

Jonah 3

The Preacher

Scripture: Jonah 3

Memory Verse: 2 Corinthians 7:10 *“For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death.”*

Lesson Focus: After three days in the belly of a giant fish, Jonah is given a **second chance** and appears ready to obey God. We will see God use him in a way that even he probably didn't expect as the people he preaches to truly repent and appear to believe in the God of second chances. God is still offering **second chances** today! Our prayer is that kids will see their need for the grace and mercy of God and truly turn to Him.

Activities and Crafts: Jonah Preaching Coloring Picture, Word Search of different terms from lesson, Find the Treasure Discussion for 3rd – 5th.
Craft for 1st/2nd Grade: Carnival Game

Starter Activity: Second Chances

Consider starting off the lesson with a challenge that you will have a few volunteers come and try. It should be something very difficult to win, like a carnival game of some sort where the odds of winning are really low. Before you play, consider having some discussion about carnival games. Talk about how hard they are yet how you still want to play them because you want to win that big prize! Maybe even share a personal story of a carnival game that you always enjoyed as a youngster. *

Look online for some simple carnival game ideas. Or below are a few easy one's:

- 1) Roll three dice. You have to roll all sixes to win. (**Teachers:** We will leave these dice in your room in case you just want to do this) *
- 2) Bring in a basket and a ball and have the kids throw from behind their back and land it in the basket.
- 3) Bring in a golf putter and a golf ball and have kids try and put the ball across the room into something.

Pick several volunteers to play and let them know they only get ONE TRY! * To raise the stakes a little, consider even having a prize ready for anyone that can win. Assuming most, if not all of the kids fail, ask them if they would all like to have a **second chance**. After they all have taken their second chance try, have them then sit down and then transition into the lesson on this topic of **second chances**.

We all like to have second chances, don't we? As we continue with the book of Jonah today, we are going to see that God is also a God of second chances. Let's see how!

Bible Study:

Jonah 2:10: If you missed one or both of our last two lessons on Jonah, this probably sounds outrageous to you. Therefore, let's review a little of what we have learned in the first two chapters.

Jonah was a Jewish prophet of God who lived about 750-800 hundred years before Jesus. He was told by God to go into enemy territory (Nineveh of the Assyrians) and warn them to repent or turn away from their evil ways and turn toward the one true and living God (Who was going to otherwise destroy them because of their evil and sin).

Q: Did Jonah listen and obey?

A: NO! Not only did he not listen, but he got onto a ship sailing in the OPPOSITE direction thinking he could hide from God. *

Q: What happened next?

A: God engulfed his ship with a huge storm. After he was thrown overboard by the crew the storm stopped. But Jonah? Instead of drowning, God saved him by having a huge fish swallow him where he was safe for three days! I'd say God sorta put Jonah in "timeout"!

Q: What did Jonah do inside the fish? A: He prayed and turned back to God. **Read Jonah 2:9.** He appears to have a change of heart and God has the fish barf him onto land! Wow!

Jonah 3:1-2: Now after this silly game of hide-and-peek with God (which God won!), the storm, and the fish, God gives his marching orders to Jonah a second time.

Q: What were they? A: To go and preach to Nineveh of the Assyrians.

Now did you notice who got a **second chance**? Jonah! He certainly didn't deserve this, but God is a God of second chances! That's called GRACE, when we realize we don't deserve a second chance and yet are offered one anyway! Let's see what he does!

Jonah 3:3a: He finally goes! Another translation says that he went **immediately**. I bet many of you can identify with Jonah here. Imagine your Mom or Dad telling you to do something (like clean your room) and you say "NO" just like Jonah said to God. * After receiving the appropriate punishment you turn back to your Mom or Dad truly sorry. While they forgive you, there is still a messy room that needs to be cleaned!

Q: Now if you were truly sorry, what would you start doing **immediately**? A: Cleaning that room!

Jonah 3:3b: Nineveh is described as a magnificent city. It was one of the major cities of the Assyrian empire which was one of Israel's ancient enemies. For many years, modern people thought this city (and the book of Jonah) was a myth (like a fairy tale) because there were no other records of its existence. But in the 1800s, archaeologists discovered a treasure trove of artifacts proving its existence and verifying the Bible's accuracy! *

Jonah 3:4: Finally, we get to see Jonah the preacher in action!

Q: Does anyone know what country Israel is at war with in our day? A: Iran, which is just a little East of where Nineveh was. Imagine a prophet today marching into Iran today and warning them that they will be destroyed if they do not repent and turn to God! *

Jonah 3:5: What? Did we read that correctly? They responded to Jonah's message! * WOW! This reminds me of what we saw often in the book of Acts. Peter or Paul would preach a simple message about God's salvation and thousands would turn away from their sin and turn to God (see **Acts 2:40-41**). Only God could do this! *

Jonah 3:6-7: Not only did the people of Nineveh respond to God's call to repent, but so did the king! This talk of fasting, sackcloth, and ashes describes an ancient way to show that you were indeed TRULY sorry for your sin.

Let's make sure we all know the difference between REAL sorry and FAKE sorry.
Teachers: Consider going back to the example earlier in the lesson about saying "NO" to your Mom or Dad about cleaning your room. Ask your kids what a REAL sorry might look like (asking for forgiveness and then willingness to do the work) and what a FAKE sorry might look like (bratty "*I'm sorry*" with grumpiness towards the work). * Or even better, act this out pretending to be the Mom/Dad and have your helper or a kid volunteer do their best imitation of a REAL vs. FAKE sorry for some laughs with the class. *

Read 2 Corinthians 7:10 (our memory verse). Not only can your parents tell REAL sorry from FAKE sorry, but so can God! REAL sorry produces a change of mind and heart with a focus on the one you've wronged. FAKE sorry is still a focus only on self.

Jonah 3:8: The king of Nineveh urges everyone to turn away from their evil ways and cry out to God for mercy! Notice they admit that they have done wrong! Another sign that your sorry is REAL is that you admit your wrongdoing and ask for mercy and forgiveness. *

Jonah 3:9: Mercy is NOT getting what you deserve. The King appears to know he deserves punishment, but is leading the plea to God for mercy. You know what the king is ultimately pleading God for? A **second chance**! God has already given Jonah a second chance. Do you think He will do the same for these evil Ninevites?

Jonah 3:10: YES! He does, because our God is a God of second chances!

Key Point: While in the Bible, we do see God dishing out punishment on people who deserve it, we don't EVER see God refusing mercy to those who ask for it with a TRULY repentant heart. This is because God is gracious and merciful! * And He desires all people to turn to Him with a TRULY repentant heart and be saved. *

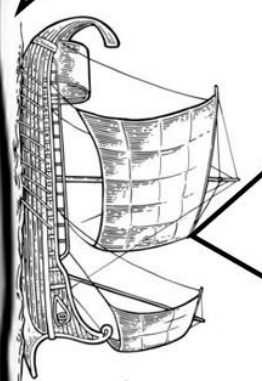
How about you? Perhaps you have been resisting God's offer of forgiveness. You have been saying YES to sin and NO to God. You've only been giving God "FAKE sorrys". God offers you a **second chance** today! * Give Him your "REAL sorry" today, turning away from your sin and turning to Him (**2 Corinthians 7:10**).

Or maybe you have a "Ninevite" in your life...someone that is mean to you that seems beyond God's reach. Pray for them! Perhaps God would even have you to go to them in kindness and tell them about Jesus and how He is a God of **second chances**! *

FIND THE TREASURE



Read 2 Cor. 7:10
What is the difference
between REAL sorry and
FAKE sorry?



PARENT CHALLENGE
Who were given “second chances” in the
text of Scripture today?

Read Jonah 3:10
Why did God have mercy on
the people of Nineveh?