



3rd & 4th

Unit 8 - Standing Firm

Story 24.A - Jonah & the Big Fish (Jonah 1-4)

INTRODUCTIONS - Introduce yourself and consider having students do the same if you have children new to the group. Fill out the top of the Roster and take attendance.

BIBLE TIME - Have kids open their bookmarked Bibles (**Jonah 1**).

Read Jonah 1:1-4

What did the Lord want Jonah to do? (Go to Nineveh and preach against their sins.)

Did Jonah do what the Lord wanted? (No, he ran away from the Lord to Tarshish instead.)

How was he planning on getting to Tarshish? (He was going on a boat.)

What happened to the boat? (A fierce storm that was sent by the Lord came.)

What do you imagine it is like to be on a boat during a fierce storm like that? (Encourage discussion.)

Main Point: When God told Jonah to tell Nineveh to repent of their sins, he ran the other way instead.

[Summary of missing text: (Jonah 1:5-11) The sailors saw that the boat was in danger of sinking, so they went to Jonah and asked him who he was and why the storm had come. Jonah told them that he was a Hebrew and he worshiped the God of heaven who made the earth. He told them that he was running away from the Lord. The sailors asked him what they should do to make the storm calm down.]

Read Jonah 1:12-16

What did Jonah tell the sailors that they should do? (They should throw him into the sea.)

Did they want to do it? (No, they tried to row back to shore instead, but the sea got even rougher than before and they couldn't.)

When they finally did throw him overboard, what happened to the storm? (It stopped.)

How did this experience affect the sailors? What did they do as a result? (They had respect for the Lord, they made sacrifices and promises to Him.)

Main Point: Jonah knew that the Lord was stopping him from going to Tarshish. He knew that the only way to make the storm stop was for him to be thrown off of the boat.

Read Jonah 1:17-2:1 & 2:8-10

God saved Jonah from drowning in a surprising way. How did He do it? (He sent a big fish to swallow Jonah up.)

How long was he inside the fish? (He was inside the fish for three days and three nights.)

Can you think of anything else that lasted for three days and three nights? (Jesus was in the tomb for three days and nights.)

What was Jonah doing for all that time? (Jonah was praying.)

What did Jonah say that some people turn away from? (They turn from God's love for them?)

What did Jonah do when God asked him to do something? (He turned from God and didn't do it.)

What did Jonah finally say before he was released from the fish? (He said that he would do what he promised and that the Lord is the one who saves.)

This is the third story that we have studied where the Lord saved His people in surprising circumstances. This time, he used a huge fish to save someone from drowning. What are the other two? (Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego are saved from a fiery furnace and Daniel is saved from a den of hungry lions.)

How was he released from the fish? (The fish spit him up on dry land.)

Main Point: Just like Jesus would be in the tomb for three days and nights, Jonah would sit in the belly of the fish for three days. During that time, he prayed to God for salvation.

***Extended Discussion: Read Matthew 12:38-40**

What kind of people did Jesus say ask for a sign? Why do you think He called them that? (Jesus said that 'evil and unfaithful people ask for a sign'. Asking for a sign when they have already had so many signs showed a lack of faith. Many people saw Jesus perform great miracles and yet they did not believe.)

What sign did Jesus say had already been given? (Jonah stayed in the belly of the fish for three days and nights, just as Jesus would be in the tomb for three days and nights.)

When Jonah was spit up onto dry land, it was a sign to all who saw it that God had saved him. What sign will Jesus give to show that He is the messiah? (Jesus would leave the tomb after three days, defeating death and proving that He is the promised Son of God.)

Main Point: The story of Jonah and his time in the belly of the fish is more than just an interesting story. It pointed toward the coming messiah and helped to prepare people for the resurrection.

Preview Next Week: This week we learned about how Jonah ran from God when he was asked to go to Nineveh. Next week, we will learn what happened when he finally did what God asked.

ACTIVITY: ROLL THE DICE QUIZ- Place the question cards on the table with the numbers facing up. It might be helpful to stack like numbers on top of each other. Give the first child a die and have them roll it. The number they roll will decide which card you will turn over for their question. Use the whale erasers as prizes. (There are enough for each child to earn one, but you can decide on how to use them.)

MEMORY VERSE - Practice the verse together using one of the activities on the Memory Game List.

Unit 6 Memory Verse: "What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us?"
~Romans 8:31

PRAYER

Ask the group if they have any prayer requests before leading the kids in prayer.

COMMUNITY & SNACK TIME

Hand out snacks, and water. This is an intentional time to create a sense of community within the group. Sit at the table with the kids and encourage conversation as they eat. If you have extra time, consider playing one of the community building games from the list.

Quiz Answer Key:

- What is the name of the main person in our story today? (Jonah)
- Jonah was a Judge. True or False? (False, he was a prophet)
- What is a prophet? (someone who is close to God, is God's messenger)
- The story of Jonah is found in the Old or New Testament? (Old Testament)
- God called Jonah to go and preach to whom? (the people of Ninevah)
- Why did Jonah run away? (he didn't want to preach in Ninevah)
- Where did Jonah try to run? (Tarshish – in Spain)
- What happened while Jonah was on the boat? (storm came)
- What was Jonah doing during the storm? (sleeping)
- What did the sailors do? (they were afraid, they wanted Jonah to pray to his God, they threw him overboard)
- Jonah begged the sailors not to throw him overboard. True or False? (False, he told them to do it, but they didn't want to.)
- What happened to the boat once Jonah was thrown overboard? (the storm calmed at once)
- How did God save Jonah? (he was swallowed by a giant fish)
- What did Jonah do inside the fish? (he prayed, he thanked God for saving him from drowning)
- How long was Jonah inside the fish? (three days and nights)
- How long was Jesus in the tomb? (three days and three nights)
- How did Jonah escape the fish? (the fish spit Jonah out onto dry land)