

The Runaway Prophet

Jonah 1:1-9; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 265, 268

Come, Jonathan!" called Mother. "I need your help!"

Jonathan frowned. He was having fun riding his bike, and he just didn't want to answer. Speeding up, he turned the corner and rode away from home. Maybe his mother would think he hadn't heard her. Later, he thought. I'll help her later.

A long time ago, God asked a friend to do something for Him. What do you think it was?

Jonah," God called, "I need your help. You know about Nineveh, that big city. Many of the people living there are wicked. I can no longer ignore all the wrong things they do. Go and tell them that they must change."

Jonah knew he should do what God wanted. But Nineveh was a BIG city. At least 120,000 people lived there—wicked people. The city was so big that it would take three days just to walk from one end to the other. Besides, what if the people wouldn't listen to him? What if people laughed at him? The people living in Nineveh were bad, just plain bad. Everyone knew that. They might even kill him if they didn't like what he said.

Soon Jonah thought, *No, God really couldn't expect me to go to Nineveh.* So Jonah ran away.

Jonah hurried to Joppa, the nearest seaport. There he found a ship just ready to sail for Tarshish. He really didn't care where the ship was going—as long as it wasn't anywhere near Nineveh. Quickly he paid his fare and went on board.

Soon after Jonah boarded, the ship sailed away. After watching the shoreline disappear, Jonah felt safe. He searched for a quiet place away from the sailors and was soon fast asleep.

Jonah did not feel the boat begin to rock. At first the rocking was gentle, but then the waves got higher and higher.

The storm clouds gathered. The sails began creaking in the wind. But Jonah was sleeping so soundly that he didn't even hear the howling wind or the crashing thunder.

"This ship is going to break up. We will all drown!" the sailors called to one another.



The Message

People in God's family share His love with others.

Memory Verse

"I desire to do your will, O my God"
(Psalm 40:8, NIV).

Desperately, they tried to lighten the ship. Cargo, supplies, everything moveable was thrown overboard. But Jonah kept on sleeping.

The captain looked for passengers and came across Jonah, still asleep. "How can you sleep through this?" the captain screamed at Jonah. "Wake up! Call on your god! We are drowning. Pray and maybe he will help us."

Then one sailor shouted to the others, "Let's cast lots. That will tell us who is responsible for all this trouble. This isn't a natural storm. Someone's god is angry."

Jonah tried to slip into the shadows, but the sailors would not let him. "You have to take part in the lots," they demanded. Reluctantly, Jonah joined them. He knew who was responsible. When the lots were cast, everyone else knew too.

"Who are you?" demanded the sailors. "What do you do? Where do you come from?"

Jonah answered: "I am a Hebrew. I worship the God of heaven. My God created the earth and the sea."

If only Jonah had taken that message to

Nineveh! But Jonah chose to "forget" that he could never really run away from God. As a result, the people on the ship suffered.

We all are part of a community. Everything we do affects others. When we do what God wants, we can make good things happen in our community. We can share His love with others.



S A B B A T H

READ With your family, go to a place where you can watch boats. Read your lesson together. Talk about the boat in the story. Was it little? Big? Clean? What did it carry?

DO Use hand signals to help your family learn your memory verse. Do this every day this week.

DO Cut or fold paper to make a boat. Write your memory verse on it and put it where you will see it every day.

M O N D A Y

READ During worship, read the lesson story. Turn on a fan (low speed) at the beginning. Turn it on high speed when you read about the storm. Shout as you think the captain and sailors shouted at Jonah. Speak Jonah's answer boldly.

DO Review your memory verse. Do you want to do God's will? Tell Him when you pray. Sing a song about rain and thank God for rainy days.

W E D N E S D A Y

DO During worship, help your family make a family tree. Start with your parents, add their parents, grandparents, brothers, sisters, and others. Put a star by people who worship God. Ask your parents to tell you how their family became Christians. Save your family tree for tomorrow.

SING Sing "The Family of God" (Sing for Joy, No. 139) then thank God for your BIG family.

S U N D A Y

READ For worship today, read Jonah 1:1-9 together. Find Joppa and Nineveh on a Bible map. How would Jonah probably have traveled to Nineveh? How do you know?

DO If possible, go for a boat ride today.

SING Sing a song about stormy weather. Thank God for taking care of your family during storms.

T U E S D A Y

READ Read Jonah 1:1-9 again for worship. What five questions did the sailors ask Jonah? How did Jonah answer? How do you answer when people ask about your God?

DO Review the memory verse. Don't forget the hand signals.

SING Sing a song about God's care, then thank Him for it.

T H U R S D A Y

READ Read Jonah 1:9 during worship. Change the word *Hebrew* to tell who you are. Then say the verse again.

DO Look at your family tree. Who are some people you want to share God's love with? Make a plan and do it. Ask God to help you.

DO Use the hand signals as you say the memory verse together, then sing "The Family of God."



Tarshish was 3,000 miles (5,000 kilometers) from where God told Jonah to go.

F R I D A Y

DO Have a “Family Reunion” worship. Invite grandparents, aunts, uncles, and cousins who live nearby to join you. Ask them to tell how they joined God’s family (if they did) or share your family’s story with them.

DO Have each one share a favorite Bible verse. Sing songs of praise before you pray. Thank God for all your family.

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PUZZLE

Directions: Everything we do affects our community. Circle the good things you can do in your community.

