

# Session 4

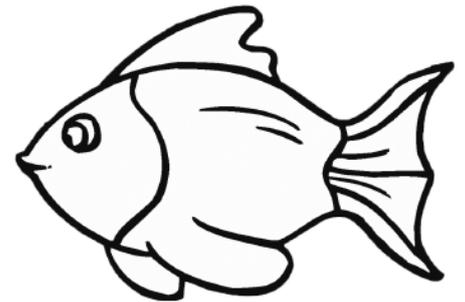
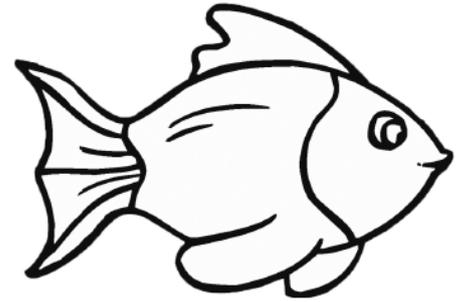
## Jonah

Children learn that God wants us to listen to Him

**Scripture:** Jonah

### Supplies

- 10 fish per group
- 3–4 Jonah pictures to glue to the back of some of the fish
- A paper clip for each fish
- Fishing rod with a magnet for each team
- A bowl for each team to put the fish in
- 1 or 2 empty cereal boxes that can be used as cameras
- Cameramen
- A newscaster
- A table where the newscaster can sit
- Papers with the “news” written on them
- Reporter and microphone
- A Jonah who looks a bit wet
- Copies of the colouring picture



### Welcome

Make a set of at least 10 fish per group as well as one fishing rod. Put a paper clip on the front of the fish if you're going to use a fishing rod with a magnet. Glue a picture of Jonah on the back of 3 or 4 of the fish. Put the fish in a clean bowl and make sure that Jonah isn't visible. For each “clean” fish they catch, the team gets 100 points. For each fish that they catch with a Jonah on it, they get 200 points. The first team to reach 1000 points, wins the competition. Let the children take turns catching the fish.



### Worship

**Settle down ritual:** Let the children close their eyes. Let them look at the dark and light patterns inside their eyelids. After 10 counts say in a quiet voice: “God’s light shines over all of us, whether it’s dark or light in our lives. Ask God to show you the dark things in your life and to help you get rid of them.” Wait a few more seconds and then close with “Amen”.



### Word

Today we're going to learn about Jonah's story through a news broadcast and an interview.

**Newscaster:** Good morning. I am Nadia from Nineveh and it is my privilege to share the news with you today. Our first story is: “Fishermen report having very good catches lately.” Our next story is about the current crime rate in Nineveh. But first, our main story: We've received reports about a curious event. It happened just around the

corner from us on the beach. Apparently a man washed ashore and his story is quite hard to believe. Our own reporter, Timmy tells the Truth, is on site ready to give us the scoop. Timmy, are you there?

*Cameraman and reporter appear on scene.*

**Reporter:** Yes, Nadia, I'm here. Good day to you and all our viewers.

**Nadia:** What's going on over there?

**Reporter:** We're on the beach where the rescue team is taking care of the man who washed ashore. It seems as if he almost drowned. He's not looking so good. A fisherman found him lying on the beach early this morning and immediately contacted emergency services. Wait, it looks as though they've finished. Let's see if we can talk to him.

Excuse me, sir. Could I ask you a few questions?

*Jonah walks onto the scene.*

**Jonah:** Certainly. Please excuse me being so smelly and a bit confused, but I've had a rough three days! I never want to experience these three days again.

**Reporter:** Tell us what happened. Who are you? Did your boat sink?

**Jonah:** No, not exactly... My name is Jonah.

**Reporter:** Wait a minute, did you say Jonah? *The* Jonah – the famous prophet of God?

**Jonah:** Yes, that's me.

**Reporter:** Folks, you saw it here first! We are speaking to one of God's special messengers! Wow, it's an honour to meet you!

**Jonah** (*a little unsure*): Thanks, I think? But I'm not as special as everyone says.

**Reporter:** Jonah, I understand that you've been telling people the Good News of God? So why are you here today? What happened?

**Jonah:** I have to tell you; today is the one day I am not excited about the message I'm bringing. You see, God wants me to go speak to the people of Nineveh.

**Reporter:** Ah, Nineveh? I see.

**Jonah:** I will do anything except go there. I started running in the exact opposite direction that I was supposed to go, and that's how I got here.

**Reporter:** Let me get this straight – you choose to NOT listen to God?

**Jonah:** That's right.

**Reporter:** Well, that wasn't a good idea, was it?

**Jonah:** You're telling me! Next thing I knew; I was on a boat with a one way ticket to Tarsus. A huge storm came up and I didn't think anyone on the boat would survive. I knew I was in big trouble.

**Reporter:** What happened next?

**Jonah:** I asked the sailors to throw me into the sea because I didn't think I'd survive anyway.

**Reporter:** Whaaaat?? You ASKED to be thrown overboard? Isn't that a crazy idea?

**Jonah:** Maybe it was, but you need to remember that we're dealing with God here.

**Reporter:** And then?

**Jonah:** Suddenly everything went dark and...

**Reporter:** Yes?

**Jonah:** You won't believe this.

**Reporter:** Try me!

**Jonah:** Okay, you asked for it... I was swallowed by a huge fish.

**Reporter:** Um, what?

**Jonah:** I was swallowed! By a huge fish! Like this... (mimic a bite and being swallowed)

**Reporter:** Alright... Wait a minute, let me get this straight. You're telling me that you ran away from God, got in a boat and went in the opposite direction, there was a big storm, you ASKED to be thrown overboard, and then you were swallowed by a big fish?

**Jonah:** That's it exactly.

**Reporter** (*laughing*): Next you're going to tell me something crazy like God felt sorry for you and told the fish to spit you out here on the beach.

**Jonah:** You don't have to believe me, but that's what happened.

**Reporter:** Well, folks. You heard it right here first. (To Jonah): I still can't believe you were silly enough to believe that you could run away from God. What did He ask you to do again?

**Jonah:** I have to tell the people of Nineveh that they're doing wrong things and that God will destroy their city in forty days if they don't return to Him. So I'm asking everyone – from the king to the simplest slave – turn back to God and do what He's asking of you. He loves you and doesn't want you to keep doing bad things.

**Reporter:** Wow, I can understand that you were scared to give them that message, because they're probably going to be very mad at you. I probably would've tried to get out of the situation too!

**Jonah:** Well, I had to learn the hard way that nothing is more important than listening to God. Would you excuse me please? I have to get some dry clothes and make my way to Nineveh.

**Newscaster:** There you have it. It's important to remember that when God asks us something, He wants us to listen to Him. He didn't just want Jonah as a messenger, but also you and I. I wonder what your answer would be if God asked you to do something?

Children reflect on the story:

1. I wonder how Jonah felt when he was inside the fish
2. I wonder how he felt when he realised that God had saved him, even though he was disobedient
3. I wonder what you would want to ask Jonah if you were a reporter



### **Working and Playing**

- Find the 6 fish hiding in the picture. Circle them and then colour the picture.
- Play the fishing game again.

### **Prayer time:**

Make groups of 2 and whisper a prayer in the other person's ear. Ask God to help the other person to listen when God is speaking to them and to turn away from sin.

### **Closing prayer to end the session**

"God chooses you to help people who are struggling, no matter who you are. Go now, don't be afraid. God is with you."

