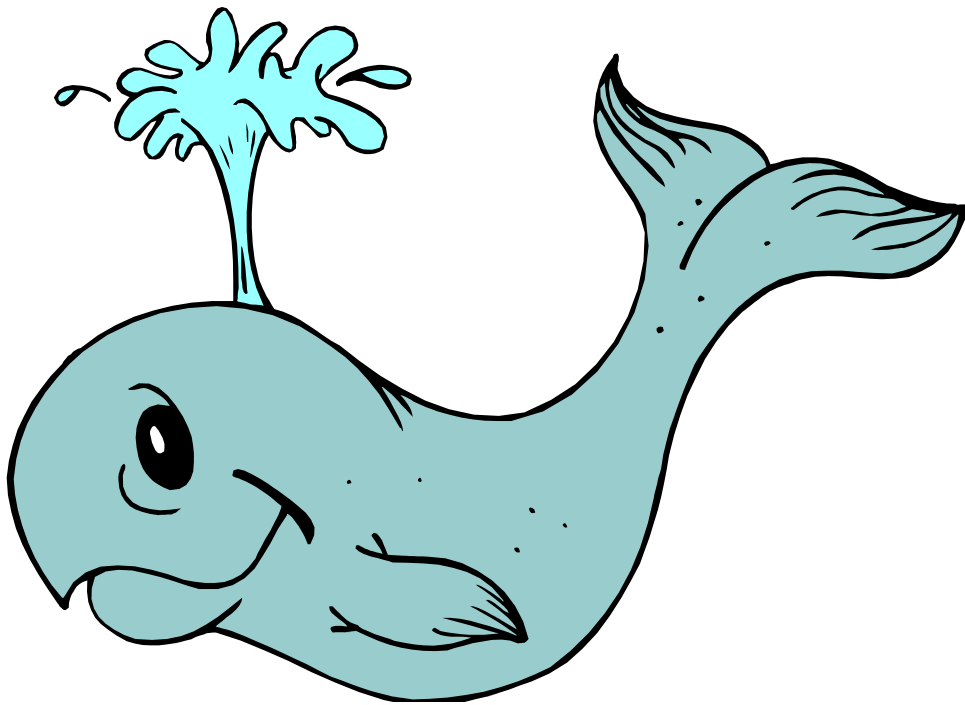


Jonah



The Book of Jonah

- 1) Where is the book of Jonah?
- 2) Running away
- 3) Swallowed by a big fish!
- 4) Forgiveness
- 5) God loves everyone and so must we

1. Where is the book of Jonah?

Make the Connection

Ask the children to tell you what they know about a man called Jonah. Write a list on a flip chart or whiteboard. Ask them where they would find the story of Jonah. Hopefully they will all know the story and be able to tell you plenty of things about him and that his story is in the Bible BUT where in the Bible?



Activity

Have a collection of a variety of Bibles from very simple picture Bibles to an adult Bible. Ask the children if they think that they will be able to find the story in these Bibles. Choose children to come out to the front, one for each Bible of an appropriate age. Then explain that the rest of the children are going to sing while they find the story in the Bible. When the other children have finished singing find out if they have found Jonah in the Bible.

Where is the Book of Jonah?

Using the Bibles show everybody where the book of Jonah is. In your chat while you are doing this make sure you include these key points....

- The Book of Jonah is in the Old Testament quite close to the end.
- It was probably written by Jonah himself and
- it was written about 760 BC.

Why have we looked for the book of Jonah?

Explain to the children that over the next few days/weeks you are going to be reading the story of Jonah to them and that together you are going to learn about and from the adventures of Jonah.

Pause for thought

Reflect on the list created by the children earlier. Use it to form a picture in their minds of the man Jonah and his story.

Prayer

Start by thanking God for Jonah and his book in the Bible. Thank God that even though this story happened many years ago we can still learn from it today. Ask God to open hearts and minds as you go on an adventure with Jonah.

2. Running Away

Make the Connection

Ask the children if they have ever been asked to do something that they thought was unfair/impossible and they really didn't want to do it.

Discussion.

What did they do? Did they try and do the task or did they 'run away' from the task?

God asked Jonah to do something for Him and Jonah decided that he really didn't want to do it and so he tried to run away.



Story

Read Jonah 1v1 -15 from one of the Bibles that you used the previous day. It is important that you stop at the point where Jonah is thrown over board.

Pause for thought

Reflect on Jonah - his feelings and decisions. It is impossible to run away from God. He is with us always and has plans for us. God's plans are always the best even though we don't always see it. God loves, cares and watches out for us all where ever we are.

Prayer

Give thanks to God in Prayer that he never leaves us

3. Swallowed by a big fish

Make the Connection

Ask the children if they have ever been swallowed by a fish! Why not? What do they think it would be like to be swallowed by a fish! What would it be like in the stomach of a fish? If possible have a collection of pictures of whales and other big fish.

Story

Continue telling the story of Jonah Chapter 1 v17 - 3v3.

Pause for thought

Have a message in a bottle from Jonah! It may begin something like this -

Dear Friends,

I have been sat in the stomach of this big fish for 2 days and 2 nights. I wonder how long it will be before I get out; perhaps I will have to stay here forever. I am in great danger and about to die.

There is seaweed everywhere around me, I have cried to the Lord my God for help and I know he can hear me.....

You can have fun using your imagination and finish the letter or ask the children to create an ending.



Prayer

Where ever we are God can hear us! Help us always to be quick to obey God's word.

(4) Forgiveness

Make the Connection

What is forgiveness?

What does it mean to forgive and be forgiven?

Saying sorry - ask the children to remember situations when they have had to say sorry. What did it feel like? Was it easy? Is it easy to forgive someone? How does it feel to be forgiven?

Story

There is great forgiveness in the next part of Jonah's story. Read Chapter 3 v 3 - v 10.

Pause for thought

A simple thought that is amazing. If we say sorry and show that we mean it God will forgive all the badness in our lives. This doesn't mean we can keep on being bad and saying sorry. God asks us to do our best to be good all the time but we all make mistakes and God forgives us.

Prayer

Have a short time of silent confession or perhaps use a prayer of confession from the Church Service book. (But remember only a member of the Clergy can pronounce the absolution).

(5) God Loves Everyone

Make the Connection

Discuss with the children what it means to love someone (but not being 'in love'). How do we show someone we love them. Who do we love? Why do we love them? Do we love everyone we know? Why?

Think of all the people we don't know, e.g. those we pass in the supermarket etc. Do we love them? Why not? But they have families and friends who love them. Try and build a picture of all the millions of people in the world. Amazing fact - God loves them all!



Story

The last chapter of Jonah is too complicated to read to the children but you can explain this and then explain that the message is that God loves everyone and he loves us all equally and looks after us all.

Pause for thought

Imagine God loving everyone. Create a picture of many people and God watching over them all.

Prayer

Thank God, for loving us all individually and having so much love that he loves everybody in the world equally.