

GAME STATION

STATION FOCUS

God loves all people and will forgive them when they repent. We, like Jonah, are called to tell others about God.

SCRIPTURES

The Book of Jonah

GAME

STATION OBJECTIVES

Children will have the opportunity to

- become familiar with the story of Jonah;
- explore ways to tell others about God, as Jonah did.

STATION SETUP

Note: You can purchase whale floats from the pool supply section of discount stores. Hang the floats around the room.

Photocopy the Main Idea, Objectives, Bible Background, Shepherd Tips, and Check Your Facts for each leader and shepherd. (See pages 3–6.)

Resources

Bibles
page 3–6

Supplies

whale floats
Optional:
toy boats
small wading pool

WANT TO DO MORE?

Set up the wading pool at a separate location from the game area. Fill it with water and add the boats to create a seascape.

SAFETY CHECK

- The church should be a place of security—a place where children can count on things and people being reliable.
- Each shepherd should know the whereabouts of every child in his or her group and where to reach a parent in case of an emergency.
- Make sure the children have plenty of space to play games. Remove any obstacles.
- Make sure children use equipment in a safe manner. Invite extra adult help, if needed, for the number of children in this station.
- Monitor the difference between high energy levels and rowdiness.

Resources

Bible

Supplies

2 cue cards

BIBLE STORY (5–10 minutes)

Prepare

Write “Uh-Oh” on one card and “Yeah!” on the other. (For nonreaders, use different colored cards.)

Show the children how to find the Book of Jonah in the Bible.

Show the children the cue cards. Practice showing them a card and having them read the word on it very dramatically. Tell them they will be helping tell the story by saying the appropriate word when you hold up the card.

The Story of Jonah

One day God saw Jonah walking along the road and said to him, “Go to Nineveh, the great city, and speak out against it; I am aware of how bad its people are.” **UH-OH.** Jonah didn’t want to go to Nineveh, so he disobeyed God, went the opposite direction, and got on a boat sailing for Spain. **UH-OH.** God sent a mighty storm that tossed the ship around and everyone was frightened. **UH-OH.** Jonah had fallen asleep and the captain of the ship found him... **UH-OH...** and told him to pray to his God to save them. The sailors discovered that Jonah was to blame for the storm because he tried to run away from God. **UH-OH.** The sailors told him that was a bad thing to do. Jonah told them to throw him overboard... **UH-OH...** and they did. **UH-OH.** But God had mercy on Jonah... **YEAH!**... and sent a huge fish (like a whale) to swallow Jonah. **UH-OH.**

Jonah lived in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights. **UH-OH.** Jonah prayed to God while he was in the belly of the fish. **YEAH!** God made the fish spit Jonah up onto dry land. **YEAH!** Once again God spoke to Jonah saying, “Go to Nineveh, that great city and tell the people the message I have given you.” **UH-OH.** This time Jonah obeyed God’s word. **YEAH!** He told the people of Nineveh that God would destroy their city if they did not obey. **UH-OH.** They did

GAME

When I was in trouble, LORD, I prayed to you, and you listened to me.
(Jonah 2:2, CEV)

Check Your Facts

- Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria.
- Jonah was a contemporary of the prophets Amos and Hosea.

obey God and stopped their wicked ways. **YEAH!** God taught Jonah a lesson about obeying God and loving his enemies. **YEAH!**

"The Story of Jonah" is from *7 Ways of Teaching the Bible to Children* by Barbara Bruce. © 1996 Abingdon Press.

ACTIVITY OPTIONS

(45–50 minutes)

Choose from the suggested activities as your time and the children's interest allow.

For All Ages

What's in a Whale's Belly?

This is a guessing game, similar to 20 questions. Each child takes a turn thinking of something they might find in the belly of a big fish. The rest of the groups asks questions (which can be answered with "yes" or "no") to help them guess what's in the fish's belly.

For All Ages

Jonah and the Big Fish

Have the children form a large circle. Choose one child to be the big fish and one child to be Jonah. Give each child a noisemaker. Blindfold Jonah.

Jonah will be searching for the fish. The fish can "swim" back and forth inside the circle. When Jonah shakes the rattle, the fish must shake its rattle in return. Jonah will follow the noise to find the big fish. After finding the fish, Jonah becomes the fish for the next round, and someone else becomes Jonah. The children in the circle will serve as spotters, making sure the blindfolded child stays inside. They may not talk.

For All Ages

Scale of a Whale

Prepare

Make a masking tape outline of a whale on the floor. (Think big! Sperm whales can be 65 feet long.)

One by one, ask the children to lie down in the belly of the whale.

Note

Resources and websites are constantly changing. Check www.powerxpress.com for updates that may help you in planning.

Talk Tips

What was Jonah doing in the fish's belly?

Supplies

2 rattles, each making a different sound
blindfold

Supplies

masking tape

Talk Tip

Was it better to be alone or with friends in the whale? Why?

How do you think Jonah felt inside the fish?

Was anyone with Jonah?

Ask the first child, "How does it feel to be in the fish's belly?"

Continue asking each child how they feel as they lie down.

Count how many people are inside the whale.

Supplies

small smooth stones
(2 per child)
black acrylic paint
(or another color that
will contrast with the
stones)
brushes

Talk Tips

It's fun to see what
casting lots means.
However, we don't
rely on something like
this for information.
Jonah learned who he
could rely on. Who
was that? We can rely
on God too.

GAME

Supplies

2 whale floats
two identical small
stuffed dolls
masking tape

Talk Tip

The fish had an
important part in
today's story. God sent
the fish to save Jonah
from drowning. Can you
think of a time when
God took care of you?

For All Ages Casting Lots

Give each child two stones. Have them paint one side black. (The unpainted side will be considered white.)

While the paint is drying, share this information in your own words:

When the storm was at its worst and it looked as though the ship was doomed, the sailors cast lots to determine who was responsible. Casting lots is frequently mentioned in the Bible. Generally, stones were painted black on one side and white on the other. They were tossed on a table or the ground. If the stones landed with two whites up, the answer was "yes"; two blacks was "no"; and one black and one white was "wait."

When the paint is dry, let the children play with the stones. They will ask a question that has a "yes" or "no" answer and then cast their lots to see what answer the lots give.

For Younger Children Swallow Jonah!

Note: Whale floats are available from the pool supply section of discount stores.

This game is a variation of Bean Bag Toss. Set the floats on the floor. Put a masking tape line on the floor about three feet from the floats.

Divide the children into two teams.

Each child will have an opportunity to toss the doll (Jonah) into the whale. After each round, move the floats farther away from the tape. Ask the children to count the total number of times their team helps the fish swallow Jonah.

For Younger Children

Go Fish!

Prepare

Make four photocopies of page 48 on cardstock. (This will make one set of cards. Two to five children can play with each set. Make as many sets as you will need.) Cut the cards apart.

This game is a variation of the popular children's card game, "Go Fish." Before playing, show the cards to the children and go over the names. Use the cards to tell the Jonah story.

Rules for playing:

Two to five children can play. Each player gets six cards (five cards if there are more than three players). The remaining cards are stacked, face down in the middle.

The object of the game is to make "books" (four matching cards). The player to the dealer's left starts. A turn consists of asking another player for a specific card. The player who asks must already hold at least one of the requested cards. (For example, the worm card) The player who was asked must give all his or her worm cards to the player who asked. That player then gets another turn and may again ask any player for any card already held by the asker.

If the person asked does not have any of the named cards he or she says 'Go fish!' The asker must then draw the top card of the undealt stack. If the drawn card is the one asked for, the asker shows it and gets another turn. If the drawn card is not the one asked for, the asker keeps it, and the turn now passes to the player on the left.

As soon as a player collects a book of four cards it must be shown and discarded face down. The game continues until either someone has no cards left in their hand or the stock runs out. The winner is the player who has the most books. The winner then tells the Jonah story, using the cards. Play several rounds.

Option: The children may color their cards with colored pencils.

Resources

page 48

Supplies

cardstock

Optional:

colored pencils

Check Your Facts

The Book of Jonah is different from other prophetic books because it is the story about an episode in Jonah's life rather than collections of sermons and prophecies.

Supplies

page 48
cardstock

Resources

Bible

Supplies

clear ½ gallon plastic bottles, clean and with lids
water
green and blue food coloring
vegetable oil
measuring cup
template material
scissors
permanent markers
small sea shells
glue
duct tape
shells

GAME

Talk Tips

How do you think Jonah felt when he was thrown into the water? Have you ever been in a situation where you felt like that?

What did God do to help Jonah?

What has God done to help you?

For Younger Children

Old Whale

Prepare

Make four photocopies of page 48 on cardstock. Cut the cards apart. Remove three of the whale cards.

This game is a variation of the card game "Old Maid." It can be played by two or more players.

The dealer deals all the cards to the players (Some may have one more card than others.) The players all look at their cards and discard any pairs they have.

Give these instructions:

The dealer begins. At your turn, you must offer your cards spread face down to the player to your left. That player selects a card from your hand without seeing it, and adds it to his or her hand. If it makes a pair, the player discards the pair. The player who just took a card then offers his or her hand to the next player on the left, and so on.

If you get rid of all your cards you are safe. The turn passes to the next player and you take no further part. Eventually all the cards will have been discarded except the whale, and the holder of the whale loses. This person uses the cards to tell the story of Jonah. Play as many rounds as the children wish.

For Older Children

Storm at Sea

Note: Template material is available at craft or fabric stores.

Read Jonah 1:1-14, or tell the story in your own words.

Give each child a bottle with these instructions:

1. Fill the bottle about ¾ full of water.
2. Add ¼ cup of vegetable oil and a few drops of either blue or green food coloring.
3. Cut fish figures and a Jonah figure from the template material. These figures need to be small enough to go through the neck of the bottle.
4. Put the figures into the bottle. Add shells.
5. Put some glue inside the bottle cover. Screw it on. Seal it with tape.

Let the children have fun rolling and shaking their bottles, making it look like a raging sea with Jonah swimming.

For Older Children

Draw That Jonah!

Prepare

Cut a piece of cardstock into 12 equal pieces. Write one of these words or phrases on each card: whale, Jonah, captain, sailors, boat, king, Ninevites, Ninevite animals, worm, plant, dice, storm.

You may need more sets of cards, depending on the size of your class.

This game is a variation of Pictionary[®].

With the Children

Divide the children into two groups. (If you have a large class, create sets of two groups and give cards to each group.) Place the cards face down between the two groups.

Team One will select a player to be the illustrator. This person will draw a card, study the card for a short time, and set it face down. The illustrator will then begin to draw the word which was drawn. (Begin timing with the stopwatch.) Letters may not be used. Other members of team one will try to guess what is being drawn. When they guess correctly, note the elapsed time on the stopwatch. This number is their score. (Put a limit of two minutes on each drawing.) Alternate between the teams. When all the cards are gone, the team with the lowest score wins. Ask the winning team to tell the Jonah story with the drawings.

CLOSING (5 minutes)

Prepare

Make photocopies of page 48, and cut them apart. You will need a copy for each child.

Let the children form a circle and sit down. Distribute the sets of cards.

Tell the story of Jonah in your own words. Ask the children to lay the appropriate card in front of them as you tell the story.

Ask: Which part of the story is your favorite? Why?

Send the cards home with the children, with instructions to use the cards to tell the story to someone else today.

Supplies

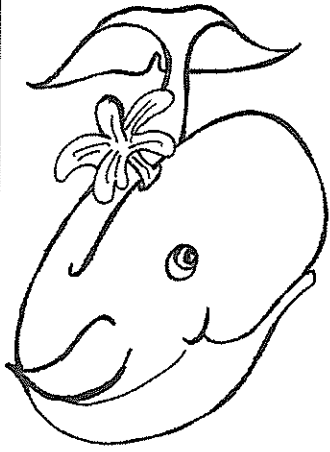
cardstock
stopwatch
paper
pencil

Resources

page 48

Supplies

cardstock
stopwatch
paper
pencil



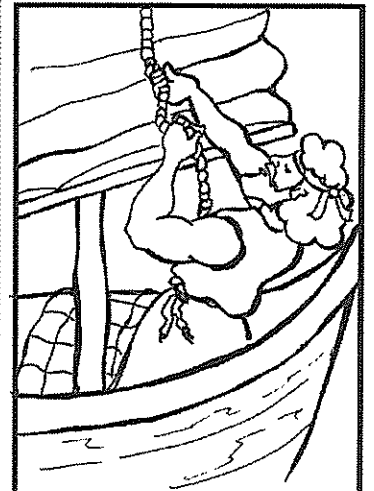
WHALE



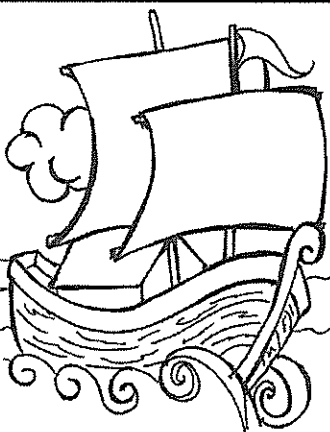
JONAH



CAPTAIN



SAILOR



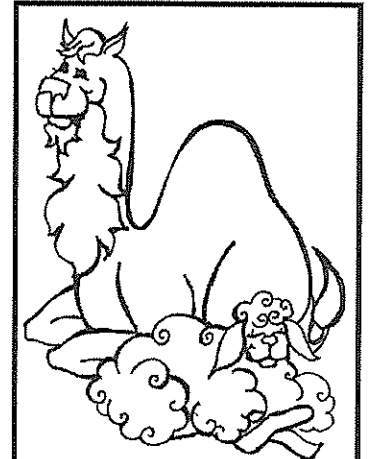
BOAT



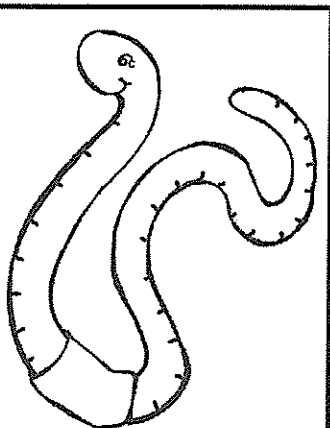
KING



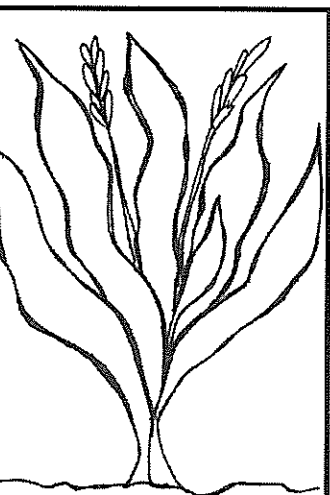
NINEVITES



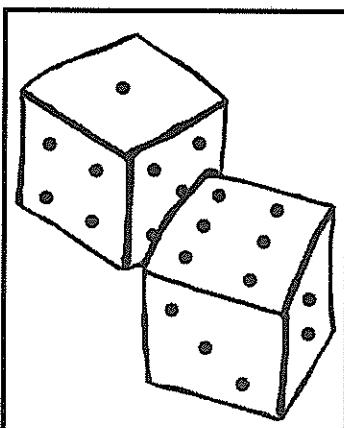
**NINEVITE
ANIMALS**



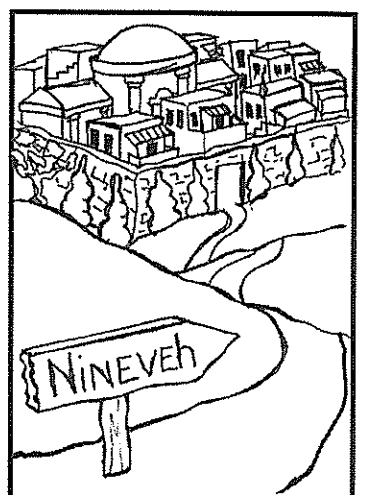
WORM



PLANT



DICE



NINEVEH