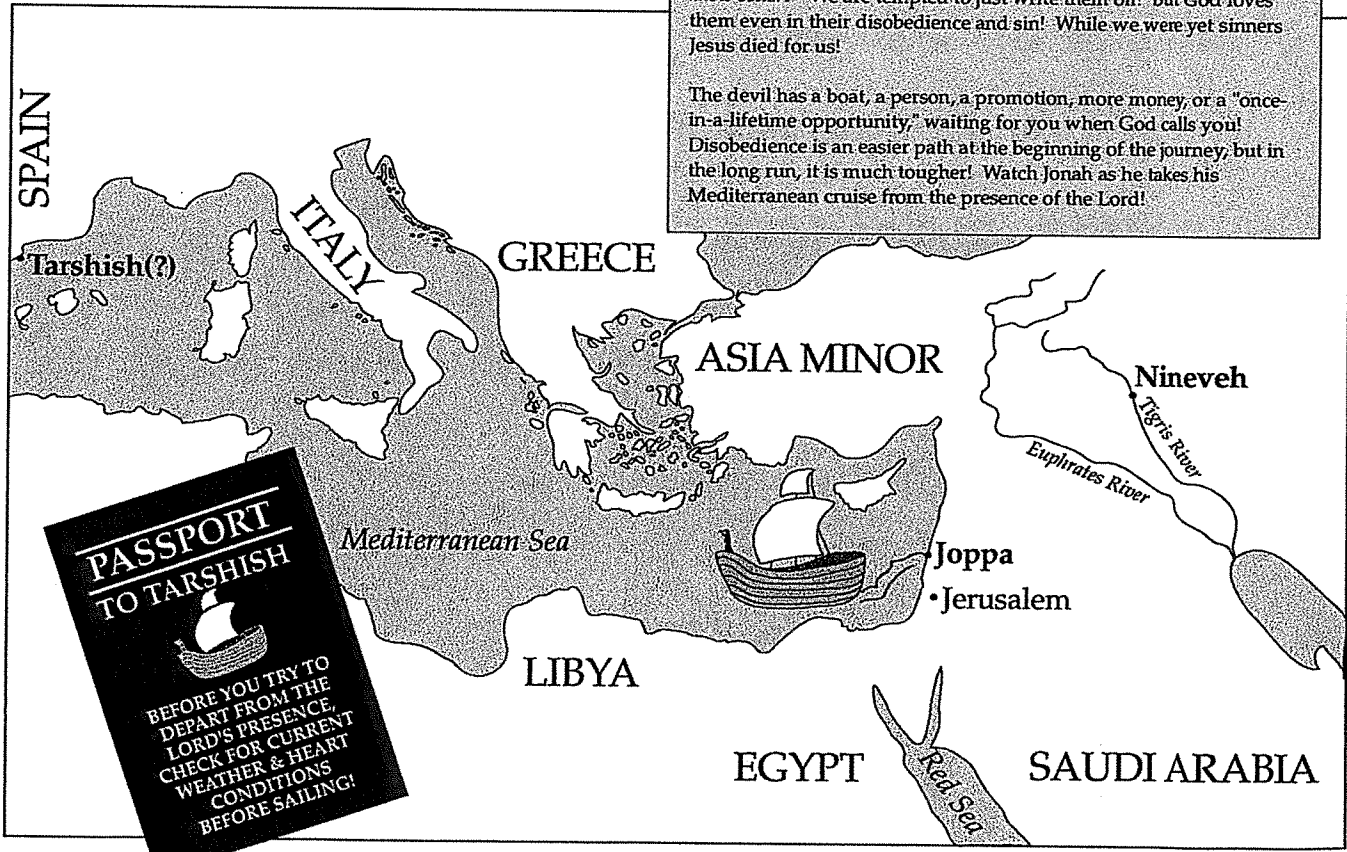
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Jonah, a prophet of God, was called to go and perform a certain task for the Lord. He was a person with all the emotions that we have. And like us, he had a choice to obey the Lord or not! We, like Jonah, many times run as fast as we can in the opposite direction of the Lord's calling! Sometimes we fail to obey due to fear and lack of faith, and other times we disagree with God!

The large city of Nineveh thrived from about 800 to 612 B.C. It was a capital of the Assyrian Empire (its ruins are found in modern-day Iraq). It was a city that was established by Nimrod (Genesis 10:9-12), on the Tigris River. Nimrod also established other cities, one of which was Babel! Babel (Babylon) corrupted the entire earth with its false religion and its cruel worldly economic system - even to this day! The people of Nineveh were Gentiles who were very cruel. God knows all things and He was well aware of their wickedness, but He loved those people in spite of their evil. He is not willing that any should perish, so He sent Jonah to them, but Jonah fled!

How many times has God told you to go and do something and you didn't agree with His orders? What did you do? Sometimes God calls us to say or do something that isn't "politically correct." Our message may "rock the boat" or upset someone! If we are people-pleasers we cannot be God-pleasers. Paul said, "... For if I still pleased men, I would not be a bondservant of Christ." - Galatians 1:10 It is far easier to tell someone something nice (even flattering them!) rather than the truth! Sometimes all God wants us to do is to pray for someone when we see they are going the wrong way in life. What is our response? Do we pray for them, or do we say in our own self-righteous hearts, "they deserve what they get, after all, they are disobeying the Lord and they know better!" We are tempted to just write them off! But God loves them even in their disobedience and sin! While we were yet sinners Jesus died for us!

The devil has a boat, a person, a promotion, more money, or a "once-in-a-lifetime opportunity," waiting for you when God calls you! Disobedience is an easier path at the beginning of the journey, but in the long run, it is much tougher! Watch Jonah as he takes his Mediterranean cruise from the presence of the Lord!



Jonah

Chapter 1:1-3

Vocabulary in Context With Today's Lesson

Joppa-an old Mediterranean city, about thirty miles NW of Jerusalem

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 1:1-2; Why did God send Jonah to cry out against Nineveh?

Note: Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Empire, a Gentile nation. It had ruled the world for 300 years at that time. They were barbaric in their ways, making furniture from human skin of the nations they conquered and using human skulls to build pyramids. They struck terror and fear into the hearts of their enemies.

2. Does God want the Jews only to know of His salvation? (Acts 28:28)
3. Even though the world is full of sin God still loves us. How do we know that He loves us and wants us to be with Him? (John 3:16; Romans 5:8)
4. Read 1 John 4:8; what does it tell us that God is?
5. Read Jonah 1:3; Did Jonah obey God's call?
6. Look at the map on the front of the lesson, which direction was Tarshish from Nineveh?
7. Can we escape the presence of the Lord? (Psalm 139:7-12)

Note: It was in Joppa that the Lord gave the apostle Peter the vision to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles (Acts 10)

8. Read Jonah 1:3; When Jonah decided to pay the fare to flee from the God's calling, which direction did it take him? It is stated twice in verse three.
9. Jonah didn't think the Ninevites were deserving of God's mercy because they were so evil, that is why he tried to run away. He didn't want them to be saved. Is that how God feels? Is that how we should feel? (2 Peter 3:9)

Memory Verse

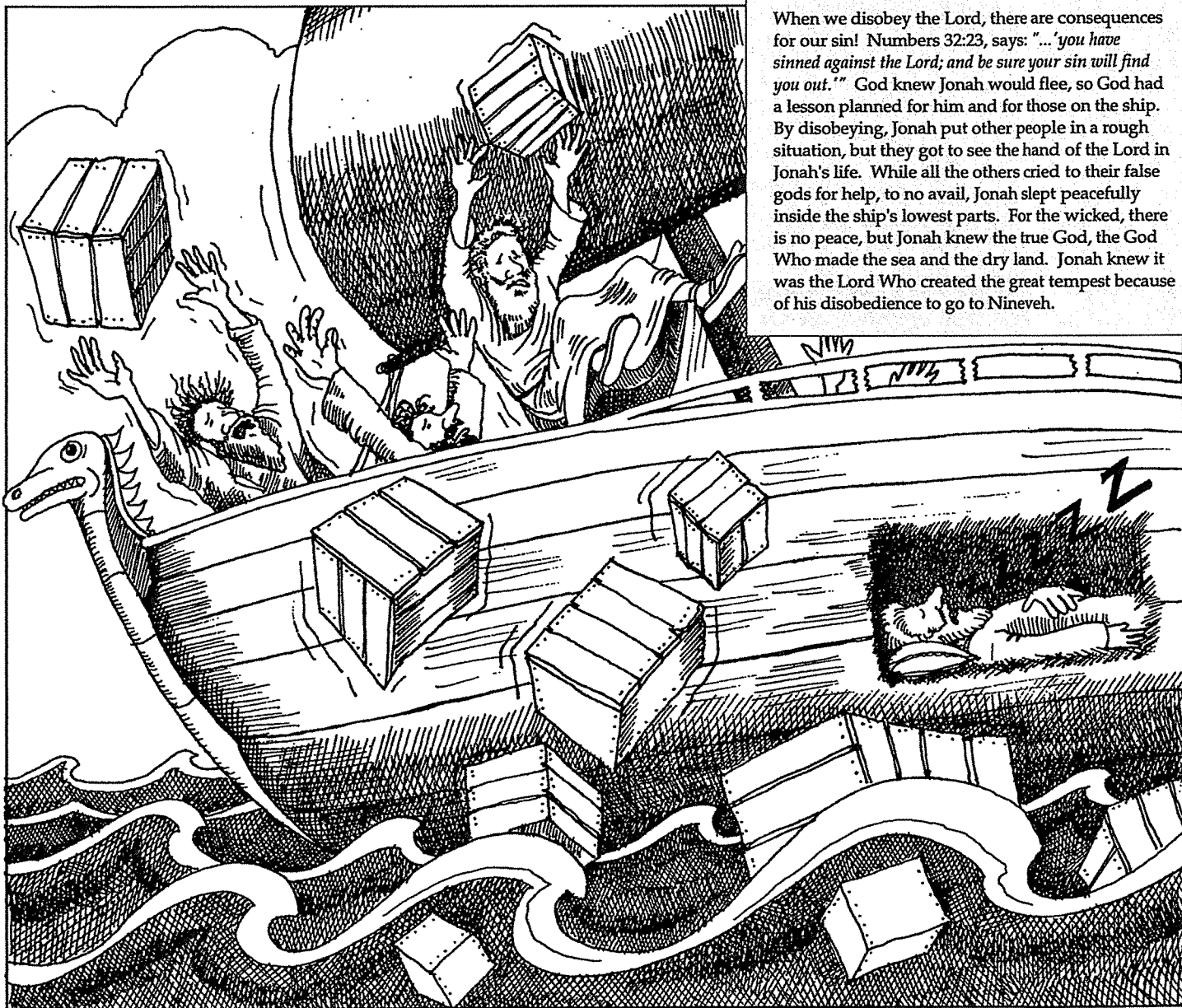
“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

God Sent Out a Great Wind on the Sea!

"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. 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.

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.' 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. 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?' 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.'" - Jonah 1:4-9



When we disobey the Lord, there are consequences for our sin! Numbers 32:23, says: "...you have sinned against the Lord; and be sure your sin will find you out." God knew Jonah would flee, so God had a lesson planned for him and for those on the ship. By disobeying, Jonah put other people in a rough situation, but they got to see the hand of the Lord in Jonah's life. While all the others cried to their false gods for help, to no avail, Jonah slept peacefully inside the ship's lowest parts. For the wicked, there is no peace, but Jonah knew the true God, the God Who made the sea and the dry land. Jonah knew it was the Lord Who created the great tempest because of his disobedience to go to Nineveh.

Jonah

Chapter 1:4-9

Vocabulary in Context With Today's Lesson

tempest-a violent windstorm with rain

cast lots-the custom of deciding a doubtful question, similar to throwing dice

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 1:4; Who sent out the great wind?

Note: God sends storms into our lives for many different reasons. The Apostles faced a storm in Matt. 8:23-27 to test their faith. Jonah is facing a storm because of disobedience.

2. Read Jonah 1:5; the strong and courageous mariners were terrified of the storm because it was so violent. What was Jonah doing? Which direction did he continue to go?
3. When Jesus was asleep in the boat during a storm, He was at peace because He Knew God was in control. When we are obeying the Lord we have peace, what does Proverb 3:21-24 tell us?

Note: Jonah's sleep was different, he was rebelling and wanted to hide from God, hoping when he awoke he would be far away and everything would be okay. Or maybe his sleep was different because he knew the living God.

4. Read Jonah 1:6-7; who drew the 'short straw'? Was God even in control of this?
5. Read Jonah 1:8-9; after the mariners questioned Jonah, what was his answer?

Memory Verse

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

Man Overboard!

"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. 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. 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.'

Nevertheless the men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. 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.' So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and offered a sacrifice to the Lord and took vows."

- Jonah 1:10-16



Jonah, like us, probably expected God to destroy him due to his sin and disobedience. That is how we think of God sometimes. But God is merciful and He loves us in spite of our sin and disobedience. God had a plan to deliver Jonah and use him anyway, just like God has a plan to use you and deliver you! If you are born again, God will never leave or forsake you, no matter how badly you fail! God doesn't squash us like bugs when we fail, but He disciplines His kids out of love. Then He helps us to keep on walking with Him. We are always pleasantly surprised by His lovingkindness because we all know in our hearts that we don't deserve it! Even in the worst situations, Romans 8:28, promises: "And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose."

The men on the ship also sought the Lord and cried out to Him! That can happen in the lives of the many unbelievers around us. When their storms arise, we can tell them about the God Who made the sea and dry land! Many times they run to us and ask us about the Lord as they fear for their lives! And when their ship is about to go down, they willingly unload the cargo of false gods and their own pride! Then they diligently seek Him with their whole heart and find Him!

Jonah was willing to be thrown overboard so that others could live. Jesus willingly laid down His life so others could live, too! But Jesus didn't fail to obey His Father, or flee from the will of His Father, ever! Jesus is God, Who is without sin! Jonah was a human like all of us, and we fail often!

Jonah

Chapter 1:10-16

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 1:10; what was the reaction of the sailors when Jonah told them who he was?
2. Read Jonah 1:11-12; what was Jonah's answer when the sailors asked him how to calm the storm?
3. Jonah knew he was the problem, and he was willing to sacrifice his life to save those on the ship. Do you think Jonah thought that he would live or die when he was thrown overboard?
4. Read Jonah 1:13; why do you think the sailors continued to row harder, even though Johan told them to throw him overboard?
5. Read Johan 1:13; did their rowing get them any closer to shore?

Note: The sailors were probably afraid to touch the prophet of the Lord and thought they could get themselves to shore. They had more respect for God than Jonah did.

6. Read Jonah 1:14-15; after the sailors realized that God was in control of the storm what did they pray? What did they do? What happened to the storm?
7. Read Jonah 1:16; After going through one of the worst storms in their lives, Who did the sailors finally put their trust in?

Note: When we are disobedient to God, our sin affects many more people than just us. Look at Jonah, how many lives were affected by his rebellion? But God is merciful and uses all things for our good and His glory (Romans 8:28). He used Jonah's rebellion to bring the sailors to salvation!

Memory Verse

“And we know that all things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are the called according to His purpose.”

Romans 8:28 (NKJV)

Swallowed Alive!

"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. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord, his God from the fish's belly. And he said, 'I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me. Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice. For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas, and the floods surrounded me; all Your billows and Your waves passed over me. Then I said, "I have been cast out of Your sight; yet I will look again toward Your holy temple."

The waters surrounded me, even to my soul; the deep closed around me; weeds were wrapped around my head. I went down to the moorings of the mountains; the earth with its bars closed behind me forever; yet You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God.

When my soul fainted within me, I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You, into Your holy temple. Those who regard worthless idols forsake their own Mercy. But I will sacrifice to You with the voice of thanksgiving; I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord."
- Jonah 1:17- 2:1-9



Many people discount the story of Jonah, but Jesus showed us that the story of Jonah is true. Many years after the life of Jonah, the Pharisees came to Jesus and requested a sign (or miracle) from Him. Jesus said, "... 'An evil and adulterous generation seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For 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 12:39-40

Jonah, in the belly of the great fish was a picture of Jesus dying on the Cross and descending into the heart of the earth to set the captive believers free from Abraham's bosom, then He rose on the third day!

While in the belly of the fish, Jonah cried out to the Lord. That is what we ought to do when we are afflicted! Jonah prayed to *his* God. Can you say that God is *your* God? If He isn't your God, He's just waiting for you to ask!

Jonah felt as though he had been cast out of God's sight. Jesus also felt cast out of God's sight when He became separated from His Father for the first time ever, and He bore our sins. He became sin for us. He cried, "... 'My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?'" - Matt. 27:46
Jonah didn't know that his story would be used as an example to show the world a picture of Jesus' death, burial and resurrection! We never know why God is allowing trials in our lives, but He uses all sorts of things in our lives to teach us and to touch other people through our lives and trials! Look at all those people on the boat who got to learn about Jonah's God! Look at all the people who Jonah will speak to in Nineveh! So we walk by faith, not by sight. When we are in a trial, we always want to know why! But God is there in our midst, and even when we disobey, He is preparing a great fish, or some other mode of transportation to get us back on track. He is full of lovingkindness and compassion.

Many of the things that Jonah says in his prayer can be found in other parts of the Bible. Look in your Bible to see all the footnotes given for Jonah's prayer! There are many. Look them up! The Lord will teach you!

Jonah
Chapter 1:17-2:1-9
Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 1:17; who prepared the fish?
2. Some people say that Jonah wasn't a real person, it was just a story. Read Matt. 12:39-40; who did Jesus say that Jonah was?
3. Read the front of the lesson, Who is Jonah a type of?
4. What were the three days and nights in the fish's belly compared with?
5. Jonah is in a "tight" spot. God uses these tight spots in our lives to test us and to teach us. They will either make us bitter or make us better. What did Jonah do? (Jonah 2:1)
6. What are we supposed to do when we're going through trials? (1 Thess. 5:17; James 5:13)
7. Read Jonah 2:1-2; did the Lord hear Jonah's prayer? Does He hear our prayers? (Psalm 34:17)
8. Read Jonah's prayer in verses 2-9, how does it describe Jonah felt?
9. In verse 7, Who did Jonah cry out to?
10. In verse 9, what kind of an attitude did he pray with; "I will sacrifice to you with the voice of _____;" ...
11. Read 1 Thess. 5:18; what are we supposed to do?

***Note:** The Lord wants us to give thanks to Him because He loved us first, with an everlasting love. He loved us so much that He sent His Son to die for us so we could have eternal life with Him. We should be thankful because God counts us worthy to go through trials and afflictions to refine us more into the image of Jesus. He told us He would never leave us or forsake us. And He also promised He would not give us more than we could handle. We're to use the trials in our lives to comfort and encourage others in their time of need.*

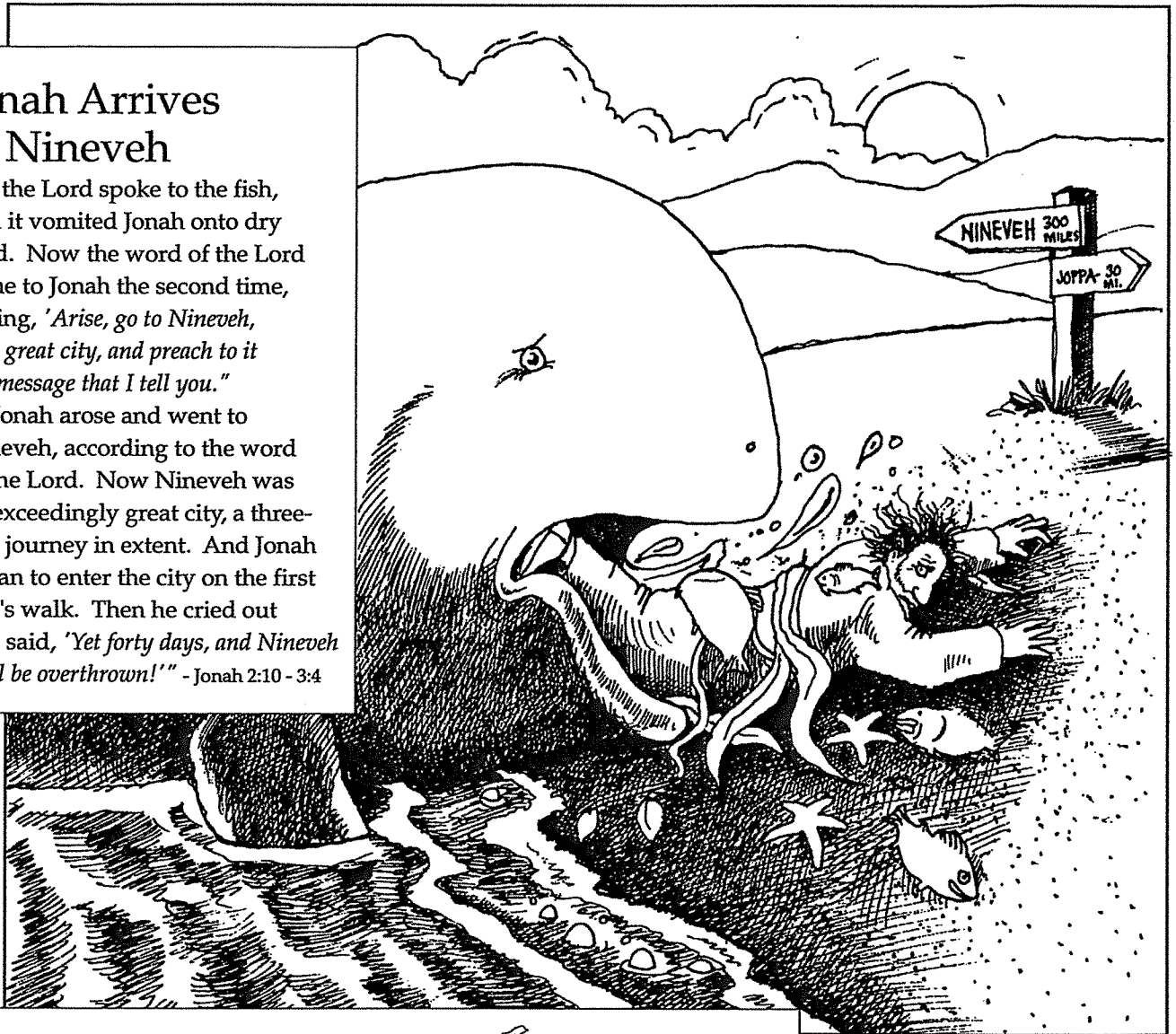
12. Read Jonah 2:9; Who does Jonah look to for his salvation?
13. Read Acts 4:10-12; Who is the only One who can give us salvation? (John 14:6)

Memory Verse

**"In my distress I cried to the Lord, and He heard me."
Psalm 120:1 (NKJV)**

Jonah Arrives in Nineveh

"So the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land. Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the second time, saying, 'Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and preach to it the message that I tell you.' 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. 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!'" - Jonah 2:10 - 3:4



We don't know where the great fish spit Jonah out, or what route he took to get to Nineveh. It must have been quite a walk from the sea!

Once Jonah arrived in Nineveh, which was a city large enough to require three days to cross, he proclaimed God's message. Jonah preached God's message, not his own. That is what we need to do. We are to preach the Gospel (the Good News) of salvation by faith to all who are willing to humbly say yes! It is a simple message. Jonah didn't lead a crusade against the evil works in the city and condemn those who do those things! He just told them what God said to tell them!

Jonah

Chapters 2:10-3:4

Discussion Questions

Note: In chapters one and two we see the direction that disobedience to God takes us. As Jonah's example show us:

*He had gone down to Joppa,
down to the ship,
down inside the ship,
down in the belly of the whale.*

1. Read Jonah 2:10; Jonah realized his sin and prayed to God for salvation. Did God hear his prayer? What did God do?

Note: For three days and nights while Jonah was in the fish's belly, that fish was swimming toward dry land near Nineveh where Jonah was supposed to go in the beginning. While we're in the middle of great trials in our lives God will get us exactly where we're supposed to be. His ways are not exactly the way we would take, but He'll get us there.

2. Read Jonah 3:1; did the Lord give Jonah another chance?
3. Does God give us more than one chance when we fail the first time?
4. Can you name some people from the Bible whom God has given more than one chance?
Abraham denied that Sarah was his wife on two occasions. (Genesis 12:13, 20:2)
Moses murdered a man and tried to cover his sin by burying him in the desert. (Exodus 2:12)
David committed adultery with Bathsheba and murdered her husband. (2 Samuel 11:4;15)
Peter denied Jesus three times.
John Mark left Paul and Barnabas stranded when he ran back home to Jerusalem. (Acts 13:13)

God used all of these men **after** their mistakes.

5. Read 1 Cor. 1:27; our God delights in us and wants to use us. Can anyone be used to accomplish His purpose?
6. Read 2 Cor. 12:9; when can God use us the most? Why?
7. Read Jonah 3:2; what did God tell Jonah to do?
8. Read Jonah 3:3 how big was Nineveh?
9. Read Jonah 3:4; what was the message that God gave to Jonah to preach to Nineveh?

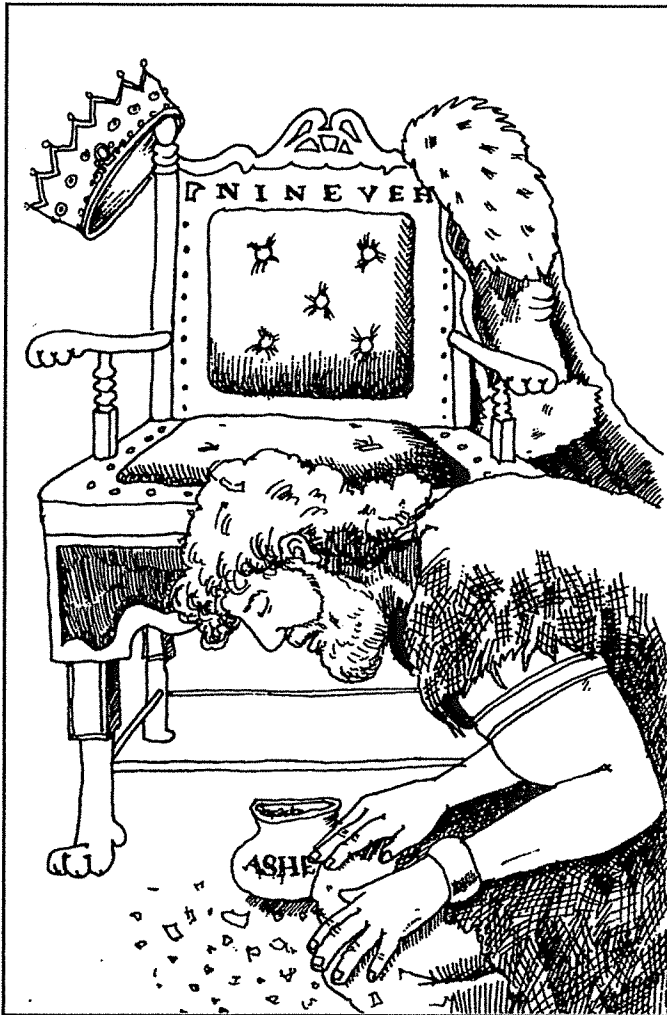
Note: Throughout Scripture, forty is the number of judgment and trial. The people of Israel wandered forty years in the desert. It rained on Noah forty days and forty nights. Jesus was tested in the desert forty days.

10. What do you think Jonah looked like after spending three days and three nights in the belly of a fish?
11. Did Jonah go through Nineveh doing signs and wonders and giving great speeches?
12. Do you think Jonah was particularly happy to give God's message?

Memory Verse

“But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty.”

1 Corinthians 1:27 (NKJV)



Nineveh's king even repented!

How were people in the Old Testament saved?
"For what does the Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.'" - Romans 4:3
They were saved by simple trusting faith in the Lord, just as we are saved thru faith.

The people of Nineveh believed God! Was it only in a simple verbal confession? No. They acted upon their belief! They proclaimed a fast, humbled themselves in the sight of the Lord by clothing themselves in sackcloth. The king of Nineveh arose from his throne, and sat in ashes. Rather than the robe of royalty, he wore a robe of sackcloth!

The king decreed a fast even for Nineveh's animals! His decree was published throughout Nineveh. Everyone was to turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. True repentance is not only in word, but also in deed. A true change of heart will make us want to live differently.

God saw their works and that they turned from their evil way, so He relented from destroying Nineveh.

Nineveh Believed God And Repented!

"So the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them. 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. And he caused it to be proclaimed and published throughout Nineveh by the decree of the king and his nobles, saying,

'Let neither man nor beast, herd nor flock, taste anything; do not let them eat, or drink water. But let man and beast be covered with sackcloth, and cry mightily to God; yes, let every one turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?'

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." - Jonah 3:5-10

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Nineveh was a city that was north of Babylon. It would be in modern-day Iraq. Jesus discussed the city of Nineveh when He was talking to the Pharisees of His day. He said, *"The men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed a greater than Jonah is here."* - Matt. 12:41
Many in Israel saw the miracles of Jesus, and many heard His teaching, yet all of them did not repent. Nineveh never saw the miracles of Jesus, nor heard His teaching, yet they heard a man who had been vomited out of the belly of a great fish! Maybe you believed and repented upon hearing someone teaching or preaching the Word of God? Jesus told Thomas, *"...Thomas, because you have seen Me, you have believed. Blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed."* - John 20:29
Is that you? Do you believe though you have not seen? When you heard or read the Word of God, did you believe it? After believing did you repent? Repentance is a desire from the heart, not just the mouth, to turn from evil and follow the Lord. The Holy Spirit will give us the power to walk and abide in Jesus Christ! Apart from Jesus we can do nothing! Willpower doesn't work. We need His Holy Spirit and a willing humble heart. Are you born again?

Jonah

Chapter 3:5-10

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 3:5-9; when the people of Nineveh heard Jonah's message what did they do?
2. Jonah's message was simple. Are we to use arguments or scientific reasoning to tell people about the Good News of salvation? Read 2 Tim. 4:2; how are we supposed to share the Good News?

Note: The greatest revival of all time happened when Jonah preached only eight words. Remember the parable of the sower in Matt. 13:3-23? We're called to sow seed, the Gospel. The Holy Spirit is the One Who prepares the soil of the heart (John 6:44). We're not to try to "convince" anyone to salvation, it won't work because it's a choice that is made in our hearts. Just preach the Word, God will do the rest.

3. We know that God uses the foolish things of the world, we don't need to be great speakers or the most intelligent. Read Isaiah 6:8, what is all that God needs for us to be used for His glory?
4. Read Jonah 3:10; after Nineveh repented and turned to the Lord, what did God do?
5. Notice that God not only heard the cry of Nineveh's repentance, He also saw their works. Read James 2:17-18; if our faith is real, what will happen?

Memory Verse

"But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things that are mighty."

1 Corinthians 1:27 (NKJV)

Nineveh Repented, and Jonah Became Angry!

"But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. 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. Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!'

Then the Lord said, 'Is it right for you to be angry?' 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. 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." - Jonah 4:1-6

Nineveh was a great and evil city. Didn't they deserve God's wrath? Yes. Are we not all evil in His sight, apart from Jesus? Yes. We, like Jonah, tend to want to see God's justice more than God's mercy, unless it concerns us! Our God is full of grace and mercy toward sinners. Jesus came to save sinners! God determines the time for judgment to fall upon *unrepentant* sinners! He is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance! God gave Nineveh time to repent, and they did! But later, Nineveh returned to their sin and God judged them. The city fell to the Babylonians in 612 B.C.

All we are responsible to do is to obey the Lord and share His message, the Gospel. Many come to your door and they share the news of wars, earthquakes and famines to tell you about their religion. But we are sent out to share the Good News! Jesus came and died for sinners! He paid for their sins! He loves people! Upon hearing the Gospel, it is God Who changes the hearts of the hearers! Either they repent upon hearing His message, or they don't! We cannot issue the consequences for their unrepentance!

Jonah was disgusted and probably felt like his trip was for nothing, since God is full of lovingkindness and mercy. Who knows why God sent Jonah? Maybe so Jonah could be used as an example to the Jews' day!?

God took good care of His angry messenger! God is kind and loving even when we don't deserve it! God could have just taken Jonah's life, as he requested! But God prepared a plant to shade Jonah's head! Remember that God had prepared the great fish for Jonah's transportation and his survival at sea! God has prepared many things for you to do, also! "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."

-Ephesians 2:10



Jonah

Chapter 4:1-6

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 4:1-2; instead of being happy for Nineveh's repentance, what was Jonah's attitude? Why?
2. Jonah was angry because he knew God was merciful and would save those who repent and turn to Him. He wanted to see Nineveh destroyed not saved. This is a selfish heart, our attitude should be in line with Jesus'. Read 2 Peter 3:9; how are we to look at the wicked and evil of this world?
3. Read Jonah 4:3; what was Jonah's cry to the Lord? Why?
4. Read Jonah 4:4; what should our answer be to God?
5. Read Jonah 4:5; there were 600,000 new believers in Nineveh, what did Jonah do? What do you think he should have been doing instead?
6. Read Jonah 4:6; Jonah was feeling sorry for himself and walked away. In his self-pity he was hoping that Nineveh's repentance wasn't real, so he watched from a hilltop hoping God would still destroy them. What did God do to Jonah?

Note: God blesses us even when we're disobedient. God's blessings are never because of what we do, they're because of Who God is. It's all about God's grace, His undeserving favor towards us! When we least deserve it He will still bless us.

7. When Jonah was delivered from the fish, Scripture doesn't record him as being happy. When 600,000 Ninevites were saved, Scripture doesn't record him as being happy. But, when his own personal comfort was met, when God prepared the gourd for shade, for the first time what was Jonah's attitude? (Jonah 4:6)

Memory Verse

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,”

Ephesians 2:8 (NKJV)

God Prepares Many Things!

"But as morning dawned the next day God prepared a worm, and it so damaged the plant that it withered. 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.' 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!' 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. 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?'" - Jonah 4:7-11

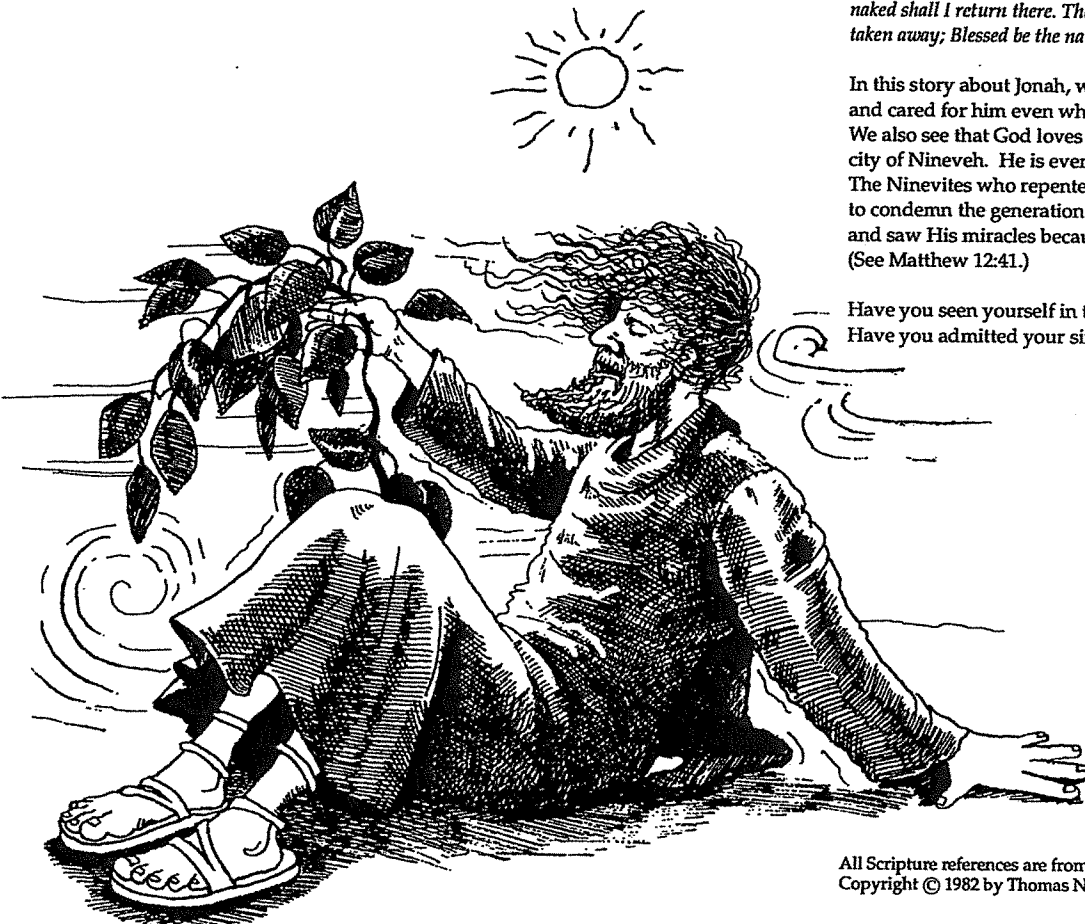
We are all like the plant that God prepared for Jonah. "But we are all like an unclean thing, and all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags; we all fade as a leaf, and our iniquities, like the wind, have taken us away. And there is no one who calls on Your name, who stirs himself up to take hold of You; for You have hidden Your face from us, and have consumed us because of our iniquities." - Isaiah 64:6-7

None of us are good. We fade away like a leaf and our iniquities have blown us away like the wind. But God loves sinners. He knows what we are like, yet He loves us.

God prepares many things in our lives such as storms, great fish to catch us, plants to shade us, and worms to eat those plants! Have you seen any of those things in your life? God knew Jonah would run to Tarshish, so He made a storm. Then He prepared a great fish to catch Jonah. When Jonah was miserable because Nineveh repented (having the wrong attitude toward sinners), God still loved Jonah and He prepared a plant to shade Jonah. Then God prepared a worm to make the leaf wither. Then He sent a strong east wind! God does all these things to teach us! The Lord gives and takes away for His purposes. We must trust Him, knowing He is good! Job had the right attitude toward the things that God allowed in his life. Upon hearing that his property was gone and his children dead, Job tore his robe, shaved his head and fell to the ground and worshiped. He said, "...Naked I came from my mother's womb, and naked shall I return there. The Lord gave, and the Lord has taken away; Blessed be the name of the Lord." - Job 1:21

In this story about Jonah, we see that God loved Jonah and cared for him even when he rebelled and complained. We also see that God loves sinners, such as those in the city of Nineveh. He is even concerned for livestock! The Ninevites who repented will rise in the judgment to condemn the generation in Israel who heard Jesus and saw His miracles because they did not repent! (See Matthew 12:41.)

Have you seen yourself in this story?
Have you admitted your sins and repented?



Jonah

Chapter 4:7-11

Discussion Questions

1. Read Jonah 4:7; Jonah was comfortable and no longer depressed because of the gourd God prepared. What did God do?
2. God is in control of all things in our lives. He prepares the gourd and the worm, the blessings and the bummer. Read Romans 8:28; why does God allow these things into our lives?
3. Read Job 1:21; what should our attitude be during our trials and tribulations?

Note: The worm was prepared by God to teach Jonah, to grow him up. God took away the comfort in Jonah's life, and He does the same thing in ours. He has to get our attention so we put our eyes and trust in Him to work out His plan and purpose for us.

4. Read Jonah 4:8; what else did God prepare and allow into Jonah's life? What was Jonah's response?

Note: The wind can do many things. It can clear the air to show us the situation around us. It can move us out of our situation and back to where we need to be

5. Read Jonah 4:9; what did God ask Jonah? Is it okay that we should be so selfish and whine when our comfort is taken away? Doesn't God do all things for our good and His glory? (Rom. 8:28)
6. Read Jonah 4:10-11; here God is asking Jonah if he should at least have pity on the children of Nineveh. What kind of attitude does Jonah have? Is God merciful to him in spite of his attitude? Did God bless him anyway?

Note: When we're faced with situations in our lives that don't make us feel good, be thankful and know that God's ways are not our ways. HE has a plan and purpose for our lives that we can't figure out. We're supposed to walk by faith. Don't be a Jonah and think that God doesn't want to save those that are very evil and wicked. Remember, He is willing that none should perish and all would come to repentance. None of us are deserving of God's salvation, it's all about His grace and love towards us. So share the Good News!

Memory Verse

"For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God,"

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