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JONAH AND THE WHALE

Theme : God has control over His creation

AIM:

To understand that God may use any of His creation to fulfill His divine purpose.

TEACHER PREPERATION:

Nineveh is described in Genesis 10:11 as having been founded by Nimrod, the hunter who built the tower of Babel. With that legacy, one can possibly understand why the people of Nineveh were wicked in their ways. The Jews were followers of God. They would not want the unfaithful and wicked to be afforded the same relationship with their God but rather to be judged for their ways. It is with this in mind that Jonah looked to run the other way.

The lesson is focused on how God has control over nature and His creation. He used the storm and the whale to change Jonah. It must be reiterated what a powerful God we have. It is important to understand that he did all this so that he could save the people of Nineveh. We see God's love for all His people.

INTRODUCTION ACTIVITY

1. Ask the children the following questions:

- Have you ever been in a very bad storm? Describe it.
- How did you feel?
- How does it feel to not be in control?

2. Ask the children the following questions:

Have you ever disobeyed your parents or your teachers? Was there any consequence?

In today's lesson, we are going to learn about a man who tried to disobey God. Let's see what happened to him.

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Theme : God has control over His creation

Jonah 1:1-17

Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah son of Amittai, saying, ²“Go at once to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before me.” ³But Jonah set out to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the LORD. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish; so he paid his fare and went on board, to go with them to Tarshish, away from the presence of the LORD.

⁴But the LORD hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. ⁵Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. ⁶The captain came and said to him, “What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.”

⁷The sailors^[a] said to one another, “Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.” So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. ⁸Then they said to him, “Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” ⁹“I am a Hebrew,” he replied. “I worship the LORD, the

God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.” ¹⁰Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, “What is this that you have done!” For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the LORD, because he had told them so.

¹¹Then they said to him, “What shall we do to you that the sea may quiet down for us?” For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. ¹²He said to them, “Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quiet down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.” ¹³Nevertheless the men rowed hard to bring the ship back to land, but they could not, for the sea grew more and more stormy against them. ¹⁴Then they cried out to the LORD, “Please, O LORD, we pray, do not let us perish on account of this man’s life. Do not make us guilty of innocent blood; for you, O LORD, have done as it pleased you.” ¹⁵So they picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea; and the sea ceased from its raging. ¹⁶Then the men feared the LORD even more, and they offered a sacrifice to the LORD and made vows.

¹⁷^[b] But the LORD provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.

Jonah 2:10

¹⁰Then the LORD spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

AIM:

To understand that God may use any of His creation to fulfill His divine purpose.



Introduction

Have you ever played “Hide and Seek”? It is a common game among young children. We try to find the perfect hiding place where it takes others a very long time to find you.

In today’s lesson, we are going to study about a person who tried to hide from God. Do you think it is possible to hide from God? Through the lesson, let us see who that person was and what happened to him?

Bible Exploration

One day God told Jonah to go to the city of Nineveh and warn the people that God would destroy them and their city if they did not stop being wicked. God asked Jonah to warn them against their sins and to preach about repentance and salvation. He was commissioned to bring the word of God to the Ninevites. Jonah was not happy to hear this at all because people of Nineveh were Gentiles. Jonah, being a Jew, knew that if he preached to the Gentiles and they repent, God who is loving and merciful would forgive them. Jonah did not want this to happen because the Ninevites were the enemy of Israelites. He got on a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish which was far away from Nineveh. As we read in the Bible portion, God sent a huge storm and the sailors threw Jonah into the sea. God sent a big fish (probably a whale) to swallow Jonah. He remained three days in the big fish’s stomach. The third day the fish spit Jonah on the shore.

Jonah willingly disobeyed God. He tried to ignore God’s call and attempted to run away. But in the end, he learned a valuable lesson about God’s mercy and forgiveness. God may use different means and ways to find the lost.

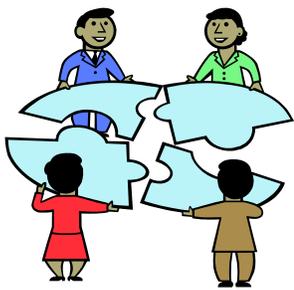
Through the Bible portion, we learned that God is in control of all events in nature. He sent a wind to create a storm to destroy the ship and he commanded the fish to swallow and spit out Jonah.

Nineveh & Tarshish

From the map, we can see that Tarshish is in the total opposite direction of Nineveh. Nineveh is located in present day Iraq.

In what present day country is Tarshish located?





Activities

Put the following events in chronological order.

- A. Jonah is swallowed by a giant fish.
- B. Word of the Lord came to Jonah to preach to the Ninevites
- C. The Lord commands the fish to spit Jonah onto dry land
- D. Jonah boards a ship to Tarshish
- E. Jonah is thrown overboard
- F. A storm threatened to sink the ship



Let's Review

Using the noted bible passage, answer the following questions.

Jonah 1:1-2 What did God want Jonah to do?

Jonah 1:2-3. What did Jonah do instead?

Jonah 1:4-5. Where was Jonah when the storm began?

Jonah 1:6-8. What did the sailors do to determine the reason for the storm?

Jonah 1:9-10. Why did Jonah's answer scare the sailors?

Jonah 1:11-12. What did Jonah instruct the sailors to do to calm the storm?

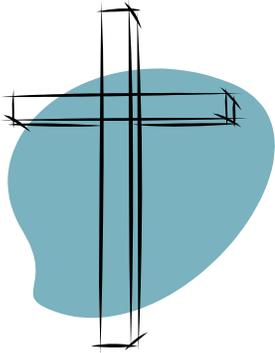
Jonah 1:13-15. What happened when the sailors did what they were told?

Jonah 1:16-17. What did the sailors do? What happened to Jonah?



Values For Life

We may think that we can run or hide from God, but we are only fooling ourselves. We must learn to follow God's word and strive to do His will. God will save us if we call upon him. God commands everything in His creation from the weather to a whale, to carry out His plan. God is always in control.



Faith In Action

- Do you know that God is in control of every situation?
- When you are facing a difficult time, do you place your trust in God?
- Rather than running away from God, are we ready to run to Him?



Memory Verse

But the Lord provided a large fish to swallow up Jonah; and Jonah was in the belly of the fish for three days and three nights.

Jonah 1:17



Closing Prayer

We thank you Lord that you are in control over all things here on earth and in heaven. Let us not run away from you Lord and help us to follow your will always.

