

Explore It

FOR LEADERS



DO I HAVE TO? JONAH COMPLAINS

📖 Jonah 1:1-3, 15-17; 2:7-9; 3:4-5,10; 4:1-11 God calls and Jonah runs

Jonah was a prophet whose main job was to share with the people important messages from God. When God asked Jonah to take his message to Nineveh – an enemy city – he did everything he could to avoid doing it. He complained to God saying, 'Do I have to?' and God said 'Yes!' Today's session follows Jonah's story as he struggled to do what God asked him to do.

Each child will need:

→ Pens/pencils and paper

You will need:

→ Bible extract sheet

Start It

Play a game of opposites: the children are to do the opposite of what you ask them to. Choose from the list below and shout out an instruction. Depending how competitive you would like it to be, then you could ask children who do not do the opposite to sit out until you have a winner or be judges with you as the game continues.

- | | |
|---|----------------------------|
| 1. Touch your elbows together | 6. Clap quickly |
| 2. Keep your mouth closed | 7. Pat your right shoulder |
| 3. Sing 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star' backwards | 8. Stand up |
| 4. Touch your right ear | 9. Kneel on your left knee |
| 5. Count down from ten to one | 10. Hop on your left leg |

🗨️ **Say:** In our story today, our Bible character decides that he is going to do the opposite of what God asked him to do.

Sing It

🗨️ **Say:** Our song for today takes us deep into the ocean ready for today's Bible story.

'Deep, deep, deep' by Tiny Trees Tunes (2 mins 7 secs)

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZhwagxWzOc

Tell It

🗨️ **Say:** Last session we met Naaman who went to the prophet Elisha to be healed. Naaman arrived with his grand carriages and entourage, but Elisha did not even come to the front door. We imagined Naaman asking, 'Do you know who I am?' He complained because God didn't answer his prayer in the way he expected.

🗨️ **Say:** This week we are meeting Jonah, who complained for a different reason. When God asked him to obey, Jonah said, 'Do I have to?'

Ask:

- What are the kinds of tasks that, when you are asked to do them, make you say, 'Do I have to?'
- How does it make you feel when you are asked to do something you really do not want to do?
- How do you normally react?

Video

🗨 **Say:** Our story today is found in the Old Testament of the Bible. Let's watch the clip to find out what happened.

Jonah and the fish by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 58 secs)

<https://youtu.be/WOSadLyqshg>

🗨 **Say:** Jonah was a prophet, which meant that it was his job to tell people what God wanted him to say. God asked him to go to the city of Nineveh to talk to the people who lived there and tell them what they were doing wrong.

Ask: Why do you think Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh?

🗨 **Say:** Nineveh was the capital of the Assyrian Kingdom and Jonah did not like the people who lived there because they were enemies. He thought they behaved so badly that they did not deserve God's forgiveness.

Ask:

- Do you think that was a good enough reason for Jonah to say no to God?
- If so, why?

🗨 **Say:** While Jonah was on the boat, the storm grew and the sailors woke him and asked him to pray to God to calm the waters. God gave Jonah the chance to do the right thing. Jonah could have asked the boat to turn back and go to Nineveh.

Ask: What did Jonah do instead?

🗨 **Say:** Jonah preferred to be thrown into the sea rather than do what God had asked him to do. While he was in the belly of the fish, Jonah said a special prayer that we will look at in our prayer time later. After he prayed, Jonah eventually agreed to do what God asked him to do. He went to Nineveh and talked to the people.

Ask: What happened next?

🗨 **Say:** The people of Nineveh turned away from their bad behaviour, God forgave them all and they all lived happily ever after, including Jonah. Oh, wait, is that really what happened?

Read Jonah 4:1-11 (ICB) using the Bible extract sheet. The words of God and Jonah are shown in different colours so that you can ask for volunteers to play the two parts.

Ask: Why do you think Jonah was so angry?

🗨 **Say:** Jonah struggled to understand that God loves everyone. He even loves the people that we don't like very much and those we think don't deserve God's love. Everyone deserves God's love and there is no one you have ever met that is not loved deeply by God.

Action It

🗨 **Say:** Today you are going to get the chance to create your own Jonah song. To give you some ideas, watch the clip below and see how the story is told through song.

Video

'Jonah's song' by Saddleback Kids (2 mins 21 secs)

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

The children can choose any part of the story to focus on, but the aim of the activity is to share the main lessons we can learn from Jonah's experience. The lyrics could focus on forgiving others, or that God loves us even when we don't do what he's asked us to do, or could focus on how important it is to follow God's instructions.

Just as William Booth might have done, the children can choose a well-known tune and create new words to it. You will know the songs that are familiar to your children, but to keep it simple you could use the tune of a song you use regularly at church or something like 'Twinkle, twinkle, little star'.

The children could create their own song in smaller groups or you could create one as a large group. Once the children have completed their songs, they can perform them for each other.

Ask: What one thing have you learned from Jonah's story?

Pray It

● **Say:** Deep in the belly of the fish Jonah cried out to God.

**'When my life had almost gone,
I remembered the Lord.
Lord, I prayed to you.
And you heard my prayers in your Holy Temple.
People who worship useless idols
give up their loyalty to you.
Lord, I will praise and thank you
while I give sacrifices to you.
I will make promises to you.
And I will do what I promise.
Salvation comes from the Lord!'**

— (Jonah 2:7-9 ICB)

● **Say:** Even when Jonah was at his lowest point, God was with him, loving him and wanting the best for him.

● **Say:** God wants us to do what he asks us to do. He loves us even when we act like Jonah and ignore his requests, but he also wants us to think differently and follow him.

Ask: Can I have a volunteer to share our memory verse?

See how many of the children can remember the memory verse and then share the prayer together.

**'Don't live the way this world lives. Let your way of thinking be completely changed.
Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.'**

— (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

● **Say:**

Dear God,

Help us to do what you have asked us to do. Help us to look at the way you forgive, and forgive others. We want our way of thinking to change, Lord, so that we can live our lives for you and help those around us discover more about you. Thank you that you love us so much, even when we have a Jonah moment!

Be with us this week as we live our lives for you.

Amen.

Explore It

Remember to send home the Explore It Ideas for children and families.

Explore It

IDEAS

Here are some ideas for you to explore at home.

OCTOBER
SESSION 02

DO I HAVE TO? JONAH COMPLAINS

📖 Jonah 1:1-3, 15-17; 2:7-9; 3:4-5,10; 4:1-11 God calls and Jonah runs

FOR ME

TOGETHER



Forgive

This clip is all about two brothers who learn how to forgive.

What does this clip teach you about the importance of forgiveness?

Is there anyone that you need to forgive? Why don't you give it a try?

Brothers learn forgiveness with Legos by Lifetree Kids

www.youtube.com/watch?v=q-Y_Vk2u0Zw



Create

Watch the Bible Minecraft version of the story of Jonah and the fish. Team up with one of your Minecraft friends or family to create a world for a Bible story of your choice.

Jonah and the fish by Bible Minecraft

www.youtube.com/watch?v=c0k7YXfJNV4



Song for the week

'Deep, deep, deep' by Tiny Trees Tunes

www.youtube.com/watch?v=oZhwagxWzOc



Memory verse

'Don't live the way this world lives.

Let your way of thinking be completely changed. Then you will be able to test what God wants for you. And you will agree that what he wants is right. His plan is good and pleasing and perfect.'

— (Romans 12:2 NIRV)

KIDS ALIVE! ONLINE

<https://www.salvationarmy.org.uk/kidsalive>

Kids Alive! The UK's only weekly Christian comic – is filled with jokes, competitions, Bible-based cartoons and much more... and is now available to read online!

