

March 10, 2024

JONAH

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Has Good News for the Whole World

**SCRIPTURE:** [Jonah 1–4](#); [Matthew 12](#)

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** Jonah spends three days and nights in the belly of a great fish. God has compassion on Jonah, who shares God's message, and the people of Nineveh, who repent of their evil ways.

**INTRO ACTIVITY: Easter Egg Find**

**ACTIVITY: Sea Creation**

**God's Big Story**

**Prayer and Blessing**

**ACTIVITY: Go Fishing**

## Wonder@Home™

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, worship playlists, activities, and more! WONDER@HOME (PDF)



**FOR FIVESTONE KIDS LEADERS**

## INVITATION

*We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...*

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** God Has Good News for the Whole World

**SCRIPTURE:** [Jonah 1–4](#); [Matthew 12](#)

**WORD OF WONDER:** [From Titus 3:5](#)

Have you ever driven through a torrential downpour? With your windshield wipers going at full blast, you slowly navigate the blinding rain. Maybe you've had to pull over until the storm passed. It can be difficult to navigate when you can't see what lies ahead.

But guess what? The storm eventually passed. There were clear skies and possibly a rainbow awaiting you on the other side. It's amazing how what was once dark becomes light-filled.

The beauty of dark skies is knowing that the sun will shine again. After three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, Jonah saw the sun and returned to the one place he had run from, the place where people most needed to hear God's good news. (Read his story in [Jonah 1–4](#).) Similarly, the sun shone brightly when Jesus emerged from the tomb after three long days and three dark nights. (Read [Matthew 12:38–41](#).)

Jesus' resurrection was good news to the whole world. He didn't stay in that dark tomb. He brought light and a renewed sense of hope.

- When has God met you in a dark place?
- How has your life changed because of the good news of Jesus?
- What has been the result of your obedience to God?

Take heart, friend. You will come out on the other side. The sun will shine again.

**—Kathie Phillips**

Senior Director of Next Gen Ministry

Contributor to Wonder Ink

**DID YOU KNOW?****FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS****WHO?**

Jonah was a reluctant messenger of God, but his reluctance was different than other prophets who feared rejection. Jonah feared acceptance! He ran because he wanted God to judge Nineveh harshly. He knew God to be forgiving and gracious beyond measure ([Jonah 4:2](#)).

**WHAT?**

God asked Jonah to prophesy to the people of Nineveh and to warn of God's coming judgment. Although the Ninevites were ruthless and cruel, God was concerned for the people and their animals ([Jonah 4:11](#)). When the people repented, God forgave them.

**WHERE?**

Nineveh was a very important city in the ancient Assyrian empire. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, sending 10 tribes into a permanent exile. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah fled in the opposite direction, toward Tarshish.

**WHEN?**

[Second Kings 14:25](#) mentions Jonah as a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II, in the eighth century BC. The book could date later, for memories of Jonah would be preserved by a school of prophets (called "company of the prophets" in [2 Kings 2:3 \(NIV\)](#)).

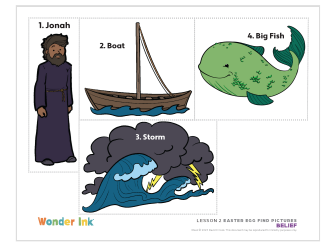
**CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY**

Jonah was reluctant to communicate God's mercy to his enemies. Jesus is a different kind of messenger. He was willing to give His own life for people who remained sinners ([Romans 5:8](#))! Jesus shows God's overflowing and abundant mercy.

## INTRO ACTIVITY: Easter Egg Find

**SUPPLIES:** plastic Easter eggs (4), scissors (prep only)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [Easter Egg Find Pictures](#) (1 set)



Before the kids arrive, print a copy of the [Easter Egg Find Pictures](#), and cut the images apart. Put each picture into an egg and hide the eggs around the room. Make them pretty obvious so kids can find them quickly.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

**Welcome! I am so excited you are here today with us! I have hidden four colorful eggs around the room. They have a special message inside about God's big story! Can you help me find them?**

Once the kids find the eggs, open them and have the kids tell you what each picture shows.

**Those are all good thoughts! Each one of these pictures has to do with our story today. I wonder how they all fit together in God's big story.** Save the pictures to use during the God's Big Story section.

## ACTIVITY: Sea Creation

**SUPPLIES:** blue paper (1 sheet per kid), sea animal stickers, fish stickers, coloring utensils

Allow the kids to create sea pictures using stickers on their blue paper. They can also color or draw fish.

**In God's big story today, we will see how a fish helped with God's plan to bring good news to a group of people. We'll learn that God has good news for us too!**

**Our Wonder Truth today is GOD HAS GOOD NEWS FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.**

Encourage the kids to do the following motions while you repeat the Wonder Truth. Older toddlers can say the words with you as they do the motions.

**GOD HAS—***Point to the sky.*

**GOOD NEWS—***Raise hands up and shake.*

**FOR THE WHOLE WORLD.—***Use your pointer finger to make a circle like a globe.*

## God's Big Story

**SUPPLIES:** Bible

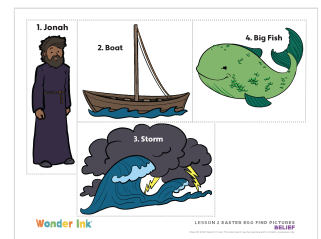
**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [Easter Egg Find Pictures](#) (from the Easter Egg Find activity)

**Today, we're learning a part of God's big story from the Bible about a person named Jonah.**

Encourage the kids to say, "Jonah." **Let's find out from the Bible what happened to Jonah!**

Use the pictures from the [Easter Egg Find activity](#) to help you tell the story to the kids.

**Sometimes God sent messengers to people because God loves all people.** Show the kids the picture of [Jonah](#).



**God asked a man named Jonah to be His messenger to the people of Nineveh. The Ninevites were mean. Jonah refused to go to Nineveh, so he ran away. Jonah got on a ship to go far away from Nineveh.** Show the picture of the [boat](#).

**God sent a big storm to catch up with Jonah's ship.** Show the picture of the storm. **Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard to stop the storm. They threw him into the water, and God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah.** Show the picture of the [big fish](#).

**Jonah stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Then the fish spit Jonah onto dry land. Jonah went to Nineveh and shared God's message with the people there. All the people of Nineveh listened to Jonah and believed in God!** Encourage the kids to cheer.

**God cares about all people. Just like the good news He told Jonah to give to Nineveh, God later brought good news to the whole world. God sent His Son, Jesus, to earth. Jesus had good news that people could be saved from their sins and have a new life if they trust in Him. Jesus died for our sins and rose again three days later. God's good news is for everyone!**

## Prayer and Blessing

**God, thank You for the great plans You had for Jonah, and for sending Jesus. Thank You for the great plans you have for us too. We praise You for the good news of Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.**

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

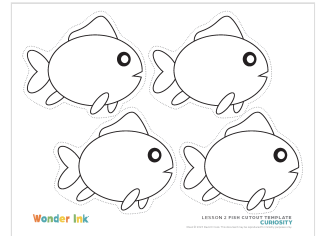
**Blessing:** May God's good news of Jesus coming to save you bring you great joy today and every day. May you have courage to share the good news about Jesus with others!

## ACTIVITY: Go Fishing

**SUPPLIES:** scissors (prep only), unsharpened pencils or dowel rods (4), string (4 pieces, each 12–24"), magnets (4), large paper clips (4)

**Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** [Fish Cutout Template](#)

Before the kids arrive, print a copy of the [Fish Cutout Template](#) and cut out the fish shapes. Attach a paper clip to each fish. Tie or tape each magnet to the end of a piece of string. Tie each string with a magnet to the end of a pencil or dowel rod.



**Do you remember what the fish did in God's big story?** Allow the kids to answer.  
**The fish swallowed Jonah. Let's play a fishing game to help us remember the story!**

Invite kids to pretend to fish using the rod with a magnet. Kids can “catch” as many fish as possible as the magnets attract to the paper clips.

**Leader Tip:** Be sure to watch the kids closely so that they don't attempt to place paper clips or magnets in their mouths.