



July's B.i.G. Idea

We believe that we can live and act with love and courage because God is always with us.

July's Bible Verse

My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth. Psalm 121:2

July's B.i.G. Theme

Come, Live the Adventure

Lesson 6 ★ Jonah

Today's Bible Story

The Book of Jonah

Three B.i.G. (Believe in God) Truths

- ★ God is a great big God.
- ★ God loves us with a great big love.
- ★ We are part of God's great big world.

Objectives

- ★ Children will hear the Bible story about Jonah.
- ★ Children will recognize that God's grace is for everyone.

Jonah has been called many names—the reluctant prophet, the backwards prophet, the runaway prophet—and for good reasons! When God called Jonah to go to Nineveh, Jonah did not want to go. The people of Nineveh were known for being cruel and dangerous. So Jonah decided to run away from God. He jumped on a ship headed in the opposite direction. There was only one problem: running away from God is impossible.

Before long a terrible storm arose, tossing the boat on the sea. The sailors prayed to their gods, but the storm grew worse. Finally Jonah said, "I am to blame. God is angry with me. Throw me into the sea." The sailors protested, but it was their only hope. When they threw Jonah overboard, the sea calmed down and the sailors, marveling, worshiped the one true God.

Meanwhile, God had not given up on Jonah. God sent a great fish to rescue him. Jonah stayed in the belly of the fish for three days,

praying to God. "I am sorry," Jonah said. After three days the fish spat Jonah out onto the shore; and again God said, "Go to Nineveh."

Jonah still did not want to obey, but he went. He told the people of Nineveh they had forty days to change their ways, to live in peace with one another and with God. The king declared that everyone should repent, and they did. Nineveh was saved!

This should have been good news for Jonah. But instead, Jonah was angry with God for refusing to punish this wicked city. Jonah, like many of us, found it easy to convince himself that some sins are worse than others. He discounted his own disobedience. He did not want to share God's grace with others.

When we read the story of Jonah, we can find deep reassurance of God's love for us. God believed in Jonah, and loved and forgave Jonah. God believed in the people of Nineveh, and loved and forgave them. God believes in us, and loves and forgives us. This is wonderful news! Even when we run away, God is always at work. Look at Jonah! Even though Jonah ran away, God used the situation to help the sailors on the ship learn about God. God can turn our mistakes into something positive!

We do not know how Jonah's story ends. We are left wondering how he lives out the rest of his life. Did Jonah accept God's unconditional love, or did he decide he could not accept a love like this? And how about us? What will we do with the gift of God's grace?

Invite them in . . . (15 minutes)

Welcome!	✓	
Make Sailor Hats		✓
Jonah Dot-to-Dot	✓	
Make a Big Fish		

. . . Into the Bible (30 minutes)

Build a Boat		✓
Hear the Bible Story		✓
Adventure Passports	✓	
Backyard Time	✓	

. . . Into Life (15 minutes)

Praise Time	✓	
Closing Worship		



TimeSaver
Activities that require little or no planning and only basic supplies.



EcoFriendly
Activities that encourage responsible earth stewardship by providing options to use recycled or repurposed materials.

DVD Summary: Backyard Time

A bake-off in the Backyard shows what happens when we follow directions and what happens when we do not follow directions. Before the bake-off begins, Mr. Z leads the children in saying the Bible verse: "My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth" (Psalm 121:2). As the teams work, Mr. Z tells the Bible story about Jonah. Ms. Lucy's team carefully reads and follows every instruction for making a pineapple upside-down cake, while Bongo's team decides to do it without any directions. You can guess how it turns out, and your preschoolers will learn a valuable lesson.

LIVE BIG

The B.i.G. Idea

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Choose one or more activities to introduce your children to the Bible story.

Welcome!

Supplies: Stickers, Attendance Chart, Leader—inside front cover, DVD, DVD player, television

- Do** ★ Welcome the children as they arrive. Give each child a big fish **Sticker** to place on the **Attendance Chart**.
- ★ **Say:** Today our Bible story is about a man named Jonah. Jonah did not want to follow God. He ran away from God and had an adventure with a very big fish!
- ★ **Ask:** Do you remember our Bible verse for this month? It says: “My help comes from the LORD, who made heaven and earth” (Psalm 121:2). We will find out how God helped Jonah.
- ★ Remind the children how to sign the Bible verse (**DVD; Leader—inside front cover**).

Live B.i.G. God is always with us to help us act with love and courage.

Make Sailor Hats

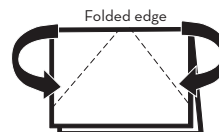
Supplies: DVD, Stickers, DVD player, television, newspapers, tape, markers or crayons

Prepare

- ★ Watch the July 10 Demonstration for making a sailor’s hat (**DVD**).

- Do** ★ Give each child a large (two-page spread) sheet of newspaper, folded in half.
- ★ Help the child fold the paper in half again, bringing the top down to the bottom.
- ★ Fold the paper one more time, this time bringing the left side to the right.
- ★ Unfold all but the original newspaper fold.

Fold the hats before class for younger children.



Invite them in . . .

- ★ Place the folded paper on the table, with the original newspaper fold at the top.
- ★ Fold the upper left corner down to the center line, and then fold the upper right corner down to the center line. You have now made the pointed top to the hat.
- ★ Fold one of the remaining bottom flaps up to the bottom of the pointed fold. Fold the bottom again, overlapping a bit of the pointed hat.
- ★ Turn the hat over and fold the bottom flap on this side.
- ★ You may want to use a bit of tape to secure the flaps.
- ★ Write the child's name on the hat with markers or crayons.
- ★ **Say:** Let's pretend to travel in a boat on an adventure! Put this **Sticker** on your sailor hat to help you remember today's adventure.
- ★ Give each child a big fish **Sticker**.
- ★ Invite the children to wear their sailor hats.

Collect the hats at the end of class. The children will wear the hats each Sunday during July.



Live B.i.G. Following God is a wonderful adventure.

Jonah Dot-to-Dot

Supplies: Leader—page 66, crayons or markers

Prepare

- ★ Photocopy “Where Is Jonah?” (**Leader—page 66**) for each child.

Do

- ★ Give each child a copy of “Where Is Jonah?” (**Leader—page 66**).
- ★ **Say:** Use your crayons to draw lines from one dot to the next dot.
- ★ **Ask:** What do you see? (*a man inside a fish*)
- ★ **Say:** In our Bible story, God sends a surprising helper to a man named Jonah.

Live B.i.G. God is always with us to help us act with love and courage.

Make a Big Fish!

Supplies: black trash bags (or a black sheet or black tablecloth), construction paper, scissors, markers, tape

Prepare

- ★ Cut trash bags down the center to open them up and make them bigger.
- ★ Cut out two white paper circles for eyes, and color a small black circle in each white eye to make it look more like an eyeball.

Do

- ★ Cover a table with black bags so that they hang over the table and touch the floor.
- ★ Tape one eye on each side of the fish.
- ★ Let children crawl under the table and pretend to be in the fish.
- ★ **Ask:** Can you imagine being inside a fish? How would it look? How would it smell? Would you be scared?
- ★ **Say:** Our Bible story is about a man named Jonah who did not want to follow God. Jonah ran away from God and wound up inside a big fish! We will find out how God helped Jonah through his adventure with the fish.

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Choose one or more activities to immerse your children in the Bible story.

Build a Boat

Supplies: large box, utility knife, white poster paper, glue gun, markers

Prepare

- ★ Cut away the top of the box (or fold down those sides for stability).
- ★ Attach white poster paper to the outside of the box.

Do

- ★ Invite the children to decorate the outside of the box with markers.
- ★ Invite the children to take turns playing in the boat.
- ★ **Say:** Our Bible story is about a man named Jonah who was not sure he wanted to follow God. Jonah got on a boat to try to run away from God. But God helped Jonah, and Jonah learned to follow God. Let's pretend we are traveling in a boat.
- ★ Have the children pretend to row a boat and sing.

My Help Comes From the Lord

(Tune: "The Farmer in the Dell")

My help comes from the Lord.
My help comes from the Lord.
Row along and sing this song;
My help comes from the Lord.

- ★ Lead the children to your storytelling area and have them sit down.

Live B.i.G. God is always with us to help us act with love and courage.

Hear the Bible Story

Supplies: Bible, Kids' Book, Leader—pages 65 and 67, paper grocery bag, glue

Prepare

- ★ Make two copies of "A Big Fish" (**Leader—page 67**).
- ★ Glue a fish picture on each side of a paper grocery bag so that the mouth of the fish is at the top opening of the bag.
- ★ Punch out the Jonah picture (**Kids' Book**) for each child.

Do

- ★ Hold your Bible open to the Book of Jonah.
- ★ **Say:** Our Bible story today is from the Book of Jonah.
- ★ Give each child a Jonah picture (**Kids' Book**).
- ★ Hold up the bag fish for the children to see.

- ★ **Say:** Hold on to Jonah as the Big Fish tells our Bible story.
- ★ Tell “A Big Fish Story” (**Leader—page 65**) to the children.
- ★ Have the children move their Jonah cards as indicated in the story.
- ★ **Ask:** Why did Jonah get swallowed by the great fish? Can you run away from God? Why not? What happened in the end to Jonah?
- ★ Jonah decided to follow God’s directions. God knows best and God wants us to follow God’s plan.

Live B.i.G. God is always with us to help us act with love and courage.

Adventure Passports

Supplies: Kids’ Book, Stickers, non-permanent ink pads, hand wipes, optional: real passport

Prepare

- ★ Punch out a passport (**Kids’ Book**) for each child.

Do

- ★ Give each child a passport (**Kids’ Book**).
- ★ Show the children a real passport if you have one available.
- ★ **Say:** When we travel to other countries, we need a passport. The passport tells where we live and who we are, and it has our picture on it. When we travel in and out of other countries, our passport is stamped to show where we have been! Let’s make passports for ourselves. We will use our thumbprints to show who we are.
- ★ Show each child how to press a thumb onto an ink pad and then onto the small square on the passport.
- ★ Wipe the ink off the child’s thumb with hand wipes.
- ★ **Say:** You will need a passport **Sticker**. We will use your passports each week as we pretend to travel! Today we went to Nineveh with Jonah. You need to have your passport with a Nineveh **Sticker** to get to Backyard Time.
- ★ Give each child the Nineveh **Sticker** and then have them sit down in your DVD viewing area.

Live B.i.G. God is always with us no matter where we go.

Backyard Time

Supplies: DVD, DVD player, television

- ★ **Do** ★ **Say:** Bongo, Ms. Lucy, and the kids are playing a game called “Let’s Follow Directions.” I wonder if anyone is having trouble following the directions.
- ★ Watch Backyard Time (**DVD**).
- ★ **Ask:** What happened when Bongo’s team failed to follow the directions? What can happen when we do not listen to God’s directions?
- ★ **Say:** Sometimes it is difficult to do the right thing. But when we make mistakes, God gives us a second chance.

Live B.i.G. God still loves us and gives us another chance, even when we make mistakes.



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Choose one or more activities to connect your children's lives to the Bible story.

Praise Time

Supplies: DVD, DVD player, television

- Do**
- ★ **Say:** Let's sing our new song with Mr. Z and his friends.
 - ★ Play "I'm Part of the Story Too" (**DVD**). Invite the children to sing and dance with the children in the backyard.
 - ★ **Ask:** Have you ever felt like Jonah? How did that feel? What special lesson does the story of Jonah have for us? How can Jonah's story be a guide for our lives?

Live B.i.G. Bible stories help teach us how God wants us to live.

Closing Worship

Supplies: Kids' Book, Stickers, Leader—page 65

Prepare

- ★ Detach a storybook for each child (**Kids' Book**) (instructions, page 144).
- ★ Photocopy "A Big Fish Story" (**Leader—page 65**) for each child.

- Do**
- ★ Gather the children into a circle.
 - ★ Place a "God Never Gives Up on Us" worship badge (**Stickers**) on each child.
 - ★ **Pray:** God, you did not give up on Jonah, and you never give up on us. Thank you, God! Amen.
 - ★ Give each child a storybook (**Kids' Book**) and a copy of "A Big Fish Story" (**Leader—page 65**) to take home.
 - ★ Collect the children's sailor hats so that they can wear them next week.

Live B.i.G. God never gives up on us. God is always with us to help us act with love and courage.

A Big Fish Story

Hello! I'm Big Fish, and I want to tell you a special story.

Long ago, I met a man named Jonah. You will never believe how we met, so let me tell you our story.

Well, it all started because Jonah did not know how important it is to follow God's directions.

God wanted Jonah to go to the town of Nineveh. The people there had turned away from God, and they weren't behaving nicely! Jonah didn't want to go, so he decided to run away instead.

He got on a boat going to Tarshish, a city far away from where God wanted him to go. But let me tell you, it was not smooth sailing! God sent a mighty storm to rock the boat!

The men on the boat knew something was wrong. Then Jonah realized that God had sent the storm because he had not followed God's directions. So Jonah told the men to throw him overboard and the storm would stop. *Ker-splash!* The men tossed Jonah into the ocean.

Here is where I come into the story! God sent me to swallow Jonah. I

saw Jonah trying his best to swim against the strong waves. He saw me coming, and he looked scared! I gulped him down, and he tickled my stomach as he moved all around.

Let me show you what that was like. Just drop Jonah right into my mouth.

(Take the fish to each child and let the child drop his or her Jonah card into the bag.)

For three days, I carried Jonah in my belly. He spent a lot of time in prayer, talking to God. He knew what he had to do! When God was ready, I spit him up onto dry land so he could follow God's directions!

Hey, it would be great if you would help me out for this part of the story. When I say, "Patooley!" reach in and get Jonah out of my belly. *(Say "Patooley!" as you hold the bag for each child and let her or him reach in and take out a Jonah card.)*

Thanks, that feels a lot better. Our man Jonah finally went to Nineveh and told the people about God's love. They stopped behaving badly and started following God.

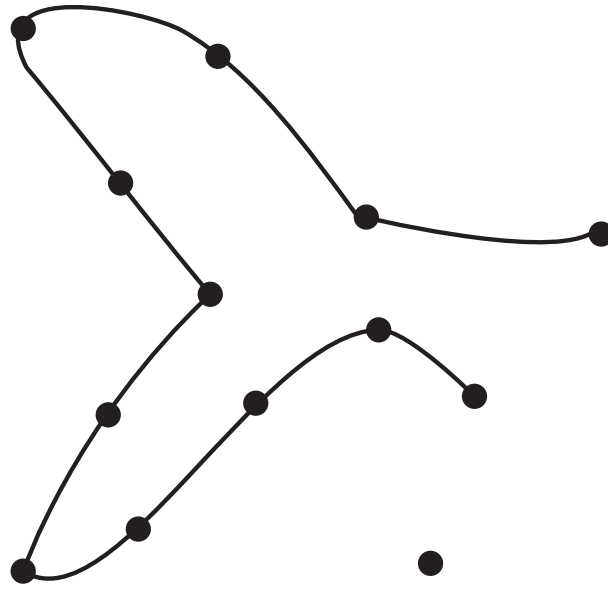
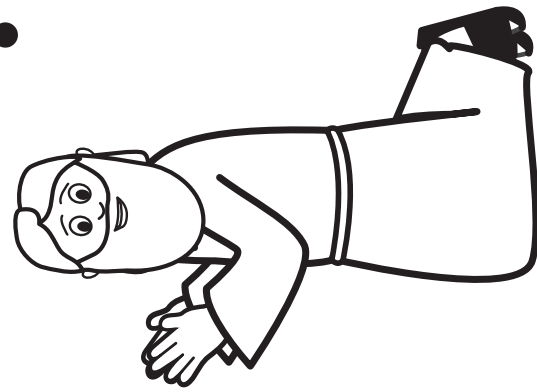
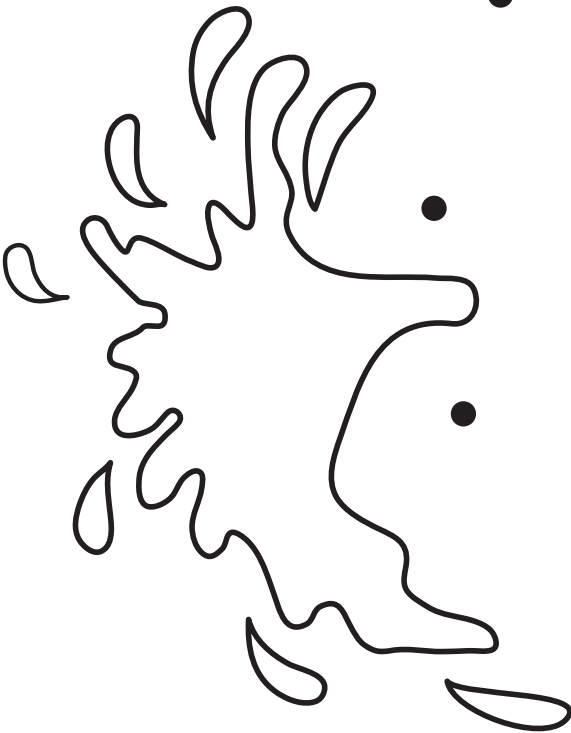
based on the Book of Jonah

Where Is Jonah?

Connect the dots to see where Jonah is.

**My help comes from the LORD,
who made heaven and earth.**

Psalm 121:2



A Big Fish

