

Student Life For Kids Camp

Bible Study

Lesson 1

A Whale of a Time

Biblical Narrative: Jonah 1:1-3:3
(Jonah disobeys God's call and runs in the opposite direction.)

Daily Truth: Sin takes us off God's course.

Learning Goals: To introduce the concepts of sin, which leads away from God, and repentance, which points back to Him.

BEFORE YOU TEACH...

- Read Jonah 1:1-3:3, Hebrews 12:1, and Proverbs 28:13.
- Review the lesson below.
- Pray for receptive hearts.
- Pray for God to give you wisdom and discernment as you lead.
- Gather today's supplies.

CONNECT...

Connect activities get kids ready to learn. Use the activities below to introduce today's lesson and to begin getting to know your group.

Take a minute to go over the purpose and rules of Family Group Bible Study. **SAY: This is our time to slow down, have some fun as a group while we learn about God by diving into His Word.**

It will also be a good idea at the top of each session to review the rules. Here are few suggestions: Be respectful. Only one person should speak at a time.

No horseplay. Etc. (Use any form of rules you like.)

Get-To-Know Activity: *Playing Favorites*

(10 minutes, no set-up)

This simple, classic game will get your kids moving (great for post lunch sessions) and will help you and your group learn a little about each other.

Have the kids gather in the middle of the group space. **SAY: This game is all about favorites, or at least, which you like best. So I will give you two options. Option A and Option B. If you like Option A the best then move to the far left side of the room as fast as you can. If you like Option B better then move to the far right side as fast as you can.**

If you're in a tight space and running is not possible then use sitting and standing instead. For example: Option A, stand. Option B, sit on the floor.

SAY: Which one do you like better?

- Playing tag or Red-Light, Green-Light?
- Eating pepperoni or plain cheese pizza?
- Vanilla or chocolate ice cream?
- Going to the dentist or getting a haircut?
- Summer or winter?
- Mac & cheese or birthday cake?
- Riding your bike or playing soccer?
- Broccoli or squash?
- Playing iPod games or watching TV?
- Frogs or goats?
- Running or swimming?

When you are finished, move to the next activity.

Learning Activity: *The Great Maze Race of 2014*

(10 minutes, no set-up)

SAY: Open your camp magazines to page 25. Once you find the page flip your magazine over with the page facing down. Don't look at it. Make sure everyone has a pen. Say: On my call, turn your magazine and race to complete the maze on that page. The first person to finish the maze AND to stand up wins this round.

There are three mazes in the magazine. So you can play multiple rounds.

When the rounds are over **SAY: You guys are fast maze racers. But let me ask you a question: when you were playing, what slowed you down? Get them to say something about going the wrong way. SAY: That's right. When you get off the course of the maze and go the wrong way it leads to a dead end. Then you have to go back. You don't want to go back in a race because it wastes time. Which in a race you don't want to do. Now ask: Did anybody choose to go the wrong way on purpose? No, of course not. That sounds crazy, but today we're talking about someone in the Bible who purposely went the wrong way and got into some trouble.**

EXPLORE...

Explore activities lead kids to study Scripture. The Key Study will help kids to focus on the Bible narrative and Daily Truth.

ASK: Have you ever purposely left the path or route that you were supposed to take? Give kids a few minutes to answer. With each response inquire about why they left the course

and about the consequences of their actions – if any.

SAY: It can be easy to lose our way. Sometimes it's by accident. But other times we choose to leave the course marked out, and then have to face a consequence for our actions. That's what happened to the character in our Bible story today. He was told by God to go to one place, but He disobeyed God and fled in the opposite direction.

Key Study: Jonah

Activity: *This Just in!*

(20 minutes, easy set-up)

SAY: We're going to put on a fake newscast of the events in our Bible story - with you and me playing the characters. Tell them to have fun. Use silly voices to match their characters. Use rolled up paper or a camp magazine as a microphone. You should play the anchor. It will keep the activity moving and be less stress on younger readers.

Have the kids open to the script on the page 25. Ask for volunteers. Cast your parts. Position the characters in different parts of the group's meeting space. It's fine if some kids don't want to participate. Every good drama needs an audience. If everybody wants to play, then there should be enough parts for everyone. Feel free to condense characters. Or, if you have a really large group then some students can be "camera crew."

ANCHOR: Good evening. I'm Buster Newbottom. Reports of a man being swallowed by a giant fish and then spit up, alive, have been confirmed. We go to our reporter in the field, Sam Nugget. What do you have to report, Sam?

REPORTER: A man named Jonah was spit up on a beach by a super huge fish. That makes me hungry.

ANCHOR: Who is standing next to you?

REPORTER: I have here two eyewitnesses. What did you see?

WITNESS ONE: Like for totally real. That fish just like burped that poor man onto the sandy beach.

WITNESS TWO: He was like so gross and like totally pale white. And he smelled like a pig after gym class. Yuck.

ANCHOR: But the big question is how did this happen? We go live to his shipmates.

SHIPMATE ONE: Yeah, I know Jonah. He was

riding in our boat. Said he was running away or something.

SHIPMATE TWO: We were miles away from the shore and this big storm came.

SHIPMATE THREE: Whoosh. Whirl. The waves where huge!

ANCHOR: What happened next?

SHIPMATE ONE: We thought we angered God or something. But it turns out it was Jonah that God was after. So Jonah just jumped right off the boat.

SHIPMATE TWO: Splat. Into the water.

ANCHOR: Did the storm calm down?

SHIPMATE THREE: You bet your monkey's second cousin it did.

SHIPMATE FOUR: Like it was never there.

ANCHOR: What was Jonah running from?

SHIPMATE FOUR: I guess God.

ANCHOR: We go back to Reporter Sam Nugget with an exclusive interview.

REPORTER: I have here with me Jonah. So tell us, what happened?

JONAH: God told me to go to Nineveh and teach the people there about God and how the city was sinful. But I didn't want to. I'm ashamed to say, I just ran away.

ANCHOR: So... what about the fish?

JONAH: After I jumped off the boat to stop the storm, a big fish swallowed me. I prayed to God. And after three days – BURP – I was spit out on dry land.

ANCHOR: What a story! And you heard it here on Channel 403. Oh wait! This just in... alien blue berry muffins have invaded New Jersey. We'll be right back with that story after a word from our sponsor.

Once you have finished, get a round of applause for all your volunteers. Then have your group sit back down and open their Bibles to **Jonah 1:1-3**. Give a minute for the kids to find it. Have someone read the passage.

ASK: **What did God tell Jonah to do?** (*Go to Nineveh and preach against it*). **Did Jonah do this?** (*No*).

SAY: **Jonah clearly heard God. But he didn't want the Ninevites to know about God's grace and love. He seemed to hate them. So Jonah fled to Tarshish, which is near Spain.**

SAY: **Turn to the MAP ON page 28 in your camp magazine.** Have them circle Nineveh and Tarshish. Point out how far away they are from each other. Say: **Jonah didn't want to listen to God. So he tried to run far away. But you can't run away from God. And why would you want too?**

SAY: **So Jonah set sail in the opposite direction of Ninevah. Soon a giant storm struck his boat. The sailors were scared. They discussed why it came. But Jonah knew why. It was God's way of getting his attention. So Jonah offered himself to be thrown overboard. This should have killed him. But instead, God rescued him in the most unusual way. He sent a giant fish to swallow him. The Bible actually says in Jonah 1:17 that "God *provided* the great fish."**

Finish the story out by saying: **Jonah eventually – from inside the fish – cried out to God. God answered Jonah's prayer and had the fish spit Jonah up onto dry ground.**

Have someone read **Jonah 2:10-3:3**.

TRANSFORM...

Transform activities challenge and prepare kids to live differently in Christ.

Discussion: *Sin and Repentance*

(5-10 minutes, no set-up)

SAY: **Jonah knew he had disobeyed God. Now ask: Does anyone know what we call it when we disobey God? (Sin.) SAY: Sin takes our focus off God and on to something else. It drives us off the course that God wants for us.**

SAY: **Sin not only takes us off course, it trips us up and holds us back. Open your Bibles to Hebrews 12:1. This verse is part of our main scripture for the week.**

Have someone read verse 1 aloud.

SAY: **The Bible says sin entangles. But it says we can throw that sin off. God made a way.**

SAY: **So when we get off course, and we are held down by sin, God loving pulls us back. Tomorrow we will talk more about how Jesus rescued us and paved a way for us to come back to God. But for now I want to talk about REPENTANCE. Does anyone know what that means? Get responses.**

SAY: **Repentance is just a big word that means to say I'm sorry to God and then turn away from sin and back towards God. We turn from sin and back to God.**

Have someone read **Romans 3:23** out loud.

SAY: **The Bible says all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God. But it also says that God loves us. He says we are His children. So He wants us to come back on course to Him.**

SAY: **So when we disobey God we can always, always, always come back. There is no sin too big, too bad or**

too old that God can't handle and clean off us. (Emphasize this point.) We just have to ask.

Now move into the memory verse activity.

Memory Verse Activity: *The Unscramble Olympics*
(5-10 minutes, easy set-up)

PREP IN ADVANCE: Write one word of the verse on an index card. Write out the whole verse and then shuffle the cards. Make multiple sets.

SAY: **A great way to learn about God and to help know how to run on His course is to memorize His word. The Bible is God breathed, and it's unlike any other book. We want to store it in our brains and in our hearts.**

SAY: **Each day we will play a game to help us memorize one verse of God's Word. Today's verse is Hebrews 12:1-2.**

"Let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race markers out for us."

Have someone read the above (Hebrews 12:1-2) out loud. **God doesn't want sin to hold us back or get us lost and off course. God intends for us to live in close relationship with Him – sin damages this relationship. We need to throw that sin off and run towards God.**

Now, divide your group into two or three smaller groups. Hand each group a set of memory cards – shuffled and facing down. On your mark, the groups race to put their set in the correct order.

The first team to correctly order their cards wins. They can use their Bibles. Play multiple rounds. And for added fun, mix up the teams each round.

Closing Prayer

Close each session with a prayer, asking God to help the kids continue understanding what has been taught. Ask for God to keep moving in their lives. And to continue giving them a fun time at camp as they play, learn about Jesus and bond as a group.

You can take prayer requests. You can also have kids pray.