

JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH

JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH

by Warwick Hutton

Themes: Religion, Responsibility, Bible Stories

Grade Level: 2-5

Running Time: 6 minutes, iconographic

SUMMARY

JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH is a Bible story about a man named Jonah who is called by the voice of God. God tells Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh, where the people are wicked, and to teach them to give up their evil ways.

Fearing this responsibility, Jonah tries to flee from God by boarding a ship that is going to a far-off land. Soon a storm arises and the ship is in danger of sinking. The sailors believe this is the result of someone on board who has brought bad luck with him. When they draw lots to see who has brought this bad luck, it is Jonah who holds the black stick.

Jonah admits to the sailors that he has done wrong. He tells them that he has run away from the Lord's command and His presence. He then tells the sailors to throw him into the sea. When they do, the Lord sends a great fish to swallow up Jonah. After three days and nights in the belly of the fish, Jonah pleads with the Lord to save him and promises that he will never disobey Him again.

The Lord commands the great fish to open its mouth and let Jonah out. The story closes with Jonah going to Nineveh and helping the people give up their evil ways, just as the Lord commanded.

OBJECTIVES

- Children will be exposed to a Biblical tale.
- Children will learn about the value of taking

responsibility.

- Children will learn about the value of honesty.

BEFORE VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Share the book, JONAH AND THE GREAT FISH, with children. Then ask:

- How do you think Jonah felt when God asked him to save the people in the city of Nineveh.
- How would you feel?

Ask children who may be familiar with a Bible story to share it with the class. Have the entire group discuss the meaning of the stories. Explain to children who have never heard a Biblical tale that one way Christians learn about their religion is through the study of Bible stories.

Share a fairy tale with the children. (The story of Little Red Riding Hood, The Princess and the Pea, Jack and the Bean Stalk, and The Three Little Pigs are among titles you might want to consider.) Then discuss the message of the story. Help children explore how the message of the story can be applied to their own lives.

AFTER VIEWING ACTIVITIES

Provide booklets made from pieces of manila construction paper which have been stapled together. Have children use the booklets to create their own "tales with a message." As they share them with the class, see if class members can identify the messages of their classmates' stories. Later, have children illustrate their stories and display them in the classroom.

Help children recall the responsibilities that Jonah failed to take on. Ask:

- Why do you think Jonah did not want to do what God asked of him?
- How do you think Jonah felt about running

away from God?

- How do you think Jonah felt at the end of the story when he took on the responsibility God had assigned him?

Talk with children about the kinds of responsibilities they have at school and at home. Ask:

- What might happen if you ran away from your responsibilities?
- How would you feel?

Talk about whales. Show the children pictures. Discuss the fact that whales are mammals, how they bear their young, breathe, what they eat, their weight, etc.

Remind children of the way Jonah admitted to the sailors on the ship what he had done. Ask:

- How do you think Jonah felt when he admitted to the sailors that he ran away from God?

Encourage children to think about situations they may have been involved in where they did, or did not, tell the truth. Discuss how withholding the truth, and being honest, makes children feel. As children talk, stress the value of being honest and forthright.

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Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Holman Bible. Now the Lord had appointed a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the fish three days and three nights. International Standard Version. Now the LORD had prepared a large sea creature to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was inside the sea creature for three days and three nights. A Conservative Version. And LORD prepared a great sea creature to swallow up Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the sea creature three days and three nights. American Standard Jonah prayed to God "out of the fish's belly" (Jonah 2:1). "Belly" is a fairly vague term in English, let alone in ancient Hebrew, so if Jonah was swallowed by a creature such as a sperm whale, he might have been in the great laryngeal pouch; if by a shark, he may have been in the stomach of a creature specially prepared by God to protect him from the effects of its gastric juices. There is no doubt that there are sea creatures with jaws large enough to swallow a man whole. See photograph taken at Underwater World, Mooloolaba, in Queensland, Australia. And in the movie Jaws the fishing-boat of English Standard Version And the LORD appointed a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Berean Study Bible Now the LORD had appointed a great fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the fish. King James Bible Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow up Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. New King James Version Now the LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. New American Jonah disobeyed God! Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah got onto a ship and sailed away in the opposite direction to a place called Tarshish. The LORD God sent out a great wind into the sea. There was a huge storm! The sailors feared the ship might break apart and sink. The storm got worse and worse. Terrified, the sailors prayed to their gods and threw all the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But nothing helped. Jonah was the only person on board who wasn't praying. Why should I not have mercy on Nineveh, that great city, with its thousands of people? Jonah and the Big Fish A story from God's Word, the Bible, is found in Jonah. "The entrance of Your Words gives light."