

Jonah

Cooking Workshop

Summary of Lesson Activities:

Children will taste things that represent parts of the story.

Scripture Reference:

The book of Jonah.

Lesson Objectives:

To show students that wanting revenge on someone can make you feel miserable

To encourage students to reach out to someone they don't know or might not like

To remind the class that God is merciful, even to wicked people

Supplies List:

Small paper plates

Small paper cups

Lemon juice

Beef jerky

Water

Salt

Lemonade mix

Celery

Licorice

Small bags of M&M's

Knife

Teacher Preparation:

Mix the lemonade(weak and sweet) and salt water in a pitcher or large glass and pour them into the small cups before the class arrives.

Also pour the lemon juice into the small cups.

Cut the beef jerky, celery, and licorice into small pieces.

Opening-Welcome and Lesson Introduction:

Welcome the students when they arrive. Ask the class if they have ever seen someone do something really wrong and not get punished for it. How did it make them feel? Tell the students that today's story is about Jonah and how he felt about some people who were behaving in a wicked way.

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for being a loving and forgiving God. Thank you for showing mercy on us when we sin, especially when we sometimes do things that are very cruel or hurtful. And all God's children said: AMEN.

Dig-Main Content and Reflection:

Read the book of Jonah. This is a short book in the Bible and there should be time to allow students to read, if they would like to. If time is short, you may want to read it. For discussion, ask the following questions: Why do you think Jonah ran away from God? Answers will vary.

Why didn't the sailors want to throw Jonah overboard? (They were afraid God would blame them for killing Jonah)

How long was Jonah inside the great fish? (3 days and 3 nights)

What did the Ninevites do when Jonah said that God would destroy Nineveh? (Everyone fasted and put on sack cloths)

Why do you think Jonah said, "It would be better for me to die than to live."? (Answers will vary)

Activity:

Ask the students what they think Jonah tasted like to the great fish. It is likely you will get quite a variety of answers. And while the answers will have no bearing on the lesson, they might be fun to listen to.

Tell the class that they are going to taste 6 different items. Tell the students what they will taste before they try it. Encourage them to try each sample but if someone does not want to taste something, that is OK.

Tell the students that each taste will represent one of the following characters or symbols from the story of Jonah: Jonah, The Sailors, The Great Fish, The People of Nineveh, The vine, and God. If a chalkboard is available, these can be listed so it will be easier for the students to remember them.

Give each student a paper plate with each of the solid items and paper cups with each of the liquid items. Have them sample the items in the following order: lemon juice, beef jerky, salt water, lemonade(one cup that tastes weak and one cup that tastes sweet), celery and licorice.

After the class has sampled each of the items, have them work as a group to figure out which sample represents each of the characters or symbols written on the chalkboard. Have the class give you all six of their answers at one time. If any of their six answers are incorrect, they have to start over with six new answers. If you start to run out of time, then you should start excepting answers one at a time, eliminating the characters or symbols on the chalkboard that are correct.

Encourage the students to think about the items on the chalkboard. How would they describe them? Have the students think about the items they taste. How would they describe them? Have them see if they can find any similarities between the two groups. Here is a list of the descriptions for each of the characters or symbols from the story. They can be used to give the students clues if they are having difficulty figuring some of them out:

Jonah(Lemon Juice): Jonah was sour. We sometimes say people are sour when they feel anger towards someone or want to get revenge. Jonah was angry at God for not punishing the people of Nineveh, even though they obeyed God and were looking for forgiveness. Jonah was also angry with

the vine for dying and taking away his shade, even though he had done nothing to help the vine grow.

The Sailors(Beef Jerky): We think of sailors as being tough, like beef jerky. We think of the hard work they have to do on the boats and the long periods of time they are at sea. They would also have to have a tough personality to throw someone into the sea, like they did to Jonah. Would you be able to do something like that? But remember that, as tough as these men probably were, they were also afraid that God would be angry with them for throwing Jonah into the sea.

The Great Fish(Salt Water): When we think of a great fish, we would probably think of a whale, even though the Bible does not say that a whale is what ate Jonah. We know that whales live in the ocean. What does sea water taste like?

The People of Nineveh (Lemonade): The people of Nineveh went through a change. At first they were weak of faith and very sinful. Then they repented and became followers of God. These were still the same people but with a stronger faith. The two cups of lemonade are essentially the same except one has more sweetener in it. Just like a little extra sweetener can make a big difference in the taste of lemonade, a stronger faith can make a huge difference in two people who are otherwise pretty similar.

The Vine(Celery): This comparison should be pretty obvious to the class. If you need to give some clues, ask questions like “What does celery look like?” or “How does celery grow?”

God (Licorice): If you hold a piece of licorice, it is pretty stiff. And yet it is flexible enough to bend it. God is very stiff and rigid in the kind of life He wants us to lead as Christians. But God is also flexible in His judgment of us. God could have very easily punished the people of Nineveh for their sins. But He showed his mercy and compassion by sparing them, just as he shows mercy and forgiveness for us even though we are sinful.

When you are finished playing the game, give each student a small bag of M&M's. Tell the students that they should give this to someone they don't know or even someone they may not like. Remind them that in our daily lives we may sin without anyone ever knowing it, but God always knows. And likewise, no one will ever know what you do with the M&M's. But God will know what you were SUPPOSED to do with them. Tell the class that you would like to hear who they give their M&M's to, if they would be willing to tell you.

Closing:

Dear God, help us to show mercy and kindness to people who are cruel to us as you showed mercy and forgiveness to the people of Nineveh. And all God's children said: AMEN.

Computer Rotation

Jonah: The Whole Tale

A Lesson Plan using Elijah and Jonah software

This software program faithfully retells the Jonah story straight from scripture using an "interactive comicbook" style of presentation. Through the story, mini game and mini learning points pop up, and there are several reflection and story memory activities as well.

Tip: Be sure to play the whale's "Spittin Game." This playful mini-game within the story teaches what a prophet is and does and encourages your kids how to become one!

Leader Preparation:

Print this lesson and the Elijah and Jonah Outline

Install and explore the software ahead of time

Insights on Teaching Jonah and Using this Software:

Parts of the Jonah story are so well known that we often forget what else is in there. The righteous sailors, for example, and Jonah's Psalm. The program doesn't miss them.

When we were recording Jonah and God's dialog (which is 98% straight from scripture), it became extremely clear to us that this story was meant to be heard out loud. God's verses are so calm, and Jonah's are word-for-word irascible! The contrast between the two is profound, teachable! ...and another great reason why we love teaching with media.

The story ends unresolved as if to say "what would YOU do?" God saves Nineveh, but we don't know if he has gotten through to Jonah. There's a whole lesson in that! We put Jonah in the same software with Elijah and Elisha -- who are two of the more famous and successful prophets! But....Elijah tried hiding too, remember? We all do.

Because of that darn 'whale', people remember Jonah more. Yet whether by whale or worm, or earthquake, wind and fire, the outcome is the same: God always eventually gets our attention, and there the stories converge: God speaks in a small calm voice to both Jonah and Elijah, ...a message of redemption and encouragement. ...A voice our children need to learn how to listen for.

Time: 35 to 40 minutes. Jonah is a long story. Start on time. The story as presented on the CD functions like your entire Bible study. It presents the full text of the story (narrated and animated), with background/study notes, and follow-up activities and reflection content.

There's MORE in the Jonah software than you can do in one lesson if you only have 30 minutes. A primary goal would be to "learn the scope and sequence of the story", --so if you're short on time, focus on the interactive story, and the "story order" game at the end.

Guide by the Side! Go WITH your students as they use the program so that you can be a teacher and hold them accountable for content. You'll also find many teachable moments as you explore the story and content with them.

Age Range: This program has a large age range. It's sophisticated and fun enough for older children and teens, yet accessible enough by young children if they have help. All the story is narrated, and some of the study notes must be read.

This story is about SO MANY THINGS that it would be a shame to try and distill it down to one idea. (It's an entire book of the Bible!) Therefore: Teach the story! ...and the story will be able to continue to unfold its meaning and voice to us.

Lesson Plan

Opening

Welcome your students and tell them what you hope they will learn today and what they'll be doing to learn it!

A Warm-up: What Does God Sound Like?

Gather your students around a microphone and ask them to show you "How do you think God sounds when he's calling people to be obedient and stop sinning." Mostly likely they'll pick a stern authoritarian voice. Now ask them to show you God "sounds in your heard" when you hear him telling you to do the right thing and stop doing wrong things".

(If you don't have a microphone, ask your music dept or a musician in the congregation. A microphone attached to even a small guitar amp is a wonderfully fun tool for this and many other lessons.) You'll be returning to "God's microphone" at the end of the lesson too.

Say: Today we're going to learn the famous Bible story about Jonah, the prophet who argued with God about forgiveness. As you work through the story, listen to how God sounds, and be ready to tell me at the end of the lesson, what the story tells us about the way God speaks to us, his character and personality.

Give them some tips about the software:

Write a list on the board of the things you want them to "be sure to see and do" in the program. Base this upon your time available and age range. Use the attached GUIDE to help you make those selections.

Work through the story and look at all the hidden notes and activities. Tell them, "don't skip anything or you may miss something cool...like the Whale Spittin Game!" ...and they will if they try to blow through study notes.

Take turns, letting different students at the controls for different pages.

When answering a mini-quiz pop-up question, confer with your fellow students and agree upon the answer before clicking it.

Dive into Jonah's Story in the Software

Work through the story. Make sure everyone finds the Whale Spittin Game (about being a prophet today). The Game Guide tells you which study note it is hidden in.

At the end of the story are several options:

Select them according to your age range, and time left.

THE END: An interesting discussion you could have about "whatever happened to Jonah? and why does it mean that the story ends like this?"

Wormy's Game: A fun game reinforcing story content.

Further Study: More about "compassion".

Jonah's Story Game: The story's 15 key episode are graphically represented in order. Roll over them to see captions. Click scramble and drag them back into order. This game is probably too hard for younger children who don't have help or are rushed.

Closing: "God Prays for Your Class"

Come back to the microphone and see if the kids have picked up on God's gentle patient voice in Jonah's story. Ask them to talk like God, and then talk like Jonah. This will be fun.

THEN.... Have the following statement (or something like it) written out on a flipchart or handout and pass around the microphone giving each a sentence to say using their best "new God's voice" which they hopefully learned from the program!

My Dear Dear Children,

People, you really frustrate me. You want me to forgive you for your sins, but you often don't want to forgive others. You want me to be all-loving but you are not as loving as you should be to others. You want others to follow the rules, but you openly disobey me. I want you to spread the message of my forgiveness and help others follow my rules for living, but you hold back.

Are you embarrassed by my Word? Do you think others aren't good enough? Do you think how you act doesn't matter to me? it does. I forgive you and love you, but YOU have some things to change about YOURSELF -- just like Jonah did.

I can help you with that, if you will let me. And that's MY PRAYER FOR YOU! That you would open your hearts to let me change YOU, so that you can be an example to others, and thus, help change the world. AMEN SAYS THE LORD OR HOSTS!!! and again I say A-MEN!.

Love, God.

Story Telling & Games

ACTION STORY TELLING:

Say: There's a whole lot of action in this story. So, as I tell it, I'm going to ask each person in turn to come up with an action for the part of the story we're hearing. When I point at you, make up an action that goes with the story, and then all the rest of us will have to do it with you. Then, at the end, we'll see if we can remember them all together.

(as you read, hold up the cue cards for each action and have each child in turn make up an action)

Script

Here's the story of Jonah from the book of Jonah in the Old Testament.

Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah saying, "Go at once to Nineveh and cry out against it, for it is a wicked place." But Jonah set out the opposite way, running away from the presence of God.

(first action— hold up first cue card and point at first child: running away from God).

He boarded a boat going to Tarshish, hoping to escape God's call. But then there came a great wind on the sea, and a mighty storm threatened to break the boat apart

(second action—point at second child: waves in a big storm)

The sailors were afraid, and they each prayed to their own gods. They threw all the boxes and cargo they had over the side of the boat, hoping it would lighten their load and their ship would stay afloat

(third action: sailors throwing cargo).

When that didn't work, and the storm hadn't calmed, they said, "Why is this terrible storm happening?" Jonah knew that the storm was God's way of telling him he was going the wrong direction, so he confessed to the sailors, "It's my fault. If you throw me overboard, the sea will calm down." But the sailors didn't want him to drown, so they tried rowing harder to get back to land

(fourth action: rowing hard to land).

It didn't work. The storm got worse, and at last, the sailors threw Jonah overboard into the sea, saying, "Please Lord, forgive us for throwing this man into the sea!"

(fifth action: throwing Jonah over).

Right away, the storm stopped. The sailors were so amazed that they worshiped God.

(sixth action: sailors worshiping God in amazement).

As for Jonah, he didn't stay in the water long. God sent a great fish to swallow Jonah so that he wouldn't drown

(seventh action: fish swallowing Jonah).

Jonah prayed to God from the belly of the great fish

(eighth action: Jonah praying).

After three days and nights, the great fish coughed Jonah up onto dry land

(ninth action: great fish vomiting Jonah onto land).

This time, when God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah went. When he got to the city—which was so big it took 3 days to walk all the way across it—he began to shout, “Nineveh will be destroyed! Repent! God has said so!”

(tenth action: Jonah preaching in Nineveh)

The people of Nineveh believed God; everyone—the king included—put on scratchy clothes

(eleventh action: putting on sackcloth).

They fasted—did not eat their rich meals—to show how sorry they were. The king declared that everyone should stop their violent ways, and everyone asked God to have mercy on them. And God was pleased that the Ninevites wanted to change. God did not destroy the city. Jonah, on the other hand, was angry

(twelfth action: Jonah stomps away angry).

Jonah couldn't believe that God would save the city of his enemies. He went out of the city and sat down outside of it to watch it. Maybe he hoped that God would destroy it anyway. Maybe he wanted time to be angry. Or maybe he just wanted to get out of town. Who knows? But either way, while he was sitting there, God made a plant grow up nearby and give Jonah shade

(thirteenth action: plant growing up).

Jonah was glad of the shade, but then at dawn the next day, God sent a worm to eat the plant. The plant withered and died

(fourteenth action: plant dying).

Without the plant to shade him, Jonah was so hot with the sun and the wind on him that he wanted to give up. He even said to God, "It is better for me to die than live."

(fifteenth action: Jonah giving up).

God replied, "Is it right for you to be so angry and unhappy about the plant dying?" Jonah said, "Yes." God said to him, "You are concerned about this plant that you did not plant or water. In fact, you did nothing to help it grow. Should I not be concerned about the city of Nineveh, with all of its children and animals?"

(sixteenth action: God scolding Jonah)

"God Says/Jonah Does "

What happened when God told Jonah to go to Nineveh? He went in the opposite direction. We're playing God Says/Jonah does. It's just like Simon Says, except you need to do the opposite of what God says, just like Jonah did.

I'll be God first.

God says "Stand Up" (the kids should all be seated or lying down)

God says "Sit down" (the kids should stand up)

God says "Take a step forward" (the kids should take a step backward)

God says "Take a step backward"

God says "Walk towards the door"

God says "yell"

God says "whisper"

Etc.

If the kids are enjoying the game, let them take turns being God.

Reflection:

How did it feel to do the opposite of what you were told to do?

Do ever feel just contrary or stubborn and not want to do what people say?

Why did Jonah not want to do what God told him? (the people in Nineveh were Israel's enemies)

Second Chance Tag

In this game of freeze tag, one person is IT and the another person goes around unfreezing people, giving them another chance to play, just like Jonah got a second chance to do God's will and the people of Nineveh got a second chance to do things right.

Pick an IT and a second-chance granter and let the fun begin!

Swap roles after a minute or so.

Reflection:

Why do you think God gave the people in Nineveh a second chance?

Do you get do-overs at home, school, or in sports?

Does anyone play piano or sports? Do you have to practice to get things right? Sometimes we need a chance to do things again and again to learn the right way to do them.

God forgave the people of Nineveh. How many times will God forgive us? (as many as it takes)