



OVERVIEW

Pre-Primary	Dock 1	Dock 2	Dock 3	Dock 4	Dock 5
Title	Overboard: Jonah Runs from God	In the Sea: Jonah Thanks God	On the Lifeboat: Nineveh Receives God's Mercy	Against the Wind: Jonah Is Angry at God	From the Lighthouse: Jesus Shows God's Mercy
References	Jonah 1:1–16	Jonah 1:17—2:10	Jonah 3:1–10	Jonah 4:1–11	Luke 23:33–46; 24:1–12
Focus	God's leading is always best for us.	God's rescuing work is the answer to our greatest needs.	God's compassion and mercy are worth sharing.	God's desires should be our desires.	God offers us His mercy through Jesus' death and resurrection.
Bible Verse	"Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).	"The LORD is good to all, and His tender mercies are over all His works" (Ps. 145:9).	"You, Lord, are good, and ready to forgive, and abundant in mercy" (Ps. 86:5).	"Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).	"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us" (Titus 3:5).
Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sailboat Race Where's Jonah? Splash! 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gulp! Upside Down Thankfulness Pour-n-Pass 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seashell Toss Life Preserver Ring Toss 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crab Walk Relay Fish out of Water Flying Fish 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighthouse Relay Swiftest Sailors
Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple-n-Cheese Boats "O" Is for Obedience Jonah Overboard! Stormy Waves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big Fish Banana God's Love and Mercy Cookies In the Sea Cups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonah on the Beach Hit the Trail, Jonah! Fruit Folks Pretzel Fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crab Croissants Cookie Clams and Pearls Jonah's Shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graham Cracker Good News Celery Boats Mercy for You and Me Cookies Mercy Meltaways
Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail Your Own Ship Nautical Anchor Whale Stick Puppet Floating Sea Turtle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonah and the Big Fish Wyatt the Whale Otter in a Bag Friend Colorful Sea Turtle 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Happy Crabbie Headband Blue Water Hat Hermit Crab Wally the Walrus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ship Ahoy Spyglass Ceramic Shark Bank Mae the Walrus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day in the Bay Photo Frame Sailing on a Stick Lighthouse on a Beach

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PRE-PRIMARY TEACHER BOOK



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OVERBOARD JONAH RUNS FROM GOD

Jonah 1:1-16

DOCK

1

TOPIC

Following God's direction

THEME

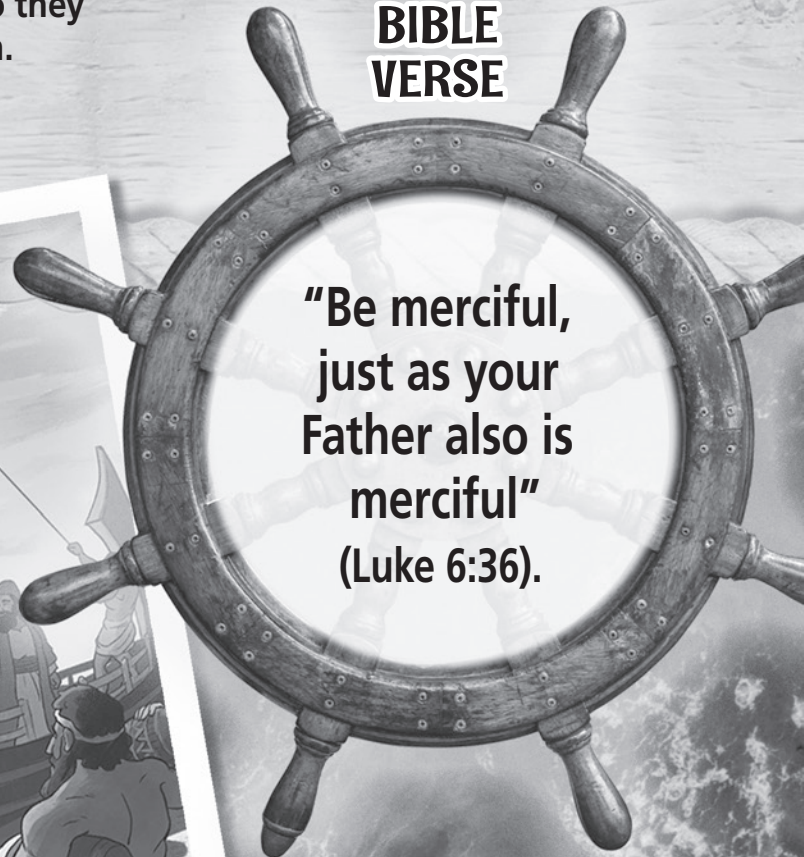
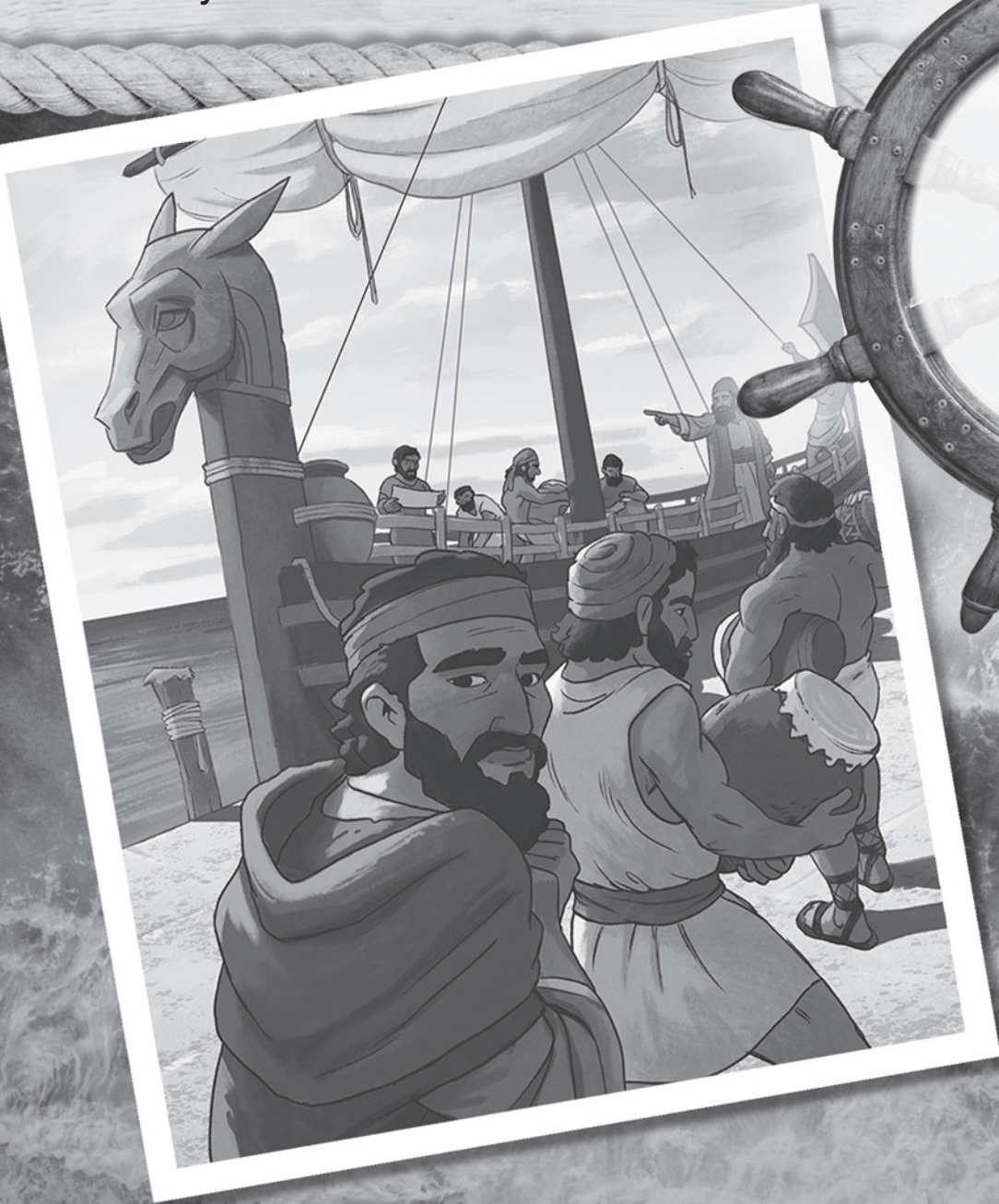
God's leading is always best for us.

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

Students will realize that God's direction is best, so they need to follow Him.

BIBLE VERSE

"Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful"
(Luke 6:36).



- Smile, greet, and get to know each student. Kneel and make eye contact when speaking with a student.
- Make sure you have a completed registration card (30208) for each student.
- Distribute nametags (32433) and Big Fish Bay passes (32434).
- Help each child record attendance on the attendance chart (32432).



Option 1: Science Station—Sink or Float

Materials

- Large, clear, deep plastic storage container; water; variety of objects for testing whether they will sink or float; orange; roll of paper towels.

Before class: Fill the container $\frac{3}{4}$ full of water. Set on a low table. Have paper towels handy to wipe off objects and catch drips. Gather the items you plan to test and lay everything out on the table.

Did you ever wonder why some things sink in water and why some things float? Let's explore with some of these items on the table.

ACTIVITY: Let students choose one object at a time to test in the container of water. Instruct the student to hold the object just above the water's surface and make a prediction: Will it sink, or will it float? Encourage all the students to voice their predictions. Then gently release the object. Observe whether it sinks or floats.

ACTIVITY: Show an orange. Let students make predictions. Release it. It should float. Then peel the orange. Make predictions. Release it. It should sink. **SAY:** When I peeled the orange, I released the trapped air. The orange is too juicy and too heavy for the water to hold it up.

Today we will find out about some men on a boat in a storm. They did everything they could to keep their boat floating, but still their ship was about to sink.

Option 2: What's in the Lighthouse?

Materials

- Children's picture books about ships and boats; toy boats of various kinds.

Before class: Before VBS week, create a lighthouse using a tall appliance box or cardboard construction for one corner of your classroom. Paint the lighthouse in red and white horizontal stripes and cut a door in one side. If desired, hot-glue a battery operated lantern on top of the lighthouse. Create a "bay" beside your lighthouse by adding a child's pool. Each day, place something new in the lighthouse for students to bring out and explore. For this lesson, place children's books about ships and boats inside the lighthouse. Add toy boats to the bay.

ACTIVITY: As students arrive, invite two or three at a time to explore inside the lighthouse and the bay. Let the students touch and handle the items. Talk with the students about sailing and about the importance of a bay. Let the students carefully sail their ships in and out of the child's pool bay.

Option 3: Let's Sail! Dramatic Play

Materials

- Large, sturdy laundry baskets; yardsticks; colorful poster or foam-core board; duct tape; blue plastic table covers; *optional*: maps.

Before class: Create “sailboats” that are just the right size for one or two of your little sailors to enjoy. Using sturdy laundry baskets, duct tape a yardstick to the inside of one end of the basket. Create a “sail” out of poster board or foam-core board and duct tape it to the yardstick. Place the baskets on top of blue table covers on your classroom floor.

SAY: Let's go sailing! The Bible tells about a man who went sailing but who was supposed go somewhere else.

As students arrive, encourage them to select a sailboat and go on an adventure. If desired, provide maps. Ask students where they are sailing to. Pretend along with your students. When it is time to put away the activity, instruct the students to “row your boats back to the dock in the bay.” Dock your sailboats and head to Bible time.



Materials

- Small action figure such as “Jonah” from a Find Jonah toy-filled whale (32556).

Before class: Hide the action figure somewhere in your classroom, but not in a cabinet or drawer.

ASK: Have you ever played the game Hide and Seek? (*Let students answer.*)

In our lesson today, we are going to learn about a man named Jonah. Jonah tried to hide from God. I have hidden a little “Jonah” somewhere in our classroom. Let's see who can find Jonah first.

ACTIVITY: Inform students that Jonah is not inside a cabinet or drawer. Then release students to search for Jonah. If students have trouble finding him, give them little clues like “Getting warmer” or “Uh-oh. Brrr—you are getting colder!” Clap for the student who finds Jonah. If time allows, you can have students turn their backs and cover their eyes as you hide Jonah one more time.

Jonah tried to hide from God, but that didn't go very well. God is our mighty Creator. He sees everything, and He knows everything. Nobody can hide from Him—not even Jonah! Let's find out why Jonah was trying to hide from God.



Teacher Tip ►
Open in prayer
and teach with an
open Bible.

EXPLORE THE BIBLE!

Materials

- Bible; lesson 1 visual packet and CD (32407) or visual book PowerPoint download (32407EB).

“Jonah, Jonah!” God called to His prophet. Long ago, God used men called prophets to tell people God’s messages. These men were God’s special helpers. Jonah was one of those prophets.

“Yes, Lord?” Jonah answered.

“I have a job for you to do,” God said to Jonah. “I want you to go to the big, important city of Nineveh. Tell the people there that I am going to punish them because of their wickedness and sin.”

“Nineveh?” thought Jonah. “Yuck! I don’t want to go warn them!” The people of Nineveh were mean and cruel. In fact, they were Jonah’s enemies because they were enemies of his country, Israel. The Ninevites worshiped fake gods that people had made up. So Jonah went the other way. Instead of going to Nineveh (*point one way*), Jonah went the other direction (*point the other way*). He disobeyed God. He tried to go away from where God was.



Lesson 1 Visual 1

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 1 or PowerPoint visual 1. **READ:** Jonah 1:3. **ACTIVITY:** Drop your head into your palm and shake your head. Encourage students to mimic you. **SAY:** Oh Jonah! Don’t you know? God is everywhere, and He knows everything! You can’t run from God. You can’t hide from God!

But that’s just what Jonah tried to do. He ran down to the docks in the harbor. There he found a boat that was sailing far away from Nineveh. Jonah bought a ticket and climbed on board. He even went down, down, down into the bottom of the boat to find a place to sleep.

Oh Jonah, what are you thinking? Don’t you know God’s way is best? Don’t you know it is always wise to obey God?

What Jonah did was disobedient and wrong. The Bible calls it sin. The Bible also says that everybody has sinned in one way or another. The sin might not be by hopping on a boat, but it could be thinking something mean about someone, or it could be telling a lie. But let’s get back to Jonah.

At first, things seemed to be going according to Jonah’s plan. Maybe the boat traveled gently over the water, and the waves were calm. (*Using your hands, demonstrate calm waves.*) But then, a strong wind began to blow. The waves grew higher and higher. (*Demonstrate high, rough waves.*) The waves beat against the boat.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 2 or PowerPoint visual 2.



Lesson 1 Visual 2

Crrrack! Crash! Boom! Lightning lit up the sky, and thunder roared from the sky. Before they knew it, the crew found themselves in the middle of a terrible

storm. The ship tossed wildly back and forth. The sailors were afraid they were going to die! (*Encourage students to sway back and forth like they are in a storm.*)

“Throw the cargo overboard—otherwise we are going to sink!” the sailors yelled. They grabbed every box, every bag of grain, and every barrel they could find and heaved it into the sea to lighten the ship. But it was no use. The storm only grew worse. Waves beat hard against the ship. “The whole ship is going to break apart!” the sailors cried.

Wait a minute . . . where was Jonah? Do you remember?

READ: Jonah 1:5b. **ASK:** Where was Jonah all this time? (*He was asleep in the bottom of the ship.*)

The captain rushed down to Jonah. “Wake up! Wake up!” (*Pantomime shaking Jonah.*) “There is a terrible storm. Pray to your God and beg to be rescued! It’s our last hope!”

ACTIVITY: Role play Jonah and the captain. Students work in pairs. One student pretends to be Jonah and is fast asleep. The other is the captain. The captain says to Jonah, “Wake up!” Jonah should wake up shocked and afraid.

And with that the captain rushed back up on deck to help the sailors keep the ship from sinking.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 3 or PowerPoint visual 3.

Jonah climbed up onto the deck. The sailors were rowing with all their might, trying to keep the ship afloat.

Remember we said Jonah couldn’t hide from God? Well, God showed the sailors that the storm was Jonah’s fault. So they wanted to know what Jonah was up to.

“I’m running away from my God,” Jonah confessed. “He is the Maker of the sea and the dry land. Throw me into the sea, and the storm will stop.”

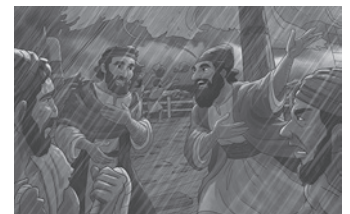
“Are you crazy?” they replied. “We don’t want to throw you overboard. You will drown. Then your God will punish us!” So the sailors rowed even harder—but it was no use. The ship was going to break apart, and they *all* would drown if they didn’t do something fast.

The sailors picked up Jonah and prayed, “O Lord, don’t punish us for what we are about to do.” Then they hurled Jonah overboard, right into the stormy sea below. Splash! Jonah hit the waves.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 4 or PowerPoint visual 4.

And just like that (*snap fingers*), the storm stopped! The wind stopped blowing, and the water became calm. God had stopped the storm! The sailors were amazed. They wondered, “Who is this God that Jonah worships?” The Bible says the sailors offered a sacrifice to the One True God and made promises to Him.

Ah, but Jonah . . . whatever happened to poor Jonah? God had not forgotten Jonah. God knew right where Jonah was, and God wasn’t finished with him yet. We will find out more about what happened to Jonah next time!



Lesson 1 Visual 3



Lesson 1 Visual 4

DECISION TIME

Materials

- Bible; salvation poster (32436).

God's Word, the Bible, tells us about ourselves. Just like Jonah, we all disobey God sometimes. Oh sure, maybe you haven't tried to run away from God and hide in a boat, but the Bible says that every person has thought, said, or done something that is disobedient and displeasing to God. The Bible calls that sin. If you have had a selfish thought or said an unkind word to a brother or sister, or pouted and stomped your foot in disobedience, you have sinned. The Bible tells us the punishment for sin: it is to be separated from God forever.

Ugh. That's terrible news! But God is merciful. He knew how hopeless we were. So God sent His Son, Jesus, to be our Savior. Jesus died on a cross to take the punishment for our sin. He died in our place!

ACTIVITY: Use the salvation poster to share the gospel. Ask students to bow their heads, close their eyes, and think quietly in their own minds. Invite students who want to learn more about how to receive Jesus as their Savior to look up at you. Assign workers to counsel and pray with responding students.

If you have already asked Jesus to take away your sin and be your Savior, you can learn to love Him more and obey Him every day. Ask God to help you obey Him as you learn more from His Word, the Bible.

DISCOVER!

Option 1: Sticker Review

Materials

- Jonah mini sticker scenes (32555).

Guide students to arrange stickers on sheets 1 and 2 while you review the lesson.

Option 2: Role Play Jonah

Materials

- Small action figures; "boats" (e.g., shoeboxes); lesson 1 visual packet and CD (32407) or visual book PowerPoint download (32407EB).

Encourage the students to use the figures and boats to role-play the story of Jonah. Cover the major events of the narrative. Use guiding questions such as the



Jonah Mini Sticker Scenes
(32555)

examples below to keep students on track. Use the visual book pictures to help students recall the order of the story.

What did God want Jonah to do? (*Go to Nineveh and preach to the people.*)

Instead of obeying, what did Jonah do? (*He ran from God, got on a ship, and tried to hide from God.*)

What did Jonah tell the sailors to do to him? (*Throw him overboard into the sea.*)



“Be merciful, just as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

When God gives us mercy, it means we don’t get the punishment that we deserve. Jonah deserved to be punished; he had disobeyed God. When God said, “Go,” Jonah said “No!” So Jonah ended up in the sea. But God was merciful. Next time we will learn just how merciful God was to Jonah.

God says we are to show mercy to others, just like He has shown mercy to us. God mercifully sent His Son, Jesus, to take the punishment for our sin. Since God showed such great mercy to us, He expects us to show mercy to others.

ACTIVITY: Demonstrate the following actions as you say each section of the verse. Encourage the students to mimic your actions.

“Be (*Point finger out and sweep across, pointing to everyone.*)

merciful, (*Hug your neighbor.*)

just as your Father (*Bring arm straight up till pointing overhead.*)

also is merciful.” (*Hug yourself.*)

Luke 6:36. (*Form open book with hands.*)

Option 1: Row and Review

Sit down cross-legged and pretend to row a boat. Switch rowing sides for each phrase. Students echo the teacher, phrase by phrase.

Option 2: Calling All . . .

God called Jonah to do a job, but Jonah refused to obey. Let’s see how you can obey. I will say “Calling all . . .,” and then describe something you might be wearing or something about you. If I call you, stand up and say the verse and do the actions with me. Let’s try it:

Calling all . . . students with brown eyes!

ACTIVITY: Continue the game, calling out broad categories such as eye color, hair color, shoe type, and clothing color. Try to call out descriptions that will have at least several students in the category. Each time, the group that is called stands and says the verse with you while doing the actions.



◀ Teacher Tip

Hold your Bible open as you teach the verse, emphasizing that the verse is from the Bible.

◀ Teacher Tip

If you made the laundry basket boats earlier, use them now, two students per boat. Students take turns.



APPLY IT NOW!

Option 1: God's Mercy Never Ends

Sing this song to the tune of "Farmer in the Dell" while doing the actions.

God's Word says to obey; *(Point to palm as if holding Bible.)*
God's Word says to obey. *(Point to palm as if holding Bible.)*
I will trust God's way is best; *(Nod and point up.)*
God's Word says to obey. *(Point to palm as if holding Bible.)*

God's way is always best; *(Point up to God, then double thumbs up.)*
God's way is always best. *(Point up to God, then double thumbs up.)*
I will love and follow Him; *(Hug self, then point up to God.)*
God's way is always best. *(Point up to God, then double thumbs up.)*

God's mercy never ends; *(Circle finger round and round in an "always" circle, shaking head.)*

God's mercy never ends. *(Circle finger round and round in an "always" circle, shaking head.)*

I will praise Him for His love; *(Clap along with the song.)*

God's mercy never ends. *(Circle finger round and round in an "always" circle, shaking head.)*

Option 2: Where Will You Obey?

ASK: Where are some of the places you will go this week? *(Encourage students to list places they will probably go this week, such as home, church, library, grocery store, or the park.)*

You can obey God and follow Him in all those places. He is with you, watching over you, ready to help you obey. Let's name ways we can obey, no matter where we go.

ACTIVITY: March in place. Call out a student's name and ask, "Ariana, where are you going?" The student then answers, "I'm going _____," and the class stops marching. **ASK:** Ariana, how will you obey your mother (or parent, teacher, babysitter, coach, aunt, guard, etc.) at _____? Students then tell how they can obey at that place this week.