



Jonah 1:1-4:11

Aim: to see that God loves and cares about people and wants us to share that good news



From infancy we make choices, some thought out but mostly instinctive. We base our reactions and our actions on what seems to make sense to us, on our feelings, and on what will help us most. It was just the same for Jonah. He had grown to know the Lord and to hear his voice. Yet, he still made the big mistake on leaning on his own understanding. He figured out 3 moves ahead, like a chess player pro. He knew that if he did what God said that the vile nasty Ninevites would escape the punishment they most definitely deserved. So he made the decision to run from God and from his directives (never a wise move). Jonah wanted justice but forgot that with God it always goes hand in hand with mercy. He also forgot that he himself needed a big pinch of mercy. In God's great mercy he gave Jonah a second chance. This time Jonah played ball. He wasn't exactly cock-a-hoop with the result. God still had work to do. We may focus on God's mercy to the Ninevites in this story but that's only half of it. God is still in the business of handing out mercy today and calls us to do the same.



Teach everyone the Makaton signs for 'sea' - u se a hand and wave it across your body to make waves and 'see' - index finger vertically at your eye then pointed towards the thing that is being looked at.

Sing 'A sailor went to see sea, sea, sea' together using the signs.



Read Jonah runs away, pg. 108 & Jonah obeys God, pg. 109.

Using the Makaton sign for 'see' and 'love' say the following lines after the words in the stories given below

...message from me... *See how God loved the people*

...run away from God... *See how Jonah loved God*

...kept Jonah safe... *See how God loved Jonah*

...I should have done what you asked... *See how Jonah loved God*

...Jonah did what God Asked... *See how Jonah loved God*

...care for people, he did!... *See how God loved the people*



- *I wonder why Jonah didn't want to go to Ninevah*
- *I wonder what it was like in the stinky belly of the big fish*
- *I wonder how the people of Ninevah felt when God had forgiven them*



Designate one end of the room 'Yes, definitely' and the other 'No, definitely not' and then ask everyone to stand along the line between them. Read out a list of possible activities some silly, some embarrassing, some really hard, and some easy. Ask everyone to stand where represents how willing they would be to do the activity. Explore why Jonah didn't want to go to Ninevah and why we might not be so willing to share God's love and forgiveness with others



- Role play. Have a large cardboard box for a boat and percussion instruments to make the storm. Encourage a reenactment of the story. Have another cardboard box, opened at the side for the fishes mouth. Add a torch in there. Let the children spend time in the belly of the fish. If the box is large enough add story books (Ensure there is ample air supply by making a blow hole at the top etc.



- Meaningful mama has a lovely catch Jonah game that can be made and played with a little help from grown ups. <https://meaningfulmama.com/jonah-whale-craft-teaches-lesson-obedience.html>
- Paper plate craft: Cut a triangle portion out of a paper plate. Stick it at the opposite end to form a fish tail. Allow little fingers to finger paint the fish. Add a lolly stick man to the plate for a Jonah and the whale craft.



Let's use the Makaton sign for 'sea', 'see' and 'love' in our prayer today.

Dear God,

When Jonah crossed the sea

He didn't want to see

the people from Ninevah.

But you loved them and used Jonah to help them see how they could change their ways

When I am being mean and not being kind, help me to see that you love me and can help me change my ways

When I am worried and feel like I am in a big storm at sea, help me to see that you love me and that I can trust in you.

Amen.



- With Jesus in the boat we can smile at the storm - <https://youtu.be/X1NAFfgr2PI>
- Nothing's too big
- Who's the king of the Jungle?
- Jesus' love is very wonderful



Watch a video of a Jonah story in song:

<https://youtu.be/RlvuWMqAPTQ>

Encourage everyone to practice signing this little poem every day

**I see you and I love you
God sees you and loves you**