

Fearless

Lesson 11 – Jonah

Series Objectives:

Students will learn:

- That followers of God have nothing to fear.
- Stories that illustrate God's people living out fearless lives.
- That followers of God are called by God to live a fearless life.

Series Theme Verse: “Do not tremble, do not be afraid. Did I not proclaim this and foretell it long ago? You are my witnesses. Is there any God besides me? No, there is no other Rock; I know not one.” Isaiah 44:8

Lesson Objective:

Students will understand:

- That God sometimes uses unusual things to help us live a fearless life.
- That Jonah lived a fearless life by sharing God's love with those who he did not like or scared him.
- That God loves everyone, even people we see as bad.

Lesson Passage: 1 Samuel 17

Lesson Materials:

Activity: Big Fish Cutout attached to the Wall, Jonah figure for children to color, scissors, colors, tape, blindfolds

Bible Story: pictures of fish

Meal: Chicken Nuggets

Bible Story:

Materials: Pictures of fish (especially ones we do not see here, but are in the ocean)

The Story:

Begin by showing students pictures of fish and letting them guess what kind of fish these are. Try to show kids the huge variety of fish that God has created from big to small, colorful to one color, freshwater to saltwater. In today's story, we find out that God can use anything to help us live a fearless life, even a fish!

One day God asked a man named Jonah to go to a place called Nineveh and tell the people living there to stop being bad. The only problem was that Jonah didn't want to help the people there. He knew they were bad and he wanted them to be punished for their mistakes.

So instead of listening to God, Jonah thought he would run away from Nineveh and not do what God asked him. He ran to the sea where he found a ship that was going to another city. He paid the captain, went in the lower part of the boat and went to sleep.

Shortly after the boat left the shore, a very bad storm came up and started tossing the boat around. All the men were very afraid so they started to throw all their packages and bags overboard in hopes that they wouldn't drown.

The captain soon went to find Jonah who was still sound asleep in the boat. He said to Jonah, "How can you sleep? Get up and pray to your god, maybe he can help us!" The captain didn't realize that Jonah didn't just believe in any God but the one true God and that He could help them.

Meanwhile, the other sailors decided that the storm was Jonah's fault. He must have done something wrong to make his god so angry. So they asked Jonah, "What have you done? What god do you believe in? What can we do to make this storm stop?" Jonah told them, "I believe in the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land and I am running away from something God asked me to do. It is my fault this is happening. If you throw me into the sea the storm will stop."

The men didn't want to hurt Jonah by throwing him off the boat so they tried to row the best they could, but the storm just got worse. So they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. The storm immediately calmed and the sea became still. The men on the boat realized that Jonah believed in the one true God and prayed to Him. Then the captain and the crew looked out to sea as a big fish came and swallowed up Jonah. God actually sent the fish to keep Jonah from drowning. Jonah stayed in the fish for three days and three nights.

Just think for a second what it would be like to be inside a fish. There are no windows, and lots of strange things floating around that you can't see because it's so dark. Other than that I'm not sure what it would be like, but Jonah probably didn't know if he would ever see daylight again.

While Jonah was trapped inside the fish he did a lot of praying to God. He asked God to forgive him for running away. He also thanked God for not allowing him to drown.

After the third day God told the fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. And the fish did just that. Jonah was happy to be out of the dark belly of the fish, but boy, did he need a shower. He was slimy and smelly.

Then the Lord told Jonah a second time to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to stop being bad. This time Jonah obeyed God and left for Nineveh right away.

When Jonah got there he told the people what had happened to him. He warned them that God said that they should stop doing bad things or in forty days the city and everything in it would be destroyed. To Jonah's surprise the people listened to him and they prayed to God and they said sorry for all the bad things they had done.

Soon the king of Nineveh heard what was going on and he ordered that everyone to listen to God and to stop doing bad things. And when God saw that they were trying to good instead of bad He felt love for them and did not destroy their city.

That could be the end of the story except Jonah left the city very angry. He was mad that God didn't punish the people. He knew that God was a loving God and didn't want to destroy anything if he doesn't have to.

So Jonah went on a hill and sulked. God saw Jonah and knew how he was feeling so he explained to Jonah that He loves everyone (after all He made us). He doesn't like to destroy people who are doing things bad, God would rather see us turn from our bad ways and do good again.

The story of Jonah might not have ended so well, but Jonah did live a fearless life by turning to God in his darkest hour (hahahaha, get it, "darkest"), and by preaching God's word in a city of people that scared him.

Activity: Pin Jonah in the Big Fish

Materials: Big Fish Cutout attached to the Wall, Jonah figure for children to color, colors, scissors, tape, blindfolds

The Activity:

- Explain to students that in today's story, Jonah, a follower of God ends up in a big fish!
- Give each student a Jonah to color and cut out.
- When a student has colored and cutout a Jonah, add tape to the back of their Jonah, blindfold them, spin them around a couple times, and let them try to put Jonah in the big fish.
- Let the Jonah's stack up on the wall and in the fish so that at the end of the night, there are Jonahs everywhere.

Music: Preparation for Musical on May 20.