

GATHERING TIME

optional but
highly recommended

If you use Gathering Time each week, plan a way for the children to form groups as they arrive. Ask the shepherds for each group to sit in the same area of the gathering place each week. Each group should have a different color flag, sign, or carpet square for identification. Ask the shepherds to visit with the children as they arrive, making them welcome and reminding them to stay with the group.

If you do not have a Gathering Time, review the activities suggested for these times as possibilities for additional activities in your stations or in other settings.

SETTING THE STAGE

You will need:

1. A sign post with "Nineveh," "Joppa," and "Tarshish" on it. Be sure "Nineveh" and "Tarshish" are pointing in the opposite directions.
2. Week one: A Bible-times costume
3. Week two: A large flat sheet (not contour) for each group, sponge softballs or a pair of rolled up socks for each child
4. Week five: cell phone, letter, laptop computer
5. Week seven: three sheets of newsprint, marker, tape

EACH WEEK

Welcome the children, take attendance, and collect the offering.

Sing one of the songs from the downloaded music. Do the Gathering activity. Introduce the stations for the day. Close with prayer.

Resources

- * *Jonah* music (downloadable)
- * *Jonah* lyrics and sheet music

Supplies

carpet squares or large pillows in a different color for each group
 CD player
 posterboard
 Bible-times costume
 large flat sheet
 sponge softballs or a pair of rolled up socks (1 for each child)
 cell phone
 letter
 laptop computer
 newsprint
 marker
 tape

GATHERING ACTIVITIES

Week 1

- * Have someone, dressed in a Bible-times costume, tell the Jonah story in the first person.

Week 2

- * **Say:** Last week we heard from Jonah, one of God's prophets who had lots of adventures as he took God's word to the people of Nineveh. Jonah got on a ship heading opposite from where God told him to go. Who remembers what happened next? *(A storm came up.)* When there's a storm on the ocean, the waves get huge. We're going to play a game called "Tidal Wave" to remind ourselves of the storm.

- * This game is for four or more players and should be played in an open area.
- * Give each group a sheet. Each person in the group should have a foam softball or a pair of rolled up socks. Each ball or pair of socks should be a different color.

- * Give these instructions:

First, put your ball or socks in the middle of the sheet.

Now, grab the edge of the sheet and pull it tight so the sheet lifts off the ground.

Then shake the sheet and try to knock everyone else's socks off. Keep shaking the sheet, even if your socks get knocked off.

The last player with socks on the sheet is the winner. Watch the sheets; they will look like huge tidal waves!

Week 3

- * **Ask:** What did Jonah do when God asked him to go to Nineveh to deliver a message? *(He went in the opposite direction.)*

- * **Say:** Jonah got on a ship, and the ship ran into a storm. Today, we're going to make our own storm!

- * This activity is performed as a round. Divide the children into four groups. The actions are rubbing hands together, snapping fingers, slapping thighs, stamping feet, slapping thighs, snapping fingers, rubbing hands together. "Direct" the group as you would the singing of a round, with one group starting and the rest following after a silent count of four. You'll hear the storm move in and out.

Week 4

- * **Say:** What happened to Jonah after he was thrown overboard? *(He was swallowed by a big fish.)*

- * **Say:** Tradition has it that a whale swallowed Jonah. Let's have a quick vote: Is a whale a fish? If you say yes, move to my right. If you say no, move to my left. If you said no, you were correct. Who knows what kind of an animal a whale is? *(a mammal)*

- * Continue voting, with the children moving to designated sides of the room. Include these questions:

1. Do fish breathe air or water? *(water)*
2. Do mammals breathe air or water? *(air)*
3. Do fish lay eggs, yes or no? *(yes)*
4. Do mammals give birth to baby mammals, yes or no? *(yes)*
5. Do fish take care of their babies, yes or no? *(no)*
6. Do mammals take care of their babies, yes or no? *(yes)*
7. Do fish have scales, yes or no? *(yes)*
8. Do mammals have skin and hair, yes or no? *(yes)*
9. Are you a mammal, yes or no? *(yes)*

Week 5

- * **Say:** In Bible-times, when God wanted to send a message... *(Have someone come in and interrupt you to give you a letter).* Excuse me. Where was I? Oh, yes, when God wanted to send a message... *(This time you'll be interrupted by the ringing of your cell phone. Pick it up and answer it.)* Can I call you back later? I'm in the middle of something now. All right, when God wanted to send a message... *(Someone interrupts, saying they need to check their e-mail.)*

(Exasperated, start over again) When God wanted to send a message, did God send a letter? *(no)* Did God call on a cell phone? *(no)* Did God send an e-mail? *(no)* God sent people with messages.

Week 6

- * **Say:** I have a question for you: What are some ways we send messages to someone? We're going to play "Who Brought the Message." I need three volunteers.
- * Send the volunteers to the back of the room. Have the rest of the children close their eyes. The messengers will move through the room. Each will tap someone on the shoulder, then come to the front of the room.
- * Ask the children who were tapped to stand up. Each one will guess which messenger tapped them. They get one guess. If they guess correctly, they will trade places with the messenger. Play several rounds. (If your group is large, have more children be messengers.)
- * **Say:** The Ninevites never believed they would get a message from God. How do we get messages from God today? *(reading the Bible, prayer, coming to church, through others)*

Week 7

- * Post signs at opposite ends of the room that read "Never" and "Always." Post a sign in the middle that reads "Sometimes."
- * **Say:** I will read four statements. As I read each statement, stand by the sign that best expresses your answer. *(Let the children make their choices, then ask them to stand by the sign that expresses how they feel Jonah might answer.)*
 1. I try to get out of doing something I hate to do.
 2. I want to get even with people who hurt me.
 3. I want to stay away from people who are very different from me.
 4. I get angry when things don't turn out the way I want them to turn out.
- * **Say:** Jonah wanted to stay away from the people of Nineveh. He thought God loved the Hebrew people, but should punish the people of Nineveh. When God forgave Nineveh, Jonah got so angry he wanted to die. While you're in your station today, think about the ways you are sometimes like Jonah.

Week 8

- * Sing songs from the Music/Movement Station that the children particularly enjoyed.

STATIONS AT A GLANCE

| Stations | Focus | Preferences | Activities |
|--|---|--|--|
| Art Children will learn the Bible story through art experiences. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: visual verbal logical physical | Scenes From the Travels of Jonah Origami Whales Eric Carle Style Whales Tessellating Doves Scrimshaw |
| Computer Children will learn the Bible story through computer experiences. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: logical independent visual verbal | Postcards From the Sea The Prophet Who Was Not Play and Learn Jonah and the Arts |
| Cooking Children will learn the Bible story through experiences with food preparation. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: logical social verbal physical | Phish Food Deep Sea Tuna Boats Juice Fish 'N' Dips Ninevite Submarine Cookies Sandwiches Dirt Pudding Whale of a The Feast Pizza |
| Game Children will play a series of learning games. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: physical visual social verbal logical | What's in a Whale's Belly? Jonah and the Big Fish Scale of a Whale Casting Lots Swallow Jonah! Go Fish! Old Whale Storm at Sea Draw That Jonah! |
| Music Children will learn the Bible story through musical experiences. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: musical physical social independent | The Ballad of Jonah The Story of Jonah Swallow Jonah Jonah's Story Make an Ocean Drum |
| Science Children will learn the Bible story through science experiences. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: logical physical verbal visual social | Boomerangs Worms, Glorious Worms! Mission Project: Composting With Worms Where in the World Is Tarshish? Whale of a Tale How Do Whales Eat? |
| Storytelling Children will retell the Bible story. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: verbal visual social | Animalitos Flip Books Midrash Drama The Journey With Jonah Letters From Jonah Will the Real Jonah Please Stand Up? Role Play |
| Video Children will hear and see the Bible story. | Station Focus: God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God. | Learning preference: visual verbal social independent | The Story of Jonah and the Whale Jonah The Lion King Fantasia 2000 Finding Nemo Jonah and the Bible Video Production Select Your Own Video |

| Resources | Plan Ahead Supplies | | |
|--|--|---|--|
| Bibles tessellation examples by M.C. Escher books by Eric Carle pictures of a scrimshaw | <input type="checkbox"/> posters (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> fishing gear <input type="checkbox"/> newspaper <input type="checkbox"/> watercolor paper <input type="checkbox"/> containers for water <input type="checkbox"/> paints (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> paintbrushes (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> paint shirts | <input type="checkbox"/> square sheets of origami paper or tissue paper <input type="checkbox"/> white construction paper <input type="checkbox"/> tissue paper (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> white school glue <input type="checkbox"/> black felt-tip markers <input type="checkbox"/> shallow plastic dishes (with airtight lids) | <input type="checkbox"/> cardstock <input type="checkbox"/> white 11 x 17 paper <input type="checkbox"/> tape <input type="checkbox"/> checkerboard <input type="checkbox"/> clean, dry soup bones <input type="checkbox"/> sharp nails <input type="checkbox"/> charcoal or markers <input type="checkbox"/> soft cloth |
| Bibles <i>Elijah and Jonah</i> CD-ROM <i>The Play and Learn Children's Bible</i> CD-ROM <i>Kid Pix Deluxe 4</i> or other drawing program | <input type="checkbox"/> computer <input type="checkbox"/> printer <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> pencils | <input type="checkbox"/> markers <input type="checkbox"/> postcard stock <input type="checkbox"/> chalkboard/chalk or newsprint/markers | <input type="checkbox"/> computer with Internet access |
| Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> ingredients (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> butcher paper <input type="checkbox"/> paint <input type="checkbox"/> chalkboard/chalk <input type="checkbox"/> bowls and spoons <input type="checkbox"/> ice cream scoops <input type="checkbox"/> trays, platter <input type="checkbox"/> access to a freezer, ice <input type="checkbox"/> colander | <input type="checkbox"/> small saucepan <input type="checkbox"/> toaster oven <input type="checkbox"/> can opener <input type="checkbox"/> baking sheet <input type="checkbox"/> rolling pin <input type="checkbox"/> pastry board, cutting board <input type="checkbox"/> sharp knife, butter knife <input type="checkbox"/> burlap (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> cheese grater | <input type="checkbox"/> measuring cup <input type="checkbox"/> large pitcher <input type="checkbox"/> wooden spoon, mixing spoon <input type="checkbox"/> glasses or paper cups <input type="checkbox"/> glass bowl <input type="checkbox"/> pancake turner <input type="checkbox"/> plates, silverware, napkins <input type="checkbox"/> toothpicks <input type="checkbox"/> electric hand mixer |
| Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> whale floats <input type="checkbox"/> 2 cue cards <input type="checkbox"/> 2 rattles (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> blindfold <input type="checkbox"/> masking tape <input type="checkbox"/> small smooth stones (2 per child) <input type="checkbox"/> acrylic paint (see station) | <input type="checkbox"/> brushes <input type="checkbox"/> 2 identical small stuffed dolls <input type="checkbox"/> cardstock <input type="checkbox"/> ½ gallon bottles (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> green and blue food coloring <input type="checkbox"/> vegetable oil <input type="checkbox"/> measuring cup <input type="checkbox"/> template material | <input type="checkbox"/> permanent markers <input type="checkbox"/> small sea shells <input type="checkbox"/> glue <input type="checkbox"/> duct tape <input type="checkbox"/> shells <input type="checkbox"/> stopwatch |
| Jonah music (downloadable) Jonah lyrics and sheet music Bibles | <input type="checkbox"/> room decorations <input type="checkbox"/> CD player <input type="checkbox"/> several index cards <input type="checkbox"/> several pencils | <input type="checkbox"/> several foil pie plates (with the clear plastic lids, if available) | <input type="checkbox"/> several bags of small round blue beads |
| Bibles books on whales Optional: <i>Worms Eat My Garbage</i> , by Mary Appelhof <i>Let an Earthworm Be Your Garbage Man</i> <i>If You Ever Meet a Whale</i> , by Myra C. Livingston | <input type="checkbox"/> aquarium <input type="checkbox"/> fish <input type="checkbox"/> template material <input type="checkbox"/> markers (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> lightweight cardboard <input type="checkbox"/> crayons or colored pencils <input type="checkbox"/> gallon jar (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> a dark cloth <input type="checkbox"/> large spoons or garden trowels | <input type="checkbox"/> soil, sand, and leaves <input type="checkbox"/> earthworms <input type="checkbox"/> spray bottle <input type="checkbox"/> shovel <input type="checkbox"/> small plastic container <input type="checkbox"/> flashlight <input type="checkbox"/> magnifying glasses <input type="checkbox"/> paper cup and paper towels <input type="checkbox"/> small pieces of glass | <input type="checkbox"/> map <input type="checkbox"/> rulers <input type="checkbox"/> whale poster <input type="checkbox"/> drawing paper and pencil <input type="checkbox"/> one-gallon jug (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> craft knife <input type="checkbox"/> shallow baking pan <input type="checkbox"/> glitter <input type="checkbox"/> earthworm food (see station) |
| Bibles <i>Jonah</i> , by Talen Ortz <i>The Legend of Jonah and the Two Great Fish</i> , by Mordecai Gerstein <i>The Journey With Jonah</i> , by Madeleine L'Engle variety of storybooks on Jonah | <input type="checkbox"/> 2 large plastic paint tarps <input type="checkbox"/> small plastic paint tarp <input type="checkbox"/> clear packing tape <input type="checkbox"/> box fan <input type="checkbox"/> construction paper <input type="checkbox"/> CD player <input type="checkbox"/> brightly-colored fabric <input type="checkbox"/> markers and pens <input type="checkbox"/> template material | <input type="checkbox"/> fusible quilt batt <input type="checkbox"/> iron <input type="checkbox"/> worry doll for each child <input type="checkbox"/> green chenille <input type="checkbox"/> burlap <input type="checkbox"/> fabric glue (see station) <input type="checkbox"/> straight pins <input type="checkbox"/> yarn <input type="checkbox"/> slips of paper | <input type="checkbox"/> Velcro <input type="checkbox"/> blank index cards <input type="checkbox"/> staplers & fine-point markers <input type="checkbox"/> video-recording equipment <input type="checkbox"/> Bible-times costumes or puppets <input type="checkbox"/> paper/pencils or tape recorders/blank tapes <input type="checkbox"/> basket |
| <i>The Family Story Bible</i> , by Ralph Milton <i>Testament: the Bible in Animation</i> <i>Jonah: A VeggieTales Movie</i> <i>The Lion King</i> video or DVD <i>Fantasia 2000</i> video or DVD <i>Finding Nemo</i> video or DVD | <input type="checkbox"/> DVD player <input type="checkbox"/> computer <input type="checkbox"/> TV and VCR (optional) <input type="checkbox"/> paper <input type="checkbox"/> watercolor pencils <input type="checkbox"/> small containers of water <input type="checkbox"/> video-recording equipment | | |