

# CHURCH AT HOME



## JONAH, PROPHET TO NINEVEH

**Bible Passage:** Jonah 1-4

**Story Point:** God uses Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh he loves them

**Key Passage:** John 14:15 (ESV)

“If you love me, you will obey my commandments.”

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**BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Q: WHY SHOULD WE OBEY GOD? A: WE SHOULD OBEY GOD BECAUSE HE MADE US, HE LOVES US, AND HIS PLANS ARE GOOD.**

**CATECHISM: Q: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?**

**A:** No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come.

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## TEACHING *Tips*

Introduce the Story with opening activities  
Teach the Story then Watch the Story (Bible Story Video)  
Apply the Story (Optional Activities)

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### **LINKS TO CHILDREN'S BULLETINS**

- [Forest Activity Page -3 & 4 year olds \(pages 1-2\)](#)
- [Treehouse Activity Page -K & 1st graders \(pages 1-2\)](#)
- [Canopy Activity Page -2nd & 3rd graders \(pages 1-2\)](#)

### **LINKS FOR KEY PASSAGE and BIBLE STORY PICTURE**

- [John 14:15 Coloring Page](#)
- [Bible Story Picture \(page 1\)](#)

### **LINKS FOR BIBLE STORY VIDEOS**

- [Preschool Bible story video](#)
- [Elementary Bible story video](#)

## START THE CONVERSATION

Ask your kids:

**Prompt kids to talk about a time they chose to disobey. Why did they choose disobedience?**



*We all are born with sinful hearts. That means we are separated from God, and we choose to do wrong things sometimes. Today we will learn about a time one of God's prophets chose to do the opposite of what God told him to do. Why would a prophet disobey God? We'll learn more soon.*

## OPENING ACTIVITIES

### SIMON SAYS DISOBEY

**Supplies:** nothing

Play a game of "Simon Says," but add the following twist: kids will do the opposite of what is asked, such as reaching up when Simon says to reach down, touching knees if Simon says to touch elbows, and so forth. Play as time allows.



*Usually we are supposed to do exactly what Simon says, and only when Simon says, but this time we did the opposite of what Simon said! Today we will hear about a prophet who did the opposite of what God commanded. Do you think God was OK with that? We'll learn how God responded.*

## ACTIVITY PAGE

Invite kids to complete their age appropriate activity page (See page 1).



If you were told to go somewhere, would you want to take the easy way or the hard way? Today we will learn about a man who thought he could go against God, but all he really did was take the hard way.

## SET EXPECTATIONS for Group Time

Before beginning the lesson briefly set expectations and go over our 5 up Rules. Model 5 up rules (What does it NOT look like and what DOES it look like). Model “Be Kind” and “Be safe” ( What does it NOT look like and what DOES it look like)

**Sit UP**

**Zip UP**

**Listen UP**

**Look UP**

**Hand UP**

## TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Before we dive too deep into the story, we need to discuss our big picture question. Big picture questions help us frame Bible stories so we know what to focus on. So here it is: **Why should we obey God?** We talk a lot about the importance of obedience, but we want to explore the reason behind it. If you don't know why you should obey, it can be much harder to actually do so.

As we learn about the reasons we obey God, we will be studying a time in the history of God's people when almost no one chose to obey Him. The kingdom of Israel had split in two. The kingdom to the north was known as Israel, and most of the tribes were part of that kingdom. That's the kingdom we will be focusing on for the next few weeks. This week, we are focusing on Jonah, a prophet from Israel whom God called to another place. Our story this week is called “Jonah, Prophet to Nineveh.”



*Remind children that all the stories in the Bible are telling an even bigger story. Every story, every page is a reminder of who God is and how God loves. Elisha is a part of God's amazing story. The*

*Bible is one big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.*

*Use the Bible storytelling tips from the Bible story below to help you tell the story. Invite kids to make hand motions to help tell the story when they hear certain words.*

**MOTIONS FOR BIBLE STORY:**

**GOD**-hand pointed to the sky

**PROPHET**-hands folded like you are praying

**JONAH**-hand in a fist with pinky up to draw a “j” in the air

**BOAT**-cup your hands together and bounce it up and down

**STORM**-stomp your feet and make thunder and lightning noises

**FISH**-one hand swimming like a fish

**Jonah, Prophet of Nineveh | Jonah 1-4**

**God told the prophet Jonah, “Go to the great city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing evil things.”** The people of Nineveh were enemies of God’s people. **Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh.** So **he got on a boat heading the other way!**

**God sent a terrible storm, and the sailors were afraid.** They cast lots to figure out who caused this trouble. The lot fell on Jonah. **The sailors asked Jonah, “Who are you? What are you doing here?”**

**Jonah replied, “I worship the one true God who made everything.”**

What had Jonah done to make God angry? **The sailors did not know what to do, so Jonah told them to throw him into the sea** to calm the storm. **When they did, the storm stopped.** From that moment on, the sailors worshiped the one true God.

**God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah, and** Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. **Jonah prayed and thanked God for sending the fish to save him. Then the fish vomited Jonah onto dry land.**

**God told Jonah, “Go to Nineveh and preach My message.”** So Jonah went. He walked into the city shouting God’s message: **“In 40 days, Nineveh will be destroyed!”**

**The people turned from their evil ways. Even the king repented. God decided not to destroy Nineveh.**

**“I knew it!” Jonah said. “You are a gracious God.** You show mercy to people. You are slow to anger, and You are loving. **I knew You would decide to not destroy Nineveh. I am so mad!”**

**“Is it right for you to be angry?” God asked.**

Jonah left Nineveh and made a shelter where he could still see the city and what God would do. God taught Jonah a lesson. He provided a plant to shade Jonah from the sun. Jonah was glad to have the plant. But the next day, God sent a worm. The worm attacked the plant, and the plant died. Then God sent a dry east wind. Jonah was so hot, he almost fainted. “I want to die,” Jonah said.

God asked Jonah, “Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?”

**“Yes!” Jonah said.** “It is right. I’m so angry, I could die.”

**God said,** “You cared about the plant, but you did not take care of it or make it grow. It only lasted one day. **Nineveh is a big city with thousands of people. I created them and care about them.** Aren’t they and the animals in the city more important than a plant?”



*Christ Connection: God called Jonah to go to his enemies and call them to turn away from their sin, but Jonah refused. Instead, he ran away. Later, God sent Jesus to His enemies to call us to repentance. Jesus willingly obeyed. Jesus died on the cross to rescue us from sin.*

## CATECHISM QUESTION

Let’s review our catechism question. Can you say it with me?



**Q: Will God allow our disobedience and idolatry to go unpunished?**

**A:** No, every sin is against the sovereignty, holiness, and goodness of God, and against his righteous law, and God is righteously angry with our sins and will punish them in his just judgment both in this life, and in the life to come.

## WATCH THE STORY (5 minutes)

[Click below to show the Bible story video "JONAH, PROPHET OF NINEVEH."](#)

- [Preschool Bible story video](#)
- [Elementary Bible story video](#)

### QUESTIONS FOR KIDS

Ask kids if they have questions about the story. What didn't make sense? What was weird? What made you scratch your head? How did it make you feel? What pictures are stuck in your head from the story.

## STORY REVIEW

Display the [Bible story picture](#) (page 1) as you ask the following questions. Retell portions of the Bible story as needed.

1. **What did Jonah do instead of obeying God?** (Jonah boarded a boat to Tarshish, Jonah 1:3)
2. **What did God do to stop Jonah?** (sent a great storm and a fish to swallow Jonah when he'd been thrown overboard; Jonah 1:4,15-17)
3. **At the end of the story, why was Jonah angry?** (God showed mercy to Nineveh, Jonah 4:2)
4. **Why does God want us to show mercy to other people?** Help kids understand that God's mercy to sinners is great. He sent Jesus to take the punishment we deserve, providing the way for us to be shown mercy. Showing mercy to others provides opportunities to help others see what God is like.
5. **Is it wrong to hope God will punish evil?** Guide kids to understand that it is good to hate evil, but we must still love people who do evil things. One day, God will punish evil and fix everything broken. We look

*forward to that day, while rejoicing that God has given us more time to share the gospel and see sinners repent and be saved.*

6. **Whom can you show mercy and love to this week?** *Help kids think about people they know who need to experience God's mercy and love. Help the kids consider what it looks like to exemplify Jesus' mercy. Encourage kids to share the gospel with their friends and loved ones.*



**Jonah was angry when God showed mercy to the Ninevites, but God taught Jonah that He made people and He cares about them. We are all sinners who need God's mercy. God loves to be merciful! He showed mercy to us by sending Jesus to call us—His enemies!—to repent. When Jesus was on earth, He shared the same message from God: “Turn from your sin and turn to God. Then you will be saved.” Jesus willingly obeyed the Father, and He died on the cross to rescue us from sin. No one is too mean or too evil that God could not save him. Jesus saves all people who trust in Him.**

## **PRACTICE THE KEY PASSAGE**

**KEY PASSAGE: John 14:15 (ESV)**

*“If you love me, you will obey my commandments.”*

**Supplies:** [memory verse poster](#)

*Write out blanks for each letter in the first phrase of the key passage on a board. Invite kids to take turns guessing letters. Each time kids guess a correct letter write the letter in the appropriate blank. If an incorrect letter is guessed, write it off to the side and draw a single part of a simple fish doodle. Your fish doodle should be complete after about seven incorrect guesses. Each time the kids complete a phrase, start again with the next phrase until kids reveal the whole key passage.*



*Great work! Our key passage comes from the New Testament. These words are actually the words of Jesus. John wrote down the words of*



*Jesus and wanted to remind us that when we obey we show God that we love him.*



Make a video of your child teaching the memory verse. Send it to [Jordan Reich](#) and we might include it on our Sunday Church at Home videos. If you say the memory verse via video and send it in, we will also send you **Pelican Bucks**.

## SING A SONG



Jesus talked a lot about obeying God. Sometimes we get so wrapped up in our own ways of doing things that we forget to obey God. We don't hear his words because we are too busy listening to other people's voices or the TV or our favorite video game. What would it be like if we chose to listen to God's words and do what he says?



Watch and sing together ["Wise and Foolish Builder" by Rain for Roots](#)

## PRAY WITH YOUR KIDS

Invite kids to pray before applying the story.



Faithful Lord, thank You for loving us even while we sin. Help us see Your love and be transformed by it each day. Give us courage to obey even when we don't want to and give us compassion for the lost. Fill us with Your Spirit so we can obey You out of love. Amen.

## EXPERIENCE & APPLY THE STORY

### OPTION 1: Heroes and villains

**Supplies:** paper, crayons, markers

Provide paper and pencils to kids, as well as crayons, colored pencils, or markers. Invite the kids to draw two pictures. In the first picture, kids should draw a picture of a villain; the villain can be an evil character from a TV show or movie, or a character the kids create. Then ask them to draw a picture of a hero who might fight the villain.



**You all have some great art skills. We often think about the world as being filled with good people and bad people. But the Bible teaches that we are all sinners, and enemies of God. That means that we are born as “villains!”**

**Jonah was angry that God would show mercy to the Ninevites because he did not think they deserved mercy. But Jonah and the people of Israel did not deserve mercy either! None of us do.**

**God loves all people and showed mercy to the Ninevites. No one deserves the wonderful salvation God gives. It’s a free gift that we cannot earn. God saves us because He is good and loves us, not because we have done good deeds to earn salvation. If we cannot earn salvation, *why should we obey God? We should obey God because He made us, He loves us, and His plans are good.***

### OPTION 2: Make ocean slime

**Supplies:** ziplock bags, glue, baking soda, water, glitter, food coloring, saline solution

Demonstrate how to make ocean slime, or form small groups and allow kids to work together to complete the following steps:

1. Mix glue and water in a bowl until combined.
2. Stir in baking soda.
3. Add food color and glitter as desired.
4. Mix well until the consistency turns slimy and pulls away from the bottom and sides of the bowl.

5. Squirt a few drops of saline solution onto your hands and knead the slime to improve the consistency and reduce the stickiness. Add ocean animal figures.

Store slime in ziplock bags to send home with kids. Provide wipes for cleanup.



Do you know how much of the earth's surface is covered by ocean? (*approximately 70 percent*) Have you ever swam in the ocean? [*Allow kids to respond.*] In today's Bible story, a prophet named Jonah told some sailors to throw him into the ocean. What would you do if you realized you had disobeyed and something was your fault? Would you speak up and tell the truth like Jonah?