

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



I CALLED TO THE LORD

Jonah 1 Jonah flees from the Lord

Despite all God had provided for Jonah, Jonah refused to follow God's will for his life and ran away. But God's love for Jonah was greater and he moved to bring Jonah back. We have to learn to listen even when it's hard to obey. God gives us strength to do what he's asked of us.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

→ A ketchup sachet (make sure that it barely floats)

→ A one-litre bottle

→ Water

→ Some quiet music – see Pray It section

Start It

Play a game of 'Simon says'. Why not try a few of these variations to the game.

→ Simon says 'animal', eg wave your arm like a trunk

→ Simon says 'go on an adventure', eg swing through branches

→ Simon says 'not what he does', eg Simon says 'put your hands on your knees' – leader puts hands on shoulders but children must still put hands on knees.

🗨 **Say:** Today we will be looking at someone called Jonah. We will discover together how Jonah refused to follow God's will for his life which made him run away. The important thing is that God's love for Jonah was greater.

Sing It

This great song is all about the love of God. It reminds us that God has a place in his heart for us, and because of that love we can jump and shout because God loves us.

'God's love is big' by Simon Parry and AllstarsGO (3 mins 56 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ss-qCvdMAMc>

Tell It

Say: Our Bible story today comes from the book of Jonah which we can find in the Old Testament of the Bible. We can find our story in chapter one.

Video

Lego: Jonah flees from the Lord (2 mins 21 secs)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tTkq6vWxMng>

Discuss

- Why do you think Jonah tried to run away from God?
- I wonder, how do you think God felt when Jonah ran away from him?
- Why do you think the Lord kept Jonah in the belly of a fish for three days and three nights?

- 🗨️ **Say:** Throwing Jonah overboard was God's rescue plan for those people who were on the boat, but God also had a rescue plan for Jonah because he loved him so much. We heard how the Lord sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah and how he was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.
- 🗨️ **Say:** As Jonah sank deep into the sea, he thought he would die. He believed he had finally outrun God. The thing is, there was no depth that Jonah could sink to that was out of God's reach. We all want to know more about the fish, but the Bible doesn't say much about it. That's because the fish is not the main part of the story – Jonah and his relationship with God is.
- 🗨️ **Say:** Here's what we do know: the fish swallowed Jonah whole.
- 🗨️ **Say:** Even though the belly of a fish must have been a really stinky place to be, God protected Jonah there. God allowed enough air for Jonah to breathe for three days.

Action It

- 🗨️ **Say:** You know, when Jonah ran away from God, God could have let him go. But God went after Jonah. Do you remember the game we played at the start of our session? We had to listen to the instructions that were given. Sometimes it's hard to obey but God gives us the strength to do what he has asked of us.

Experiment

Hold up the ketchup sachet. When you squeeze the bottle the ketchup sachet should sink.

- 🗨️ **Say:** How many of you think I can get this ketchup sachet to listen to me, make it obey me, have it do what I want it to do? Well let's see.

Put the ketchup sachet inside the bottle and then add the water. Screw on the cap.

- 🗨️ **Say:** Mr Ketchup, I want you to go down to the bottom. (Squeeze the bottle)

- 🗨️ **Say:** Did you see that? (The packet should sink.)

- 🗨️ **Say:** Now Mr Ketchup, I want you to go up. (Un-squeeze the bottle)

- 🗨️ **Say:** Even this ketchup packet will listen – isn't that amazing.

You may wish to ask a child to give the instruction, but this time the ketchup does not move.

- 🗨️ **Say:** He's not listening. What happens a lot of times is that as followers of Christ, instead of listening to God, we listen to everyone else. Unlike Jonah who didn't listen and ran away, this ketchup sachet knows who to listen to.

Encourage the children to listen to God throughout the week.

Ask: Can you think of some things that people have been called by God to do?

Prompt discussion with the children about the different things God calls us to do, and how sometimes people feel scared, unskilled, or not good enough. But through all that, God uses us to do amazing things because he promises to be with us.

- 🗨️ **Say:** You may feel that God is calling you to do some amazing things for him.

Encourage the children to talk to someone they trust about this.

- 🗨️ **Say:** Remember, even when you may feel scared or not good enough, that God promises to be always with you.

Pray It

Play some quiet music and encourage the children to listen to God.

● **Say:** Have you ever felt God say something to you? If so, you may want to write it or draw a cartoon to show what happened.

Spend some time letting the children do this.

● **Say:** God speaks to us in lots of different ways: through his words written down in the Bible, through something a friend or someone at church says. Or maybe a thought will quietly pop into your head while you're praying or praising him.

Close with a spoken prayer encouraging children to listen to God even when it is hard to obey and thanking God that he gives us the strength to do what he has asked of us.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It (For Me) and Explore It (Together) ideas for children and families.