



JONAH

BIBLE PASSAGE: Jonah 1–4

FOCUS VERSES: Titus 2:11; Ephesians 2:8; 4:32; John 1:16

Summary: God called the prophet Jonah to warn Nineveh, but Jonah disobeyed and sailed in the opposite direction. A huge storm hit, and the sailors threw Jonah into the sea. God sent a big fish to swallow him. Inside the fish, Jonah prayed and admitted he was wrong. The fish spit him out, and this time Jonah went to Nineveh. He warned the people, and the people responded by believing in God. Jonah was upset that God showed grace, and God used a vine to remind him to have grace for others.



MONTHLY *Memory Verse*

*Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised,
and His greatness is unsearchable.*

(PSALM 145:3)



God gives grace.



We will go deeper in God's truth by answering these questions:



WHAT IS GOD'S GRACE?

God's grace is His free gift of forgiveness and salvation that we don't earn, but He gives because He loves us.



SHOULD WE SHOW GRACE TO OTHERS?

Because we recognize the grace God has shown us, we can show kindness and forgiveness to others.



HOW IS GOD INVITING ME TO RESPOND?

Kids will reflect and respond to the truth they learned about God.

Leader TRAINING

LEADER TRAINING TOPIC: PRAYING ALOUD

Not all kids are comfortable praying aloud. Some will be unsure what to do when called on to pray. Here are some ways for kids to practice praying so they become more comfortable praying aloud.

- **Fill in the Blank.** During prayer time, read a statement and invite kids to fill in the blank aloud together. For example: "God, today we thank You for _____. After today's lesson, would You help us to _____?"
- **All at Once.** Invite kids to spread out around the room and pray aloud at the same time. Remind kids that they are not listening to each other, they are all talking to God at once.
- **Praying Scripture.** Select a Scripture verse or passage from the day's lesson or the unit's theme and invite kids to fill in their name or pray that Scripture aloud.
- **Praying for Others.** Invite kids to call out the name of someone they need to pray for. For example: "God, we bring to You all these people who are sick." (Kids would then say someone's name aloud together.)

NAVIGATING A BROKEN WORLD: GUILT

One study revealed that as many as 40 percent of believers struggle with guilt because they are afraid they are displeasing God.* Guilt is a normal human emotion that the Holy Spirit often uses to convict of sin. Second Corinthians 7:10 says: *For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.* The feeling of guilt is designed to bring us back to God, not to consume us with fear and take over our lives. Some kids struggle with guilt, especially kids who have experienced trauma. In today's lesson, kids will learn the grace God shows us when we mess up. Help kids understand that guilt can lead us to turn away from our sin and receive God's grace, like Jonah did. Instead of serving God out of guilt, we can serve Him out of gratitude for His grace.

*For more resources on this topic, check out: [brightcurriculum.com/resources](https://www.brightcurriculum.com/resources)

ELEMENTARY GLOSSARY

Forgiveness: not holding someone's wrongs against them

Grace: giving what is not deserved

Omnipotent: having unlimited power; stronger than anything

Salvation: rescue from sin and separation from God

Large Group ROADMAP

1**WELCOME****(8 MINUTES)****SUPPLIES:** Video player, Intro Video, teaching slides**2****FIND IT IN
THE BIBLE****(2 MINUTES)****SUPPLIES:** Bibles, teaching slides**3****BIBLE
TEACHING****(10 MINUTES)****JONAH
(JONAH 1-4)****SUPPLIES:** Bible, teaching slides, printable pages, writing supplies (1 per kid), teaching images**4****REVIEW****(8 MINUTES)****SUPPLIES:** Video player, Bible Review Video, teaching slides**5****LARGE GROUP
WRAP-UP****(5 MINUTES)****SUPPLIES:** Video player, Memory Verse Video, teaching slides

Welcome



Say: Let's play Reverse Simon Says! In this game, everything is opposite. If I say "Simon says sit," you should stand. If I say "Simon says look up," you should look down. But if I don't say "Simon says," you do the action the normal way. Listen carefully and try to keep up!

Begin playing several rounds, increasing speed as time allows.

Say: That got confusing fast! Doing the opposite isn't always helpful. In fact, sometimes going the opposite way gets us into trouble. In our Bible story today, Jonah went in the opposite direction of where God told him to go. But even then, God didn't give up on him. God showed Jonah incredible grace, and that's today's Brite Idea: God gives grace.

SUPPLIES:

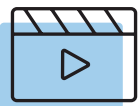
Video player, Intro Video, teaching slides

PREP:

None

LEADER TIP:

Occasionally let everyone back in the game to keep the game fun and engaging.



INTRO VIDEO

Play Intro Video then transition into discussion.

Say: The distances Wes talked about today are mind-boggling! The contestants weren't even close to guessing how many miles were in a light year.

Discuss: Have you ever missed a question really badly?

Say: We all get things wrong sometimes. The good news is that when we mess up in life, God doesn't give up on us. Today's Brite Idea is: God gives grace.

Show teaching slide: Brite Idea

Show teaching slide: He/We/Me Questions

TODAY WE WILL ANSWER THESE TWO QUESTIONS:



What is God's grace?



Should we show grace to others?

AT THE END OF OUR TIME TODAY, THE QUESTION YOU WILL BE ABLE TO ANSWER IS:



How is God inviting me to respond?

FIND IT
IN THE



Bible

WHAT IS GOD'S BIGGER STORY?

Show teaching slide: God's Big Story

Say: The Bible is real and true. God gave us the Bible so we could know Him. The Bible is filled with many books and stories, but they are all a part of one BIG story — God's story.

Creation: God is the one true God and He has always existed. He is the Creator of all things, including you and me. He is good, He loves us, and we are made in His image.

Fall: Adam and Eve sinned and disobeyed God. Sin broke the world, and people were separated from God. People could not fix their sin problem on their own.

Redemption: God sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the cross, to take the punishment for our sins, and to rise from the dead to conquer death. When we trust in Jesus as our Savior, our relationship with God is made right again through His grace, and He gives us new life.

Restoration: When we walk with Jesus through the power of the Holy Spirit and learn God's Word, He renews us. One day, Jesus will return to renew all things.

WHERE IS TODAY'S BIBLE STORY?

Show teaching illustration: Fire Falls on the Mountain.

Say: Last week we studied Elijah and Mount Carmel and discovered together that the Lord is the one true God.

Show teaching slide: Books of the Bible.

Say: This week's story comes from the book of Jonah. Jonah can be found between the books of Obadiah and Micah.

Show teaching slide: Find It in the Bible Timeline.

Say: This story falls in the "Times of Trouble" period of the Bible. Today's true story tells us what happened when a prophet from the northern kingdom of Israel did not want to obey God.

Show teaching slide: Biblical Theme.

Say: This month we are focusing on the truth that God is greater than anything. Nothing on Earth or in the sky can match God's awesome power and might.

Say: This week we are learning that God gives grace.

LET'S FIND IT IN OUR BIBLES!

Open your Bible and show the kids the title page for the book of Jonah. Help kids turn in their Bibles to today's Bible passage (Jonah 1–4).

Bible TEACHING

JONAH (JONAH 1-4)



PRAY: God, thank You for this amazing story. You saved Jonah even when he disobeyed. Show us Your heart to rescue those far from You, and help us to be thankful and show grace like You. Amen.

SUPPLIES:

Bible, teaching slides, printable pages, writing supplies (1 per kid), teaching images

PREP:

Print the printable pages (1 story picture page per kid). Keep the Answer Key with you.

LEADER TIP:

For smaller groups, print the story images and tape them to the wall in order.

Pass out a printable page and writing supply to each kid.

Say: The pictures on your page represent parts of Jonah's story, but they are not in the right order. Take just a moment to guess the right order by writing numbers 1 through 7 next to the pictures. Feel free to work with your neighbors!

Give kids a moment to write in their numbers.

Say: I'll reveal the right picture as we go so make sure to check your answers!

Say: Jonah was a prophet in the northern kingdom of Israel. One day, God commanded Jonah to go to Nineveh, a city in the enemy country of Assyria.

Show teaching image: Go!

Tell kids they should have put a number 1 by this picture.

Say: God wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh that they were doing evil things. Instead, Jonah went in the opposite direction. He refused to go to Nineveh and disobeyed God. He boarded a ship, determined to get as far away as he could. God sent a great storm, tossing the ship among the waves.

Show teaching image: Ship in Storm.

Tell kids they should have put a number 2 by this picture.

Bible TEACHING CONTINUED

Say: Jonah was sleeping downstairs when the men on the ship came to him, asking him to pray for his God to stop the storm. Jonah knew that the storm was his fault. He told the men to throw him into the sea. They threw Jonah into the sea, and as soon as he sank beneath the water, the storm stopped.

Say: But God still had a rescue plan for Jonah, and it was ... interesting.

Show teaching illustration: Jonah Swallowed by the Fish.

Read Jonah 1:17 directly from the Bible: *And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.*

Show teaching image: Big Fish.

Tell kids they should have put a number 3 by this picture.

Say: Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. Finally, Jonah prayed to God.

Show teaching image: Praying Hands.

Tell kids they should have put a number 4 by this picture.

Say: He prayed, "I was in great trouble, and I cried out to You. You saved me from death! I was about to die and I remembered You. Salvation comes from You alone."

Say: Then God commanded the fish to spit out Jonah onto dry land. Again, God told Jonah, "Go to Nineveh and give them My message."

Say: This time Jonah obeyed. He went to Nineveh and warned them that God would destroy their city in 40 days.

Show teaching illustration: Jonah Tells the Ninevites God's Message.

Show teaching image: Welcome to Nineveh.

Tell kids they should have put a number 5 by this picture.

Say: The people listened! They cried out to God, repented of their sins and believed in Him. God showed mercy and didn't destroy their city.

 (CONTINUED)

Bible TEACHING CONTINUED

Say: But Jonah was mad again. He watched the city, waiting for God to destroy it. He was angry that God showed grace to Nineveh. Then God caused a vine to grow over Jonah's head, and it gave him shade.

Show teaching image: Vine.

Tell kids they should have put a number 6 by this picture.

Say: Then God sent a worm to eat the plant.

Show teaching image: Worm.

Tell kids they should have put a number 7 by this picture.

Say: Jonah was angry. God told him, "You are worried about one plant that you didn't even grow. I am more concerned about this great city of people who don't know Me." Grace is when we get something we don't deserve. God showed grace to the people of Nineveh even though they had sinned, just like He showed grace to Jonah by rescuing him even though he ran away. Our God gives grace.

Show teaching slide: Point to Jesus.



POINT TO JESUS

Say: The story of Jonah is a reflection of God's Big Story. God, the Creator, is in charge of all things, but when He told Jonah what to do, Jonah did the opposite. Jonah chose sin. But God rescued Jonah and redeemed Him, or brought him back from his mess. He restored Jonah to his mission and restored an entire city as a result. In the same way, we all sin and disobey our God. Through Jesus' death and resurrection, He shows us grace and redeems us. He restores us to a right relationship with God and one day, Jesus will return and make all things new.



BIBLE REVIEW VIDEO

Play Bible Review Video. Play the game below using teaching slides: Review Game

SUPPLIES:

Video player, Bible Review Video, teaching slides

PREP:

None

INSTRUCTIONS: For each question, kids will show their answer with a motion.

A: Move one arm in a wavy motion for the ocean.

B: Wriggle a finger like a worm.

C: Hold both hands over your head like a vine.

1. Why did God want Jonah to go to Nineveh?

A. To tell the people they were doing evil things

B. To curse God's enemies

C. To go on a fishing trip

2. When Jonah was thrown overboard, how did God save him?

A. A vine grew for him to climb.

B. A helicopter let down a ladder.

C. A fish swallowed him.

3. What did God do when the people of Nineveh cried out to Him and repented?

A. He sent a mighty storm as punishment.

B. He showed mercy and didn't destroy the city.

C. He split Israel into two kingdoms.

4. What lesson did God want Jonah to learn from the vine and worm?

A. God didn't really like the people of Nineveh either.

B. Jonah should have shared his shade with others.

C. God loved and cared for the people of Nineveh.

5. What is grace?

A. A prayer you say before eating

B. A free gift you don't deserve

C. The name of the very first Thanksgiving turkey

God's grace is His free gift of forgiveness and salvation that we don't earn, but He gives because He loves us.

6. Should we show grace to others?

A. No

B. Sometimes

C. Yes

Because we recognize the grace God has shown us, we can show kindness and forgiveness to others.



Wrap – Up

Show teaching slide: Brite Idea



SUPPLIES:

Video player, Memory Verse Video, teaching slides

PREP:

None

Show teaching slide: He Question and Answer

HE

What is God's grace?

God's grace is His free gift of forgiveness and salvation that we don't earn, but He gives because He loves us.

Show teaching slide: We Question and Answer

WE

Should we show grace to others?

Because we recognize the grace God has shown us, we can show kindness and forgiveness to others.



MONTHLY Memory Verse

Choose an older kid to look up the verse and read it aloud to the group. Have the whole group repeat it together.

Show teaching slide: Memory Verse

Great is the **LORD**, and greatly to be praised, and His greatness is unsearchable.

(PSALM 145:3)



VERSE VIDEO

Play Memory Verse Video
after the verse is read.



PRAY: God, it can be hard to show kindness and forgiveness, especially when others are unkind. You show us grace no matter what. Help us this week to show grace to others like You do. Amen.