

# LENT IN THE OLD TESTAMENT

## “Jonah: God Chooses Us”

**Series Objective:** Students will learn:

- God chose Jonah and God chooses us
- We must ask God to forgive us when we do not do what God wants
- God uses us to help others know God
- God cares for everyone

**Series Theme Verse:** “I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” Jonah 1:9

**Lesson Objective:** Students will discover and understand:

- God chooses us to be God’s followers
- We sin when we do not do what God wants us to do

**Lesson Passage:** Jonah 1

**Materials Needed:** Green Solo Cup for Each Student, 18-inch piece of yarn for each student, markers, duct tape or glue gun, half a popsicle stick for each student, poster board of theme verse.

**Lesson Plan:** Read Jonah 1 to the students. *The Message* translation is a great version to read this story out of, especially for children.

### Talking Points:

- What is the name of the man God chose to follow God and preach for God in our story today? (Jonah)
- What city did God want Jonah to go preach to? (Nineveh)
- Why did God want Jonah to preach to Nineveh? (Because the people of Nineveh were living their lives in a bad way...they were sinning)
- What is sin? (Anything you do that God does not want you to do)
- When God chose Jonah to go to Nineveh, did Jonah go to Nineveh? (No, he went the other direction towards Tarshish, instead of doing what God said to do, Jonah was running away from God...Jonah was sinning by not doing what God told him to do)
- How did Jonah plan to travel to Tarshish? (On a boat)
- Did Jonah make it all the way to Tarshish on the boat? (No)
- Why not? (God caused a huge storm to happen on the sea)

- How big was the storm? (Let kids use their imaginations and tell you the noise the wind made, or how tall the waves were, and what the lightning and thunder might have looked or sounded like. Then tell students the storm was so big that it was breaking the boat up and it was about to sink the boat)
- When the boat was going to sink from the storm, what did the sailors on the boat do? (Threw the luggage and tools and boxes into the sea so the boat would be lighter and float in the storm)
- Did the sailors do anything else to save their boat from sinking? (Yes, they prayed to their fake gods)
- Would praying to a fake God save them from the storm? (No, only the real God, Jonah's God could save them)
- Where was Jonah while the sailors were throwing stuff into the sea and praying to their fake gods to stop the storm? (Asleep in the bottom of the boat)
- Who found Jonah sleeping? (The captain)
- What did the captain say to Jonah? (Wake up and pray to your God to save us from the huge storm)
- Jonah finally told the sailors that the storm was his fault, that he was running from God and God had caused the storm. What did Jonah say the sailors had to do to stop the storm? (Throw Jonah into the sea)
- Did the sailors throw him into the sea at first? (No, they tried to row to land because they did not want to have Jonah die in the sea)
- Eventually, they threw Jonah in the sea to save their lives, and what happened to the storm? (The storm stopped)
- What did the sailors do when the storm stopped? (They worshiped Jonah's God, the real God)
- What happened to Jonah? (God had a big FISH, not whale, swallow Jonah)
- Did Jonah die? (No, he was just living in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights)
- The fish was not necessarily a punishment, but a way of saving Jonah from drowning in the sea.

### **The Story Retold:**

- Give each student a Green Solo Cup (Other colors will work, but green helps kids think of a fish).
- Let kids decorate the cup like a fish, using markers with the opening of the cup being the mouth of the fish. (If there is time, students can draw fins and eyes on green paper and cut them out to tape to the cup)
- Cut an 18-inch piece of ribbon or yarn and attach to the base of each cup using duct tape or hot glue.

- While you are attaching ribbon or yarn to the cup, have each child decorate a half of a popsicle stick to look like a man (Jonah)
- Attach the “man” to the other end of the yarn/ribbon with duct tape or hot glue.
- Now let the children try to “catch” Jonah in the mouth and belly of the big fish.
- Remind students that God chose Jonah to follow God and do what God asked Jonah to do, but Jonah ran from God and ended up in the belly of a big fish.
- Just as God wanted Jonah to follow God, God wants us to follow God, too.
- How do we follow God? (We pray to God, read the Bible, listen to our teachers who teach us about the Bible, treat others nicely, tell others about Jesus, etc.)

### **The Story and Me:**

- Introduce the series verse to the students.
- Remind the students that Jonah was a follower of God, the true God who created the world and everything in it. Next week we will see how Jonah called out to God when he was in trouble and God protected Jonah using a big fish that God created.
- Have the students say the verse together aloud a few times. Then take turns having different groups say the verse together aloud (boys, girls, green clothes, blonde hair, etc.)
- What ways do we worship God? (Sing, Pray, Read the Bible, etc.)