

K-2 | November 9

Today's Bible Story: Jonah • *Jonah 1–3*

Today's Bottom Line: God knows what's best.

Monthly Memory Verse: *Those who trust in the LORD will receive new strength. They will fly as high as eagles. They will run and not get tired. They will walk and not grow weak. Isaiah 40:31 (NIRV)*

1. Opening Activity

Pray for your group before they arrive. Pray for kids who will visit your group for the first time. Thank God for never giving up on you, even when you've tried to run or hide. Recall an age-appropriate story about a time when you felt like you were far from God, but He kept reaching for you! Ask God to remind each kid that His love isn't based on our performance. Pray that kids would be confident that He is with them at school, at home, on hard days, and on good days. Pray they would feel God's love chasing after them, even when they make bad choices.

What You Need:

- ☐ Offering container
- ☐ Index cards
- ☐ Pencils

What You Do:

- Greet each kid by name with a fist bump, high-five, smile, or wave as they arrive!
- Invite any kids who brought an offering to place it in the offering container.
- Give each kid one index card and a pencil.
- Say, "Think of a place you love to go to or something fun you love to do! You're going to draw it on your card. Just one idea per card!"
 - *Provide examples to get them started, like "The beach," "a cousin's house," "playing on the playground," or "reading a book."*
- Collect all the cards, place them in a pile, and mix them up.

Imagine Together:

- Instruct the kids to sit in a circle.
- Mix up the index cards face down, and put them in a pile in the middle of the circle.
- Explain how to play:
 - One kid will draw a card.
 - Without speaking, they'll act out what they think is on the card.
 - Everyone else will try to guess what they're doing or where they are!
- Continue until everyone who wants to act has had a turn, or as time allows.

What You Say:

"It's fun to imagine all the places we can go and things we can do. Was it tricky acting out something that wasn't your idea? Some of the things we acted out might have felt easy, or even tricky! Especially when you're acting out something someone else came up with. Some of you had to guess, get creative, or just give it your best shot."

"Today, in our true story from the Bible, we'll learn about a guy named Jonah who didn't want to do what God asked him to do. He had his own idea of what was best. But guess what? God always knows what's best! Not just for Jonah, but for the people around him—and for us too! Let's go find out more!"

Inclusive Pro Tips:

- Instead of writing, invite kids to quietly tell a leader their idea to write or draw it for them.
- Give kids the option to pair up and act out the cards together.

[Lead your group to do worship and watch today's lesson.]

2. Which Way Will I Go?

What You Need:

- ☐ "Jonah & the Big Fish" Activity Page
- ☐ Markers/crayons/color pencils
- ☐ Optional: Metallic pens

What You Do:

- Before you begin:
 - Have each child write his/her name on their paper

Craft time:

- Review the Bible story of Jonah
- Have the children color and decorate their activity page
- When they are done coloring, show them how to fold their paper so that the fish's mouth opens and closes to show it swallowing Jonah.

What You Say:

"What an adventure! Jonah's journey to Nineveh was one wild ride. God gave Jonah a mission to go to the city of Nineveh and tell them to turn from their sins, but Jonah went the opposite way. LITERALLY! He jumped on a boat, and God brought a giant storm. When Jonah was thrown into the sea by the people on the boat, God sent a big fish to rescue him! And after three days, Jonah finally listened to God. He traveled to Nineveh and shared God's message. And the people of Nineveh actually listened and changed!"

"Why did Jonah not want to tell the Ninevites to turn from their sins? Well, the Bible tells us. Jonah said this to God:

"I knew that you are gracious. You are tender and kind. You are slow to get angry. You are full of love. You are a God who takes pity on people" (Jonah 4:2 NIV).

"Jonah knew that God is kind. He knew that God would forgive the Ninevites if they turned from their sins. And that's exactly what happened!"

"Do you know what Jonah's journey tells us about God? Well, God knows what's best! We should always follow God's direction. God wanted to give an entire group of people the chance to live better if they just turned from their ways! And God wanted to give Jonah a chance to share that message with them."

“But even when Jonah decided he himself didn’t want to follow God’s ways, God didn’t give up on him—and God won’t give up on you either! Even when Jonah wasn’t listening, God was still patient and kind in saving him and redirecting him.

“Even when things feel confusing or you feel like you don’t understand what God is asking you to do, you can always be confident that **God knows what’s best!** You might not see the full picture, but you can take a deep breath and trust God. He is good. His ways are good. He is always working for your good. So even if you don’t understand, you can always hold His hand and trust His heart. He is doing something good, that is the only thing He can do! Remember: **God knows what’s best.** Always!”

3. Let’s Go Fishing!*

What You Need:

- ☐ Prepared “Jonah Story Cards” Activity Page with paperclips
- ☐ Prepared fishing pole
- ☐ *Optional: blue towel or blue paper*

What You Do:

- Spread the “Jonah Story Cards” Activity Pages on the floor.
 - *Optional: Place the blue towel or blue paper on the floor and then scatter the cards on top!*
- Explain that the kids will take turns using the prepared fishing pole to “fish” for one card from the pond.
- After all the cards have been “caught,” turn them face-up and work together to put them in Bible Story order. (The Bible Story order is included in the prompts below.)
- Review each card using the prompts below.
- ***[Make It Personal] (Tell your few about an age-appropriate time as a kid when you thought you knew what was best, but like Jonah, you learned that God’s way was better. How was God’s way better?)***

Jonah Story Card Prompts:

- GO to NINEVEH sign: God told Jonah to go to Nineveh. Why? *(God wanted Jonah to tell the people to stop doing wrong things.)*
- BOAT: What did Jonah do instead? *(He got on a boat going the opposite way.)*
- PILLOW: What happened while Jonah was below deck and fell asleep? *(God sent a big storm!)*
- CALM SEA: How did the storm stop? *(Jonah was thrown overboard, and God calmed the sea.)*
- BIG FISH: How long was Jonah inside the fish? *(Three days and three nights.)*
- PRAYER HANDS: What did Jonah do in the fish? *(He prayed to God for help.)*
- SANDY BEACH: What happened next? *(God made the fish spit Jonah out.)*
- NINEVEH with THUMBS-UP: What did Jonah do now? *(God asked him again to go to Nineveh, and Jonah went. The people of Nineveh listened!)*

What You Say:

“Wow, Jonah went through A LOT—from running away to being swallowed by a big fish! Jonah didn’t trust God at first. He thought he knew better than God! Instead of trusting and putting his confidence in God and in God’s ways, Jonah decided he was going to go his own way.

“God wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh and tell the people there to follow God’s ways! God wanted to give an entire group of people the chance to live better if they just turned from their ways. And God wanted to give Jonah a chance to share that message with them. But Jonah didn’t want to do that. He thought the Ninevites were too mean to receive God’s kindness.

“We can be like Jonah too. Sometimes, we think we know better than God. But God never gave up on Jonah. God gave Jonah a second chance, and Jonah decided to follow God’s ways! And because Jonah did what God wanted, an entire city of people lived better lives!

“Sometimes we don’t understand why God wants us to do something. Maybe it feels scary or hard—like talking to someone new, telling the truth, or choosing to be kind. But here’s what we can always remember: God knows what’s best. Do you know why? Because God is GOOD. He is kind, He is loving, He is truthful. God is good, and that means His ways are good!

“When we tell the truth, it shows that we are honest people. When we are kind to someone, it shows them God’s love. When we follow God’s ways, it is good and it spreads goodness! That’s why God wants us to follow Him and His ways—even when it’s hard.

“Sometimes we might feel unsure about following God and His ways like Jonah, but remember, friends, **God knows what’s best**. He is always working for something good! We can trust Him every time!”

Inclusive Pro Tips:

- To support the fine motor skills of kids in your group, let them select a card without using the fishing pole.

4. Prayer

“Dear God, we are so grateful that You are always good and we can trust You and follow Your ways no matter what! Sometimes it’s hard to do what’s right. Sometimes we want to run away from things we don’t like or don’t understand. Help us to trust that You are good, and You know what’s best. Help us to stop and pray when we feel afraid or unsure. Help us to trust You and obey. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus’ name. Amen!”