



COUNTRY CLUB CHRISTIAN CHURCH

FOUNTAINS OF FAITH

Sunday School Rotation for Grades 1-5

Cycle Two: Test of Faith — September 23-October 21, 2007

Jonah

What has been the best advice you ever received when you had to face a difficult situation?

Where is your favorite place to feel close to God?

KEY FOCUS: *God wants us to love all people and to act in ways that will show others that all of us are loved by God. Our relationship with God makes us special. That is what Jonah thought too. The story of Jonah directs us outward. Jonah's job from God was to go to another "people" and share God's love with them in such a way that they would take action. Our special relationship with God means that we are responsible for being a "light to the nations." We can live in such a way so that others might see God's love and grace reflected in our thoughts and deeds.*

A word to the wise from Jonah – **you cannot hide from God.** That is what Jonah learned the hard way! God called Jonah to do a very difficult thing – go to his enemies in Nineveh and tell them about God. Jonah did everything in his power to sever his relationship with God. He thought he would travel far away to Tarshish, a place that did not know of God. Jonah thought that this meant God did not know about Tarshish, but God not only knew of Tarshish, God also knew how to get there and intercepted Jonah. God would not let Jonah off the hook.

A storm caused Jonah to be thrown overboard. Perhaps he thought that drowning would be better than facing his enemies. God had other things in mind. A great fish saved Jonah, and after three days brought him into the light of day safe upon the shore. Jonah did not die, and God did not release him from his call. Jonah tried really hard **not** to do what God wanted, yet God persisted. God saw value in Jonah's life and in the lives of his enemies.

"Alright already," exclaimed Jonah as he started to Nineveh. When Jonah got to Nineveh he was overwhelmed. Nineveh was a great city and the people knew nothing of God. How could he do the job alone? Jonah thought that the people were so bad that they didn't deserve God's grace and love. Jonah learned that judgement belongs to God and God alone, and God chooses to extend grace to **all** people. The people just have to be willing to accept it.

Jonah did a very good job because the entire city changed and chose to live in ways that would be pleasing to God. Perhaps we will change our ways after we hear Jonah's story and know that there is no place to hide from God and that God chooses all kinds of people to spread God's message of love. You don't have to be perfect, just willing.

What we'll be doing:

- **My Father's House:** Children will make cinnamon whales and learn Jonah's story through computer animation.
- **Mary & Martha's Bed and Breakfast:** Through a shadow puppet play the children will tell the story of Jonah to learn the sequence of events and discuss some of the scenes and the meaning for us today.
- **Sacred Story Studio:** Through a session considering how appearances might change, but the inner person doesn't always change children will explore how the prejudice between the people of Israel and Nineveh affected Jonah's sense of justice and grace.
- **Creator's Place:** Children will hear the story of Jonah through an illustrated book and create symbols of the story.
- **Wisdom Temple:** Joining Jonah in the "belly of the whale" children will hear Jonah share his story as he ponders how he ended up there for three days.



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Strength for the Journey. Grace for the Soul.