

Old Testament

Lesson 34 - Jonah and the Whale

Aims

- * To know the key events of the story
- * To learn that we should not run away from God like Jonah, but follow God's plan for our life

Materials

- * Bible story - Jonah 1:10 - 3:10
- * Visual aids - pictures of the story
- * worksheets
- * whale patterns, card, coloured pencils, glue, wool or string, hole punch

Lesson Outline

1. Introduction
2. Jonah and the Whale
3. Questions about the story
4. Follow God's plan
5. Activities - worksheets, retell the story, Jonah action story, Jonah & Whale craft, "Hide & Seek"
6. Review the aims
7. Prayer

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1) Introduction

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 hide from God, only he wasn't having any fun. This is how it happened.

2) Jonah and the Whale

God told the prophet Jonah, "Go to the big city of Nineveh. Tell them to stop doing bad things." But Jonah did not want to go to Nineveh. Instead he got on a boat to sail across the sea. God sent a big storm to stop Jonah. The sailors on the boat were afraid. They thought the boat was going to sink! Jonah told the sailors, "My God has sent the storm. If you throw me in the water, the sea will become calm again." So the sailors threw Jonah into the sea and instantly it became calm. But Jonah didn't drown. A big whale swallowed him. For three days and nights he stayed inside the whale. Then God told the whale to spit Jonah onto dry land. Again, God said to Jonah, "Go and tell the people of Nineveh to stop doing bad things." This time Jonah obeyed God. The people of Nineveh were sorry for doing bad things, so God forgave them.

3) Questions about the story

- * What did God want Jonah to do? - *Tell the people of Nineveh to change from their bad ways or God will destroy the city.*
- * What did Jonah do? - *He got on a boat and went in the opposite direction to Nineveh.*
- * Why didn't Jonah obey God? - *He was afraid to go to Nineveh, because they were Israel's enemy.*
- * What happened when Jonah was on the ship? - *There was a very big storm*
- * What did the sailors do? - *They prayed to their gods to save them*
- * What did Jonah tell the sailors? - *I have disobeyed God by running away from him. It's my fault. The best thing you can do is to throw me overboard.*
- * What two things happened when Jonah was thrown over board? - *The storm stopped. Jonah was swallowed by a whale.*
- * How long was Jonah inside the whale? - *3 days and 3 nights*
- * What did Jonah do when he was inside the fish? - *He thanked God for saving his life and was very sorry for running away.*
- * What did God tell Jonah after the whale spit him out? - *Tell the people of Nineveh to change from their bad ways or God will destroy the city.*
- * Did the people of Nineveh listen to Jonah? - *Yes, the king ordered that the whole city should fast and pray, and ask God's forgiveness*

4) Follow God's plan

- * Jonah learnt the hard way to follow God's plan, but in the end, everything turned out well. Even if something is difficult to do, if we try, God will help us, because He loves us and wants the best for us.
- * We can also learn God's way from our parents. Parents love their children and want the best for them. It is better to follow what parents say even if it is difficult, because in the end, everything will turn out well.
- * Jonah caused a lot of trouble for himself, but 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, have done something wrong or just don't want to do what we are told.
- * Have you ever done something wrong and then tried to cover it up or hide in your room and hope that your parents wouldn't get angry 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.
- * When you are scared about something or have done something wrong, instead of running away and hiding, God wants you to tell him about it. So instead of trying to hide your wrongs from God, tell God and tell your parents what you did wrong and they will forgive you
- * What things do your parents want you to do? What good things happen when you listen to your parents? What bad things happen when you don't listen? Try your best to follow what your parents say every day, then God will help you very much

5) Activities

* Worksheets

- a) Jonah and the Whale - a picture to colour
- b) Find the Whale - Colour the spaces that have a dot and find the whale
- c) Jonah Maze - Help Jonah get past the whale

* Retell the story - tell the story in your own words using the coloured pictures

* Jonah action story - As the teacher tells the story, children make different faces to show how the characters feel.

* Jonah and the Whale Craft

1. Glue the patterns onto card.
2. Colour the patterns and cut them out.
3. Place the whale with the eyes on top of the other whale. Cut out the mouth first
4. Make holes with a hole punch where indicated.
5. With a length of wool or string, stitch the whale together. Then you can insert Jonah in and out of the whale's mouth.
6. Insert another piece of wool into one of the holes to display the whale

* Play Hide and Seek

- a) Play the traditional game, except the seeker is "God" and everyone who hides is "Jonah".
- b) An alternative is to make several copies of the Jonah picture, cut them out and hide them in different places in the room. Everyone must try to find as many as possible. Who can find the most?

6) Review the lesson aim

- * To know the key events of the story
- * To learn that we should not run away from God like Jonah, but follow God's plan for our life

7) Prayer

Jonah and the Whale



Another prophet in Israel was a man called Jonah. One day, God spoke to Jonah. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and talk to the people. They have become cruel and selfish, and they worship many false gods. I want you to warn them to change their bad ways, or I will destroy the city."

The people of Nineveh were also the enemies of Israel. Jonah did not want to go to them so he tried to run away. Instead of heading for Nineveh, Jonah boarded a ship heading in the opposite direction. He wanted to get as far from Assyria as he could.

The ship set sail, and Jonah went below deck to rest. But, after a while, the sky grew dark, and there was a terrible storm. The crew was terrified and called upon their gods to save them. The captain rushed below deck to Jonah, to find him sleeping. "How can you sleep!" he shouted at the prophet, shaking him. "Pray to your god to save us! Maybe he will help us and we won't all drown."

Jonah realized that he was the cause of all the trouble. He told them he was a prophet. "I am from Israel," he said. "I worship the Lord, God of Israel. I have disobeyed God by running away from him. It's my fault this has happened to you. The best thing you can do is to throw me overboard. "

But the Captain would not hear of it. He was a good man, and he did not want to harm Jonah. Instead, the crew tried to row the ship back to land. But the storm grew even wilder. So in the end, the captain prayed to God, "O Lord, do not blame us for killing an innocent man." Then, very reluctantly, he and the crew pushed Jonah overboard into the raging sea.

As soon as Jonah sank beneath the waves, the wind dropped and the sea grew calm again. The storm was over. The captain and crew fell their knees and worshipped God, and thanked him for saving their lives.

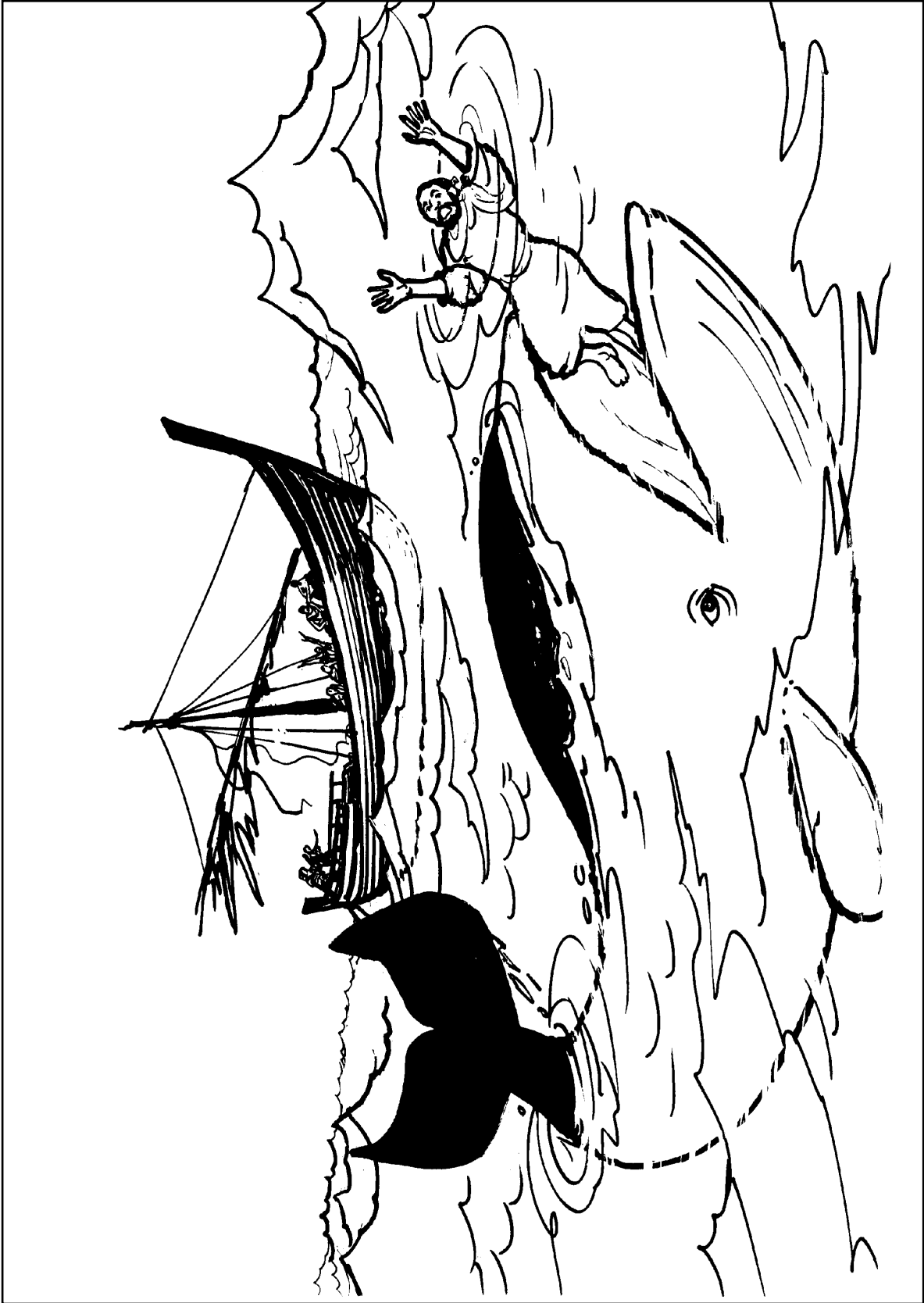
But God was not going to let Jonah drown. A great whale appeared and swallowed him up. For three days and nights, Jonah was inside the whale. He thanked God for saving his life and was very sorry for running away. After three days the whale spit Jonah up on to the seashore. At last, he was safe on dry land. Then God spoke again to Jonah. "Now will you go to Nineveh?" he asked. This time the prophet did as he was told.

The Assyrians were cruel and selfish, and worshipped many false gods. So, as the Lord had commanded, the prophet began to preach. "Turn from your bad ways, or in forty days God will destroy your city." The people listened and took notice. The king listened, too. Then the king ordered that the whole city should fast and pray, and ask God's forgiveness for the way they had behaved. Soon, everyone had started to live better lives. God saw what had happened, and he was pleased. He decided not to destroy the city after all.



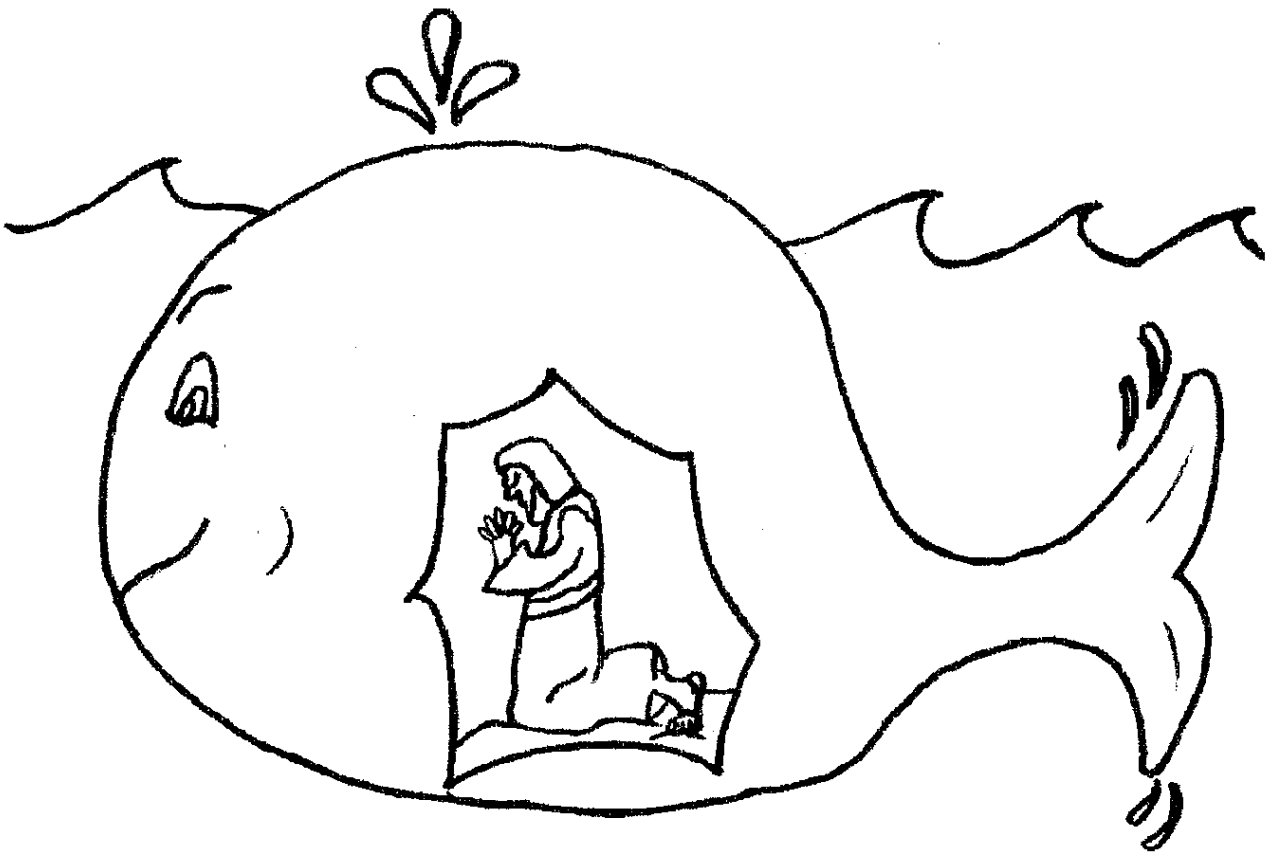


Jonah and the Whale



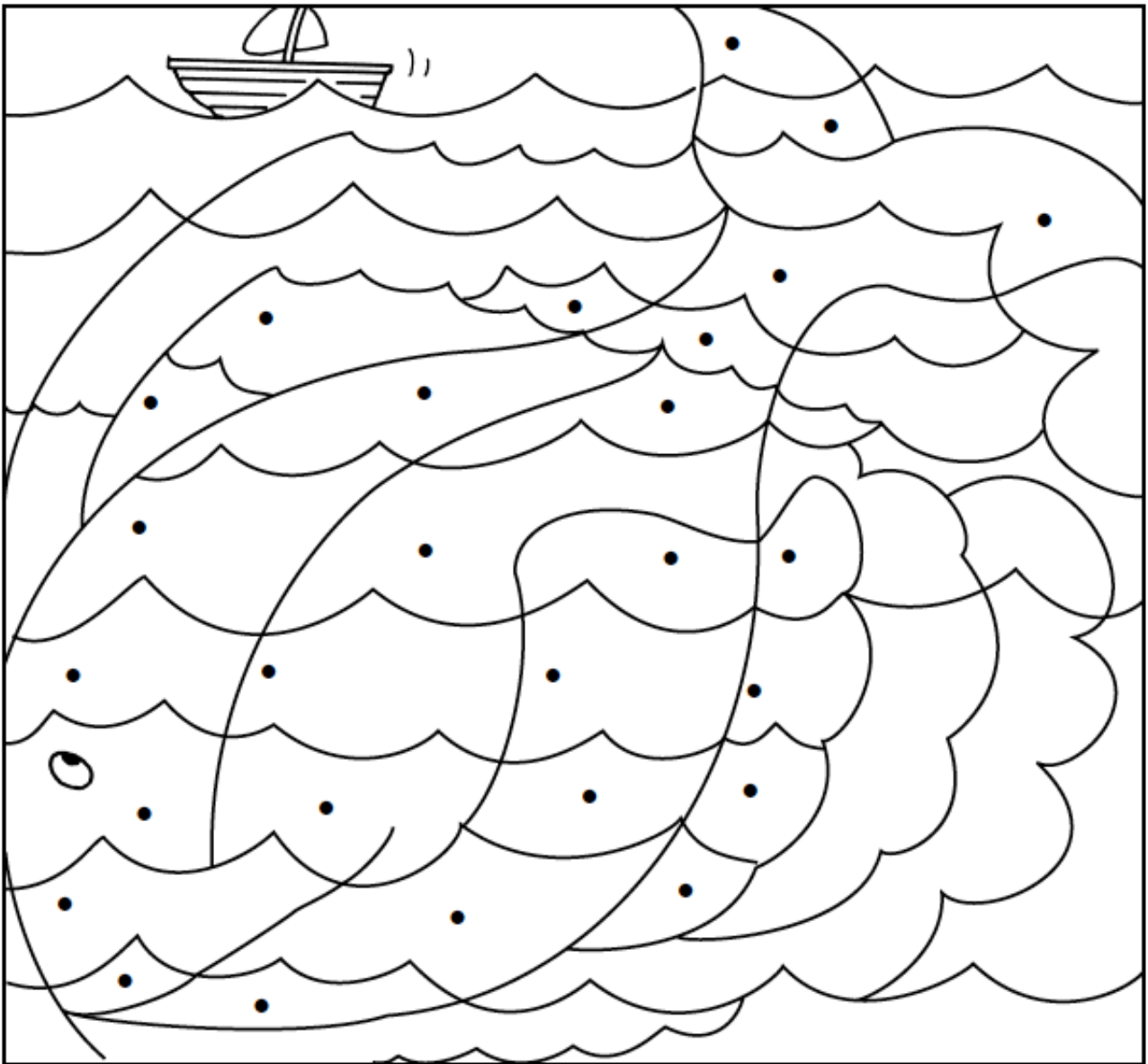
Jonah and the Whale

Colour the picture



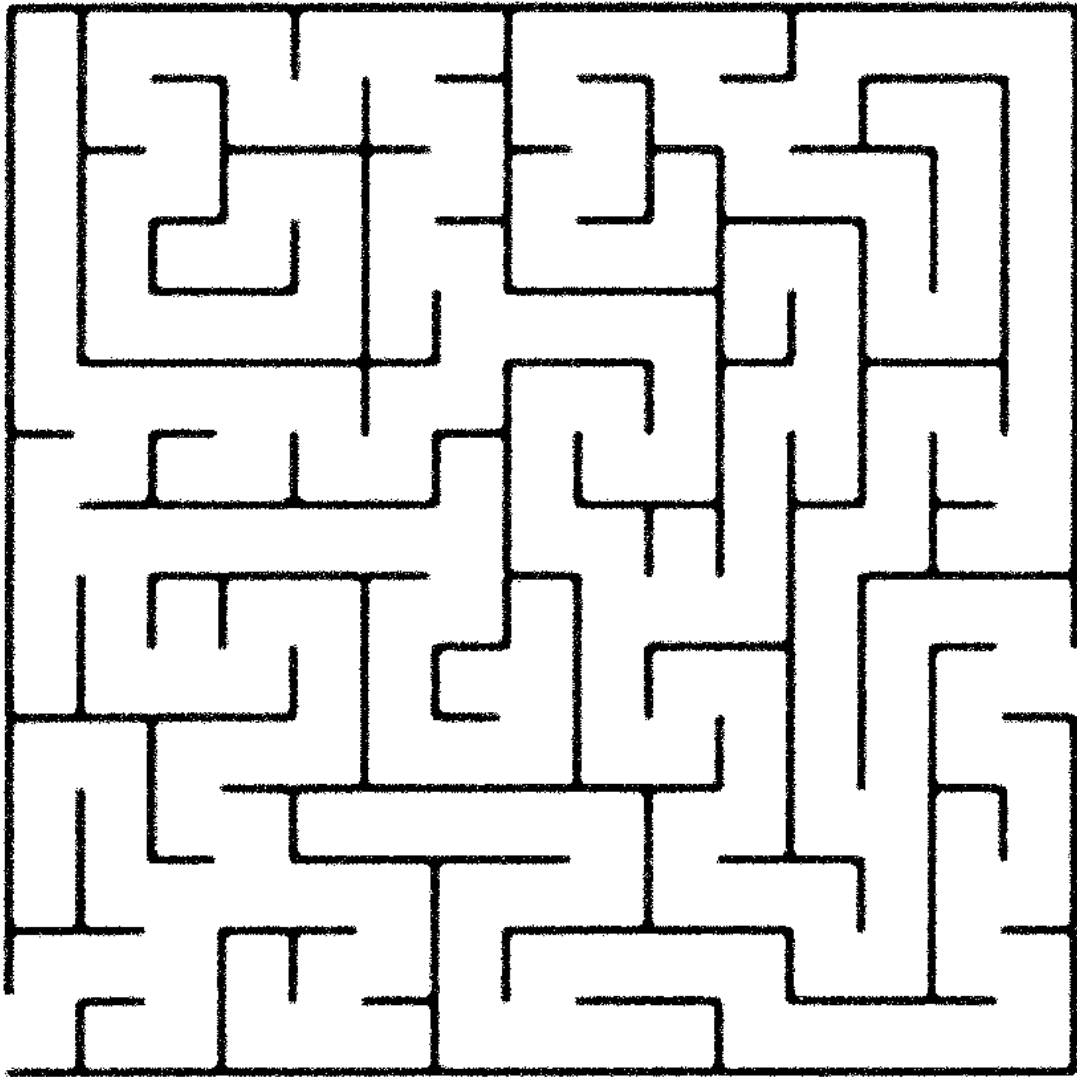
Find the Whale

Colour the spaces that have a dot ● and find the whale



Jonah Maze

Help Jonah get past the whale



Jonah Action Story

Tell the story and children make different faces to show how the characters feel.

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? (***Make a sad face***)

Jonah wasn't happy to hear this. He started to pout. (***Make a pouting face***) Jonah was also mad that God had asked him to do this. (***Make a mad face***)

He probably said to himself, (***Make a pouting face and fold your arms together***) "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. (***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. (***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. (***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 (***Make a scared face***). 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 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. (***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 whale to swallow Jonah and take him down to the bottom of the sea. How do you think Jonah felt now? (***Make a scared face***) 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. (***Make an ashamed face***) Finally, after three days of being in the dark, stinky, belly of the whale, the whale 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. (***Make a happy and surprised face***) He was also probably a little embarrassed by the way he looked. (***Make an embarrassed face***)

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

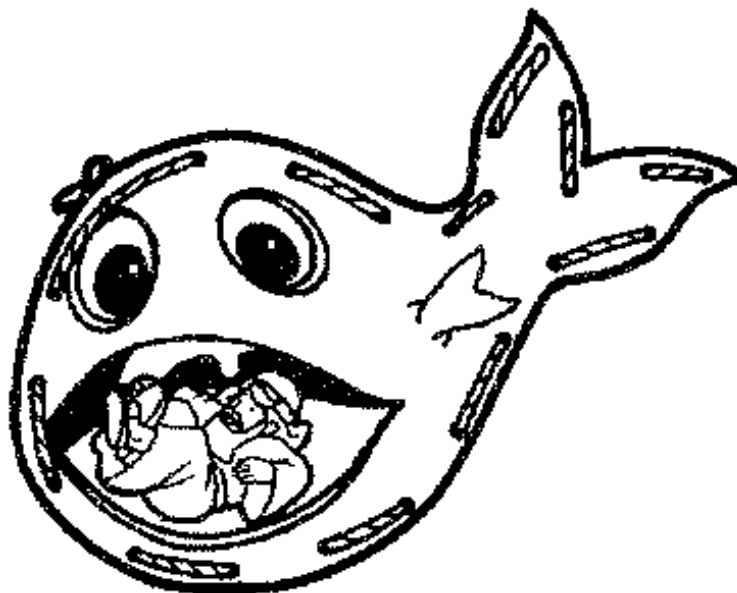
Jonah and the Whale Craft

Materials

- * Jonah and the whale patterns
- * card
- * coloured pencils
- * glue
- * wool or string
- * hole punch

Directions

1. Glue the patterns onto card.
2. Colour and cut them out.
3. Place the whale with the eyes on top of the other whale. Cut out the mouth first.
4. Make holes with a hole punch where indicated.
5. With a length of wool or string, stitch the whale together. Then you can insert Jonah in and out of the whale's mouth.
6. Insert another piece of wool into one of the holes to display the whale.



Finished Product

