

## Day 1

### Overview

Bible Lesson—Jonah

Key Verse—Romans 5:8 - “But God showed his own love toward us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

### Get Ready

*You will need:*

- Snack items such as popsicles or snacks and drinks.
- Paper bag with “Act-out” words: God, showed, love, died.
- The Romans 5:8 Poster
- Something to mark boundaries for today’s game area.
- A Bible marked at Romans 5:8

*Preparation:*

- Make sure your snack items are ready and that you have easy access to them
- Mark off your game area
- Write the “Act-out” words on slips of paper: or print the page at the end of this lesson: *God, showed, love, died*. If you want, you can add a couple of extra words too.
- Make a small Romans 5:8 poster with the following blanks or print the page at the end of this lesson

But \_\_\_\_\_ his own \_\_\_\_\_ for us, in that while

We were yet sinners, Christ \_\_\_\_\_ for us.

### Get Started

Once your kids have arrived, tell them that any time you say, “Who should be #1 in your life?” They say: “Jesus!” as loud as they can.

Practice a few times. Tell them that you want them to be so loud that they wake the neighbors up.

*Throughout the day, keep asking them this question at random times, especially when you want to re-focus them or as you are changing from one part of the lesson to another. This is your Control Tool. Learn more about Control Tools in the VBS Training.*

### Get Familiar

Tell your kids that you want to get to know them. Tell the kids your name and answer the following questions with them.

Ask the Kids —What is your name and what is your favorite food? (Let every student answer.)

Ask the Kids —If you could choose one person in all time to be your hero, who would it be? (Take volunteers).

## **Group Identity**

Let your kids make up a name for your group.

Tell them that even though you're meeting as a small group, your group will have a challenge each day. You'll take a picture of your challenge and send it to your VBS Director to compete against other groups meeting across your town.

## **Bible Lesson—Jonah**

*Divide your group into two parts—this side and that side, boy and girls, etc.*

- To one side give the following sound effects: Wind, splash,
- To the other side give the following effects: Waves, swallow
- To all: Rain (hands on lap), thunder, lightning (no sound, but blinks eyes), and
- the sound of something sinking—i.e., gulp, gulp, gulp...
- Tell the kids: Every time I say "Jonah" I want you to say, "Go Jonah!" Practice this.

## **Tell the story of Jonah**

Once there was a man named Jonah (Go Jonah!) and Jonah (Go Jonah!) was a godly man who wanted to follow God, but one day God told Jonah (Go Jonah!) to do something really hard. He said, Jonah (Go Jonah!) Go to Nineveh. Now the people of Nineveh were his worst enemies. But God said, Jonah (Go Jonah!) Tell the people that if they don't stop doing the wrong things they are doing that I will destroy them all. Now Jonah (Go Jonah!) kind of liked the idea of his worst enemies getting wiped off the face of the earth, so Jonah (Go Jonah!) decided to disobey God. Instead of going to Nineveh Jonah (Go Jonah!) went the opposite direction and went down to Joppa to hoppla on a boat. And Jonah (Go Jonah!) went down into the bottom of the boat and they set sail for a place called Tarshish—not Tarzan.

The sailors looked up and saw some clouds. Then there was some gentle wind (kids begin making effects) and gentle waves and gentle rain. But the rain got louder and wind and waves got louder too. Suddenly there was thunder and lightning and the boat was going back and forth, back and forth. But Jonah (Go Jonah!) (This cuts off the effects)—Does anyone know what he was doing? He was asleep.

Now do you see what Jonah was doing—He was trying to run away from God. Can you run away from God? No. If you go to the top of the highest mountain in the world, God is there. If you go to the deepest part of the sea, God is there. And that's why God had sent the storm—to stop Jonah (Go Jonah!) from going the wrong way.

And the wind was blowing (kids begin making effects again) and the waves were coming and there was rain and thunder and lightning and the boat was going back and forth, back and forth. And the captain came down and said Jonah (Go Jonah!) "Wake up. We're going to die." And Jonah (Go Jonah!) went up and looked at the storm.

And the wind was blowing (kids begin making effects again) and the waves were coming and there was rain and thunder and lightning and the boat was going back and forth, back and forth. And then Jonah (Go Jonah!) said "If you throw me overboard it will stop." And even though they didn't want to, the sailors finally took Jonah (Go Jonah!) and threw him over. And there was a splash (splash sound) and he sank down (gulp, gulp, gulp) and then God appointed a big fish to swallow (sound effect) Jonah (Go Jonah!). And for three days and three nights Jonah (Go Jonah!) was in the belly of a fish.

Now what would you do if you were in the belly of a fish? (Let kids answer) Jonah (Go Jonah!) prayed and told God that he didn't want to go the wrong way anymore and that he was willing to do what God wanted him to do.

So the big fish got a stomach ache, pulled up to the shore, and what kind of sound do you think it made. And out came Jonah (Go Jonah!). And Jonah (Go Jonah!) did what God wanted him to do and the people of Nineveh repented (stopped doing the wrong things) and God didn't destroy them. They were saved because Jonah (Go Jonah!) took them God's message.

#### *Make the point*

Jonah (Go Jonah!) decided to do what God wanted him to do. Giving your life to Jesus and following Him is the best choice you'll ever make.

#### **Sing a Song**

Have fun with your kids singing **Whose Side**

*You can see this song in the VBS Training Session on Leading VBS Songs.*

*Teach them the song and do "Whose Side are you leaning on?", "Whose Side are you zodding on?", and "Whose Side are you sitting on...I sit, I stand..."*

#### **Tie in the meaning**

Jonah made choices in today's story. We all make choices everyday too and the best choice you'll ever make is to give your life to Christ and to follow Him every day in every way. Make sure you choose to be "on God's side" whether you're leaning or sneezing or eating and in everything else that you do.

Leader: "Who should be #1 in your life?" The kids: "Jesus!"

#### **Play a Game, part 1 - Big Fish**

Mark out a large area (20 ft. x 20 ft.). The center area is the sea. Choose one volunteer to be the big fish. Have kids line up around the shore. When the leader yells, "Cross the ocean" all players run from one side to the other and then stop when they are safe. The big fish tries to tag players as they run. Anyone who is tagged before reaching the other side becomes big fish as well and join the big fish in the middle of the area. The next time the runners "cross the ocean" both the big fish and the players who have been tagged will be tagging others. Play continues until only one player remains "crossing the ocean". This player become the big fish for the next round.

After the first round, have the following conversation:

In this game you are running from something, what do you think God wants you to run away from in life? Answer: Sin. God wants us to keep away from sin.

What did Jonah run from? (God) And when you go the wrong way, you always end up in the wrong place. God has plans for your life and everything you've ever wanted in life is only found in Jesus Christ.

*Play the game again.*

In this game you are also running after something—either a person or the other side of the sea. You have a goal. Our goal in life should be to follow Jesus, because only when we follow Jesus will we ever truly find everything we've ever wanted in life: Peace, joy, love...real life.

## **Snack**

While you lead the next part, let your kids have a popsicle or a snack and drink. Since they've been running, they'll be thirsty.

## **Key Verse**

*Get the bag with your Act-out words.*

Choose 1 volunteer to reach in the paper bag. Whatever word they draw out, they have to act it out silently (like charades). Either everyone can guess or you could have a boys against girls competition, if you have enough kids.

The first hand raised gets to guess. As words are guessed, make a list of them.

*Once all the words have been guessed, get your Romans 5:8 poster.*

Ask where your students think the words go in the sentence. (If you added a couple of extra words, be sure to tell them that not all the words fit.)

## **Read Romans 5:8 from your Bible.**

“But God showed his own love for us, in that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us.”

Write the words in the correct blanks.

Ask the Kids:

- How does God show his love for us?
- Who can tell me what a sinner is?

## **Explain the Verse**

We've all done wrong things. Just like Jonah (go Jonah!), we've all gone the wrong way at times and that's why we all need Jesus. Jonah needed to be saved and we need to be saved from our sins. That's why God sent Jesus. When Jesus died, God punished Him for all the wrong things we've done—He paid the price for our sins and because Jesus died and rose again, He has made a way to save you, a way for you to be forgiven and go to heaven someday when you die. That's why the best thing you can do with your life is to give it to Christ and then follow him every day in every way.

## **Review the Verse**

Have your kids read today's verse from the poster but cover different words or fold the poster to hide one line, then two lines, then half, etc., and see if they can keep repeating the entire verse without seeing it all. Then turn it backwards and see if they can say the entire verse without looking at the poster.

## **Sing a Song**

Sing **Whose Side** again - Do the same versions as before and then add more such as “Whose Side are you hopping on?” (I Hop, I Hop...which always makes me hungry for pancakes) And “Whose Side are you screaming on? (I Scream, I Scream...do this like licking an ice cream cone.)

Leader: “Who should be #1 in your life?” The kids: “Jesus!”

## **Illustration**

*Have your group sit back down and choose 1 volunteer:*

Let's say this pen (the pen you've been writing with) is worth a million dollars and I come to you one day and say, "Johnny, I'd like to give this to you." Is it yours yet? What would you have to do to get it? (If they don't immediately say, "I have to reach out and take it," guide them toward that answer.)

Like a gift, you can accept it, or you can say no. A gift can't be earned, just like heaven— you can't be good enough to get to heaven. There is only one way to be saved from your sin and it's only through Jesus.

Now with the pen, it would be easy for you to take it. All you have to do is reach out and it's yours. With God's gift, it's a little different— You can't physically reach out and take it, but in the Bible God told us how we can accept this gift. You see, Jesus paid the price. What we have to do is:

- Admit you have sinned and be willing to turn from your sin.
- Believe that Jesus is God's Son who died and was raised from the dead.
- Call on the Lord, confess your sins, and commit your life to Him.

Have a leader in your group share his story of how he was saved— This should only take a minute or two. Keep it brief and to the point.

*You can learn how to effectively share Your Salvation Story in the VBS Training.*

Be sure to tell your kids that if they have any questions about what it means to give your life to Christ or how to be saved, to just ask you.

## **Photo Challenge**

Today's challenge is to take a group picture. The most creative photo wins. For example, your group might make a pyramid, or make funny faces, etc. Let your kids decide and have fun with it. Then submit your group name and photo to your VBS Director.

## **Wrap It Up**

### **Review**

*Take a few minutes to review today's lesson:*

- What was our story about?
- Who are the main characters?
- What did they do?
- What was our key verse?
- What did you learn today and how does it affect your life?
- Do you have any questions?
- Is there anything you want us to pray for?

### **Pray**

Ask your kids for prayer requests. Then pray and pray that your students will give their lives to Christ when the time is right and follow Him always.

Be sure to remind your kids that if they have any questions about what it means to give their lives to Christ or how to be saved, to just ask you.

Leader: "Who should be #1 in your life?" The kids: "Jesus!"

**Announcements**

Remind your kids of any announcements from your VBS director.

But \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

his own \_\_\_\_\_

for us, in that  
while we were yet  
sinners, Christ  
\_\_\_\_\_ for us.

Romans 5:8

**Act It Out Words**

*Print the following words, fold them, and put them in a bag our container.*

God

,

Showed

,

Love

,

Died