

Riverbend United Church - Children's Ministry

Lesson- September 13, 2020

The Lesson – Jonah and the Whale

Your children will learn about Jonah and how he tried to hide from God. They will learn that they can't hide anything from God. When they do something wrong, instead of trying to forget about it, or hiding from it, God wants them to tell him about it, and to ask him for forgiveness.

Have you ever played "Hide and Seek"? It's a fun game isn't it? It's fun to try and find a really good hiding place and see how long it takes someone to find you. It wouldn't be very fun, though, if every time you hid somewhere the person looking for you knew exactly where you were, would it?

Our story today is about a man who tried to play hide from God, only he wasn't having any fun. This is how it happened.

One day God told Jonah that he had a special job for him to do. God told Jonah that he wanted him to go to the city of Nineveh and warn the people there that he would destroy them and their city if they didn't stop being bad. How do you think Jonah felt when God told him that? Jonah wasn't happy to hear this. He started to pout. Can you make a pouting face? Jonah was also mad that God had asked him to do this. Can you make a mad face?

He probably said to himself, (Make a pouting face and fold your arms together as you say what Jonah might have said.) "What? God wants me to go to Nineveh? This must be some kind of mistake. Those bad, bad people? There is no way I'm going to Nineveh. I wouldn't make it out of that city alive." He was scared of that city and the people who lived there. Can you make a scared face?

Instead of going to Nineveh, Jonah decided that he would go as far away from Nineveh as he could. He hoped God would pick somebody else to go and warn the people. Can you make a hopeful face?

Jonah got on a ship that was going to the farthest city he could find. He was really tired, and once he got on board, he went to the very bottom of the ship to hide, and curled up to take a nap. Can you make a tired face?

Soon Jonah found out that he couldn't hide from God and that God doesn't forget about anything. God knew exactly where Jonah was. God wasn't happy with Jonah at all. He

caused a huge storm to come up. The sailors were afraid that their ship would sink. They started throwing everything they could get their hands on into the sea to lighten up the ship. They all started praying to their Gods to save them, but the storm kept getting worse. Finally when they realized that Jonah wasn't helping, they went and got him and told him to start praying to his God. But Jonah knew what the problem was; and he knew that there was only one thing to do. God wouldn't stop the storm until Jonah obeyed (did what he asked him to do) him. So Jonah told the sailors to throw him overboard. As soon as Jonah hit the water the storm quit and all was calm. The sailors were so surprised that the storm had stopped. Can you make a surprised face?

Jonah began to sink into the sea, going down farther and farther into the depths. But God didn't want Jonah to drown, he just wanted Jonah to obey him. God sent a huge fish to swallow Jonah and take him down to the bottom of the sea. How do you think Jonah felt now? He must have felt very scared and alone. He prayed and asked God to forgive him for disobeying him. He probably felt ashamed for not listening to God. Can you make an ashamed face?

Finally, after three days of being in the dark, stinky, belly of the fish, the fish came up to the top of the sea and spit Jonah out on the shore. How do you think Jonah felt then? He was probably happy and surprised to be out of the fish. He was also probably a little embarrassed by the way he looked. Can you make an embarrassed face?

Then Jonah obeyed God and went and told the people to stop sinning. They believed Jonah, and God saved them.

Jonah sure did cause a lot of trouble for himself didn't he? You know, when you think about it, we're not so different from Jonah. We may never run away and hide at the bottom of a ship and get swallowed by a huge fish, but sometimes we do try to hide from God when we are scared, ashamed, embarrassed, or just don't want to do what he says.

Have you ever done something wrong and then tried to cover it up or go hide in your room and hope that your mom and dad wouldn't get to mad when they found out? If you did, you were acting just like Jonah. It doesn't do any good to hide does it? Sooner or later you have to face up to what you did.

You may be able to hide things from your parents and friends, but you can't hide them from God. The Bible says, "Nothing in all creation can hide from him. Everything is naked and exposed before his eyes. This is the God to whom we must explain all that we have done."

When you are scared about something, instead of running away and hiding, God wants you to come to him and ask him for strength to face up to your fears. And when you do something wrong, instead of trying to forget about it, or hiding from it, God wants you to tell him about it, and to ask him for forgiveness. The Bible tells us that, "If we confess

our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us and to cleanse us from every wrong."
1 John 1:9

So instead of trying to hide your sins from God, tell God what you did wrong and he will forgive you.

Jonah Questions

What did God want Jonah to do?

What did Jonah do?

Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh?

What happened when Jonah was on the ship?

What did the sailors do when the storm came up?

Where was Jonah when the storm came up?

What did Jonah say when the sailors asked him to start praying?

What happened when Jonah was thrown overboard?

How many days was Jonah inside the fish?

What do you think Jonah did when he was inside the fish?

What did Jonah do after the fish spit him out?

Did the people of Nineveh listen to Jonah?

Was Jonah happy about that?

Finish the Bible verse, "God is slow to anger and abounding in _____?"

Give an example of how we are like Jonah sometimes?

Give an example of how someone might try to hide from God today?

What does God want us to do when we do something wrong?

CRAFT:

Whale Origami Paper Craft

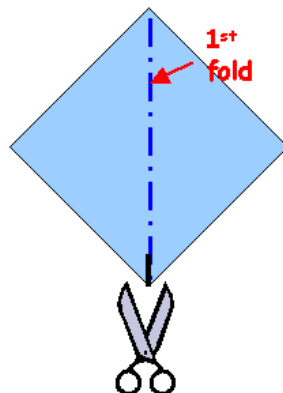
Materials:

- paper (legal sized...8.5"x11"....blue or gray are most appropriate)
(a slightly heavier paper than 20lb helps too)
- scissors,
- for decorating:
 - wiggly eyes
 - markers or pencil crayons
 - bingo dauber

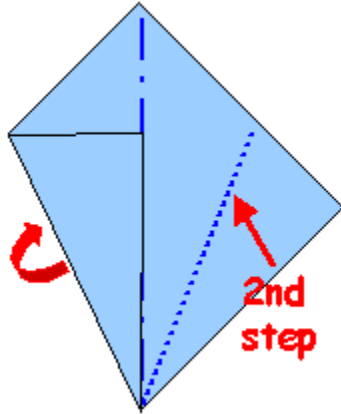


Instructions:

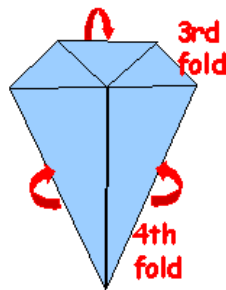
- Starting with a legal sized piece of paper, cut the bottom few inches off to make the paper square.
- The first fold is from one corner to another
- Use the scissors to cut a one inch slit from one corner along the fold. This is ultimately be used for the whale's tail.



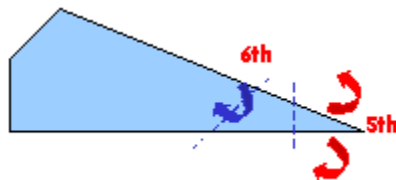
- The second step is to fold the other two corners over to the center of the paper. The edge of the paper should line up with the first fold.



- The third step is folding the top corner down to meet the edge of the paper from the second fold. Sort of like a dog ear.
- The fourth fold is repeating the first fold and folding the entire project in half again.



- On the pointed end (where you made the slit in step one) fold the two halves to the outside to create the tail for step 5.
- The sixth and final fold is sort of on an angle and works to raise the tail up above the back of your whale.



- Take some time to decorate your whale. You can use googly eyes or draw the eyes on your whale, color it, make polka dots with a dauber or whatever you see fit!

Have fun!!