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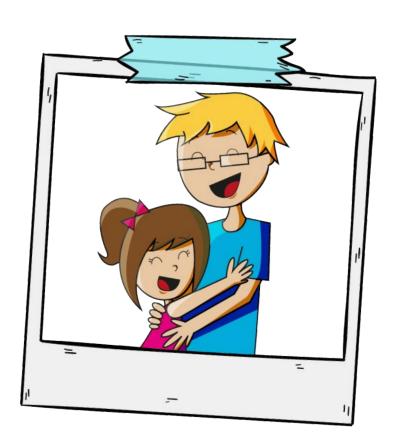
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Transforming Children in Christ through His Church

# Dear Reader:

This is the manual presented to you by Every Generation Ministries to use when working with children in your church. We make these materials available with the sole purpose of helping you achieve the goal of seeing children transformed in Jesus Christ through His local church.



# Table of Contents —

Introduction	5
How to Use this Material	7
Curriculum Overview	9
Lesson 1 Jonah Disobeys God	10
Lesson 2 The Sailors Throw Jonah Overboard	16
Lesson 3  Jonah Talks to God from the Belly of the Fish	23
Lesson 4 Jonah Preaches in Nineveh	28
Lesson 5 Jonah is Angry with God	33
Lesson 6 Jonah Learns of God's Great Love for the Ninevites	38
Guiding Children to Christ	43
Jonah Story Visual Aids	45



### What is every generation Ministries?

An international, interdenominational Christian organization that works together with the local Church to develop effective children's ministry. Since its founding in 1993, EGM has worked closely with leaders of local congregations to establish ministries led by national leaders to equip churches to effectively serve children.



Matthew 28:18-20 is the biblical basis of our role in the proclamation of the gospel. In this passage, Christ commissioned the "community of faith" to go and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them to keep all His commands. Today, the local church is the "community of faith" and therefore, the Great Commission is fundamentally a charge for her (Ephesians 3:8-10; 2 Corinthians 6:16). To this end, the purpose of our ministry is to support local congregations in their call to make disciples of children in Christ.

## Christian Education Materials

EGM's materials place a strong emphasis on how children can apply the Bible to their real lives. EGM's resources will transform your Bible teaching; ensuring God's Word is the center of learning and Jesus' model of ministry is followed. Each one of these lessons provides opportunities for children to experience, discuss and apply the Bible truth they receive during the lesson. The material will guide them in how to respond to God, with the purpose of seeing spiritual growth and transformation in each of them.



### A TRANSFORMATIONAL VISION

Our philosophy is framed in the principles extracted from the Word of God in Deuteronomy 6:4-9 and in the ministerial philosophy of Jesus Christ.

# Relationship

"Love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your strength" (Deut. 6:5). To talk about these things, to walk along a road, or to sit at home with a child, one must have a relationship with that child. Thus, it is implied throughout this passage that there is an ongoing, real-life relationship happening between the adult and the child.

### EXPERIENCE

"These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts" (Deut. 6:6). We are to teach our children in the everyday living of life.

### TRUTH

"Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up" (Deut. 6:7). We are to teach God's Word to our children.

### DISCUSSION

"Talk about them" (Deut. 6:7). We are to discuss the truths of God's Word and how it applies to the children's everyday lives.

### RESPONSE

"Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates" (Deut. 6:8-9). We are to let the commandments influence what you do (with your hands) and how you think (with your mind).

We know that the process of transformation in the life of a child is not the result of a well-planned class or lesson. The process of transformation takes place when the child responds to the work of the Holy Spirit by experiencing biblical truths, talking about how they relate to their lives and responding to them. It is our desire that this material be a resource that God uses to enrich your ministry.

# How to use this Material

For this material to be useful, we want to briefly explain the principles that accompany the development of each lesson. Knowing them will help you not only better prepare your lessons but also help you understand why each element is included.

### · READER'S DEVOTTON

The **reader's devotion** allows you to teach from your own convictions and your own reality with God. When you teach children biblical truth – especially using the following five elements – there is in a sense something different when you teach what you believe in. There's a personal, spiritual connection and conviction the teacher feels with the lesson. It's a lesson that God is teaching you or has taught you personally, that you're now sharing with the children. Children sense it. It's crucial, in our opinion, in children's ministry work and parenting. You're not just saying what you are supposed to say and teaching what you're supposed to teach, but it's something from your own heart, your own convictions and your own experience.

### · LESSON ATM

The **lesson aim** is the one purpose for the lesson that is focused on life change to help children live godly lives. The Lesson Aim is the one thing you want to teach the children from the Bible story. We know that any given Bible story can have multiple lesson aims and spiritual truths, but it is important that you choose just one for the children to learn. That way when they leave the class, the children will clearly remember what they learned.

### · RELATIONSHIP ACTIVITY



Relationships grow when the teacher creates a warm environment where children feel loved, accepted and befriended by their teacher and peers before, throughout, and after the class. The **relationship activity** is the foundation for the entire class; it is like an umbrella covering the whole ministry. This is your opportunity to allow the children to experience God's love through you. When children feel loved and accepted, their hearts will be open to receive God's truth. This is the first activity that you will do with the children, but it is essential that the relational spirit carries into each of the other elements.

### · EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



The **experiential activity** is focused on the feelings associated with the action-oriented verb in the Lesson Aim and allows all the children to experience these feelings. This happens right before you teach the Bible passage. This activity actively engages the children and helps them not only understand the Lesson Aim, but how to relate to it in a personal way. It is important to connect this activity to the Lesson Aim through questions and a connecting statement so the children understand the purpose of the activity.



The **truth** is the Bible teaching section of the lesson, which is focused on the Lesson Aim and taught in a creative way. By creatively teaching the Bible, the teacher will make the Word of God come alive in the minds and hearts of the children. It is very important that you make sure you are focusing on the defined Lesson Aim. Also, it is important to always have your Bible in hand and let the children know you are teach-ing a story from God's Word.

### · DISCUSSION



The **discussion** happens when children, in small groups, talk about the Bible lesson and how the Lesson Aim relates to their real lives. This is the moment when we want the children to discover what the Lesson Aim means and how it can be personally applied to them. During this time, children can open up and share what is happening in their real lives and how it relates to the Lesson Aim.

### · RESPONSE



Don't forget the importance of children applying the biblical truth they learned in class throughout their week. For this reason, we have included the **response activity** to motivate children to respond to God's truth in their real life and continuously outside of the class.

# IMPORTANT NOTES:

There are also suggestions for memorizing a Bible verse and doing an artistic activity. Remember that you can modify them or change them completely to fit your needs and the context of your class.

# CURRICUIUM OVERVIEW

LESSON	LESSON AIM	MEMORY VERSE
LESSON I: Jonah Disobeys God	I can obey God even if he asks me to do something difficult.	"That is why, for Christ's sake, I delight in weaknesses, in insults, in hardships, in persecutions, in difficulties. For when I am weak, then I am strong" (2Co. 12:10).
LESSON 2: The Sailors Throw Jonah Overboard	God wants me to help people with their problems.	"Carry each other's burdens, and in this way you will fulfill the law of Christ" (Gal. 6:2).
LESSON 3: Jonah Talks to God from the Belly of the Fish	I can thank God, even in difficult situations.	"Do not be anxious about anything, but in every situation, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God" (Phl. 4:6).
Lesson 4: Jonah Preaches in Nineveh	When I tell God I am sorry, He forgives me!	"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness" (1Jo. 1:9).
LESSON 5: Jonah is Angry with God	I can learn important truths by different experiences that God creates.	"Consider it pure joy, my brothers and sisters, whenever you face trials of many kinds, because you know that the testing of your faith produces perseverance" (Jas. 1:2-3).
LESSON 6: Jonah Learned of God's Great Love for the Ninevites	God wants me to love others, even those I find hard to love.	"Love your neighbor as your-self" (Mar. 12:31a).



- Lesson #1 -

# Reader'S Devotion

Please read Matthew 26:36-46 in your Bible.

During our Christian lives, walking in the hand of the Master involves one key word: obedience. Jesus, our example in everything, gave us this teaching. A life of obedience means being at the center of God's Will, even when difficult situations arise. Why don't we have to understand the Lord's purposes to be obedient? Sometimes, we don't know the reason we are asked for something. However, we demonstrate our faith and trust in God when we obey Him despite not understanding the reason.

On Mount Gethsemane, Jesus Christ expresses an extraordinary form of obedience by exclaiming that everything was or will be done according to the will of the Father, not his own. This is the sentiment the Word of God is giving. Not what we want, but what God wants. It is easy to be obedient when everything in our journey is what we want and has a happy ending. When God gives us the desires of our heart, we receive them with joy. However, what do we do when things do not go that way? How do we react when the plans of the Lord seem different than ours? Here is the difference between obedience and disobedience. Take some time to reflect about the difficult things you must face in obedience to God. Although everything seems to indicate that to obey takes a great effort, we have a God so merciful that, knowing our weaknesses, He has given us His very presence through the Holy Spirit to guide us to all truth and in this way, we cling to obedience. Therefore, it is not a question of your effort, but of your total dependence on His Will.

Disobedience isn't anything more than taking our own desires and passions and placing them before those of God. Obviously, this attitude isn't blessed by God, who leaves us to the consequences of our actions. Like Jonah, we will have to go through more difficulties that we could have avoided. Our first attitude is complaining, when what God wants is our acceptance of all He proposes without question, knowing all His ways are wise.



# LESSON AIM



Aim: I can obey God even if He asks me to do something difficult.

Scripture: Jonah 1:1-3

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 12:10

# LET'S BEGIN

# Relationship activity

Play the game, "Hard or Easy?"



Make a list of hard things to do and easy things to do, then write them on separate cards. One at a time, have each child come up to the front of the room, choose a card, read what it says and say if he or she thinks it is hard or easy. Then have everyone stand up if they think it is easy or sit down if they think it is hard. Give children a chance to look around to see the response from the other children. Explain to the children that there are no right or wrong answers. It is important that children decide for themselves if they think the item is easy or hard.

#### Here are some examples of easy and hard things to do:

- Eat a cookie
- Stand on your head
- Talk to someone in a foreign language
- Touch your tongue to your nose

- Jump up and down ten times
- Do a front flip
- Eat a caterpillar
- Count by fives
- Meet a new person
- Write a book
- Sing a solo
- Catch a butterfly
- Catch a spider
- Eat a raisin
- Draw a picture of a boat
- Fold a paper boat
- Drink chocolate milk
- Tell someone that Jesus loves them
- Color a picture
- Tell a funny joke



## EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Joyful, successful, pleased, content, reassured
- Frustrated, unhappy, confused, discouraged, uncomfortable

Set up a difficult game, a challenging physical activity or an obstacle course that is nearly impossible for the children you serve. Make sure that the focus is not to have fun as they accomplish the task, but rather to experience the fact that the task is difficult.

For example, choose one of the following:

- 1) Children throw an item (beanbags, paper wads, etc.) into containers of various sizes, including small containers which are nearly impossible.
- 2) Children go through an obstacle course made from chairs, tables, traffic cones, cardboard boxes, pieces of fabric or any other supplies you have on hand.
- 3) Children take turns trying to walk, standing only on one foot, for 30 seconds on a narrow balance beam made of a long piece of sturdy wood balanced between two concrete blocks (Be sure that the balance beam is stable and that there are "spotters" to make sure no one falls.)

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) How did you feel when you had to do the task?
- 2) Was it difficult?
- 3) Why did you attempt the task anyway?

#### **Connecting Statement:**

Tell the children, "Today we will learn about a man named Jonah. We will see what he did when God asked him to do something very difficult.

#### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

Option 1:

Small beanbags Various size containers

Option 2:

Chairs

**Tables** 

Traffic cones

Cardboard boxes

Fabric remnants

Option 3:

Long piece of sturdy, narrow wood Two concrete blocks

### TRUTH

During this time, teachers and children will act out the first part of the story of Jonah. (God calls Jonah to go to Nineveh. Jonah disobeys. Jonah boards a ship headed for Tarshish, which is in the opposite direction.)

#### **Costumes and props:**

- 1) <u>Megaphone</u>: Piece of paper folded into a cone shape for the character playing God to use to speak in a low, loud voice.
- 2) <u>Jonah costume:</u> A rectangular piece of fabric with a hole cut out for a head to fit through, a belt or tie for the waist, and a fabric head scarf.
- 3) Sailor costumes: Cotton shirts as head scarves or turbans.
- 4) Sailboat: Turn a rectangle table on its side and place it near a wall in the room. Attach blue paper to the wall behind the table to look like the water. Cover the table surface with brown paper to create the boat. Make a sail (a large triangle of white paper or cloth) and attach it to a broomstick or other long stick. Attach the sail to the front leg of the table with masking tape. Put fishing net over the side of the boat.
- 5) Two cardboard signs: One with an arrow pointing to Nineveh and another with an arrow pointing to Tarshish. Post signs in the room where children can see them.

#### Skit:

Use teachers to read all parts. Teachers can dress up as the characters, or you can dress up some children and have them pantomime actions as teachers say the lines.

Characters: Narrator, God's voice, Jonah, Sailor 1, Sailor 2

**Narrator:** God saw that the king and the people of Nineveh were very evil. Their wickedness was so bad that God was about to destroy

them. But God is loving and compassionate. He wants to save rather than destroy. So God called out to His prophet Jonah and gave him important instructions.

God's Voice: "Go to the great city of Nineveh and tell the people to stop their evil ways or they will be destroyed."











Jonah: (Muttering to himself and shaking his head "no") "Nooooo! I hate those people. They are wicked enemies of our people, the Israelites. I don't want to tell them to stop their evil ways. If the people of Nineveh tell God they are sorry, He might forgive them and be nice to them. God is so loving and compassionate. It would be just like Him to let them off the hook and save them instead of destroying them." (Jonah shakes his head "no" and walks in the opposite direction) "God wants me to go to Nineveh." (Point to Nineveh) "But I don't want to go there. I am going to go to Tarshish instead." (Point to Tarshish)

(Jonah walks in the direction of Tarshish, occasionally looking back toward Nineveh. He climbs aboard the boat.)

**Sailor 1**: Ahoy there. Do you have money for this voyage to Tarshish? (Jonah pretends to pay him the fare)

(Jonah climbs aboard, yawns loudly and then crawls into the box at the back of the boat and curls up to fall asleep.)

Sailor 2: Where are you going?

Jonah: "I am going below. I am very tired. I need to take a nap." (Jonah crawls into box)

Sailor 1: "It is morning. How can he be tired already?"

Sailor 2: "He doesn't look tired, he looks sad and depressed. I wonder why?"

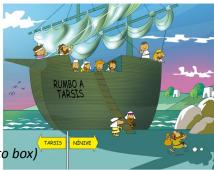
### DISCUSSION

- 1) What difficult thing did God call Jonah to do?
- 2) What did Jonah do instead of obeying God's calling?
- 3) Why do you think Jonah disobeyed God? Do you think these are good reasons?
- 4) What hard things have you had to do? Did you obey or disobey? Why?
- 5) What will help you obey God the next time he asks you to do something difficult?

### RESPONSE

#### **Respond Now**

- 1) Give each child a "Jonah Journal." This will be used for all the Jonah lessons and for completing the tasks at home during the week. Ask the children to bring their journals with them each time, and don't forget to discuss the past week's tasks. (Journals may be store-bought or made with lined paper stapled together with a cardstock cover. Journals should be about 12 pages in length so it can be used for all the lessons.)
- 2) Let each child think about today's Bible story and discussion time as they draw and color the front covers of their journals and write their names on them. (See the instruction below, under Craft)
- 3) On the first page of the journal, ask each child to write or draw about one to three things that God asks them to do that they find difficult. Have them brainstorm ideas for other ways they could obey God.
- 4) Have each child find a partner to share what they wrote or drew in their journal.
- 5) After sharing, have them pray together, asking God for His strength to obey Him.





#### **Keep Responding**

- 1) On the second page, ask the children to continue doing what God is calling them to do and obey Him. Have the children write or draw about the results and reactions of others during the week when they do what is right and obey God.
- 2) Children can share their experiences during the next meeting.

### CRAFT

#### Jonah Journal - Decorate the cover of the journal

Make a journal for each child before the lesson. Use two sheets of heavy paper for the front and back covers, plus several sheets of lined and plain paper inside. Then make sure the journal is stapled together, or hole-punched, and secured with braids or yarn. Or, you can purchase a blank journal for each child.

#### **For Journal Cover Art:**

#### **Supplies:**

- 1. Heavy white paper (one per child) cut to the size of the journal cover
- **2.** Various shades of blue, lavender, and/or green tissue paper torn into 1 inch squares. (You may cut the squares, but the water effect works better with paper that has been torn rather than cut.)
- 3. Glue that is slightly watered-down in small plastic containers
- 4. Small paintbrushes or foam brushes
- 5. ½ inch wide construction paper strips (various lengths and colors)
- 6. Regular glue or scotch tape

#### **Procedure:**

On a sheet of white paper (sized to fit on front of journal) have children create a water scene by painting small squares of blue tissue paper with watered-down glue. Let the paper dry thoroughly and then have a teacher trim the edges that stick out on the sides. A paper cutter is the easiest way to trim the covers.

Making lots of fish in the water is optional, but you can cut out fish of different shapes and sizes, then glue them on the cardboard after it dries.





- Lesson #2 -

## Reader'S Devotion

Please read Matthew 7:12, Deuteronomy 15:7 and Proverbs 3:27 in your Bible.

One of the most visible characteristics of the Christian is helping your neighbor. This is a quality that marks one's own personality and that of those around us. We must be diligent in this regard until we form a habit of extending help.

You don't get to decide when you will help your neighbor. When God puts the needy in front of us, we are obligated to help them. Sometimes we must interfere in bad situations, or situations that aren't pleasant, but that should not stop us from doing so. We must act immediately to come to the aid of our brothers and sisters.

Jesus taught us about this concept and what Christians have called "The Golden Rule." He says, "So whatever you wish that others would do to you, do also to them, for this is the Law of the Prophets" (Mat. 7:12).

The people of God in ancient times had been instructed by Him in this regard. Deuteronomy 15:7 says, "If among you, one of your brothers should become poor, in any of your towns within your land that the LORD your God is giving you, you shall not harden your heart or shut your hand against your poor brother" (Deut. 15:17).

In the Word of God, the verse in which we are urged not to forget about this is Proverbs 3:27, which says, "Do not withhold good from those to whom it is due, when it is in your power to do it" (Pro. 3:27).

This is a challenge to encourage us to help those who are in need!



# LESSON AIM



Aim: God wants me to help people with their problems.

**Scripture:** Jonah 1:4-16

Memory Verse: Galatians 6:2

# LET'S BEGIN

## RelationShip activity



Play the "Four Corners" game.

#### **Four Corners**

Designate each corner of the room with a number. One child is blindfolded, or covers his or her eyes, with no peeking. The rest of the children quickly and silently walk to one of the four corners, while the blindfolded child counts to ten. At the count of ten, he or she calls out one of the four numbers and anyone standing in that corner sits down. Repeat until there is only one child left. As the numbers dwindle, there may be a corner with no kids. Stress that once the child counting gets to nine, the rest of the children had better be in a corner. No dashing at the count of eight or nine. The last child standing gets to be the next counter.

Between rounds, ask the children to say as many things in 10 seconds as they can. It could be about last week's response challenge of obeying God or one way they obeyed God during the week. Make sure each child has an oppor-tunity to share and that they share one at a time. For children who were not in class the previous week, ask them to share about what they think it means to obey God.

The teachers will be the time keepers. Play until the allotted time is up.

### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Joy, appreciation, love, care, empathy
- Jealousy, selfishness, frustration, unsuccessfulness

Use a room with smooth floors, preferably no carpet. Divide the children into groups of five. Give each group a difficult problem where they can only do the task in the time allotted if they work together and help each other. Explain that they can either choose to work alone or they can ask for help. The other children can also choose to help or not. The winning team is the group that accomplishes all the tasks each individual in the group received.

For example, choose one of the following ideas:

- 1) Hand out a bag of assorted, colored, individually wrapped candies and have the children sort them by color.
- 2) Have the children carry water or sand from one container to another on the opposite side of the room using only the tablespoons provided. (*Provide a full cup of water or sand, an empty cup and 5 tablespoons for each group.*)
- 3) Have the children put together a 20-piece puzzle in a short time. It should be impossible for one person to do in the time allotted.
- 4) Throw ten coins, beanbags or rolled-up socks into a container on the opposite side of the room. Each child has one toss. (Children can figure out that they should spread out and throw from one person to the next, in an assembly-line fashion, until the last person right next to the container just drops it in.)

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) How did you feel when you heard the hard problem you had to solve?
- 2) Did you want to work alone or help each other in your group? Why?
- 3) What would have happened if the people in your group did not want to help each other?

#### **Connecting Statement:**

Today we will learn about a big problem that took place on the ship that Jonah was on and what people did or did not do to help.

#### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

#### Option 1:

Individually wrapped candies (assorted colors)

#### Option 2:

Cups (1 per group)
Water (1 cup per group)
Tablespoons (5 per group)

#### Option 3:

1 20-piece puzzle per group

#### Option 4:

Coins, beanbags or rolled up socks Container (1 per group)





### TRUTH

Use puppets to tell the story. Tell the part of the story where Jonah is aboard the boat headed for Tarshish and a big storm comes up.

#### Preparat on:

Make puppets and a puppet theater from cardboard (see instructions in Craft.)

#### **Jonah Puppet Show**

**Act One:** Choose one person to move the ship with sailors and the waves. Choose another person to manipulate the captain and Jonah puppet according to the dialogue. Depending on the age and ability of the group, capable children can move puppets and say the lines, or the teachers can do this, or a combination of both.

**Narrator:** Jonah was aboard a ship going in the opposite direction of Nineveh, the city where the Lord wanted him to go. God wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh to turn from their evil ways. But Jonah did not want to obey



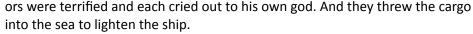
Lord, so he ran the other way. Let's pat our laps to make the sound of someone running. (Do this for a few seconds and then continue.)

He was headed to Tarshish. Listen, boys and girls, to find out the big problem that happened and what the men did to try to solve the problem.

**Sailors:** (Screaming frantically) Help! The sea is becoming stormy. Look at those big waves! Look at those rain clouds and the wind! We're so afraid! We are experienced sailors, but we don't know what to do to save this ship! Help!

Narrator: Let's make the sound of the wind, the waves, and the thunder. (Make whirring and swooshing sounds for a few seconds and then continue.)

The LORD had sent a great wind on the sea that caused a violent storm. The ship threatened to break up. All the sail-





(Have the sailors and ship puppets rock back and forth as sailors scream and cry out.)

**Sailors:** Oh no! We are going to sink! We are going to die! Let's throw some cargo overboard to see if we can lighten the load and keep the ship afloat!

(Toss the bags of cargo out.)

**Narrator:** But Jonah had gone below deck, where he lay down and fell into a deep sleep. The captain went to find him.

Jonah: Zzzzzzzz, (snoring) zzzzzzz.

**Captain:** Jonah, wake up! How can you sleep? Get up and call on your god! Maybe he will take notice of us so that we will not die.



**Narrator:** What was the problem? Why were they so afraid? What did the sailors do to try to solve their problem? What did Jonah do? Was he helping at all? (Let children respond to each question before moving on.)

**Act Two:** If desired, choose new participants to manipulate the ship, waves, sailors, captain and Jonah.

**Narrator:** Children, listen to find out more things the sailors did to try and solve their problem of the big storm. Listen to see if Jonah helps them out at all.

**Sailors:** Let us cast lots to see who is causing this trouble at sea. (*Throw dice out through the curtain.*)

**Sailors:** The lots have fallen on Jonah. Jonah is the guilty one! Tell us, Jonah, who is responsible for making all this trouble for us? What kind of work do you do? Where do you come from? What is your country? From what people are you?

Jonah: I am a Hebrew and I worship the LORD, the God of Heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

**Narrator:** This news about Jonah's powerful, Creator God terrified them! They knew that Jonah was running away from the LORD, because he had already told them so. The sea was getting rougher and rougher. They all thought they were going to die.

Sailors: Jonah, what have you done? What should we do to make the sea calm down for us?

**Jonah:** Pick me up and throw me into the sea and it will become calm. I know that it is my fault that this great storm has come upon you.

**Narrator:** Children, what did the sailors do and say as they tried to solve their problem? What did Jonah tell them to do? (Let children respond before moving on.)

**Act Three:** If desired, choose new helpers to manipulate puppets.

**Narrator:** Let's find out what happened next. Let's see if any of their ideas worked and if anyone helped the sailors. The sailors didn't want to throw Jonah overboard. They knew that Jonah would die and they would be responsible for killing him. Instead, the men did their best to row back to land. But they could not do it, for the sea grew even wilder than before. Then they cried out in terror to the LORD.

**Sailors:** Please, LORD, do not let us die for taking this man's life. Do not hold us accountable for killing an innocent man. For you, LORD, have done as you pleased.

**Narrator:** Then they took Jonah and threw him overboard, and the raging sea grew calm. Let's make the sound of the storm again and then suddenly stop when I stop.

(Make the storm noise again and stop suddenly. Puppeteers should throw Jonah and make the sea calm.)

Then the men greatly feared the LORD and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows to him. How did God help the sailors when they prayed to him? I wonder if God will help Jonah begin to believe again too?

### CRAFT

#### Teacher Tips - Make a Puppet Theatre and Puppets

#### **Supplies:**

For a small puppet theatre, use a shoebox or small cardboard box. For a larger theatre, use a large cardboard box (refrigerator or oven box is great). You will need a sharp (razor-edge) knife or scissors, masking tape and blue paper.

#### **Procedure:**

Cut an opening across the bottom of the box to insert the stick puppets. Attach waves to the front and sides of the box. Attach blue "water" to the three inside walls of the box. Cover each side of the box with blue paper, or you can paint it, and strengthen the walls with masking tape.

Use the cardboard from the lid of the box to make puppets.

Make the following stick puppets: (See patterns provided)

- 1) Ship with sailors aboard
- 2) Big waves
- 3) Captain
- 4) Jonah

Make the following props proportionate to the size of your ship and other puppets:

- 1) Cargo (draw-string bags stuffed with paper)
- 2) Pair of dice to represent casting lots

Teacher or students can manipulate the puppets. The box (theater) can be placed somewhere high, like a chair on a table covered with a blue material, leaving the bottom open to have room to manipulate the puppets.

If you are not able to make a puppet theater, students can crouch behind a curtain, or manipulate puppets from behind a table that is turned on its side.

## DISCUSSION

- 1) What was Jonah doing when the sailors became afraid of the big storm?
- 2) What helpful idea did Jonah have when he woke up?
- 3) In what ways were the sailors behaving better than Jonah during the story?
- 4) Who do you cry out to for help? Who can you count on for help?
- 5) Share about a time you faced a difficult situation and someone helped you.
- 6) When people you know have a big problem, do you help them? Think of someone God wants you to help this week.





## RESPONSE



**Respond Now** (Teacher should write on chalkboard as children brainstorm)

- 1) Brainstorm ideas for helping people. Think of people that need help in the church or neighborhood. It could be children at school or younger siblings that need help with homework, or elderly people that need help fixing up their house or yard, or a person in the hospital that they could visit and cheer up, or a one-day project to help the homeless such as making sandwiches to hand out.
- 2) List the ideas on the board and vote on one or two ideas to do during the week independently or as a group.
- 3) Have children write which idea they will accomplish in their Jonah journals.
- 4) Create an opportunity for the children to help someone in the class already. It could be another child or the teacher. Think of something practical they could do. (For example, help the teacher clean up the classroom or bring water to a child who is thirsty.)

#### **Keep Responding**

- 1) Have children decide which idea they will accomplish from their Jonah journals next week. Have them share what they plan to do and write it down.
- 2) Pray with the children, before they leave, that they would be able to help these people.
- 3) Make sure the children know they have to write down the results during the week in their Jonah journals.



- Lesson #3 -

# Reader'S Devotion

Please read 1 Thessalonians 5:18 in your Bible.

Thankfulness is a virtue with double satisfaction, since it brings joy to those who receive it and gratifies those who grant it. Generally, it is a natural response to receiving something that pleases us.

However, what happens when what we receive isn't what we hoped or isn't so rewarding? Sometimes we endure situations that are difficult to imagine, that we didn't expect or are not pleasant. How do we respond as Christians? What is the correct attitude?

To be thankful in whatever circumstance is a question of attitu-de, which can change everything. To be grateful in moments of joy and in moments of sadness is a choice that we always have within our reach. To demonstrate gratitude in circumstances surrounded by well-being makes us better people. But to demonstrate gratitude in challenging circumstances transforms us into true masters of life, who deserve anything and can change everything with a simple smile. Perhaps your problems will not disappear, but if we can find the strength to move forward, we will find in God the purpose of them.



## LESSON AIM



Aim: I can thank God, even in difficult circumstances.

Scripture: Jonah 2:1-10

Memory Verse: Philippians 4:6

# LET'S BEGIN

### Relationship activity

Play the game "Helper's Hot Potato" with the



#### **Helper's Hot Potato**

Sit in a circle, on chairs or on the carpet. Give one child in the circle a potato (you can use a small ball if you don't have a potato). Pretend that this potato is HOT, so children must pass the potato around the circle while the music plays or while a teacher sings a song. When the music stops, or the singer abruptly stops singing, the child holding the potato is out and must share something from last week's experience of when they helped someone. If children did not attend the last class, ask them to think of someone that they know that needs help and to share an idea of how they could help them.

#### **Teacher Tip:**

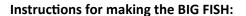
For this lesson, you can create the BIG FISH craft with the children at the beginning of the meeting. Then you can use the created fish to tell the story. At the end in the response activity, it can hold the prayers for the children.

### CRAFT

#### To make the BIG FISH:

#### **Supplies:**

- 2 paper plates for each child
- Crayons or water color
- Staples or glue
- Googly eyes or paper eyes
- Scissors



- 1) Use two paper plates. Cut a triangle from the paper plate. This will be the mouth of the fish.
- 2) Use the triangle as a tail. Tape or staple the tail to the other side of the plate.
- 3) Glue or staple the two paper plates together to make the container, but only on the top and bottom of the two plates. On the left side where the mouth will be, don't staple or glue. Children will use the opening to put paper square prayers inside.
- 4) On the right side where the tail will be, match up the two pieces and staple them between the two plates.
- 5) Put on the eyes (and spout), and draw the mouth.
- 6) Decorate as desired.

# EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Safe, peaceful, thankful, content, trustful
- · Doubtful, insecure, uncertain, sad, dread

Set up four stations, each with a two-minute experience. You know your group of children, so choose two activities that you know they <u>WON'T</u> like to do and two that you know they <u>WILL</u> like to do. For example, they may not like to clean up a mess or carry heavy bricks from one side of the room to the other, or help with a dreaded chore. However, in contrast, you

know they would like to eat a sweet snack or play with some fun toys or games. After each activity, have a sign you can hold up that reads, "THANK YOU!" to have children say out loud.

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) Did you feel like saying "thank you" when you participated in the activities that you liked? For example, when you ate the snacks, played with the toys, etc.
- 2) How did it make you feel to say "thank you" when you had to do a dreaded chore or carry heavy bricks?

#### **Connecting Statement:**

Today we will learn whether or not Jonah felt like thanking God after he was thrown overboard.

#### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

- Heavy bricks
- Fun toys or a sweet snack



### TRUTH

Since the kids created their "Big Fish" at the beginning of class, we will use it by involving children to present the story. During the story, every time they hear the word, "fish," they can hold it up, move it around and pretend it is swimming. You will find the word "fish" underlined every time it is mentioned in the story.

#### **Supplies:**

- 1. Big Fish craft for each child
- 2. Can of fish
- **3.** If possible, supplies to make the room dark (turn off the lights, window covers, etc.)

**Teacher says:** In the last class, we learned that the sailors on the ship had just thrown Jonah overboard. That very second, the stormy sea became calm. The sailors were amazed by the power of Jonah's God. Instead of bowing down to their gods, as they usually did, they started offering gifts to Jonah's God. That's amazing! Our powerful God, who controls the fish, the wind and waves, used this storm to teach the sailors to believe in the one true God.

But what about Jonah? What happened to him? Do you think he had a change of heart? Today we will get to find out what happened to Jonah after he was thrown into the sea.



Here's what the Bible says happened to Jonah:

Open Bible and read... "Now the LORD provided a huge <u>fish</u> to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the <u>fish</u> three days and three nights" (Jonah 2:1).

Wow! Our powerful God even controls the fish in the sea! What must it have been like inside the belly of that huge fish? I am sure it was dark, wet, slimy and stinky. (If you can, make the room dark) What do you think it smelled like? (Open the can of fish and leave it open so the smell fills the entire room.) How would you expect Jonah to feel? (Afraid, sad). Yes, you would think he was scared and sad. But instead, Jonah was singing praises to the Lord. He was thanking God that he was alive. Isn't that amazing?



Let's see what the Bible tells us Jonah said while he was inside the belly of the big fish.

Read from Bible... Jonah said: "In my distress I called to the LORD, and he answered me. From the deep... I called for help, and you listened to my cry... You, LORD my God, brought my life up from the pit. With shouts of grateful praise, will give to you. What I have vowed I will make good. I will say, 'The LORD SAVES'" (Jonah 2:2-9).

Let's talk about these verses, what does Jonah say that he is thankful for?

Even though Jonah had believed in God his whole life, lately, he

had forgotten God and had chosen to disobey Him. He had run away and had refused to follow God's plan. He had gone on a boat going in the opposite direction from God's plan.

But, when Jonah was thrown into the scary sea, Jonah changed instantly. He believed in God again. Jonah knew that God had sent the big <u>fish</u> to swallow him and keep him alive and safe. He started to remember how much God loved him. He knew God was giving him a second chance to follow Him. When God saved Jonah, Jonah was full of joy and thanks to the Lord. He promised God that he would trust and obey Him from now on.

Do you know what happened next? Here is what the Bible says:

Read from the Bible... "And the LORD commanded the <u>fish</u>, and it spit up Jonah onto dry land" (Jonah 2:10).



The <u>fish</u> spit Jonah onto the sand. Jonah was probably wet, slimy, hungry and tired, but he was SO glad to be alive! Jonah was safe! So guess what he did next? We'll read about that next time.

# DISCUSSION



- 1) Where was Jonah when he prayed his prayer of thanksgiving? Were you surprised that Jonah would feel thankful to be in such a scary place? Why or why not?
- 2) What happened right after Jonah's prayer?
- 3) What trial in your life makes you feel trapped, as if you are trapped inside the belly of a fish?
- 4) Share a difficult situation you have gone through. How could you have shown praise and thanksgiving in that situation?
- 5) How would you thank God the next time you have a problem like Jonah did? Brainstorm a list of ways with the children that they could do this.

### RESPONSE

#### **Respond Now**

Today, each of you will get to thank God for helping you get through a difficult time. Just like Jonah, you will get to thank and praise Him for protecting and helping you every day. You can either write down your praises or draw them on square pieces of paper. Then, you will put these special praises into the belly of the fish that you made during craft time. All week long, you can write or draw more praises on paper squares to put inside your fish.



- 1) What are some reasons you would like to thank God?
- 2) What are some words that describe who God is and what He is like?
- 3) What are some of the great things God has done for you recently?

(Write some of their ideas on the board so they can use these words in their writing, or ask all the teachers to write the ideas on squares of paper. Provide colored paper strips and pencils for each child, as they finish, let them roll up the strips and put them inside the fish.)

#### **Keep Responding**

- 1) Every day this week, think of at least one way you can thank God when you go through a difficult situation.
- 2) Draw or write them on paper squares and put them inside your fish. (*Give the children paper squares to take home with them; at least one for every day of the week.*)

- Lesson #4 -

# Reader'S Devotion

Please read Hebrews 4:16 in your Bible.

Comprehending the greatness of a God able to forgive all the sins of the world is a marvelous experience and surprising for our sinful nature. It is truly astonishing that every time we sin, He is ready to forgive. This is a fundamental part of His nature. At all times, in all moments and in all circumstances, we can turn to God knowing that if our repentance is genuine, He is faithful to forgive.

Forgiveness is guaranteed in that, by becoming flesh, He paid the price of all the sins of the world. Our sins are paid, but we need to approach Him through His love to confess our sins and repent of them, so that forgiveness obtained on the cross through Christ is a reality in our life. Knowing that God forgives sins, and to live indifferent to that love, does not take away the guilt of our sins. Only confession, repentance and acceptance of His love and grace are effective over our faults.

Let us heed the words of the author of Hebrews, "Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need" (Heb 4:16).



## LESSON AIM



Aim: When I tell God I am sorry, He forgives me!

Scripture: Jonah 3

Memory Verse: 1 John 1:9

# LET'S BEGIN

# Relationship activity



Have the children sit in a circle. If you have a bigger group, you can form smaller circles. Have everyone sit except one child in each circle. There should be enough chairs for all the children except for one. When the child standing in the middle says something that is true for other children in the group, they should stand up and change seats. They cannot sit in the same place. Encourage children standing in the middle to share things, even difficult situations, that they are thankful for when they said "thank you" to God.

(For example, the child standing in the middle of the circle says: "I thanked God for my family." Everyone who thanked God for his or her family at least once last week stands up and tries to find another chair. The one remaining without a chair will be the next one to share another situation or reason of thanks. If children did not

attend the last class, have them share something that they are thankful for.)

### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Free, joyful, released, thankful
- Guilty, responsible, ashamed, burdened

#### **Activity**

Fill containers with flour, sand or something similar, and other containers with water. At the beginning of this activity, have the children come forward and put their hands in the water and then in the flour, sand, etc. Have them shake off the excess flour, sand, etc. Then have them go back to their seats.

Ask the children to clean their hands where they are sitting. Tell them they need to get their hands completely clean so there isn't any flour, sand, etc. on them. After a few minutes, ask the children if they were able to clean their hands? Then, have them come forward and rinse their hands in the water, cleaning off all of the flour, sand, etc. Once everyone has cleaned the off their hands, ask them the following questions.

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) How did you feel when you tried to clean your hands before you were able to rinse them in the water?
- 2) How did you feel when you cleaned your hands in the water?

#### **Connecting Statement:**

Today we will learn about the Ninevites, who needed God's forgiveness very badly. They needed God to take away their sins and make them clean, just like you needed the water to make your hands clean. Let's see what happens when Jonah went to visit them.

#### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

- Containers
- Sand or flour



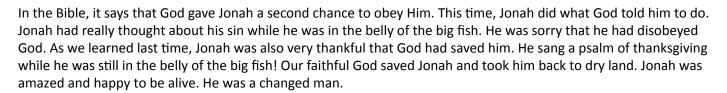




#### **Supplies:**

- 1. Robe
- 2. Crown
- **3.** Scroll (long sheet of paper attached to a wooden dowel and rolled up)
- 4. Bowl of ashes, dust or equivalent
- **5.** Large piece of burlap fabric with a hole cut out for a head to fit through





So he obeyed God and went to talk to the people of Nineveh. He spoke the exact words that God gave him to say. God was about to destroy the Ninevites unless they stopped their wicked behavior. Just like your dirty hands, their





lives were very dirty with sin and they were unable to change on their own. God told Jonah to tell them that in forty days, Nineveh would be overthrown. That was really bad news for the Ninevites. Let's read this part from the Bible and also find out what happened after Jonah told them what God planned to do.

(Have a teacher or capable child read aloud Jonah 3:1-4)

"Then the word of the LORD came to Jonah a second time: 'Go to the great city of Nineveh and proclaim to it the message I give you.' Jonah obeyed the word of the LORD and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city; it took three days to go through it. Jonah

began by going a day's journey into the city, proclaiming, 'Forty more days and Nineveh will be overthrown'" (Jonah 3:1-4).

People that are really evil usually don't care what God says. However this time, the Ninevites listened carefully to Jonah. Let's read more of what the Bible says to see what the Ninevites did after they heard Jonah speak the truth.

(Teacher or capable child should read Jonah 3:5-9)

"The Ninevites believed God. A fast was proclaimed, and all of them, from the greatest to the least, put on sackcloth. When Jonah's warning reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, took off his royal robes, covered himself with sackcloth and sat down in the dust. This is the proclamation he issued in Nineveh: 'By the decree of the king and his nobles: Do not let people or animals, herds or flocks, taste anything; do not let them eat or drink. But let people and animals be covered with sackcloth. Let everyone call urgently on God. Let them give up their evil ways and their violence. Who knows? God may yet relent and with compassion turn from his fierce anger so that we will not perish'" (Jonah 3:5-9).

#### **Teacher says:**

You see boys and girls, in those days, when people were very, very sorry for their sins, they did something really strange to show God they were sorry. I need someone to pretend to be the King of Nineveh. (Choose a child and dress him in robe and crown.)

The King of Nineveh and all the people of Nineveh listened to what Jonah said and they were deeply, deeply moved to repentance. They wanted to tell God they were sorry... very, very sorry. So the King took off his robe and crown. (Remove robe and crown) Then he put on sackcloth. Sackcloth is the material used to make sacks to hold grain, flour and other goods. Sack-



cloth is scratchy and uncomfortable. (*Put sackcloth gown on the child*) Then, the King spread ashes all over his body. (*Put some ash on the child's face and arms*) Then, the King sat down in the dust and made a proclamation. He told everyone in the entire kingdom to fast and pray. (*Have the child unroll the scroll and say, "People, everyone must fast and pray."*) Fasting means that there would be eating no food at all. And the King took it even further by saying that no one should drink anything either, not even the animals. Then the King told all the peo-ple to pray and call out urgently to God. He said for everyone to turn from his evil ways and stop fighting and acting violently. The King was hoping that if everyone in Nineveh did this, God would change His mind and not destroy the city and people.



Let's find out what God did when he saw the King and all the people fasting, praying and telling God they were sorry. "When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relented and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened" (Jonah 3:10).

Wow! God did not destroy the people of Nineveh like He had said. He knew that they were truly sorry for their sins. The Lord knew that they wanted to do what is right. God loved these people so much, even though they had been very, very bad. God is kind and compassionate. So He decided to forgive them and let them live.

# DISCUSSION

- 1) What did the Ninevites say and do after they heard Jonah's warning?
- 2) Why do you think the people listened to Jonah and repented wholeheartedly?
- 3) What did they do to show God that they were truly sorry for their sins?
- 4) What are some things you have done to disobey God? How do you tell God you are sorry? What do you do after you have asked Him for forgiveness?
- 5) Is there something you want to ask God for forgiveness right now?

### RESPONSE

#### **Respond Now**

- 1) Have the children take their Jonah journals and pencils with them outside for some time alone with God. Ask them to think about their relationship with God and their sins. Ask them to pray silently, confess their sins and pray for God to forgive them. Give them time to write their thoughts and prayers in their Jonah journals. (If you can provide pencils and erasers, encourage them to write down the sins they are asking forgiveness for on one page. After they finish the prayer, erase those words because God forgives and takes away our sins when we ask.)
- 2) You can make some easy stamps with the letter of forgiveness. As they ask for forgiveness, they can put a stamp on the words they wrote to cover the writing. (For example, use a stamp with the word "FORGIVEN" or a CROSS)



#### **Keep Responding**

1) Encourage them to continue writing in the journal during the week. Each time they write down a sin or a situation when they disobeyed God and ask for forgiveness, they should put a stamp on it because God forgives us if we confess our sin.

### CRAFT

#### **Supplies Needed:**

- A pen or marker
- A small piece of foam or cardboard (for each child)
- A bottle cap (for each child)
- Ink

#### Instructions to make a stamp:

- 1) Draw a cross on a small piece of foam, or cardboard, then cut it out
- 2) Glue it on a water bottle cap.
- 3) You can use ink, or any other water color, to dip in the stamp
- 4) Then it's ready to use!

(You can also form the letter from a rubber band and glue on a cup, to have the word, "FORGIVEN")

- Lesson #5 -

# Reader'S Devotion

Please read Jeremiah 29:11 in your Bible.

The teaching that God imparts is fundamental to our communion with Him, since He knows the plans He has for us. In this relationship, even in the most difficult moments, He shows us the way to go and teaches us to walk with Him. This is a process of permanent learning where the Lord is the teacher and guides us through His Spirit.

We must be willing to learn those things that the Lord shows us, for through them we are edified. The apostle Paul shows us that we are a product of His workmanship (e.g. 1 Corinthians 15:10). Since life's difficulties are numerous and some are severe, He teaches us how to cope and resolve them according to His Will. Let us learn from His counsel and we will have better results in all our ways.



### LESSON AIM



**Aim:** I can learn important truths by different experiences that God creates.

Note: Learning is not only a cognitive process. Biblical learning is knowing the truth, doing something with it, and being transformed by it. This passage is one of the rare, biblical examples of a living parable. Rather that telling the parable of the vine, God enacts the parable for Jonah to experience and learn from.

Scripture: Jonah 3:10-4:11

Memory Verse: James 1:2-3

# LET'S BEGIN



### RELATIONSHIP ACTIVITY

Divide the children into two teams to play "Charades" and have them act out various situations they faced last week when they asked for forgiveness. Encourage the children to present the whole scenario, before and after they asked for forgiveness, and how they made up for their bad decisions.

(For example, if a boy had a fight with his brother, then he asked for forgiveness. After, he offered his toys to his brother to play with. Have the boy pantomime the whole story, letting the other children guess what happened.)

If you have a large group of children, spread them out to the four corners of the room with two teams in each corner.

If any children did not attend the last class, have them act out a situation in which they would need to ask for forgiveness or a time that they had to ask for forgiveness.

### EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY



#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Curious, eager, encouraged, interested, engaged
- Uncertain, unsure, suspicious

#### **Supplies:**

1. Bag of individually wrapped candy/treats (enough for each child to have two).

#### **Procedure:**

Have the children sit together on the rug. Say, "Would you like some candy?" When the children become excited, go around ready to hand out a piece of candy to each child one-by-one. Say, "Would you like a piece of candy?" If the child says, "Yes," go on to the next child <u>WITHOUT</u> giving him or her a piece of candy. If the child says, "Yes, please," give the child a piece of candy. If he or she says, "Thank You," after receiving the candy, give him or her another piece. Don't say anything about what you are doing or why you are doing it. Just continue around the room until you have asked every child if he or she would like to have a piece of candy. Let them watch and react until you have reached every child. Notice whether or not children learn what to do to receive two pieces of candy.

#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) If you got one piece of candy, how did you feel? Two candies? No candy?
- 2) Why did some people get one piece, some get two pieces and some get no candy at all? Was this fair? Why or why not?
- 3) What did you learn through this situation?

#### **Connecting Statement:**

Today, we will learn how God created different experiences so that Jonah could learn important truths. Let's find out what these experiences are and what Jonah learned.

#### **SUPPLIES NEEDED:**

• Bag of individually wrapped M&M's or other individually wrapped candy/treats (2 bags each)

### TRUTH

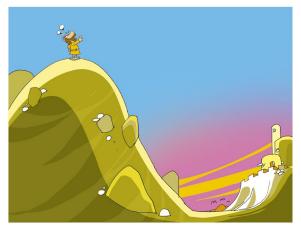
#### Materials: (Costumes and Props for a Skit)

- 1) Shelter made from a large cardboard box or a tent made from several long sticks tied together with a large piece of cloth draped over
- 2) Green vine (real or fake)
- 3) Dead vine (real or fake)
- 4) Worm (real or a fake one made of paper or other materials)
- 5) Electric, or battery-operated, fan or a picture depicting the hot, dry wind
- 6) Jonah costume (robe and beard)

#### Procedure:

Choose capable students or teachers to play the parts of the Narrator, Jonah and God's Voice. Make sure that actors have read through the script ahead of time, so they know what props to use and what to say.





#### Skit for Jonah 3:10-4:11

**Narrator:** Last time we heard that Jonah went to Nineveh and warned the people about the coming destruction. The people and king repented and prayed to God for forgiveness. When God saw what they did and how they turned from their evil ways, he relent-ed and did not bring on them the destruction he had threatened. But Jonah was greatly displeased and became angry.

Jonah: (Ranting angrily as he prays dramatically) "LORD, O LORD, is it not what I said when I was still at home? That is why I was so quick to flee to Tarshish. I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God

who relents from sending calamity. Now, O LORD, take away my life, for it is better for me to die than to live."

**Narrator**: Jonah is very angry that God is gracious and compassionate. Hmmm. Aren't those good and wonderful qualities about God? Jonah is mad that God has not destroyed the Ninevites.

God's Voice: (Calmly and compassionately in a deep voice.) Jonah, do you have any right to be angry?

**Narrator:** Jonah went out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city.

(Jonah should make a shelter and sit inside.)

Then the LORD God provided a vine and made it grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head and ease his discomfort, and Jonah was very happy about the vine.

(Person playing God's Voice should bring in a vine and put it over the shelter.)





But at dawn the next day God provided a worm, which chewed the vine so that it withered.

God did not just tell Jonah a story about the vine. He wanted Jonah to learn an important truth, so he created a situation in which Jonah could experience this truth.

(Bring in a worm and place it on the vine.)

When the sun rose, God provided a scorching east wind and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die.

(Bring in a dead vine and take away the green vine. Then bring in a fan, turn it on and blow it at Jonah, or hold up a picture of the hot, scorching sun and wind.)

Jonah: It would be better for me to die than to live.

God's Voice: Do you have a right to be angry about the vine?

Jonah: I do! I am angry enough to die.

**God's Voice:** You have been concerned about this vine, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It sprang up overnight and died overnight. But Nineveh has more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot tell their right hand from their left, and many cattle as well. Should I not be concerned about that great city?

**Narrator:** What do you think? Did Jonah have reason to be mad? Who was Jonah thinking about more than anyone else? Who did God want Jonah to be thinking about?

### DISCUSSION

Put props from the skit on a table. Have children sit on the floor where they can see what is on the table. Being able to see the props will help children remember the story.

- 1) What three things did God provide to create situations for teaching Jonah?
- 2) What truths did God want Jonah to learn? (Let a child come up and hold the three props vine, worm and scorching wind.)
- 3) Why do you think Jonah cared so much about his own personal comfort, yet did not care about thousands of people from another culture? (Let a child come up and point to props that represented Jonah's comfort shelter and vine.)
- 4) Was it right for God to love and forgive the people of Nineveh that He had made even though they were evil?Why or why not?
- 5) Can you think of a situation in your life that God is using to teach you an important truth?

## RESPONSE

#### **Respond Now**

- 1) In their Jonah Journals, have children draw a picture about a situation in their life that God is using to teach them.
- 2) Let them share about these situations. Then have them pray in pairs for obedience and wisdom to recognize and learn the things that God wants us to teach. Remind them that even though sometimes we have to go through difficult experiences, God uses these experiences to teach us important lessons.



#### **Keep Responding**

1) On another page in their Jonah journals, have the children draw a picture or write down the next time they face a difficult experience. Once they see that God has used this experience to teach them something, put a smiley face sticker, or draw one, and write what you learned. (Provide a couple of smiley face stickers for each child, if you have access. If not, encourage the children to draw them.)





- Lesson #6 -

### Reader'S Devotion

Please read Luke 6:27-36 in your Bible.

The Christian must love others as God loves them. This is the rule of God's love. God does not have to give us His love: He loves us because He chose to love us; it is only by His grace. He loves us even as we were far from Him as His enemies (e.g. Romans 5:10; Ephesians 2:1-2; Colossians 1:21).

In the same way, we must choose to love without condition. We must love even if it costs us.

Jesus commands us to love even our enemies by doing three things: blessing them, doing right by them and praying for them. The Bible says, "But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you" (Mat. 5:44). Jesus says to His disciples, "A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one another" (John. 13:34).

If we look closely, we will see an order. There is no place for choice, we simply need to obey. But let us consider that He has loved us to demonstrate that it is possible to do just as He continues to do. Love is a decision.



### LESSON AIM



<u>Aim:</u> God wants me to love others, even those I find hard to love.

Scripture: Jonah 3:10-4:11

Memory Verse: Mark 12:31

# LET'S BEGIN

### RelationShip activity



You will need one piece of paper for each child. If you have a bigger group, divide the children into smaller groups.

On the bottom of the paper, ask kids to write down a simple situation they experienced last week in short sentences.

After they finish, everyone will give the paper to the person on their right side. Then the next child will write on the top of the paper what he or she might have learned from that situation. Fold it only so that part is revealed. Then on the teacher's signal, pass the papers to the next child on the right side. This will continue until everyone gets back his or her original paper.

(For example: On the bottom of the paper write, "I got locked out from my home, so I learned..." and the next person writes, "to be more attentive next time." Then fold that line and pass it on, so that the next child will see just the bottom line with the situation. At the end, have everyone read their stories to each other.)



## EXPERIENTIAL ACTIVITY

#### Feelings associated with the Lesson Aim:

- Loving, accepting, kind, open, understanding, generous
- Unfair, selfish, offensive, lonely, isolated, insecure, injustice

Divide the children into small groups of different sizes. Announce that there is a big contest between the teams, and the team that gathers the most points will get a prize.

Depending on your situation, start to make up random criteria to receive points. (For example, a team receives as many points as there are shoes with laces on the

team, or pairs of glasses, or blond hair, or siblings. Change the criteria randomly, without any meaning or any achievement, solely based on outside appearance and no reason.)



#### **Connecting Questions:**

- 1) How did you feel when you found out the rules and the fact that being in a smaller group meant you had less of a chance to gather points?
- 2) How did you feel about the criteria of gaining points? What could you have done to get more points?
- 3) Do you think it was fair to win because you had blond hair or shoes with laces?

### **Connecting Statement:**

Sometimes we make decisions based on appearances and things we can't change. We decide to like, not like or judge someone because of random reasons. Today we will learn how God felt about the people that Jonah didn't love. As a matter of fact, he didn't even like them. Do you remember why Jonah didn't like the people from the city of Nineveh?

### TRUTH



Last time, when we studied Jonah 4, we talked about how Jonah felt when he learned God had a heart of love for the Ninevites. Who can retell that part of the story for us in a few sentences? (Choose someone to give a quick review.)

Great job reviewing the story! You are right that Jonah was mad at God for loving the people of Nineveh. He was so, so angry! Earlier, when God released him from the big fish, Jonah praised and thanked God for saving his life. He was happy that the Lord had forgiven and rescued him, but now he was angry that God forgave the people from Nineveh.

The truth that God gives us in Chapter 4 is so important. We are going to talk about that part one more time. God has an important life lesson for each of us and we don't want to forget God's truth. Listen for the question that God asks Jonah two times.

(Choose a few teachers to read ideas from Jonah 3:10-4:11 aloud with expression.)

**Reader #1:** When God saw that the people of Nineveh turned from their evil ways, He decided not to punish them. This made Jonah angry. Jonah prayed to the LORD in a mad voice, "I knew that you are a gracious and kind God, slow



to anger and full of love. And that makes me angry. Those people are bad. You should not love and forgive them. I don't like them!"

Reader #2: But the LORD replied, "Is it right for you to be angry?" Jonah had gone out and sat down at a place east of the city. There he made himself a shelter, sat in its shade and waited to see what would happen to the city. He was still hoping that God would punish them. Then the LORD God made a leafy plant grow up over Jonah to give shade for his head to cool him, and Jonah was very happy about the plant. But at dawn the next day God sent a worm, which chewed the plant so that it died and shriveled up.



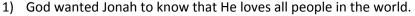
**Reader #3**: When the sun rose, God sent a scorching hot east wind, and the sun blazed on Jonah's head so that he grew faint. He wanted to die, and said, "It would be better for me to die than to live." But God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?" "It is," he said. "And I'm so angry I wish I were dead."

**Reader #4:** But the LORD said, "You have been worried about this plant, though you did not tend it or make it grow. It grew up overnight and died

overnight. Don't you think that I should care about the great city of Nineveh, in which there are more

than a hundred and twenty thousand people?"

**Teacher:** What question did God ask Jonah two times? ("Is it right for you to be angry?") Our patient and loving God asked Jonah this question for three important reasons:



- 2) God wanted Jonah to know that His plan was to save everyone, not just the Israelites. Jonah, an Israelite, believed that he was special. But he forgot that God also created people from other nations and is full of love and concern for them, too.
- 3) God wanted Jonah to think about other people and not just think about himself.

God wanted Jonah to act in a loving way to other people, even people he didn't like. God wanted Jonah to stop hating and start loving. God wanted Jonah and all of us to learn that He loves everyone He has created and wants to save them. He wants you and me to be concerned about these people, too, even the ones we don't like.

## DISCUSSION



- 1) What was God trying to teach Jonah with the shady vine, the worm and the scorching wind?
- 2) What group in our culture do we treat like the Ninevites?
- 3) Looking around, why might someone think that there are some people inherently less valuable or worthy of grace? (poor people, minorities, people of other religions)
- 4) Have you ever met anyone who was hard for you to love? What did you do?
- 5) How do you think God wants you to treat the people who are difficult to love?
- 6) What person or group of people does God want you to show love to this week?



### RESPONSE

#### **Respond Now**

- 1) Have each child think about someone he or she finds difficult to love that God wants him or her to show love to this week.
- 2) Have the children make the handprint, or the hand cutouts, that is mentioned in the Craft below.
- 3) Have the children decorate it and draw or write the name of the person they are going to love this week.
- 4) Have them draw one thing they are going to do to extend love to that person.

#### **Keep Responding**

- 1) Have the children take the hand prints, or the hand cutouts, home and put them close to their beds.
- 2) Have them pray that God will help them love that person.
- 3) Once they extend love to that person, have them thank God for helping them to be loving.

### CRAFT

#### Handprints

#### **Supplies:**

- 1. Cardboard
- 2. Crayons
- **3.** Scissors
- 4. Decorate as desired with available materials (glitter, stickers, etc.)

#### **Procedure:**

- 1) Fold the cardboard in half.
- 2) Then put the child's hand with their thumb and index finger touching the fold to form half a heart shape between these two fingers.
- 3) Have them trace their hands, offering help if it is needed, but make sure that their hand remains on the folded line.
- 4) Cut out and decorate. (Have the children personalize as they wish.)
- 5) On one side, have them write their own names. On the other side, have the children write the name of the person or people they want to show love to next week. (They can also draw themselves and the other person.)





# GUIDING CHILDREN TO CHRIST

One of the most important things you can do as a teacher of children is guide those who are ready for salvation in Jesus Christ. Jesus Himself said, "Let the little children come to me and do not hinder them, for to such belongs the kingdom of heaven" (Mat. 19:14).

### PRACTICAL TIPS

Be convinced of the importance of leading children to Christ and believe that God can use you to do it. Remember that God does not want one child to be lost!

- A. Pray for God to use you (both inside and outside your classroom) to lead a child to Christ. Pray for God to use you and for Him to prepare the children with whom you will be sharing the message of salvation. Don't delay!
- B. Creatively communicate, in an age-appropriate way, the basic truths of the message of salvation.

The following examples are ideas of how to explain these verses to 5-6-year-olds. You can modify the explanations for older children.

- i. God made me, loves me and wants to have a forever friendship with me. (Genesis 1:1,27; Psalm 139:14; John 3:16)
- ii. I have made bad decisions and these decisions separate me from God because He is perfect and always makes good decisions. (Romans 3:23, 6:23; Isaiah 59:2)
- iii. Jesus Christ is God's Son and is perfect. He has NEVER made a bad decision. (Acts 9:20; 2 Corinthians 5:21)
- iv. Since God doesn't make bad decisions, He is sinless. He can't tolerate bad decisions and just let them go. He decided to solve this problem by sending His Son Jesus to die on the cross and then come back to life! This is how God decided to forgive me for the bad decisions I make. (1 Corinthians 15:2-4)
- v. The only way for me to be forgiven for the bad decisions I make and to have a good relationship with God is to tell God I am sorry for the bad decisions I have made. I also need to believe that God allowed Jesus to die on the cross and be brought back to life so my bad decisions will be forgiven and erased forever! (John 1:12, 3:16, 3:36)
- vi. God wants to help me change and grow in my new life as I learn how to be more like Jesus. (2 Peter 3:18)
- C. Make a specific plan to allow children to respond to the movement of the Holy Spirit and extend God's invitation so they can respond to the message of salvation. (*This should only be done AFTER the message has been shared carefully and in its entirety.*)
- D. Make yourself available to counsel individual children who desire to respond to God's invitation.
- E. Help the child take the first steps of spiritual growth: read the Bible, pray, attend church, confess sin, and share their decision with others.
- F. Remember that leading a child to Christ is only one step along the pathway of helping children to become transformed in their new life with Him. Your commitment to discipleship must continue beyond this conversation about salvation.



### Here is a plan for presenting the message of salvation when you lead children to Christ:

- A. God loves you and wants to be a better friend of yours. He wants us to live with Him in heaven; however, we have a problem. The problem is called sin. Sin is everything we think, say or do that God doesn't like. Can you think of things you think, say or do that are bad? (Let the children respond; read Romans 3:23.) The Bible says that sin must be punished. (Read Romans 6:23.)
- B. God loves you so much that He wants to forgive all your sins. That's why He sent His only Son, Jesus, to die on the cross and carry the punishment for your sins. Three days later, He rose to prove He can save us from our sins. When you say to God, "Forgive me for my sins," and receive, "Jesus as your Savior," God forgives and forgets your sins and you become part of His family forever. (Read John 1:12.)
- C. When you receive Jesus as your Savior, you have the security that one day you will be with Him in Heaven. The Bible talks about this eternal life. (Read John 3:16.)
- D. Then ask, "Do you want to accept Jesus as your Savior and be a friend of God?"
- E. Guide each child to receive Christ by means of prayer.

#### Consider the following when praying:

- A. Children must recognize they are sinners.
- B. They must ask for forgiveness of their sins.
- C. They need to confess that Jesus died and rose. (Romans 10:9-10.)
- D. They must pray to receive Christ as their Savior.
- E. They must thank God for saving them.

### **Additional tips:**

- A. Encourage the children to pray in their own words.
- B. If they don't feel confident enough to pray, help them by following the steps above.
- C. Respect their decision. If they say, "No," there will be other opportunities.
- D. Encourage the children, telling them that this is only the beginning of a new life and now as children of God they need to believe it.







