



Date: _____
Series: Signs on Believers Hwy
Spring Year 4, Lesson 50

Jonah—Rescued and Available

Primary Scripture: Jonah 1-3

Key Verse: 1 Peter 3:15, "...dedicate your lives to Christ as Lord. Always be ready to defend your confidence in God when anyone asks you to explain it."

How does this address a need in our kids' lives?

Kids try to avoid getting into situations that might seem scary. At such times, a separation from their parents or an adult who can help may cause a feeling of panic. Regret for our choices is a common part of needing to be rescued. God makes it known that he is always available to help and calling out to him is a lifeline we can use when seeking refuge. Kids must know that God answers prayer and wants us to help grow in our trust for him. Just as we need him to be available for us, God is interested in our availability to him. Jonah learns that in turning away from God, he lands in a scary place causing a separation in his relationship with God. As we examine Jonah's rescue from the big fish, we see how God showed Jonah his great mercy. When Jonah calls out for a rescue, God answers in a way that put Jonah back on track to deliver God's message and rescue the people of Nineveh.

How does Jesus fill this need?

Jesus for us: God's plan for our rescue was to give his Son Jesus to release us from the condemnation of sin.

Jesus in us: Jesus fills our lives with hope to help us show evidence of his presence.

Jesus through us: If we make ourselves available to him, he uses us to reach others with his rescue plan.

Kids Church Year 4 - Lesson 50 - 1

Stamp of Excellence:

Remind the kids what excellent worship looks like. We are in God's presence to honor him. Put on your best manners. This might include wearing your name tag, participating eagerly at all times, listening when the leader is talking, raising your hand to speak, not distracting others, playing the learning game with cooperation, singing enthusiastically, and praying reverently. Offer rewards or positive reinforcement to those who worship with excellence.



Worship

Invocation:

Let kids bring forward the worship symbols such as the cross, candles, Bible, and offering plate. Invite God's presence and call by name the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Attention Grabber:

Capture the children's attention and help them focus on the worship theme for the day.

Secretly remove a child before Kids Church (referred to as "Jamie" in this lesson). Coach him to use a panicked voice to say, "Let me out!" Have him speak it into a bucket or muffled into a towel outside the room where the kids are meeting and preferably near a closet area. Have the voice not be too strong but just enough to make the following set-up seem more realistic.

The set-up

The large group presenter opens the service and just begins to start talking about a fishing object such as a paddle, fishing pole or whatever simple object you choose. If the presenter begins to pick up an object and talk about it, it will seem like an ordinary opening. However, the presenter is immediately interrupted by another adult who is upset and appears panicked, running onto the stage and saying:

Help! We've got a problem! A child was goofing around and crawled into an air duct in the back of the closet and is stuck. I need you to come quickly! Can you hear him?

The large group presenter runs out of the room with the adult who had come in with the announcement. Very shortly, the presenter returns and asks the group:

We need help! Jamie is stuck! I need someone small who is willing to crawl back into the air duct and help him get out! See who will raise their hands.

Oh, but you can't be afraid of the dark because this is an air duct just big enough for someone to crawl right inside. Then see who will raise their hands.

Take one child out and have everyone else remain. Then come back a few seconds later and ask for a second volunteer saying:

Oh, no! They're both stuck! Now who will help? Again, see who will raise their hands.

Take another volunteer outside the door and then return with all the kids.

Well, it looks like the rescue is complete. How did you feel when you had a chance to help with the rescue? Was anyone too scared to raise your hand knowing you would have to crawl into a dark, tight air duct?

Jamie really wasn't in danger. We were just pretending so you kids might feel what it is like to be called to help with his rescue. Today we're going to learn about Jonah. God sent Jonah on a rescue mission but Jonah didn't think he had the ability to deliver God's message, so he ran from God. God had an interesting way of turning Jonah around. Today you will also learn that God sends us on a rescue mission. I wonder what kind of rescue mission he is sending us on. We'll find out today, but first let's worship him.

Songs of Worship:

Choose two or three songs. Briefly introduce songs so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God!

Your choice of music.

The Power of the Cross:

Jesus has given his life for us that we might have forgiveness and power to live for him.

Jamie wasn't really in danger HERE today, but the Bible says that ALL of us are in danger every day. We may not be stuck in a dark air duct, but the bad things, or sins, we do are sometimes called darkness. Sometimes that darkness can be right inside of us and even if we can't see it, we can feel it. We feel it when we've done

something wrong. God wants to rescue us from that. To do it, he sent Jesus as a rescuer. What Jesus used to reach out and touch us is the cross. Jesus gave his life for us on the cross. So, even in the times when we have not followed him, he takes us back and forgives us. Then he gives us the power to want to follow him more every day.

Prayer

Dear Jesus, thank you for giving your life for us. Thank you for your forgiveness. Each one of us can think of one or two things this week that we have done you are not pleased with. Please forgive us and help us to not want to do that again. Please live in our lives and let us live for you. In Jesus' name. Amen.

Song of Response:

Choose a song to help the children turn to Jesus. Or, you may want to help them celebrate what God has done by singing a song of praise.

Offering:

Teach the importance of giving and talk about the mission activities they are supporting.

Place some type of representative object or even a globe in the offering plate as you talk about mission projects that this money will go toward from your church.



The Word

Learning Game:

Some churches dismiss children from the adult service at this time to join Kids Church. The learning game provides a fun kinesthetic activity to help kids connect with each other. The learning point will help reinforce the theme of the day.

Supplies: three long socks or strips of cloth

Tail Tag:

Set boundaries in your room using tape, chairs or rope to create the largest game space possible. Put all the students in a circle and begin with one child in the middle with another child who will have a sock (*tail*) tucked into his/her back pocket or back belt loop. This person with the tail is called the Tail Tagger. Make sure the tail is secured but in an “easy to remove” fashion. For the game to be won, someone only needs to pull the tail of the Tail Tagger. The challenge for kids is that anytime the Tail Tagger tags someone, that person must go outside the circle and wait until this game is over. When you begin the next round, add a second person so two people are “it.” Add a third person and the game gets more interesting yet.

Teaching point

Notice how the Tail Tagger kept turning around and trying to get away to protect his tail. In a way, that is like Jonah who is asked by God to go to the city of Nineveh but, instead, he went in the other direction. He was afraid and “turned tail” and ran. But God finally got him turned around by sending a fish to him. Then he went to Nineveh where he tagged all the people with the message to turn back to God. Because of that, Jonah obeyed God and the people of Nineveh were rescued.

Bible Presentation:

Help children pay attention by giving them a word or concept to listen for as you read. Consider letting a child read who could do so with excellence.

Supplies: two presentation-sized words; “avail” and “ability” written so that when held together they spell “availability.”

Word Parts

How many of you know what this word means? I bet it's a new one for most of you. Hold up the sign with "avail" written on it and take answers.

To avail means to be of use or helpful to someone.

How many of you know what this word means? Hold up the sign with "ability" written on it and take answers.

Correct. Ability means that you can do certain things especially well. What are some abilities kids in this room have? Mention a few.

Synthesis

When you put the two words together, you get "availability." What does that mean? Take answers.

Availability means that you're willing to use your abilities whatever they are. It's not your actual abilities that matter, but that you're willing to do what you can to help. What is God more interested in, your ability or your availability? It's not your ability. Many people have lots of abilities, but they've never used them for God. What is your availability? God has a plan for you if you're available to him. How do you do that? You say, "God, I love you. Thank you for sending Jesus into the world and into my life. Now I am available to be used by you wherever you send me."

1 Peter 3:15 (NIV)

But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have.

I want you to think about times when you've talked to others about when you had a hope. You have Jesus in your life and you know that he has a special purpose and plan for you. You'll be with him forever in heaven. We'll talk about that more in Witness and Tell.

Video

Option One:

Please show the video *Testament, The Bible in Action: Jonah*, produced by Diamond Entertainment Corporation, ISBN #1-56364-300-6. Total running time 30 minutes.

Option Two:

Another option is to show a section of the Veggie Tale movie, *Jonah: A Veggie Movie*. ISBN: 8901001365, Distributed by Lion's Gate Family Home Entertainment. This is a full-length (83 minute) movie and only a portion needs to be seen, depending on how much time you choose to take. Preview this movie to select your portion to use.

Discussion

Why do you think Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh? *(Maybe he didn't feel qualified or he didn't like the people there.)*

What turned Jonah around when he ran away from God? *(A very large fish created by God.)*

When Jonah was inside the fish, what do you think he wished he could have done differently? *(He wished he hadn't run away from God and that he had obeyed him.)*

When Jonah went to Nineveh and the people repented, was Jonah happy about that or angry? Why? *(Jonah was angry because he wanted to see God destroy the city.)*

Was God happy that the people repented? *(Of course. God reminded Jonah of how important those people are to him and how wonderful it is that they turned back to him.)*



Witness

Witness and Tell:

Give children opportunities to share how God is working in their lives. It is best to use a microphone to ask children interview questions around the theme for the day.

Talk about times you've shared with another person about Jesus. This is an example of hope that is within you.

Prayer:

Let the kids pray out loud. If you are using a microphone, invite children to form a prayer line and speak their thanksgivings or requests. If you have portable microphones, you can roam the audience. Kids can also go to prayer stations set up for specific types of prayer.

Options: (select one from the options below)

_____ **Prayer Line Option:** Kids line up and take turns stepping in front of the microphone to speak their prayers briefly.

_____ **Prayer Chair:** Adults or children with special prayer needs are invited to sit in the chairs. Kids gather around them, lay hands on their shoulders or knees and take turns praying.

_____ **Popcorn Prayer:** The leader moves through the crowd with a microphone and turns it toward kids who are raising their hands to pray. The kids speak their prayers into the microphone.

Lord's Prayer: Lead the children through the Lord's Prayer, phrase by phrase, or let them pray the entire prayer along with you.

Blessing:

Speak a blessing prayer over the children. Personalize this to your setting. Use a special scripture verse or blessing around the theme of the day.

Song of Sending:

Choose one song. Briefly introduce song so kids can better understand what they are singing and be drawn into a more focused worship. Keep the attention on God.

Your choice of music.

Supplies:

Attention Grabber:

- bucket or towel to muffle a voice

Offering:

- globe or object representative of your church's mission project

Learning Game:

- three long socks or strips of cloth

Bible Presentation:

Option One:

- video: *Testament, The Bible in Animation: Jonah*, distributed by Diamond Entertainment Corporation, ISBN #1-56364-300-6. Total running time 30 minutes—order from http://www.cfmedia.com/Listings/TTBA_Jonah.shtml

Option Two:

- video, *Jonah: A Veggie Movie* produced by Big Idea Productions—order from <http://yhst-54787164184156.stores.yahoo.net/jovemo.html>
- two words on a sign: “avail” and “ability” (written so when held together they spell “availability”)

Safety and Security: Safety and security procedures are important for each church to carefully define and implement according to their unique needs. The security, safety, illness and accident procedures described in this curriculum are provided for example purposes only and may not be appropriate, applicable or adequate for every situation. Each church is responsible for determining whether any security, safety, illness and accident procedures contained in the curriculum are appropriate, applicable or adequate for its unique situation. The activities described in this curriculum require adult supervision and may not be suitable for each child and each situation. Each church is responsible for ensuring that adequate adult supervision is provided for all activities and for determining whether an activity is appropriate for each child and each situation. Kids Kount Publishing disclaims all liability for the implementation of any procedures or the performance of any activities described in this curriculum.

AVAIL

ABILITY