



God is Forgiving – Jonah & The Big Fish

Jonah

God Statement: God is Wisdom

KEY VERSE: “The Lord gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.”

(Proverbs 2:6, NIRV)

CHECK-IN

Classroom Teacher

(until 15 minutes after the start of each service)

As kids check-in, please have them wash their hands or use hand sanitizer before entering your classroom. Then they can participate in the various activities and games in your classroom. 10 minutes after the start of your service time, ask the kids to clean up their activities and toys so you can begin the Explore Activity at 15 minutes after the start of service.

EXPLORE ACTIVITY

Classroom Teacher

(15 minutes)

The Explore Activity is a chance to get the kids thinking about the upcoming Bible story for the day. Encourage your kids to engage with the activity as they prepare for the lesson.

DISCUSS: God is Forgiving

In today’s lesson, we are going to learn about how God is forgiving!

SAY:

Today, we’re going to learn about the word forgiving. Who knows what it means to forgive? **Let kids respond.** To forgive means deciding not to pay someone back what they deserve when they hurt you or go against what they say they will do. Have you ever had to forgive anyone? Turn to the person next to you and tell them about it. **Let a few kids share after they’ve shared with one another.** Is forgiving an easy (thumbs up) or hard (thumbs down) thing to do? Show me with your thumbs. Most of the time it can be hard (thumbs down).

Today, we are going to learn about how God is forgiving. Raise your hand if you have heard of a man named Jonah before. Well, Jonah chose not to do what God told him to do, and God still forgave him. Even though it can be hard for us to forgive, God always forgives. We will learn more about that later, but first, let's do this activity!

MAKE:

To get the kids thinking about the lesson, they can do this activity!

Jonah & The Big Fish Wheel

Supplies: one wheel cut out set per child, one brad, markers and crayons

Say: *Today we get to learn about Jonah! When Jonah ran away from what God asked of him, he was eaten by a big fish! And God STILL used Jonah to do great things. Let's make a fun wheel to remind us of our story that we get to learn about.*



Directions: Pass out one Jonah and the big fish wheel set per child. Have the children color their pictures. When finished, attach the fish circle over the ocean circle and seal it together with a metal brad.

LARGE GROUP

(25 minutes)

Each week, Large Group will consist of an introduction, worship, the Bible lesson, worship response, and the blessing.

WELCOME & EXPECTATIONS

Host

Depending on your age group, either find a designated space in your classroom or join the other classes for Large Group in the specified location.

As children enter into Large Group time, welcome and greet the children, telling them you're excited to have them joining this evening/morning.

Expectations Slide

Once everyone has found their seat, the host will use the Large Group expectations slide to go over the rules. Encourage various children to take turns reading the rules.

***** After Expectations, transition the power point to the "Worship" slide. *****

KEY VERSE**Host**

Before you start worship, introduce/review the key Bible verse for the quarter. This is a great opportunity for you to talk about the importance of God's Word and encourage the kids to work on memorizing the verse each week.

Use the Key Verse Motions Video on Plex (or sent in weekly email) to learn the motions prior to Large Group.

**“The Lord gives wisdom. Knowledge and understanding come from his mouth.”
(Proverbs 2:6, NIRV)**

****** After the Introduction, transition the power point to the Worship songs and invite the Worship Leader up front to lead the kids in worship. ******

OPENING WORSHIP**Worship Leader**

While the video is playing the opening worship songs, encourage the kids to sing and dance along. Don't forget to set the example by participating alongside them!

Kids may participate in the worship however they feel led. Encourage kids to find a way that helps them worship best but remind them that it's not time to goof off or talk to friends. If you have someone leading the worship up front, you can even invite a few kids to help.

TODAY'S WORSHIP SONGS:

- Help Me Live in Step
- Glorious Day
- Closing: Firm Foundation

****** After Worship, transition the power point into the Bible Story video where the kids will hear about the lesson for the day. ******

BIBLE STORY**Lesson Video**

Remind the group before starting the video to follow the expectations for Large Group.

THIS WEEK'S LESSON: God is Forgiving – Jonah & the Big Fish

Encourage kids to listen and engage with the lesson as they watch the teaching video.

******After the video finishes, turn on soft worship music (with or without lyrics) to transition into Worship Response. This should be background music to help set the tone for a quiet reflection time with God.******

WORSHIP RESPONSE

Host

Worship Response is an opportunity for the kids to apply what they just learned and to respond to what God is doing in their life. *Have the kids sit in a place where they can be still and reflect independently.* Then read through the Worship Response prompts below as you lead the kids through the time.

Supplies: sticky notes, markers/pencils, wooden Cross station

Prepare Ahead: Let teachers know that the salvation message will be presented and if any kids ask questions about it afterwards to please notify a staff person and let parents know at check-out. Ask 1-2 teachers to stand at the cross during the activity to say “God loves you” to each kid.

Wow, God is so forgiving! Who did God forgive in our story today? **Let kids respond – Jonah AND the Ninevites.** That’s right, God not only forgave Jonah when He totally did not listen to what God told him to do, but God also forgave the Ninevites, those people that were really mean. That’s pretty amazing!

You know what’s even more amazing? God forgives each of us too! Are any of us perfect in here? No! We may not end up in a belly of a big fish, but we all sometimes choose not to listen to God and do what is right. Maybe we eat that cookie our mom told us not to. Maybe we yell at our brother/sister. Maybe we say mean things to someone at school. Maybe we take something that isn’t ours. We ALL make mistakes and we all sin!

But remember what I said? God forgives us, just like He forgave Jonah and the Ninevites. God has given us a very special gift so that we can have a relationship with Him even though we mess up.

SALVATION MESSAGE & CROSS ACTIVITY:

Romans 3:23 talks about just that. It says: **“Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God’s glory. The free gift of God’s grace makes us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free.”**

God loves us so much that He sent His Son, Jesus, to die on the Cross for our sins and mistakes. Even though we mess up every single day, He made a way to have a relationship with us forever. And the best part? It’s a free gift! We don’t have to do anything to earn it! All we have to do is invite God into our hearts.

If you’ve never prayed to ask God into your heart before, and you want to, all you have to do is:

- ADMIT – Admit to God that you are a sinner (made mistakes and disobeyed) and turn away from your sin
- BELIEVE – Believe that Jesus Christ is God’s Son, that He paid the price for you, and that you need to accept God’s free gift of forgiveness and grace

- CALL – Call on God to save you from your sin and start a relationship with Him

If you want to take that step, during this next activity, talk to one of your leaders and they would love to pray with you to invite God into your heart. Or maybe you're not quite ready yet, and that's totally okay, but if you have questions, talk to one of us and of course talk to your grownups at home!

Let's take a moment to respond to that good news that God loves us so much and forgives us!

Turn on soft worship music at this point.

Have teachers pass out a sticky note and marker/pencil to each child. As they pass it out, invite kids to write/draw how it makes them feel to know that God loves them and forgives them. Then, when kids are ready, they can place their sticky note on the cross. Have a teacher stand by the cross and say "God loves you" to each kid as they finish.

Once everyone has finished, close time in prayer.

******After Worship Response, transition the power point to the closing Worship videos and invite the Worship Leader to come back up.******

CLOSING WORSHIP

Worship Leader

Play the closing worship song included in the power point and encourage the kids to sing and praise along.

This closing song is intended to be a transition for the kids to finish processing and reflecting on the lesson before transitioning to the small group time.

******After Worship or Bible Story, transition the power point to the "Compassion International" slide.******

COMPASSION & OFFERING

Host

Before closing large group, take a moment to highlight and discuss each campus' Compassion sponsor child. Explain a little about the Compassion child's life and the impact their offering has for this child (info should be provided on cards in classroom). Then remind kids that if anyone brought offering, now is the time to come forward to donate.

Ask a child to come up and pray for the offering and their Compassion child.

****After Compassion & Offering, transition the power point to the “Announcement” slide. The host will discuss any current announcements.****

ANNOUNCEMENTS & SPECIAL MISSIONS FOCUS – ACTs Senior Center Ministry

Host

Take this opportunity to cover any announcements and special missions focus for the kids, such as upcoming events or reminders, like bringing food donations for Feeding Families. Use the slides provided in the Power Point to display important announcements.

Who was here a few weeks ago, when we made those special wreaths? Who were they for? **Let kids respond.** Our current mission focus for the month of February is ACTS Senior Center Ministry.

What holiday is in February? Valentine’s Day! We often give each other special gifts, card, treats on Valentine’s Day. How does it make you feel to get a Valentine? **Let kids respond – warm, excited, happy, loved, etc.** Well, that feeling is exactly what we want to share with the seniors who will receive these wreaths. We want them to know that even if they sometimes feel alone or sad, that there is someone who loves them more than anyone else. Who’s that? Jesus!

As we talk about the Senior Centers this month, we want to challenge you to think of little ways you can love the seniors/elderly in your life! Maybe you could make a special card at home for a grandparent, neighbor, friend. Maybe you just intentionally say hi and ask about their day. Let’s love well!

Invite a couple kids to come up and pray for the seniors who will receive the wreaths, that they would feel known, loved, and seen by Jesus.

****After Announcements, transition the power point to the “Blessing” slide. The host will lead the class in receiving the blessing for the day.****

BLESSING

Host

Read the verse and blessing over the kids before closing Large Group. Encourage the kids to stand and open their hands to receive the blessing as a truth that they can take with them this week and hide in their hearts.

May you never forget how awesome our God is! May you remember that the God who protected the Israelites is the same God who protects and loves you!

SMALL GROUP

Classroom Teachers

(10 minutes)

Younger Kids:

This time is optional for younger kids, depending on if you feel like the kids are still listening and participating well.

1. **What did you learn about God from our story today?**
2. **Read/ Recap today's story: The Book of Jonah**
 - a. **Where did God want Jonah to go? (Nineveh)**
 - b. **Jonah did not want to do what God had asked him so he ran away. What swallowed up Jonah when he went to sea? (a big fish!)**
 - c. **God had the fish spit up Jonah. What did Jonah do after the fish spit him up on the land? (Jonah went to Nineveh and did what God had asked him to).**
3. **Have you ever been asked to do something that you really REALLY don't want to do? Maybe it's taking out the trash, or cleaning your room, or maybe it's helping out at school? Even when we don't want to do something, sometimes God calls us to do it anyway.**
4. **God had a plan for Jonah, even though he made a mistake, God forgave him! Can you think of a time God forgave you for something you did? Is there something you want to ask him to forgive you for?**

Close small group in prayer.

Older Kids:

Encourage the kids to utilize their personal Bibles or the classroom Bibles to read the Scripture as a group.

1. **What did you learn about God from our story today?**
2. **Read scripture: Jonah 1: 1-3**
 - a. **Where did God want Jonah to go?: (Nineveh)**
3. **Read scripture: Jonah 2: 10**
 - a. **Jonah did not want to do what God had asked him so he ran away. What swallowed up Jonah when he went to sea?: (a big fish!)**
4. **Read scripture: Jonah 3: 1-3**

- a. **God had the fish spit up Jonah. What did Jonah do after the fish spit him up on the land?** (Jonah went to Nineveh and did what God had asked him to).
5. **Have you ever been asked to do something that you really REALLY don't want to do? Maybe it's taking out the trash, cleaning your room, or maybe it's helping out at school? Even when we don't want to do something, sometimes God calls us to do it anyway.**
6. **God had a plan for Jonah, even though he made a mistake, God forgave him! Can you think of a time God forgave you for something you did? Is there something you want to ask him to forgive you for?**

Close small group in prayer.

RESPOND ACTIVITY

Classroom Teacher
(10 minutes)

DISCUSS:

If you have extra time at the end of your lesson and small group time, the kids can participate in this activity.

PLAY: Pin Jonah on the Fish!

Supplies: one piece of blue paper, Jonah cut outs, tape, blind fold

Directions: Tape the blue paper with the whale drawing on the wall. Pass out one Jonah cut out to each child. Have children get in a line. Blind fold the person in the front of the line and have them try to tape Jonah to the belly of the fish. Have children take turns trying to tape their Jonah to the whale on the wall. (Play this game like pin the tale on the donkey).

Say: *Today we got to learn about a special story! We got to learn about Jonah! Jonah was swallowed up by a big fish, when he ran away from what God had asked him to do. God forgave Jonah and He still had a great plan for him. Let's play a fun game to help us remember this wonderful story of Jonah!*

CHECK-OUT

Classroom Teacher
(end of service)

As parents arrive for check-out, the kids can continue participating in the Respond Activities or the classroom games and toys.