

JONAH







THEMED PROGRAMME



AIM

Dive into the Bible, as well as the deep blue sea, and take a journey through Jonah's story. Experience how Jonah tried to run and hide, see if you can escape the whale's belly and meet some of the friends Jonah made at the bottom of the ocean.

ACTIVITIES

-  **You Can Run But You Can't Hide**
-  **Where's Jonah & Friends**
-  **Jonah & the Balloon Whale**
-  **Escape the Whale Quiz**
-  **Swallowed By a Whale**
-  **Jonah Cup & Ball**

JONAH

» INTRODUCTION

Jonah and the Whale is a popular story in the Bible about a man who tried to run away from God and his instructions. In the end – via the belly of a whale – Jonah finally listened to God and did as he was asked.

The story of Jonah teaches us some important lessons including listening and obeying God, God's ability to forgive people and also that God can always hear our prayers... even if we are inside the belly of a whale!

? DID YOU KNOW?

- The story of Jonah can be found in the Bible in the book of Jonah. That's right, Jonah has his own book in the Bible that tells his story.
- Jonah was meant to go to Nineveh (Iraq) but instead tried to flee to Tarshish which is thought to be near Spain. That's a completely different direction!
- Whilst the story is called 'Jonah and the Whale' we don't know exactly what swallowed Jonah, other than it was a 'big fish'.



GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES YOU CAN RUN BUT YOU CAN'T HIDE

Play a game of hide and seek. Tell all the hiders that they are Jonah and the seeker is the whale. When the whale finds a Jonah they should be 'swallowed up' and out of the game. The last Jonah left hiding is the winner.

Jonah and the Whale is a story about God asking Jonah to do something difficult and Jonah deciding to try and run and hide from this problem and God. However as we see in the story, Jonah can't hide from God and ends up getting found on the boat, thrown overboard and swallowed by the whale.

We shouldn't try to hide from God when he asks us to do something or when we do things wrong. Instead, we should trust him and have faith. God has a plan for all of us.



GET LEARNING: PROBLEM SOLVING WHERE'S JONAH & FRIENDS

Download and print the 'Jonah & Friends' activity sheet. Each child will need a copy or be working in a small group. Alternately use the PowerPoint version and a projector / large TV to complete the activity together as a whole group.

On the activity sheet there is a picture of Jonah inside the whale surrounded by a load of his sea creature friends. Children are challenged to find all the different types of fish / creatures. For example they need to find 4 seahorses, 5 crabs, 6 jelly fish, 7 yellow fish and so on. In total there are 55 objects to find on the activity sheet. This could be set as a race between children or just as a fun activity to complete.

Take it Further: Not all the creatures on the activity sheet are on our list to find. How many other creatures can you spot?



GET CREATIVE



15 MINUTES



PREPARATION
NEEDED

GET CREATIVE: ARTY & CRAFTY

JONAH & THE BALLOON WHALE

- 1 Give each child an uninflated balloon and a jelly baby. Explain that the jelly baby represents Jonah. Squeeze Jonah inside the balloon and then inflate the balloon fully and tie. Children should now be able to see Jonah trapped inside the balloon.
- 2 Using a permanent marker, draw eyes and a mouth onto the balloon to start creating the whale.
- 3 Finish off the whale by cutting a fin from card to go on the top of the balloon. Decorate the fin and stick it onto the balloon using tape. You could also create a tail too, using card.

What you'll need:

- Balloon
- Jelly Baby
- Colouring Pens
- Card

You now have a completed Jonah and the balloon whale. Finish by reminding the children that Jonah was trapped inside the whale for three days. In that time he spent lots of it praying to God and listening to what he said. Let the balloon whale be a reminder that we too can spend time speaking to God, but thankfully we can do it without being trapped inside a whale.



GET INTO
THE BIBLE



15 MINUTES



PREPARATION
NEEDED

GET INTO THE BIBLE: MY BIBLE ADVENTURE

ESCAPE THE WHALE QUIZ

Start by sharing the story of Jonah and the Whale. This could be by reading it as a story from a children's Bible or by showing a YouTube video, such as 'Jonah and the Fish' by Saddleback Kids – <https://youtu.be/WOSadLyqshg>. Conclude the story by re-capping the main points and what we can learn from Jonah's adventure, such as listening and obeying God, God works in strange ways (using a whale to 'eat' Jonah in order to save him) and that God likes to forgive people – Jonah & the people of Nineveh.

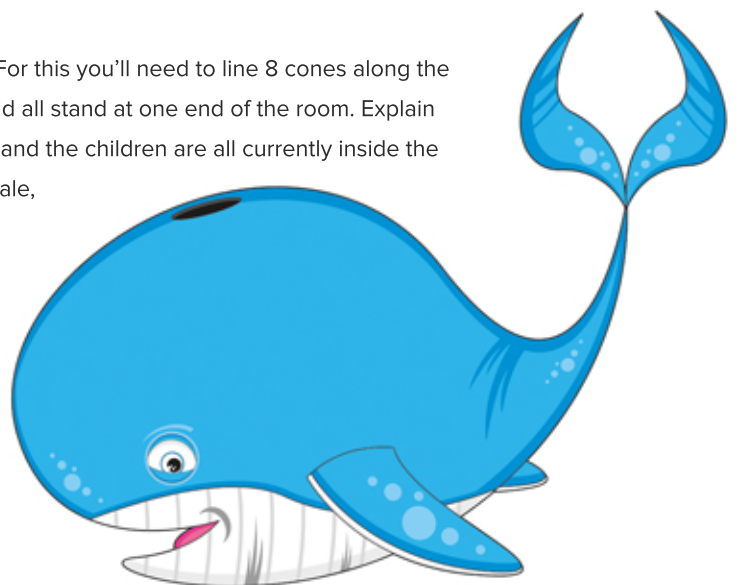


'Now the Lord provided a huge fish to swallow Jonah, and Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights.' Jonah 1:17

Now play a Jonah and the Whale style quiz. For this you'll need to line 8 cones along the length of your meeting space. Children should all stand at one end of the room. Explain that the cones represent the whale's tongue and the children are all currently inside the whale's belly. In order to escape from the whale, they will need to get the questions correct. Each correct question allows the group to move one cone forward. Play as one group (or small teams), with a group answer for each question. There are 10 questions and 8 cones to clear, so the group will need to do well at the questions to escape.



Escape the Whale Quiz Questions





GET ACTIVE: PLAYING GAMES

SWALLOWED BY A WHALE

This is a parachute game, themed around the story of Jonah being swallowed by a whale.

- 1 Lay a parachute on the floor and sit the group around it. Each child should be holding a handle, with their legs underneath the parachute.
- 2 One person should be nominated as the whale and go underneath. One (or more depending on the size of your group / parachute) should be given the role of a lifeguard trying to save Jonah. Their job is to stand on the outside of the parachute.
- 3 On GO, all children should start shaking the parachute to create a stormy sea. The whale underneath the parachute should crawl around trying to find a Jonah (any child) to swallow. To swallow a Jonah, the whale must tap or lightly pull at one of the children's legs; the child should then co-operate and go under the parachute.
- 4 The lifeguard's job is to patrol the outside of the parachute keeping an eye out for anyone being eaten by a whale. When a child is being eaten, they can call out for help. The lifeguard must try to run around the circle to the child being eaten. If they can get to the child (and tap them on the shoulder) before they disappear under the parachute, then they are saved and can sit back normally again. The job of the whale is to try and swallow a Jonah before a lifeguard can save him. The job of the lifeguard is to save the children being swallowed up before they disappear. If a child is swallowed by the whale, or if a couple of minutes have passed without a Jonah being eaten, then change roles and play another round.

Increase the difficulty of the game by having a couple of whales under the parachute, or by having more lifeguards around the outside.



GET CREATIVE: ARTY & CRAFTY

JONAH CUP & BALL

- 1 If using a plain cup, decorate it with pens & craft materials to look like a whale. Alternately use a blue cup and attach googly eyes.
- 2 Poke a hole in the bottom of the cup. Feed a piece of string through the hole, out the other end of the cup and then tie the string to itself. This will create a small loop of string around the outside and inside of the cup. This stage may benefit from being completed by a leader beforehand.
- 3 Cut a small tail from blue card and stick this onto the bottom of the cup to complete the whale.
- 4 Fill a small balloon (water balloon) with flour, using a funnel. Tie the balloon shut and then tie the balloon to the end of the string. You could draw a small Jonah shaped man on the balloon too.
- 5 You now have a completed Jonah themed ball in the cup game. Show the group how to use it (swing Jonah and catch him in the whale's mouth) and then challenge the children to see how well they can play with it. Who can catch Jonah in the whale's mouth the most from 10 attempts?



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ESCAPE THE WHALE QUIZ QUESTIONS

Q1. Where did God tell Jonah to go?

- A) Nottingham
- B) Norway
- C) Narnia
- D) Nineveh**

Q2. When Jonah was at sea, what did God do to Jonah?

- A) Nothing
- B) Sent Jonah a bad dream
- C) Made him ill
- D) Sent a storm**

Q3. What did the sailors do to try and save the ship?

- A) Threw cargo overboard to make the boat lighter**
- B) Did a rain dance to stop the rain
- C) Made a cup of tea and waiting for it all to blow over
- D) Tried throwing spears at the storm clouds

Q4. The storm didn't stop, so what did Jonah do?

- A) Pushed the Captain overboard
- B) Went back to sleep
- C) Let the crew throw him overboard**
- D) Turned the boat around and went home

Q5. What animal swallowed Jonah?

- A) Shark
- B) Turtle
- C) Whale / Big fish**
- D) A swimming giraffe

Q6. How long did Jonah spend inside the whale?

- A) 1 day and night
- B) 2 days and nights
- C) 3 days and nights**
- D) 4 days and nights

Q7. What did Jonah do whilst inside the whale?

- A) Built a boat
- B) Built a fire to keep warm
- C) Played Monopoly
- D) Prayed to God**

Q8. Why did the whale spit Jonah out?

- A) Because God told it to**
- B) Jonah tickled the whale's tongue
- C) Jonah made the whale sick
- D) The whale thought Jonah tasted funny

Q9. What did God tell Jonah to do once on dry land?

- A) Get a shower, because he smelt of whale's breath
- B) Learn how to swim so he could swim away from the whale next time
- C) Go to Nineveh like he asked him to do in the first place**
- D) Pay the fish £100 for looking after him for 3 nights

Q10. God wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh to speak to the people and ask them to live better lives. Did God forgive the people of Nineveh?

- A) Yes**
- B) No