

Something Smells Fishy

Jonah 1:10-17; 2; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 268, 269

Have you ever been asked to do something you really did not want to do? You kept putting it off. But you finally had to do it. Then you know just how one of God's friends felt.

Jonah had run away from God. He did not care where he went, just as long as it was far away from Nineveh. Now he was on a boat going to Tarshish, which was about as far away from Nineveh as he could get.

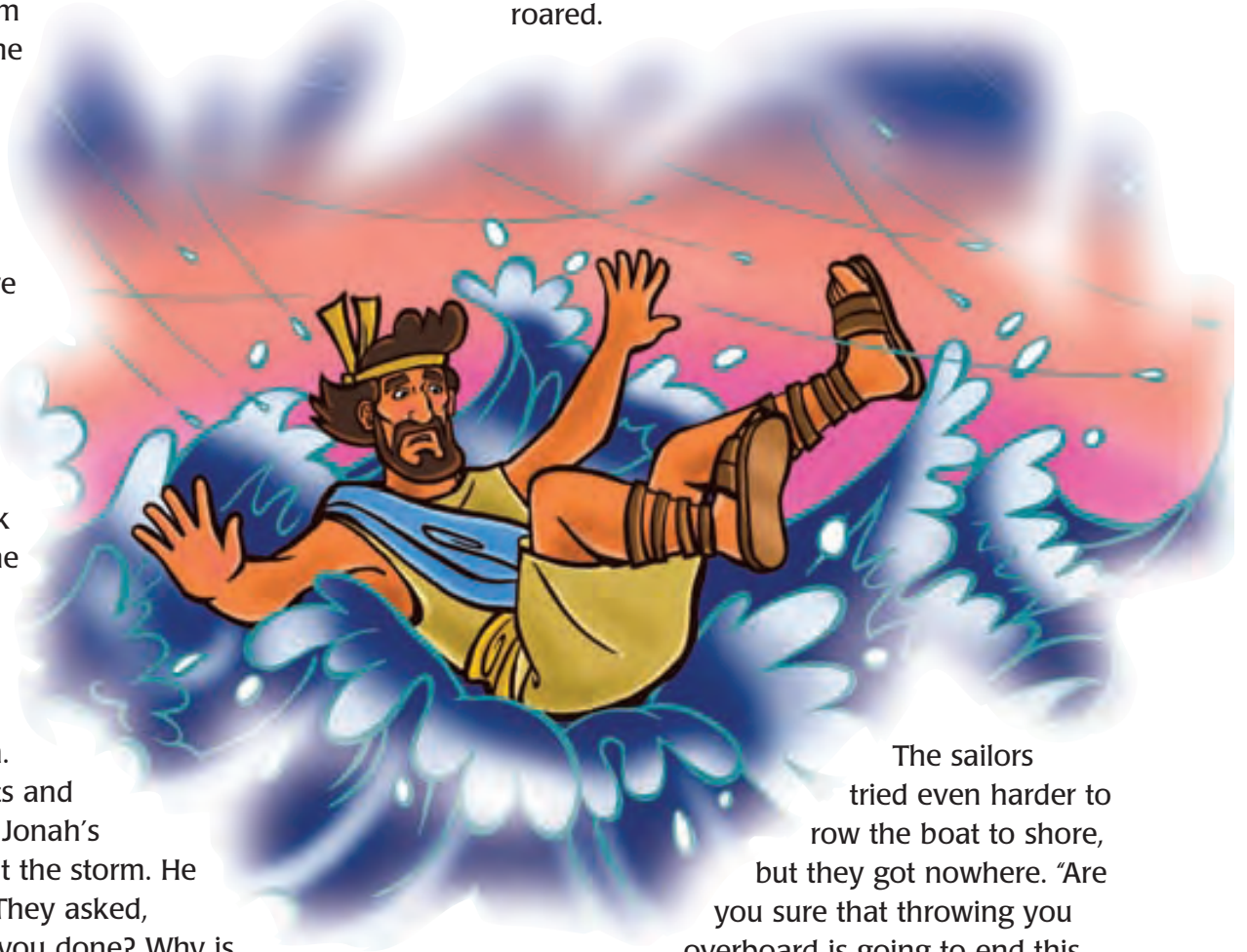
How wrong Jonah was! God knew exactly where he was and what he was doing. God sent a terrible storm to rock that boat. The sailors were terrified. They had never seen such a storm. They cast lots and learned that Jonah's God had sent the storm. He admitted it. They asked, "What have you done? Why is your God so angry with you?"

"I'm running away from what He wants me to do," Jonah answered. "He wanted me to go

to Nineveh, but it is such a dreadful place. I didn't want to go there. So I ran away from the Creator of the land and sea. The only way to calm the storm is to throw me overboard."

"Never! We can't do that," said the sailors. "We won't throw you overboard. You would die!"

But the waves got higher. The wind blew harder. The lightning flashed and the thunder roared.



The sailors tried even harder to row the boat to shore, but they got nowhere. "Are you sure that throwing you overboard is going to end this terrible storm?" the sailors asked Jonah.

"Yes," answered Jonah. "You must throw me overboard."

The Message

God helps me to admit my mistakes and make them right.

Memory Verse

“If we confess our sins, he . . . will forgive us”

(1 John 1:9, NIV).

The men believed Jonah, and they pleaded with God. “Do not hold us guilty of killing this man,” they prayed. Then they threw Jonah over the side. As he disappeared under the waves, the wind immediately stopped blowing. The thunder and lightning stopped. The sea became calm. The sailors could hardly believe it. Immediately they offered a sacrifice and prayed to Jonah’s God, promising to serve Him.

Jonah sank deeper and deeper in the water. It was cold and wet and dark. Suddenly it felt different. He was not sinking anymore. He was inside something damp, warm, and clammy. And it smelled terrible! God had prepared a big fish to swallow Jonah!

Jonah began to think about what he had done. He knew God still loved him, even though he had run away. So from inside the fish he prayed: “Thank You for hearing my prayer. As I sank beneath the waves I was sure that I was going to die. I could feel the seaweed around my legs, and it was getting hard to breathe. Thank You for saving me. You have given me back my life. I know that You are the most wonderful God. You are the God of power, unlike the gods of wood and stone. I will do whatever You want me to do. My life belongs to You.”

After three days the big fish spat Jonah out on dry land.

The sailors suffered because of Jonah. But they also learned about the true God, the God who created the land and sea.

God still loved Jonah. And Jonah was still part of God’s family. God still had work for him to do. God loves us in just the same way. We belong to Him even when we make mistakes.



S A B B A T H

READ With your family, visit a place where fish can be found (lake, aquarium, etc.). Find a quiet spot and read your lesson together. What was Jonah's big mistake?

DO Talk about the fish that swallowed Jonah. Who sent the fish? Read Jonah 1:17. Read Matthew 12:40. What did Jesus say about Jonah and the big fish? About Himself?

DO Teach your memory verse to your family. Thank God for His forgiveness.

S U N D A Y

READ For worship today, read Jonah 1. Try to imagine the size of the fish. The largest sea animal known today is the blue whale, which can be 100 feet long. Ask your family to help you measure 100 feet. How does that compare to your house? Your church? Your school?

READ Read to learn more about whales. How do they breathe? How do you breathe? Why didn't Jonah drown?

M O N D A Y

READ During worship read Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2:1-9. Describe Jonah's feelings as he sank down into the sea. Is God with you when you are in dark, scary places? Read verse 4 again. What does it say about Jonah's faith in God? Read verse 8. What can we learn from it? Did God forgive Jonah? Will He forgive you?

PRAY Say your memory verse together, then thank God for His forgiving, loving grace.

T U E S D A Y

READ Ask your family to use paper and pencil (not pen) to write 1 John 1:8. When they are done, say, "Oh, I meant verse 9." Have them erase and write verse 9. Read Romans 3:23 aloud. Who makes mistakes? Who sins? Now read verse 24. Who saves us from our sins? How? Read Proverbs 3:11, 12. Who helps us erase and correct our mistakes? How? Why?

DO For fun, tell a circle story about Jonah from the fish's point of view. One person begins with a sentence. Each person around the circle adds a sentence until the story ends.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO Before worship today, put some slippery stuff in a sealable plastic bag. During worship read Jonah 1:17 together. Then have someone close their eyes and put their hand into the plastic bag. Have them describe what it could have been like inside the big fish. What did Jonah feel? Smell?

DO Talk about your feelings in scary or dark places. Read Isaiah 41:10. What has God promised you?

THURSDAY

READ For worship, read Jonah's prayer again (Jonah 2:2-9). Listen for the parts that describe Jonah falling into the sea. Now read Micah 7:19 and Hebrews 8:12. Where does God cast our forgiven sins? What promise does He make?

DO Give each person a strip of paper and a pen. Have them write or draw something for which they want to be forgiven. Drop the papers in a bowl of water. What happens? How is that like the way God forgives us? Thank Him for His forgiving love.

FRIDAY

READ For worship, read Jonah 1 together. Assign reading parts: narrator, God's voice, ship's captain, Jonah, sailors. Then act out the story.

DO Say the memory verse together. Sing "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 13) before you pray. Thank God that He casts your sins deep in the sea and will not remember them.

DO For a special family treat, make banana boats. Slice a banana the long way, spread peanut butter on each half, and put the pieces back together. Cover with chocolate sauce and enjoy. (A scoop of ice cream makes it even better!)

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PUZZLE

Directions: Look at the picture clues and write the word in the crossword puzzle.

1.



2.



3.



4.



5.

3

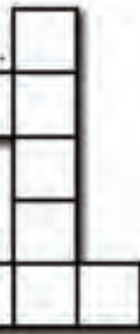
6.



1.



2.



3.



4.



5.



6.



Lots are sticks, stones, or bone pieces thrown like dice to decide something.

