

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

JONAH



CHRIST CONNECTION: God wants everyone to turn from their sin and trust in Him. God loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: Follow the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 13:4

BABIES GOSPEL GEMS

- God told Jonah to speak to the people in Nineveh who were doing wrong things. Jonah did not listen to God. He ran away and got on a boat.
- God sent a storm. Jonah was thrown in the sea, and God sent a fish to swallow Jonah.
- Jonah listened to God, went to Nineveh, and the people said they wanted to obey God.

BIBLE STORY FOR TODDLERS: God told Jonah to speak to the people in Nineveh who were doing wrong things. But Jonah ran away and got on a boat. God sent a big storm. Jonah told the sailors to throw him into the sea. When they did, the storm stopped! Then, God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah! Jonah was in the fish for three days and nights. Next, the fish spit Jonah out on the shore. Again, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. This time, Jonah listened. Jonah told the people, “God will destroy the city in forty days!” The people listened, they changed, and God did not destroy the city. God loved the people in Nineveh and was happy they wanted to obey Him.



LEARNING Activities

Engage babies in the following activities during the session. In each activity, provide handheld Bibles for babies to handle. Open a Bible to Jonah. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster as you say the gospel gems in a soothing voice. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card. Pray for the babies.

1 SING A SONG

Sing the following lyrics to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”:

“Follow the LORD your God,
LORD your God, LORD your God.
Follow the LORD your God,
He loves and cares for you.”

SAY “ Our key passage phrase says, ‘Follow the LORD your God.’ We can follow God because He loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us. ”

2 FIND THE FISH

Draw simple fish shapes on papers, and spread them around the room on the floor. If desired, spread out blue butcher paper or a blue shower curtain to represent water. Then place the fish in the “water” for the babies to find. Sit babies just out of reach of the fish papers in leaders’ laps or in horseshoe-shaped pillows. Encourage them to reach for and touch the fish. For more mobile babies, encourage them to crawl around the room to find the fish. Read the second gospel gem as the babies play.

SAY “ God told Jonah to speak to the people in Nineveh who were doing wrong things. Did Jonah listen to God? No! Jonah did not listen to God. Jonah ran away and got on a boat. God sent a storm. Jonah was thrown in the sea, and God sent a fish to swallow Jonah. ”

3 LISTEN AND FOLLOW

Sit babies in leaders’ laps or in horseshoe-shaped pillows. Place noisemaker items (jingle bells in a brown bag, a bottle of water, crinkle paper, and so forth) behind leaders’ backs. Use the items to make a noise behind a leader’s back, and help the babies find the sound. For more mobile babies, allow them to crawl to the sound to shake the noisemaker for themselves. Read the key passage phrase as the babies listen and follow.

SAY “ In our story today, Jonah was thrown into the sea by a big storm. Did Jonah follow God at first? No! So, Jonah was swallowed by a fish! Our key passage phrase says that God wants everyone to follow and trust in Him. God loves us and sent Jesus to save us. ”

Check diapers, serve bottles if needed, and release babies to parents according to your church’s security guidelines. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card. Repeat the Christ Connection, gospel gems, and Bible-learning activities for babies who stay a second hour.



LEARNING Activities

Engage toddlers in the following activities. In each activity, show the Bible Story Picture Poster as you review the Bible story. Provide small Bibles for toddlers to handle.

1 CIRCLE TIME

Open your Bible to Jonah. Show the Bible Story Picture Poster as you tell the provided toddlers' Bible story. Read the Key Passage Phrase Card, and guide toddlers to say it. Pray for the toddlers.

2 MOVE AWAY

Line up all of the toddlers in the middle of the room. Stand on one side of the room. Explain that, when you say, "Go," the toddlers should move to the side of the room that is opposite from you. Repeat as time allows, alternating which side of the room you stand on. Review the story as the toddlers play.

SAY “ You are so fast! When I said, ‘Go,’ you ran away from me. When God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, did he listen? No, Jonah did not listen to God. He ran away and got on a boat instead! ”

3 MAKE A STORM

Explain to the toddlers that you are going to make a “thunderstorm.” Dim the lights, and instruct some toddlers to tap lightly on the ground for rain, others to rub hands together for wind, and the rest to clap for thunder. Use your arms to “direct” the storm to get louder or softer. Allow the toddlers to add sound effects as you read the Bible story.

SAY “ When Jonah was on the boat, what did God send? Yes! God sent a storm, and Jonah was thrown in the sea. God protected Jonah by sending a fish to swallow him. God keeps us safe. ”

4 COUNT TO THREE

Collect various objects in threes from around the room (three cups, three toys, three crayons, and so forth). Count the items with the toddlers, showing the numbers on your fingers as you count. Review the Bible story, pausing for emphasis when you say the number three.

SAY “ How many days was Jonah in the fish? Yes, three! Jonah did not listen to God, so God sent a fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish for three days and nights! God loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us. ”

5 EAT FISH CRACKERS



Post an allergy alert. Draw a fish shape on small paper plates for the toddlers. Encourage toddlers to lay their fish-shaped crackers on the shape to examine the crackers' shape and size. Retell the story as the toddlers enjoy the snack.

SAY “ Did God send a huge fish or a tiny fish? Yes! God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah because he disobeyed God. After the fish spat Jonah out, he went to Nineveh and told the people about God. God wants everyone to turn from their sin and obey Him. He sent Jesus to save us. ”

JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

JONAH

CHRIST CONNECTION: God wants everyone to turn from their sin and trust in Him. God loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us.

KEY PASSAGE PHRASE: Follow the LORD your God. Deuteronomy 13:4

1 TRANSITION ACTIVITY: BUILD A CITY

Set out foam blocks for the toddlers. Encourage them to build a city (Nineveh) and knock it down. Rebuild as time allows. Retell the Bible story, explaining that God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh.

SAY “Who told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh? Yes, God! God told Jonah to go to Nineveh to tell the people about God. God said He would destroy the city if the people did not turn from their sin. Did the people decide to obey God? Yes! God loved them and did not destroy their city.”

2 SING THE SCRIPTURE

Sing the following lyrics to the tune of “Mary Had a Little Lamb”: “Follow the LORD your God, / LORD your God, LORD your God. / Follow the LORD your God, / He loves and cares for you.”

SAY “Our key passage phrase says, ‘Follow the LORD your God.’ Did Jonah eventually follow God? Yes! We can follow God too because He loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us.”

3 TURN FROM SIN

Arrange the toddlers in a line and assign the first person in the line as the “leader.” Instruct the leader to walk from one end of the room to another, then turn around and walk the other way. Instruct the toddlers to follow not just where the leader walks, but also how the leader walks. Select new leaders and replay as time permits. Review the Bible story as toddlers play.

SAY “Jonah told the people of Nineveh that God wanted them to turn from their sin. Does God want us to turn from our sin and the wrong things we do too? Yes! God wants everyone to turn from their sin and trust in Him. God loves us and sent Jesus to save us.”

4 PAINT A SEA

Provide painting smocks. Use painter’s tape to make one simple fish shape on each paper for the toddlers. Give each toddler a prepared piece of paper and a paintbrush. Place small plates of blue washable paint on the table. Encourage the toddlers to paint a “sea” on their papers. When dry, remove the “fish” to reveal the fish God sent to save Jonah. Review the Bible story as the toddlers paint.

SAY “When Jonah was thrown in the sea, what did God send Jonah? Yes, God sent a huge fish to save Jonah. God loves us, and He sent Jesus to save us.”

Check diapers, serve a snack if needed, and release toddlers to parents according to your church’s security procedures. Give parents today’s Big Picture Card to reinforce today’s Bible story, Christ Connection, or gospel gems throughout the week.