

**Objective:** Parents help their children find joy and purpose by living in daily obedience to God and telling others about Jesus, even those who are different from us.

**How This Lesson Fits in the Story of the Bible:** Jonah prophesied during the reign of Jeroboam II who ruled the northern kingdom of Israel from 782 to 753 BC. The book of Jonah demonstrates that God has compassion for all people, not just the Jews, and wants all to repent and be saved.

**Bible Basics:** Work with family members to memorize Psalm 46:10.

## Read the Word: Jonah 1:1-17; 3:1-10

## Disciple Your Kids

Help your children or grandchildren understand that God disciplines us when we do not obey His Word. He does this because He loves us and wants the best for us, just like parents do.



### Key Truth: God Disciplines Believers Who Disobey Him (Jonah 1:1-17)

- God directed Jonah to preach to the wicked people of the city of Nineveh, but Jonah's apparent hatred for those people caused him to disobey and try to flee from God on a ship. God used a severe storm to get Jonah's attention (verses 1-4).
- The ship's crew cried out to their false gods and threw cargo overboard in an effort to save their lives. They also cast lots in an attempt to discover who had caused the storm. The lot fell on Jonah (verses 5-7).
- Jonah identified himself as a Hebrew and a believer in the Lord, the God of Heaven who made the sea and the dry land. This implied that this God could control the sea. Jonah admitted he was running from God. His disobedience affected those around him (verses 8-10).
- Jonah knew the Lord was disciplining him. The only way to stop the storm was to throw him overboard. The crew tried to avoid this, but had no other option. The sea grew calm when they threw Jonah overboard. This caused the pagan sailors to fear the Lord, make sacrifices to Him, and to vow to obey Him (verses 11-16).
- God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah, where he remained for three days and nights (verse 17; see also 2:10) before the fish spit him out.



### Key Truth: God Does Great Things Through Believers Who Obey Him (Jonah 3:1-10)

- God once again instructed Jonah to go to Nineveh and preach to the inhabitants. This time he obeyed and went to preach the message God had given him, including the fact that Nineveh would be totally destroyed within 40 days (verses 1-4).
- The Ninevites believed God and outwardly displayed their inner conviction and sorrow over their sins. The king called for his people to fast and wear sackcloth while calling out to God for forgiveness. They were to turn from the evil and violence that characterized Nineveh in hopes that God might be appeased and relent (verses 5-9).
- God accepted the repentance of the Ninevites and spared them (verse 10). God wanted Jonah to understand that God loves all people and wants them to turn to Him and be saved (4:11).

# Discussion Starters

Use one or more of the following questions as discussion starters with family members this week. Questions in **bold** will be good to use with elementary age children.

- **When has it been difficult for you to obey God?**
- **Why didn't Jonah want to obey God?**
- **What excuses do you give for your disobedience?**
- **In what ways might God discipline us when we disobey?**
- **What does it mean to repent?**
- What do people face if they refuse to turn from their sin and trust in Christ?
- What is our role in helping people come to repentance?
- **In what area could you repent and more fully obey God's will?**

## Everyday Extras

Play Hide and Seek with a twist. Hide the pieces of the nativity set (or some other Christmas collection). Limit the hiding spots to one room. See how quickly your family can find them and return them to the nativity. (Multiple rounds of the game are inevitable!) Talk together about the way you looked diligently for the pieces so they could return to the right place. God looked for Jonah the same way, wanting him to do the job God had given him to do. We can never hide from God. He is always watching us and He always wants us to follow Him.

## Preschool Highlights for &

Today your child learned **God's Ways Are Best** through the story of Jonah. God wanted Jonah to give the people of Nineveh a message. But Jonah did not want to obey God and he tried to hide from Him. God sent a huge storm to batter the ship Jonah was on. Jonah told the men to throw him into the water. When they did, God saved the ship and saved Jonah by sending a giant fish to swallow him.