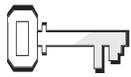


Out of Darkness



References

Jonah 3;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 269-271



Memory Verse

"[God] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

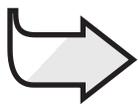


Objectives

The children will:
Know that God uses people in a community of faith to share His message of salvation with others.

Feel concerned for the salvation of others.

Respond by asking Jesus to help them share His love with others.



The Message

God will help me share His message of salvation with others.

Monthly Theme

God teaches us how to treat others.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

After God saves Jonah's life, He again tells Jonah to go to Nineveh with a warning message. This time Jonah goes straight to Nineveh and shares God's warning message that Nineveh will be destroyed. The people believe God's message and seek the Lord through fasting and prayer. God hears their prayers, has compassion on them, and does not destroy them, as He had threatened.

This is a lesson about community.

Nineveh was a wicked city and an enemy of Israel. Even so, God cared about the people in that wicked city who would come to Him if given the opportunity. As a community of faith, we also need to care about the salvation of everyone outside our faith. God will help us to share His love with them.

Teacher Enrichment

The city of Nineveh was one of the oldest cities of Assyria and, according to Genesis 10:11, was probably founded by Nimrod. From time to time through the centuries, Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. Nineveh lay on the eastern bank of the Tigris River opposite the present-day city of Mosul (see *The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, p. 1000).

"The book of Jonah is one of the missionary treatises of the Old Testament. While the people of Israel had interpreted their covenant relationship with God as something exclusive in which no other nation might share, God is concerned to demonstrate that His grace is not limited by national interest, boundaries, or pride. If we may speculate, God may have chosen Nineveh for repentance because it was the least likely candidate. Because of the intense cruelty of the Assyrians, they were thoroughly feared and hated in the ancient world. What better focus for the grace of God than the people for whom not even the prophet could bring himself to feel concern!" (*Today's Dictionary of the Bible*, pp. 353, 354).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Who Cares?</i> B. <i>There Are People in There!</i>	none picture of a large city, large boxes or blocks
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> box decorated to look like a face or head, cut so that it opens at the mouth (with lips around the mouth) none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	adult male, Bible-times costumes, boxes or "city of Nineveh" (made during Readiness B), real or fake microphone, Bible five simple signs (see activity) Bibles, eight foot cutouts on which Bible texts are written (see activity)
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	<i>I Care to Share</i>	construction paper, crayons, markers, pencils, heart shape (see p. 144)
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Collage Announcement</i>	paper, old religious magazines/ other magazines, glue, markers, scissors

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Encourage them to share any experiences from last week's lesson study. Have them begin the Readiness Activity of your choice.

1

Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Who Cares?

Have most of your class make a circle by holding hands. Have a few other children stand outside the circle, but near it. Whisper "God loves you, and wants to save you" into the ear of the first child in the circle. Have him/her whisper this to the next child until it has gone around the circle. Tell the children outside the circle to try to get into the circle so they can hear the message. The children who make the circle are to shut them out.

Whisper the same words around the circle again. This time, allow the "outsiders" to join the circle and hear the message.

Debriefing

Ask: **What did you learn about treating others from this activity?** (that it is not nice to leave others out when we are sharing a message; that we should care about the "outsiders.") Ask the "outsiders": **How did you feel about being an "outsider"?** ("insiders" didn't care about me; "insiders" were unfriendly, etc.) Ask the ones who were included in the circle: **How did you feel about leaving the others outside, not sharing your message with them?** (guilty, because we didn't show that we cared about them, etc.) **How will you treat others who are outside your group of friends?** (I want to include them in what I say and do.) **Today's message is:**



GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

Say that with me.

You Need:

- picture of a large city
- large boxes or blocks

B. There Are People in There!

Draw attention to a picture of a large city. Let the children "build" a city with the boxes or blocks. Leave the "city" standing for "Experiencing the Story."

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Have you ever seen a big city in the distance when you were traveling? Can you remember the names of some cities that you have visited? What would you like about being in a big city? Did you remember that God loves the many people in the city?** (yes; no) **In our Bible story today, a preacher goes to a city to give a message from God. Today's message is:**



GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "For God So Loved the World" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 26)
- "O, How He Loves You and Me" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 28)
- "Wide, Wide as the Ocean" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 32)
- "I Have Heard Good News Today" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 33)
- "Jesus Loves Children" (*Sing for Joy*, no. 37)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission* at <https://am.adventistmission.org/mq-children>. You might introduce the mission story by saying: **Today our story is about _____, who shared God's message of salvation with others.**



Offering

Have the children put their offering in the mouth of the offering device. Explain that our offering goes to help tell God's message of salvation to people living in (name world field receiving Thirteenth Sabbath Offering).

You Need:

- box decorated to look like a face or head, cut so that it opens at the mouth (with lips around the mouth)



Prayer

Try a "round-the-circle prayer." Hold hands to form a circle. First have a silent prayer time when the children silently pray for someone they know who does not know Jesus. Then invite volunteers to pray that Jesus will help class members share His message of salvation with others.

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- adult male to play Jonah
- Bible-times costumes
- boxes or city made during Readiness B
- real or fake microphone
- Bible

Experiencing the Story

Setting the Scene

Select children to take turns being a “reporter” to interview “Jonah.” Stand together outside the “city of Nineveh.” (See Readiness B or use boxes to make a “city.”) Have the children hold a “microphone” as they interview. Furnish a copy of the script to Jonah. Place the reporter’s questions on numbered cards.

Use the following script to tell the story.

Reporter 1 : Our special guest today is Jonah. He has just passed through a most interesting experience—being swallowed by a huge fish! Jonah, tell us about it.

Jonah: God asked me to go to Nineveh. But I didn’t want to go, so I boarded a ship going in the opposite direction. A big storm came up. To save the ship, I was thrown overboard, and a huge fish swallowed me. After three days and three nights, the fish coughed me up onto the shore.

Reporter 2: Amazing! Then what happened?

Jonah: I was so happy to be alive and on dry land again. First I took some really deep breaths of fresh air. It smelled so good after being inside the fish for three days. After three days in the dark, the light hurt my eyes. I blinked a lot. It was good to move freely again. I was praising God for saving my life when He spoke to me again.

Reporter 3: What did He say?

Jonah: Well, He didn’t scold me. But He reminded me that He had a task for me. “Jonah!” He said, “I want you to go to Nineveh right now. Preach the message I gave you.” I still did not want to

come here. But I came the fastest way possible.

Reporter 4: What happened when you arrived in Nineveh?

Jonah: I began to preach as soon as I arrived. And the people listened to God’s special message: “In 40 days Nineveh is going to be destroyed.”

Reporter 5: That’s a startling message! How did the people in Nineveh react?

Jonah: The news spread quickly through the city, and the people believed God’s message. “Nineveh is going to be destroyed?” they asked. “How could this possibly happen? What can we do to stop it?”

Then people began to wonder, “Maybe if God sees that we are truly sorry for the things we are doing wrong, He will save us and our city. Let’s show Him how sorry we are. We will stop eating food for a while, and we won’t wear our regular nice clothes, and we will pray. This will show God that the most important thing to us right now is to talk to Him and have him listen to us.”

Reporter 6: What did the king of Nineveh think of all of this?

Jonah: He heard what was happening and knew at once that my warning had come from God. He wanted God to know how sorry he was for all the wicked things he and his people had done. So he took off his royal clothes and put on sackcloth. Then he sat in the dust and prayed.

He sent out a message to all the people in Nineveh: “No man, woman, child, animal, herd, or flock is to eat or drink anything. Everyone is to wear sackcloth. We need to pray to God urgently. Let us stop being violent and unkind to one another. Maybe God will be merciful to us. Maybe He will forgive all the wrong things

we have done and not destroy our city.”

Reporter 7: Then what happened?

Jonah: Everyone did just as the king had commanded. God saw that the people of Nineveh were really sorry, and He forgave them. And He did not destroy the city. As you can see, it is still standing.

Reporter 8: Thank you, Jonah, for telling us your experience.

Reporter 9: Jonah did what God asked him to do. He delivered God’s message. God cares about the people of Nineveh. He wants us to care about others. He would like to use us to share His loving message of salvation with others.

Debriefing

Ask: **How would you have felt about preaching in a wicked city?** (scared, etc.) **Why did God send Jonah on such a scary assignment?** (Because He cared about the lost people in Nineveh.) **How should I feel about the lost people around me?** (I should care about them and let God help me share the message of salvation with them.) Read aloud 2 Peter 3:9. **What is God telling us today?** Allow response time. **Let’s say today’s message again:**



GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

Memory Verse

Say: **We want to announce the good news of the gospel to the world. Signs are used to announce things, so the words of our memory verse are on signs.**

Give one sign to each of five children. Have the children

You Need:

- five simple signs reading as follows:
 - 1—[God] is patient
 - 2—with you,
 - 3—not wanting anyone
 - 4—to perish.
 - 5—2 Peter 3:9

holding signs stand in the wrong order.

Ask the children to suggest where the sign holders should stand so the words are in the right order. Then read the verse. Repeat until the children know the verse.

Bible Study

Have the texts listed below written on cutouts of a foot—one text per foot. Appoint children to find and read the texts and look for words that tell what God is like. (Adults assist as needed.) Have them write the word(s) next to the text on the “foot.” Then place the footprints on the floor, arranged to look like footsteps going toward the “city of Nineveh” boxes.

Isaiah 52:7	He reigns
Deuteronomy 32:3, 4	just
Jeremiah 9:24	kind
Exodus 34:6, 7	gracious
Psalms 24:8	strong
Nehemiah 9:17	forgiving
Jonah 2:9	gives salvation
Jonah 3:10	compassionate

You Need:

- Bibles
- eight foot cutouts with texts

Debriefing

Say: **Others need to know what God is like, and that He wants to save them. Jonah was given a second chance to share this message with Nineveh.** Ask: **How do you feel about your God after reading these Bible verses?** (He’s awesome, wants to save people, loving, etc.) **Why do you want to share how He is with others?** (Because it would be selfish to keep such good news to myself; God wants to save as many people as possible, etc.) **And what is today’s message? Repeat it with me:**



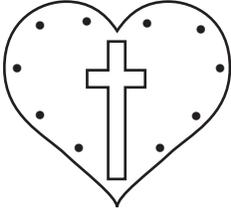
GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- construction paper
- crayons, markers
- pencils
- Heart shape (see p. 144)



I Care to Share

Distribute supplies. Demonstrate as you give the following directions.

1. Write at the top of your paper: "I Care to Share."
2. Draw a large heart (see page 144) under the words, symbolizing that you have a heart of love for others. (Or distribute papers with a heart already drawn.)
3. Put 10 evenly spaced dots around the edge of your heart drawing. (See illustration.)
4. Draw a cross in the center of the heart, symbolizing that you care enough about others to share the good news of salvation with them.

Say: **What are some ways to show that we care about the salvation of others?** Allow response time. **Each time a suggestion is given, poke a small hole with a pencil point in one of the**

dots around your heart, until all the holes are poked. Take the heart poster home and hang it in a window so the sun shines through. This can be a reminder that God will shine through us when we care to share.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you say: **Think about the ways you can show that you care about the salvation of others.**

Jonah had a message to share that saved the people of Nineveh. What is the message of salvation that you will share with others? How do you feel about sharing this message with others? Our message reminds me and you that:



GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Collage Announcement

Where all can see, write: "Jesus is coming soon. He wants to take you to heaven!"

Distribute supplies. Direct the children to cut out pictures that represent the message of salvation (Jesus on the cross, smiling people, Jesus coming in the clouds, heaven, etc.). Have them glue them to a paper and then copy what you have written in a prominent place on their collage.

Say: **Think of a friend, acquaintance, or relative who does not know Jesus, one whom you will see soon. Write "To:" at the top of the paper and then write that person's name. Plan to give the announcement poster away this next week.**

Debriefing

Ask: **What does your announcement poster tell you about Jesus?** (He

is coming soon and wants to take others and me to heaven.) **How do you feel about this good news?** (happy, excited, want to tell others, etc.)

To whom will you give your poster? When will you give it to them this week? (Ask those who have decided.) **Our message today will give you courage to share your announcement poster. Let's say it together:**



GOD WILL HELP ME SHARE HIS MESSAGE OF SALVATION WITH OTHERS.

Closing

Have the children repeat this prayer after you: **Dear Jesus, help us to care about others outside our group. Please give us all the words and actions that we need so we can share You with them. Help us to know whom to share with and when. Thank You, Jesus. In Your name, amen.**

You Need:

- paper
- old religious magazines/
other magazines
- glue
- markers
- scissors

Out of Darkness

References

Jonah 3; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 269-271

Memory Verse

"[God] is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish" (2 Peter 3:9).

The Message

God will help me share His message of salvation with others.

Akiko squinted several times as she came out into the bright sunshine from the cave she and her class had been exploring at the zoo. It felt good to come into the sunshine and the fresh air. Imagine how Jonah felt when the big fish finally spit him out onto dry land.

Jonah was so happy to be on dry land again! First he took some really deep breaths of fresh air. It smelled so good after the fishy smell of the past three days. He blinked a lot. The light probably hurt his eyes after three days inside the fish. He stretched and moved around. How good it was to be able to move freely again. Jonah rejoiced and praised God for saving his life. Suddenly God spoke to him again.

"Jonah! I still want you to go to Nineveh. I need you to preach the message I will give you." Jonah still did not want to go to Nineveh, but he had promised God that he would obey Him. So he went.

Jonah began to preach as soon as he arrived. He told

everyone God's special message for the people living in Nineveh. "In 40 days Nineveh is going to be destroyed."

The news spread quickly throughout the city. "Nineveh is going to

be destroyed. How could this possibly happen? What can we do to stop it?" Everyone was serious. They believed the message Jonah delivered.

Soon people began to wonder. "Maybe if God sees that we are truly sorry for doing wrong, He will save us. Maybe He won't destroy our city. Let's show Him how sorry we are. We should stop eating food for a while and not wear our regular nice clothes. And we should pray. This will show God that the most important thing for us right now is to talk to Him and have him listen to us."

So everyone put on sackcloth to show how sorry they were for their sins. They fasted and prayed for forgiveness.

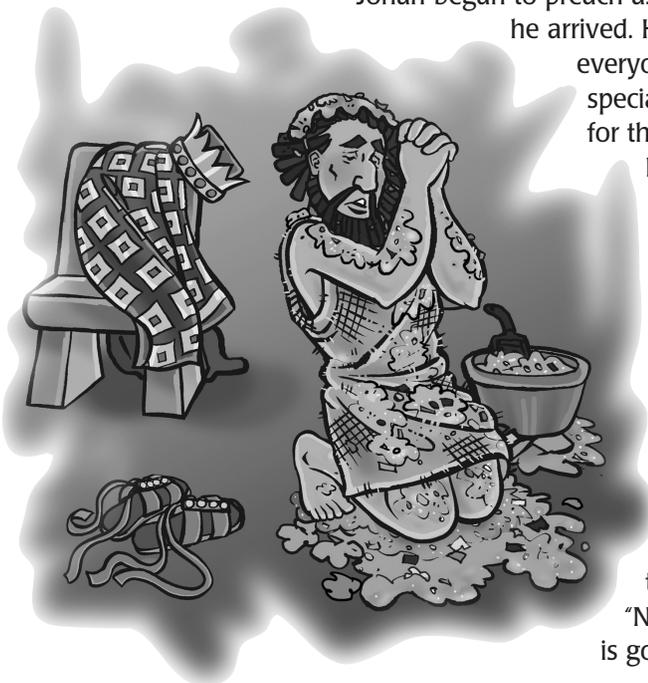
The king of Nineveh heard what was happening in the city. He knew at once that Jonah's warning had come from God. And he believed the message. He decided to show God how sorry he was for all the wicked things he and his people had done. He took off his royal clothes and put on sackcloth—simple, coarse clothes. Then he sat in the dust and prayed to God.

The king sent out a message to all the people in Nineveh. "No man, woman, child, animal, herd, or flock is to eat or drink anything. Everyone is to wear sackcloth. We need to pray to God urgently. Let us stop being violent and unkind to one another. Maybe God will be merciful to us. Maybe He will forgive us for all the wrong things we have done and not destroy our city."

Everyone did just as the king commanded.

God saw the people. He could see how sorry the people of Nineveh were. He believed that they were really sorry. So He forgave them and decided not to destroy the city.

The people of Nineveh were grateful. God had shown them His love and mercy. And they would change their



ways. They began by praising God for His love and forgiveness.

Jonah had done what God had asked him to do. He had given the message that God gave to him. God had shown that He cared about the people of Nineveh. He wanted them to be good people. He wants us to care about others too. He wants to use us to share His loving message of salvation with others.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Take a nature walk with your family. Watch for creatures that might be giving messages of warning to other creatures. What do they do? Find a quiet place and read your lesson story together. Who gave a message of warning? What was the result? Ask God to help you listen to His message for you.
- Teach the memory verse to your family.

Sunday

- For family worship, read Jonah 3:1, 2.
- Deliver the “collage announcement” you made in Sabbath School. Or write your memory verse and John 3:16 on paper and decorate it with pictures of Jesus. Put it inside a balloon, then blow up the balloon. Give it to someone in your neighborhood.
- Write your memory verse on a long strip of paper. Cut the words apart, put them in order, and say the verse. Save this for another day.

Monday

- Read Jonah 3:3 with your family. Jonah obeyed and went to _____.
- Find that place on a Bible map. Notice how far Jonah had to travel from the seacoast. How many days did it take to cross the city of Nineveh? How far do you have to go to share God’s message?
- Put your memory verse puzzle in the right order. Thank God for His patience with you. How can you share His message with someone today?

Tuesday

- With your family, read Jonah 3:4, 5. In how many days would Nineveh be destroyed? _____. Look at a calendar and count out that number of days from today. What would the date be?
- Say your memory verse together. Did you share

God’s message with someone today? Tell your family about it.

- Sing together “God Calls Us” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 130). Thank God for His love for your family and friends.

Wednesday

- During family worship, read Jonah 3:6-9. What is sackcloth? Ask a family member to help you find the word in a dictionary. Put a sheet or some rough cloth over you and imagine what it was like to pray all day wearing sackcloth. How does one fast? Can you fast for one day? With your parents’ permission, try it tomorrow. Why were the people from Nineveh so desperate? (See Jonah 3:9.)
- Say your memory verse in your own words.

Thursday

- Read Jonah 3:10 with your family. Think of a time someone hurt you. How did you treat that person? How does God treat those who turn from their evil ways?
- Did you fast today? Why?
- Plan tomorrow’s sundown worship together. Think of ways to share the good news of God’s salvation with your family through song, scripture, acting out your Bible lesson, etc. If possible, invite a friend to worship with you. Ask God to bless your plans.
- Put your memory verse to music and sing it together.

Friday

- Enjoy the worship program you planned yesterday. Try wearing “sackcloth” and sitting on the floor. Pray for God’s mercy and blessings. Be sure to thank Him for His message of salvation.
- Ask your family to share favorite Bible verses about God’s salvation.
- Say your memory verse. Sing “God Is So Good” (*Sing for Joy*, no. 13) before you pray.