



LESSON 1: MAN OVERBOARD

Scripture: Jonah 1

Main Point: God is always with us & God is sovereign. Even when we sin and disobey, God's plan still reigns.

Memory Verse: "I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!" Psalm 139:7

LARGE GROUP LESSON

INTRODUCTION

I'm pretty sure we've all heard the story of Jonah before, right? The guy who God sends out to tell another nation to repent and turn from their wicked ways, but chickens out and jumps on a boat instead, then gets swallowed up by a fish? Yep. You know that dude.

Jonah is a little book of the Old Testament, only 4 chapters, BUT it tells us a lot. It even gives us a glimpse of what Jesus will come later to do. Wait, Jesus is in the Old Testament? Yes! Jesus was even around even before then! As we study this book over the next few weeks, keep your eyes and ears open for similar things that Jesus did.

So, let's dive in (pun intended) to the book of Jonah!

MAIN LESSON

Jonah 1:1-2 Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah the son of Amittai,

Jonah grew up in the northern kingdom of Israel, in the region of Galilee, in a village called Gath-hepher (2 Kings 14:25). Jonah was a prophet of God. A prophet is a messenger for God. God gives them the words and they tell others what God says.

2 "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and call out against it, for their evil has come up before me."

"Nineveh is not in Texas, nor is it in the United States. Nineveh is now where Northern Iraq is located. But at the time Nineveh was an important city in Assyria and the Assyrian Kings were known to be some scary, mean guys. But here's where the story gets interesting. Jonah doesn't want to go, in fact he FLEES:

3 But Jonah rose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa, and found a ship going to Tarshish. So he paid the fare and went down into it, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the Lord.

(Start fake laughing) This is funny, Jonah thinks he can RUN away from God. Like hide or escape God. In Psalm 139: 7-10 it says, "I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence! If I go up to heaven, you are there; if I go down to the grave, you are there. If I ride the wings of the morning, if I dwell by the farthest oceans, even there your hand will guide me, and your strength will support me." Running from God: impossible.

Do you think Jonah will find that out the easy way or the hard way? Yep. Hard way.

4 But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship threatened to break up. 5 Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried out to his god. And they hurled the cargo that was in the ship into the sea to lighten it for them. But Jonah had gone down into the inner part of the ship and had lain down and was fast asleep. 6 So the captain came and said to him, "What do you mean, you sleeper? Arise, call out to your god! Perhaps the god will give a thought to us, that we may not perish."

Jonah was asleep. ASLEEP as the ship was about to be torn in half. God created the ocean, he can control the storm and sea and he knew where Jonah was. And you know what? Jonah knew, God knew!

7 And they said to one another, "Come, let us cast lots, that we may know on whose account this evil has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. 8 Then they said to him, "Tell us on whose account this evil has come upon us. What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?" 9 And he said to them, "I am a Hebrew, and I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land." 10 Then the men were exceedingly afraid and said to him, "What is this that you have done!" For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them.

Like I said, Jonah knew that he was running away from God. And He knew God would find him. God didn't want to hurt Jonah. He wanted to remind him to obey. God wants us a part of His plan and the work he is doing. Jonah knew it was time to take action, but it was going to be fun. It wasn't going to be like sliding down a water park slide. It was going to be scary.

11 Then they said to him, "What shall we do to you, that the sea may quiet down for us?" For the sea grew more and more tempestuous. 12 He said to them, "Pick me up and hurl me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you, for I know it is because of me that this great tempest has come upon you." 13 Nevertheless, the men rowed hard to get back to dry land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more tempestuous against them. 14 Therefore they called out to the Lord, "O Lord, let us not perish for this man's life, and lay not on us innocent blood, for you, O Lord, have done as it pleased you." 15 So they picked up Jonah and hurled him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. 16 Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly, and they offered a sacrifice to the Lord and made vows.

Jonah gets tossed overboard. The sailors really didn't want to do it, they wanted to save him, but Jonah knew this was the only way. He had to SACRIFICE himself to save others. (hmmm, that sounds familiar).

Jonah disobeyed God. And our disobedience has consequences. He put other people in harm's way. Those sailors could have been hurt in the storm. Sometimes we think sin just affects us. We don't always see the pain it can cause other people. But you know what's really, really cool? God's plan still works. Even if we feel like we mess it up, He knows how to fix it. In verse 16, we learn that sailors on the boat "feared the Lord". That means they saw that God was the one true God. They make promises and sacrifices to God AND worship Him!

Do you think Jonah will find that out the easy way or the hard way? Yep. Hard way.

CLOSING

Jonah made a mess when he disobeyed, but God still used that mess to bring glory to His name. This means that God is sovereign. He is over all things and allows all things to work together for our good.

Today we'll end with Jonah tossed overboard, but we know that's not the end of the story. Even when we make big mistakes, God still has big plans for us. Just like he had for Jonah.

Close in prayer and dismiss to small groups.



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SMALL GROUP DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION

Today we read Jonah 1 and learned about Jonah's disobedience to God and how it ended him up in a dangerous & wet situation.

- What was Jonah's "job"? *Prophet of God*
- What is a prophet? *A prophet is a messenger of God, to communicate God's Word to His People.*
- What did Jonah do when God told him to go to Nineveh? *Disobeyed God and ran the opposite direction. He thought he could run away from God.*
- What happened when Jonah disobeyed? *God sent a storm & Jonah was tossed overboard.*
- What does this chapter tell us about God? *God wants us to obey. God always knows where we are—we can never outrun or hide from him and his love. God is Sovereign.*
- What does Sovereign mean? *Sovereign means that God is over all things and allows all things to work together for our good.*
- How was God still sovereign in this chapter? *The sailors saw what God did and worshiped him.*
- How do we see Jesus in today's chapter? *Jonah sacrificed himself to save the sailors & ship. Jesus sacrificed himself to save us from our sins and an eternity away from God.*

Jonah had a chance to be a part of something BIG God was doing, but he didn't want to go so he ran away. He thought he could run from God and his disobedience, but both caught up to Him. Jonah's sin caused others (and himself) to be in harm's way. God knew where Jonah was and never stopped loving him. THEN God uses this great big mess to show sailors that he is the one, true God! God is always with us & God is sovereign. Even when we sin and disobey, God's plan still reigns.

BIBLE CHALLENGE

This Week's Memory Verse: *"I can never escape from your Spirit! I can never get away from your presence!" Psalm 139:7*

Go over this week's verse. Practice as a group. Say: In our chapter of Jonah we learned that God will never leave us, we can never run away from his presence. We're going to make rocking boats like Jonah to help us remember our lesson today and to remind us to NOT do what Jonah did.

ROCKING BOATS

Supplies: *paper plate, paper triangles for the sail, coffee stirrers or wooden skewers, markers, scissors, tape, memory verse label.*

Instructions:

1. Fold your paper plates in half and decorate.. Encourage them to add any details they'd like.
2. Cut out your triangular sail and again decorate.
3. Tape your sail to the wooden sticks... you may want to use two - one down the center of the sail and another along the bottom of the sail to give it a little structure.
4. Next, make a small hole in the paper plate crease, feed the stick through and tape it to the inside of your board.
5. Add their memory verse to the outside of the boat.

*If your boat doesn't stay upright fully, you can add a little glue/ or rolled up tape to the inside of the paper plate halves to keep them together.***

Prayer: Ask children if they have any prayer needs and then close in prayer.



****Craft from:** <https://www.redtedart.com/rocking-paper-plate-boat/>