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JONAH AND THE BIG FISH

The Great Commission

YEAR 2 – KINGDOM LIFE

UNIT 9: SPREADING THE KINGDOM

1 | Teacher's Notes

Scripture The book of Jonah; Matthew 28:18-20

Objectives To explain that

- Today's story is about spreading God's Kingdom.
- God used the prophet Jonah to save Nineveh from destruction.
- Jonah was angry with God for saving Nineveh. He didn't care about the people of Nineveh, but only about himself and his own people. Israel often failed to show God's love to the nations as God had called them to do.
- Now God is calling his new people, the Church, to show his love to others and lead them to Jesus. Jesus wants us to be like him and say "yes" to God.
- Jesus has promised to be with us through his Holy Spirit who gives us power to tell others about him.

Memory Verse Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you." (Matthew 28:18-20 – NIRV)

ACNA Catechism Connections Today's story of Jonah and the Big Fish is connected to the following Catechism questions:

Q99 Why is the Church called "apostolic"? An apostle is one who is sent. The Church is called "apostolic" because it holds the faith of the first apostles sent by Christ. In continuity with them, the Church is likewise sent by Christ to proclaim the Gospel and to make disciples throughout the whole world.

Q139 What is the work of all Christians? All Christians are to bear witness to Christ in their lives; to care for the poor, strangers, widows, and orphans; and, according to their gifts, to serve Christ in the world and in the Church.

**Suggested
Materials,
Props, and
Costumes**

Big story props:

- Large Bible
- Kingdom Life storyboard (see photo)

Lesson Props: (see Props Document for instructions on how to make these)

- Set up storyboard complete with the 9 peg people around the Trinity. Place another peg doll on the grey area of storyboard.
- Make a story mat made of posterboard to represent half land/half water. See props document.
- 13 felt circles (approx. 3.5 inch wide) cut from green felt that was left over when you made the storyboard
- Storyboard unit title: "Spreading the Kingdom", attached to one of the green felt circles.
- Story box with the following props in it (see props document):
 - Peg dolls: Jonah and two sailors
 - Cardboard boat for the three peg dolls
 - Two pictures of Nineveh, one with "sin and evil" written on it, the other with "repented" written on it.
 - Word card: "40 Days"
 - Cardboard wave
 - Large fish made of double card with space inside large enough for Jonah peg doll

Memory Verse: Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you." (Matthew 28: 18-20 – NIRV)

(Found on the last page of this lesson plan) Print out and place in large Bible.

2 | Lesson Outline:

Welcome	As the children arrive ensure each one is personally welcomed and everyone knows each other's name.
Greeting & Collect for Purity	Light the candles Say the Greeting and Collect for Purity (<i>see Resource Section</i>)
Prayer of Confession	Say the Prayer of Confession (<i>see Resource Section</i>) Extinguish the candles
Music	This Little Light of Mine Song for the Nations (May We Be a Shining Light) <i>Please check internet for lyrics and music.</i>
Review of foundations	Choose from the following as appropriate: The Lord's Prayer, The Apostles Creed, The Ten Commandments or The Greatest Commandment. <i>For more information on how to teach these, see Resource Section</i>
Reading	Memory verse (Printed out and placed in large Bible – invite older child to read)
Story Board Review	Ask review questions relating to props from previous lessons on story board. <i>Story board review is found in Section 4</i>
Props/Costumes	Take a few moments to arrange the narrator and actors. (Props should already be set up prior to the start of the class.) Big story props: Large Bible, Kingdom Life storyboard
Bible Story	<i>Proceed with story and questions found in Section 4.</i>
Related activities	<i>After the story, proceed with related activities found in Section 5.</i>
Preparation for Communion & leaving class	Gather the children together for the Preparation for Communion prayer before exiting the classroom. <i>See Resource Section.</i>

3 | Storyboard Progression



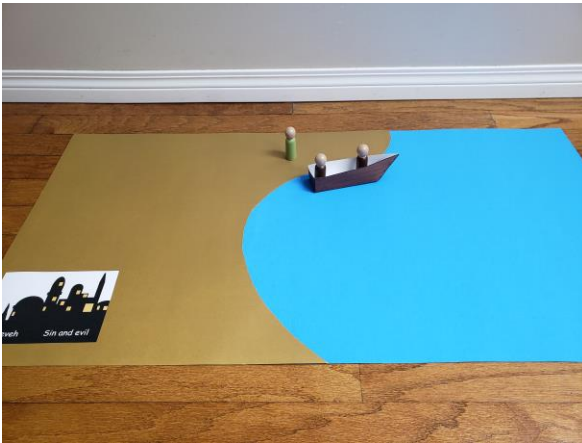
This is how the storyboard should look at the **start** of the lesson



This is how the Spreading the Kingdom section should look at the **end** of the lesson. The green circles are added all around God's Kingdom on the storyboard. Leave the storyboard like this for next week.

See next page for placement of props for the Jonah story.

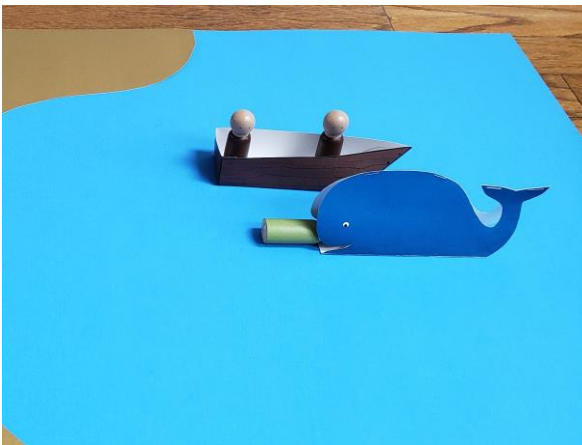
How to use the props for the Jonah story:



1. Jonah enters the boat



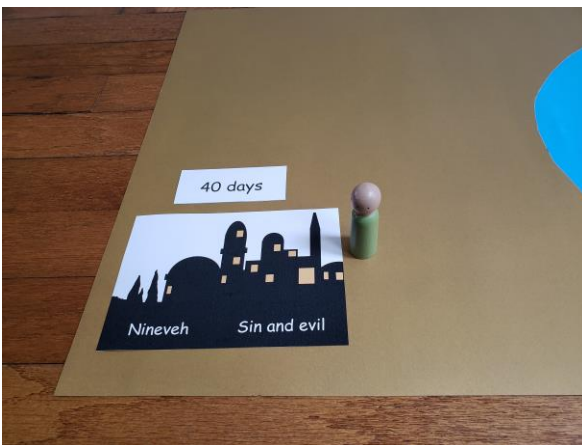
2. God sends the storm



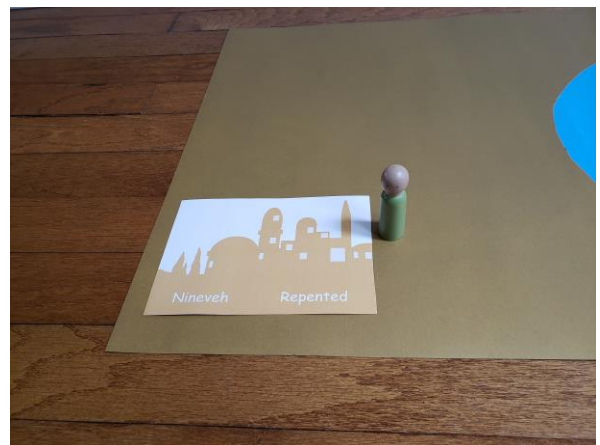
3. Fish swallows Jonah



4. Fish spits Jonah onto dry land



5. Jonah goes to Nineveh



6. Nineveh repents

4 | Story and Questions

SETUP: Set up two teaching stations: One with the story mat (sea and dry land, with dark version of Nineveh already attached) and props for the Jonah story (have the props hidden in a box and pull them out as you tell the story.) At the second teaching station set up the Kingdom Life storyboard. Place another peg doll on the grey area a distance away from the cross. Start the story by the first station.

BIBLE: Hold up the Bible and say: 'Today's story is from the Bible, and it is about Spreading God's Kingdom and about how the Kingdom grows.'

STORY: (If two teachers are present, one can move the figures and props while the other reads the story.)

TEACHER: Have you ever told others about Jesus, maybe to a friend or a relative? *(Allow children to respond.)* Sometimes that might be easy to do, but sometimes it can be hard.

Today's story is about a man called Jonah. *(Place Jonah on the "dry land" next to the "sea".)* Jonah did not want to share God's message. He found it hard.

Jonah was an Israelite who lived in Old Testament times. He was a prophet, which means that God would give him special messages to share with the people.

(Hold right hand over Jonah) One day God said to Jonah: "I want you to go to the great city of Nineveh. I have seen that the people of Nineveh have sinned and done great evil to each other." *(Point to dark Nineveh picture on story mat).*

God said: "Jonah, tell the people of Nineveh that I will destroy their city in 40 days because of their sin."

Nineveh was a city far away in the country of Assyria. The Israelites were afraid of the Assyrians because they were so evil and violent. Jonah really did not care about the people of Nineveh, and he didn't want to go there and share God's message. Jonah said "no" to God. *(Twist Jonah as if shaking his head).*

He found a boat that was going in the opposite direction from Nineveh. *(Place boat with sailors on the "sea" next to the dry land.)*

Jonah got into the boat. *(Place Jonah in boat.)*

(Move boat away from Nineveh as you say): Jonah wanted to run away from God. Is it possible to run away from God? No, because God is Almighty – he is all powerful, all knowing and everywhere present!

God sent a big storm against the boat *(place waves in front of boat)*. The boat was almost breaking apart in the storm, and the sailors were afraid. They said to Jonah: “Who are you? What have you done to bring this trouble on us?”

(Point to Jonah) Jonah said: “I’m sorry, this is all my fault. I worship the Almighty God who made heaven and earth, but I am running away from him. That is why he has brought this storm on us. You will have to throw me overboard into the sea. Then all will be calm.”

The sailors did as Jonah said and threw him into the sea *(lay Jonah down in the sea in front of boat)*. Then the sea became calm *(remove waves)*, and God sent a very large fish to swallow Jonah. *(Place the fish in front of boat and slide Jonah inside it.)*

(Move fish and Jonah slowly towards dry land as you say): Jonah was alive inside the belly of the great fish for three days and three nights. While he was inside the fish, Jonah prayed to God, and thanked God for saving him.

Then God caused the fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. *(Move fish up to dry land and move Jonah out from inside the fish onto the dry land. Stand Jonah upright.)*

God spoke to Jonah again and said *(hold hand over Jonah):* “Go to Nineveh and give them the message I tell you.”

This time Jonah obeyed God and went to Nineveh *(walk Jonah over to Nineveh)*. Jonah walked through the city *(walk Jonah through the city)* and called out: “In 40 days God will destroy this city because of your sin and evil!” *(Place “40 days” sign above Nineveh.)*

When the people of Nineveh heard this, they repented and turned from their evil ways. *(Place bright Nineveh picture over top of the dark one to cover it.)* They cried out to God for mercy.

When God saw that the people of Nineveh had repented, he took pity on them, and did not destroy the city after all. *(Remove “40 days” sign.)*

(Point to Jonah) But when Jonah saw that God had mercy on the people of Nineveh, he became angry. He didn’t think it was fair that God should have mercy

on them after he had told them the city would be destroyed. Jonah did not care about the people of Nineveh. Jonah only cared about himself and his own people. But God had always cared about all the nations of the world, including Nineveh. He had called his people, the Israelites, to show God's love to other nations, but they often disobeyed God and only cared about themselves.

Let's move over to the storyboard to talk about what God is calling **us** to do.

ACTION: *Move over to the storyboard with the children.*

TEACHER: Now, God is calling his new people, the Church (*point to peg people around Trinity*), to share his love with others.

Our memory verse today is the last commandment Jesus gave his disciples before he went up to Heaven to be with the Father. This commandment is called "The Great Commission". Let's read it:

STUDENT: Jesus said: "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations. Baptize them and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you."

TEACHER: Jesus wants us to be like him (*point to Jesus*). Jesus wants us to say "yes" to God, just like **he** did when he came to seek and save the lost (*point to flashlight*). Jesus is calling us to go to those who don't know him yet and lead them to him. (*Walk one of the peg dolls from the Trinity circle over to the doll on the grey area.*)

He wants us to tell them the wonderful news that Jesus is the true King over all the world, that Jesus loves them so much that he died and rose again to set them free from sin, and that they can turn from their sin and receive God's forgiveness and life.

When they put their trust in Jesus, and are baptized, they become Jesus' disciples. (*Walk the two dolls through the cross and place them in the Kingdom with the other peg dolls.*) Then they will live forever with God's people in his wonderful Kingdom of life and love.

TEACHER: God called Jonah to go to a different country to share his message. Even today God calls people to go to other countries to share the good news about Jesus. Not everyone is called to another country, but we are **all** called to tell others about Jesus.

When we lead others to Jesus, the Kingdom of God grows, and more people can know God's love and forgiveness. Let's place these green circles on our storyboard to remind us that God is calling us to spread his Kingdom by sharing the good news of Jesus with others. *(Place the green felt circle with the unit title on the storyboard as shown. Then hand out felt circles to the children for them to place around the edges of the green felt.)*

Remember in our memory verse, Jesus promised that he will always be with us? *(Point to the memory verse.)* It is by the power of God's Holy Spirit who lives within us that we can tell others about Jesus, our Forever King.

Life Application Prayer:

TEACHER: Heavenly Father, thank you that we can share your love with others at home, at school and anywhere in the world. When we lead others to Jesus, the Kingdom of God grows. Thank you that your Holy Spirit lives within us and gives us power to tell others about Jesus, our Forever King.

SUGGESTED QUESTIONS:

- **What does this story tell us about God?** (God is merciful when we repent of our sins and turn to him. God loves all people and all nations.)
- **What did God call Jonah to do in our story?** (To go to Nineveh and warn the people that God would destroy their city because of their sin.)
- **Why did God decide to destroy Nineveh?** (Because they sinned and did great evil.)
- **Did Jonah obey God at first?** (No, he tried to run away from God on a boat.)
- **How did God bring Jonah back from the boat?** (He sent a storm and then a great fish that swallowed Jonah and spat him up on dry land.)
- **What happened when the people of Nineveh repented and cried out to God for mercy?** (God had mercy on them and did not destroy their city.)
- **How did Jonah react when God did not destroy Nineveh?** (He was angry. He did not care about the people in Nineveh, he only cared about himself and his own people.)
- **Does God care about those who don't know him yet?** (Yes, he cares about everybody in every nation. God also wants us to care about those who don't know him.)
- **What did Jesus command his disciples to do just before he went up to Heaven?** (Go into all the world and make disciples, baptizing them and teaching them everything I commanded you.)
- **What is this commandment called?** (The Great Commission)
- **What does Jesus want us, as his disciples, to do?** (Tell others the good news about salvation through Jesus.)
- **How does the Kingdom of God grow?** (When we lead other people to Jesus, and they love and follow him.)
- **What did Jesus promise before he went up to Heaven?** (That he would always be with us. Jesus is with us through his Holy Spirit who gives us power to tell others about Jesus.)

5 | Response Activities

Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement

- Have the children complete the activities in the Kingdom News handout and colouring supplement.

Optional activities

- Different learning stations, such as: a book table, modelling clay, colouring papers

(The Great Commission)

Jesus said:

"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. So you must go and make disciples of all nations.

Baptize them ... and teach them to obey everything I have commanded you. And you can be sure that I am always with you."

(Matthew 28: 18-20)