

Jonah: The reluctant servant

(Jonah means 'dove')

Theme: Serve God – even if it seems wrong.

Opening Prayer: *Dear God, May love help us to serve one another. Amen.*
(taken from Galatians 5 v 13)

Games:

Escape! Similar to 'Sticky Glue', everyone holds on to the volunteer chaser's arms or fingers and can only run away when they hear the 'buzzword'. The chaser calls the names of people in the group and can call 'Jonah' at any time. The first person to be tagged becomes the new chaser.

Cat and Mouse: Blindfold the volunteer 'cat' and stand them between two chairs, about three metres apart. The other players are the 'mice' and they have to creep between the chairs without the cat hearing them or catching them. Make the first person to successfully creep past be the new cat.

Memory verse: *"I worship the Lord, the God of heaven...."* Jonah 1 v 9.

Make two or three different colour copies of the verse from resources. Tell the children the pieces of the verse have hidden themselves as far away from God as Jonah did. Find them and put them together again.

Introduction: Play **Instant Art Pictionary**. Give each team a sheet of A4 and pens. With a leader holding the clue words, one person at a time comes up to collect the next clue word; each subsequent person gives the answer to the last clue before collecting the next one. Ask teams to guess today's story by drawing all the pictures on one side of the paper to create a big picture clue. Give the clues in this order so you don't give away the answer too quickly: *worm – wind – sun – vine – storm – ship – large fish – drowning man*.

Story: Jonah Chapters 1-4 (including the plant and the worm). The story is full of opportunities for dramatic fun. Choose children to play all the parts of the story while you read it. Or you can use the version in the resources which can be read correctly the first time and then read again with the incorrect words in place. Get the group into teams and give points to the team with the first hand up and the missing word identified.

Application: When we are told to do something by a teacher or a parent, do we always want to do it? Does it depend on whether **we think** it's a good idea? Sometimes, when we are told to do things, we should just trust the person telling us – and do it! Jonah didn't agree with God's decision to give his enemies a chance. Because he didn't trust God's decision to be right, he couldn't serve him in the way he should. We need to trust in God's decisions so we can serve him well.

Prayer: Just as Jonah took God's message to the people of Ninevah; think about one person you could talk to about Kingsquad. Ask God to help you find the right time to talk to that person.

Resources: Funsheet, memory verse resource, story.

Song: 'Whoopah Wahey' – Doug Horley, 'Whoopah Wahey' CD

The Story of Jonah's Disobedience

Week 9

Read the story once with the correct words in place, then read it again, substituting the words in brackets. Ask the children to put their hands up every time they can identify a wrongly placed word.

One day, God (*the cod*) spoke to Jonah. "Go to the great city (*dung heap*) of Nineveh and warn them they are doing wrong (*ding-dong*). I see the bad things they do (*toffees they eat*).

But Jonah was scared (*brave*) and ran away in the opposite direction. He got on a ship (*plane*) that was sailing to Spain (*flying to Disneyland*). Soon the Lord sent a great storm (*humungous whale*) and all the sailors were feeling rather sick and scared! (*hairly and hungry!*) They started throwing cargo (*sweets*) overboard to make the ship lighter (*heavier*).

Then the captain (*fish*) found Jonah asleep (*being sick*). "Get up and pray (*play*) to your God", he said. "Maybe he can save us (*shave us*)."
Jonah told the crew it was his fault that God had sent a storm (*holiday*). He told them he was running away from God (*school*).

The wind and the waves (*peanuts*) were becoming much stronger (*harder*). Jonah told the men to throw him overboard (*a party*). "That will calm the storm", he said.

So the sailors (*monkeys*) picked Jonah up and with a great big swing (*many sad goodbyes*) they threw him into the stormy sea.

God sent a big fish (*bird*) to swallow Jonah. He was inside the dark, smelly, stinking fish for three days and nights! (*the rest of his life!*)

Jonah prayed to God (*cod*), "Lord, you threw me into the sea where I went down into the deep, (*to the beach*) tangled by the seaweed, but you saved me! I'm sorry, Lord, I will praise you and thank you!" (*buy you gifts*)

After that, the fish spat Jonah out on to dry land (*a soft bed*) and God told Jonah again to go to the people of Nineveh (*Nirvana*) and tell them to stop doing bad things. Otherwise the city would be destroyed (*repainted*) in 40 days!

The people of Nineveh believed in God. They were sorry (*boring*) and stopped doing bad things, so God changed his mind (*clothes*). He did not punish them or destroy the city (*feed them beetroot*).