THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

**CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON**

**DATE:** August 27, 2017

**SUBJECT:** **GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Jonah**

**SCRIPTURE:** Jonah chapters 1-4

**AIM**: To show the children that God is omniscient, omnipotent and omnipresent and that as His children we must learn to obey Him.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Psalm 139:1, 7 (**1** O Jehovah, You have searched me and known me. **7** Where shall I go, away from Your Spirit, And where shall I flee from Your presence?); Psalm 147:5 (Great is our Lord, and mighty in power; His understanding is infinite.); Eph. 6:1 (Children, obey your parents in the Lord for this is right.); Colossians 3:20 (Children, obey your parents in all things, for this is well pleasing in the Lord.); Luke 11:28 (But He said, Blessed rather are those who hear the word of God and keep it.).

**SUGGESTED SONGS:** 50 (Who Did?); 153 (Obey His Call); 4 (Be Careful, What You Do); 11 (Oh, Be Careful); 52 (God is Always Near Me); 54 (God Knows Everything); 56 (God Sees Us); 80 (Jesus Bids Us Shine); 82 (Join the Gospel Express); 87 (‘Tis Simple As Can Be); 100 (I Can Spell a Lovely Name); 191 (This Little Light of Mine); 10 (Inside Me); 9502 (*BSS Wonderful* The Lord God Almighty Has Purposed)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** 1) Great Fish (not a whale) made out of two paper plates. Cut a circle out of one paper plate. Glue them together. Draw Jonah inside the stomach of the great fish. Color the great fish, add fins and a tail.

2) Cut out a great fish, and cut it lengthwise into two pieces. Glue the top of the great fish to the top of a clothespin. Glue the bottom of the great fish to the bottom of the clothespin. Add Jonah. Open and close the clothespin to show Jonah inside the great fish.

**CONTENT:**

**Jehovah Commissions Jonah, but Jonah Flees**

The word of Jehovah came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, "Arise, go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it, because its wickedness has come up before me." But rather than obeying God’s word, Jonah ran away and headed for the city of Tarshish to flee from the presence of Jehovah. He went to Joppa and he found a ship bound for Tarshish, which was in the opposite direction of Nineveh. So he paid the fare and got on the boat.

On the way there, Jehovah hurled a great wind on the sea, and such a violent storm arose that the ship was in danger of being broken apart. All the mariners (sailors) were afraid and each cried out to his own god. They began throwing the equipment and cargo off the ship so it would lighten the ship to sail in the storm. Meanwhile, what do you think Jonah did? Do you think he was afraid and cried out to his God like the other sailors? Jonah had gone below the deck of the ship and fell into a deep sleep. The captain came down to him and asked, “How can you be fast asleep? Arise, call on your God. Perhaps God will give thought to us, and we will not perish.” Then the sailors said, “Come, let us cast lots that we may know on whose account this misfortune has befallen us.” They cast the lots and it fell upon Jonah.

**Jonah Repents**

So they asked him, “Tell us now, on whose account has this misfortune befallen us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?” Jonah answered, “I am a Hebrew, and I fear Jehovah, the God of the heavens, who made the sea and the dry land.” After finding out that Jonah was fleeing the presence of Jehovah, the sailors were very afraid and asked him, “What is this that you have done?”

Then they asked Jonah, “What shall we do with you that the sea may be quiet for us?” Jonah simply replied, “Lift me up and cast me into the sea, and the sea will be quiet for you. For I know that it is on my account that this great tempest has come upon you.” Instead of throwing Jonah into the sea, they rowed hard to get back to dry land. But it was to no avail because the storm grew even more tempestuous than before. Then they cried to Jehovah, “Ah, Jehovah, let us not perish, we pray, for this man's life, and do not put innocent blood upon us; for You, Jehovah, have done as You pleased.” So they lifted up Jonah and threw him into the sea. Then suddenly, the storm stopped raging and calmed down. When this happened the men feared Jehovah greatly and offered sacrifices to Jehovah and made vows to Him.

Now Jehovah prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah and did not allow to Jonah to drown. Jonah was in the stomach of the great fish for three days and three nights. While Jonah was there he cried out, prayed and repented to Jehovah. After Jonah prayed to Jehovah, Jehovah commanded the great fish to release Jonah—so it vomited Jonah out onto the dry land.

**Jonah Goes to Nineveh**

Then the word of Jehovah came to Jonah a second time saying, “Arise, go to Nineveh, the great city; and proclaim to it the proclamation that I will speak to you.” This time Jonah obeyed Jehovah. Jonah arose and went to Nineveh. As soon as he got there he proclaimed, “Yet forty days Nineveh shall be overturned.” So when the people of Nineveh heard about this, they believed God, fasted and put on sackcloth. When the word reached the king, he arose from his throne, took off his royal robe, and then covered himself with sackcloth and ashes. He then decreed, “Let neither man nor beast nor herd nor flock taste anything; let them not feed, nor let them drink water. And let man and beast be covered in sackcloth, and let them call to God strongly. And let each turn from his evil way and from the violence that is in his hands. Who knows whether God will turn and repent, and will turn from His burning anger so that we do not perish?” When Jehovah saw how the Ninevites repented He decided not to destroy them.

But Jonah was angered at Jehovah for not destroying Nineveh and told Jehovah that he wanted to die. Jehovah asked him, “Do you do well to be angry?” Jonah went to the east side of the city and made a booth for himself and waited there to see what would happen to the city. While he was there, Jehovah allowed a castor-oil tree to grow over Jonah to protect him from the sun—Jonah was very happy. The next day Jehovah made a worm to eat the vine and caused it to wither. Then He sent a scorching wind and allowed the blazing sun to bother Jonah to the point where he wanted to die. Jonah was angry at Jehovah for allowing the vine to die. Then Jehovah said to Jonah, “You had pity on the tree that you did not labor for nor cause to grow, which came into being overnight and perished overnight; And I, should I not have pity on Nineveh, the great city, in which are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people who cannot discern between their right hand and their left, and many cattle?”

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not try to cover all the applications. It is sufficient to cover just* ***one or two applications*** *which are appropriate for the age group of the children you are serving.*

* **God is Omniscient, Omnipotent and Omnipresent.** Even though Jonah tried to run away and was tossed into the sea, God was overseeing the whole situation. Our God is omniscient (all-knowing) and omnipotent (all-powerful) and omnipresent (ever present). God sees everything we do and everywhere we go. He knows everything we say and do. He is watching over us in every situation, from normal school days to special events in our lives.
* **Obey.** Jonah was commissioned (sent by) the Lord to go to Nineveh to preach against it. He did not obey the Lord immediately but rather he tried to run away. But the Lord did not let him get away. We should always obey the Lord because we cannot hide from Him. If we disobey the Lord, our parents, our teachers, our coaches or the adults in our environment we may cause a lot of trouble like Jonah. If we have disobeyed the Lord or our parents we need to repent right away.
* **God Cares for People.** Through this account of Jonah, we see God spared the lives of the mariners on the ship at sea, He spared Jonah’s life and He spared all the people of Nineveh, including the children (“those who cannot discern their right hand from their left”) and even the cattle. We should have a heart to tell our friends about the Lord Jesus and about the Lord’s Word in the Bible. The Lord cares for all people and wants them to know Him and believe into Him (1 John 3:16; 1 Tim. 2:4). We can invite our friends to children’s meeting, neighborhood children’s meeting, or to our home to hear more about the Bible and God.

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 8/13/89; 8/27/00; 9/02/12 `