



OVERVIEW

Middler	Dock 1	Dock 2	Dock 3	Dock 4	Dock 5
Title	Overboard: Jonah Runs from God	In the Sea: Jonah Thanks God	On the Lifeboat: Nineveh Receives God's Mercy	Against the Wind: Jonah Is Angry at God	From the Lighthouse: Jesus Shows God's Mercy
References	Jonah 1:1–16	Jonah 1:17—2:10	Jonah 3:1–10	Jonah 4:1–11	Luke 23:33–46; 24:1–12
Focus	God's leading is always best for us.	God's rescuing work is the answer to our greatest needs.	God's compassion and mercy are worth sharing.	God's desires should be our desires.	God offers us His mercy through Jesus' death and resurrection.
Bible Verse	"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful" (Luke 6:36).	"The LORD is good to all: and his tender mercies are over all his works. All thy works shall praise thee" (Ps. 145:9, 10).	"Thou, Lord, art good, and ready to forgive; and plenteous in mercy unto all them that call upon thee" (Ps. 86:5).	"Be not overcome of evil, but overcome evil with good" (Rom. 12:21).	"Not by works of righteousness which we have done, but according to his mercy he saved us" (Titus 3:5).
Games	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sailboat Race Where's Jonah? Splash! Jonah Overboard 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Gulp! Upside Down Thankfulness Pour-n-Pass Bay Balloon Catch 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Seashell Toss Life Preserver Ring Toss Slippery Fish Rocks and Ships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Fish out of Water Flying Fish Beach Ball Baseball 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Lighthouse Relay Swiftest Sailors Pass It Along Good News Soccer Following in His Footsteps
Snacks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apple-n-Cheese Boats "O" Is for Obedience Jonah Overboard! Stormy Waves 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Big Fish Banana God's Love and Mercy Cookies In the Sea Cups 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Jonah on the Beach Hit the Trail, Jonah! Fruit Folks Pretzel Fishing 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Crab Croissants Cookie Clams and Pearls Jonah's Shelter 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Graham Cracker Good News Celery Boats Mercy for You and Me Cookies Mercy Meltaways
Crafts	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sail Your Own Ship Nautical Anchor Floating Sea Turtle Fun Sailboat 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Wyatt the Whale Otter in a Bag Friend Colorful Sea Turtle Happy Whale Good News Bracelet 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Dolphin Sand Art Keychain Hermit Crab Life Preserver Plaque Wally the Walrus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ceramic Shark Bank Mae the Walrus Crab Pet Keepsakes in a Can 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day in the Bay Photo Frame Sandy Beach Lighthouse 3-D Tall Ship Sea Snail Magnet Lighthouse on a Beach

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MIDDLER

TEACHER BOOK



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OVERBOARD

JONAH RUNS FROM GOD

Jonah 1:1-16

Extra Credit Verses: Ps. 18:30; Prov. 3:5, 6

DOCK

1

TOPIC

Following God's direction

DESIRED STUDENT RESPONSE

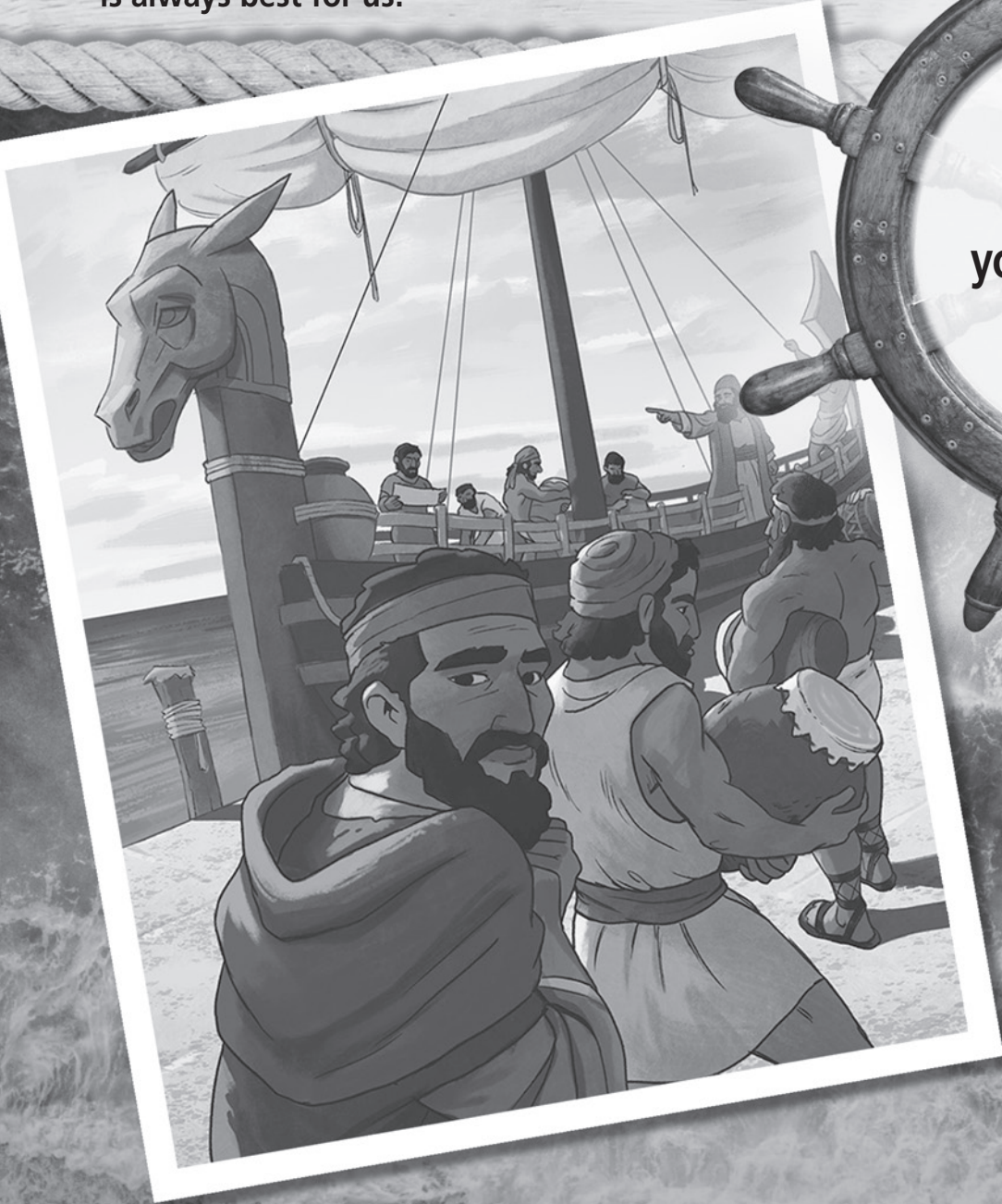
Students will realize that God's direction is best, so they need to follow Him.

THEME

God's leading is always best for us.

BIBLE VERSE

"Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful"
(Luke 6:36).



- Greet students with enthusiasm. Get to know each student.
- Make sure you have a completed registration card (30208) for each student.
- Distribute nametags (32433) and Big Fish Bay passes (32434).
- Open the class time with prayer.



Option 1: Safe Voyage

Materials

- Obstacles; tape.

Before class: Set up the classroom as an obstacle course using chairs, tables, cones, etc. On one side of the room, mark two or more squares on the floor with tape as the starting points. On the other side, mark the boundary of the “harbor” with tape.

A crew on a ship must be able to use navigational equipment correctly. Following navigational equipment is like following directions. If a ship’s crew don’t follow directions, they will find themselves in big trouble.

ACTIVITY: Organize students into two or more teams. Each team will start in a square. Each student is a ship and will be sent over one at a time to the harbor. As the students navigate the course, call out random directions (e.g., “Captain says touch your toes,” “Captain says spin around three times,” “Captain says bark like a dog”). If a ship (player) does not follow a direction or touches an obstacle, he or she must return to the starting line and start over. As with Simon Says, if you do not preface a task with “Captain Says” but a player does the task, he or she must start over. The first team to have all its ships in the harbor wins. **ASK:** Was it easy to follow the directions? Why or why not?

Even though following instructions can be hard, not following them is often worse. When it comes to God’s instructions, they are always best for us, and our response to them may affect lots of other people too.

Option 2: True North

Materials

- Glow in the dark stars; picture of the Little Dipper and Big Dipper from Director Resources CD (32402); sticky tack if necessary.

Before class: Attach the stars on the ceiling of your classroom in the pattern of the Little Dipper and Big Dipper. Place the remaining stars around the constellations so students will have to search to find the North Star. Print the picture of the Little Dipper and Big Dipper or prepare to show it on a screen.

Long ago, way before GPS was invented, sailors would often use the stars at night to find their way. One star is called the North Star, or Polaris. It always lights the way to true north. If you can find the North Star, you’ll know which direction north, south, east, and west are!



Director Resources CD
(32402)

DISPLAY: Show the picture of the Big and Little Dippers, pointing out the North Star on the handle of the Little Dipper. **ACTIVITY:** Instruct students to lie on their backs. A helper dims the lights so the stars can be seen. Help students identify the Little Dipper, Big Dipper, and North Star.

Having good directions is the best thing when you're trying to keep safe and get to where you need to go. God is good and wonderful, so His directions always lead us to the best place for us!



INTRODUCTION

Materials

- *Optional:* cardboard; brown duct tape; brown spray paint or boardwalk deck scene setter (32489); porthole clings (32488); blankets.

Before class: Arrange chairs in the general shape of a ship. Or if desired, make your teaching area into a cardboard ship and allow students to sit on blankets inside. To make your ship, cut 2' strips of cardboard. Tape together the ends as you form the outline of a boat 2' in height surrounding the area where students will sit. Paint the cardboard brown before assembly, or fold the boardwalk deck scene setter (32489) in half and cover the outside with just the deck part of the scene setter for a wooden-boat look. Add porthole clings (32488) to the inside of the boat.

ACTIVITY: Have students sit so they are facing the front of the boat. **SAY:** Sailors have given names to the parts of a boat. When facing forward, the left side of the boat is called the port side. The right side is called starboard. The front of the boat is the bow, and the back of the boat is the stern.

ACTIVITY: Instruct students to lean in the direction of the boat you call out (port, starboard, bow, stern). Call out the directional terms faster and faster as you go. Change the order of the directions.

Well done following the instructions I gave you! Today we're going to learn about a man named Jonah who didn't like the instructions God gave him, so he went in the opposite direction. Let's look together at God's Word, the Bible, to see how that turned out for Jonah.

Teacher Tip ▶

Open in prayer and teach with an open Bible.



EXPLORE THE BIBLE!

Materials

- Bible; lesson 1 visual packet and CD (32407) or visual book PowerPoint download (32407EB); map from the lesson visual poster set (32435), or map of the Mediterranean Sea world showing Joppa, Nineveh, and Tarshish; faux smartphone, as realistic-looking as possible. If desired, print the smartphone from the Director Resources CD (32402) and adhere it to thick cardboard that is cut to shape.

Before class: (1) Ask an adult helper to play the role of someone who intentionally breaks your smartphone. (2) *Optional:* Ask another helper to be Jonah and snore out of sight of the students, as though Jonah were sleeping in the ship. (3) Prepare your Bible so you can quickly find and read Romans 6:23.

Have you ever had something happen to you that didn't just surprise you—it shook you, or made you tremble! The man hurrying down the path to Joppa was shaken. But he could not mistake what God had said. “Go to Nineveh,” was God’s clear message. “Tell them My warning.”

Jonah had a special job—he was a prophet. Long ago, prophets would receive a message from God and tell it to others. People didn't have a copy of the Bible, God's Word, like we do today. So Jonah had an important job! But this time God was commanding Jonah to go to Nineveh (draw out the word for emphasis), of all places.

DISPLAY: Show map and point out Nineveh, Joppa, and Tarshish. **READ:** Jonah 1:1, 2.

Nineveh was in Assyria and was one of the biggest, most important cities in the known world at the time. But Nineveh wasn't just huge. The people of Nineveh were known for being bad, mean, and violent. Of course, being mean to other people is wrong.

ACTIVITY: Show faux smartphone to students. **SAY:** Let's pretend I just got a new smartphone. I had been saving and saving to buy this phone, and finally I had enough money! But one day, I'm outside and my phone is sitting beside me, just for a minute. All at once, someone comes up to me (the adult helper), picks up the phone, and smashes it on the ground! (*Helper pretends to smash the phone.*) Then the person runs away before I can do anything. (*Helper runs out of the classroom.*) **ASK:** How do you think I would feel about this? (*Really mad! Wanting justice.*)

Most other people wanted nothing to do with the mean people in Nineveh. Being mean is wrong. The Bible, God's Word, calls the wrong things people do “sin.” But Someone loved the people of Nineveh, cared for them, and wanted to

Teacher Tip ▶

Definition of *mercy*: “not giving people a punishment they deserve.”

help them! Who could possibly do that? Who could love them so much that He didn't want them to get what they deserved? Who wanted to give them mercy instead?

I'll give you a clue. It wasn't Jonah. Jonah didn't think the Ninevites should get any mercy. They were the enemies of Israel, his country. "Serves them right," he may have grumbled. "I don't want to warn *them*. What if they change their ways? They might not get punished."

But God thought differently than Jonah. God loved the people of Nineveh and wanted them to be warned so they'd have an opportunity to receive His mercy. What does God's mercy look like?

ACTIVITY: Same adult helper comes to the front, looking repentant. **HELPER SAYS:** I am so sorry I ruined your new phone! There's no excuse for that. Would you please forgive me? **SAY:** In this moment I have a choice. Obviously, (helper's name) is sorry about what he or she did. I can show him or her mercy, or I could choose to be mean back. It would be hard to show mercy, wouldn't it? A phone is worth a lot! And it was hard for Jonah to go to Nineveh so the Ninevites would have a chance to receive God's mercy. **DISPLAY:** Show visual picture 1 or PowerPoint visual 1. Show map of Nineveh, Joppa, and Tarshish.

Jonah had other ideas than showing mercy to the people of Nineveh. He did not want to follow God's direction. So instead of obeying God, when Jonah got to Joppa, he boarded a ship heading to a city called Tarshish.

ASK: Can anyone find Tarshish on our map? Where is it in relation to Nineveh?

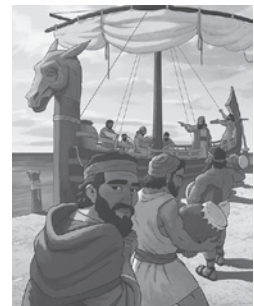
That's right—at that time, you couldn't get much farther away from Nineveh than Tarshish! Jonah knew what God was like. God might give mercy to Nineveh, and Jonah knew it.

But Jonah missed something very important. He missed that right then, on that ship, he needed mercy too. Any time we put what we want ahead of what God wants, we are sinning. And God's Word tells us the punishment we deserve for our sin is death, or separation from God. (Read Romans 6:23.)

DISPLAY: Show PowerPoint 2 or visual picture 2. **READ:** Invite a student volunteer to read Jonah 1:4.

Though Jonah was heading his own direction, God's ways and directions for Jonah had not changed. So God sent a great storm. The wind howled. The water whipped into high, mountain-like waves. The ship was in danger of breaking into pieces!

The sailors were terrified. They began to cry out to their false gods for help. They began to throw things overboard. (*Pantomime frantically throwing things overboard; encourage students to do the same.*)



Lesson 1 Visual 1



Lesson 1 Visual 2

◀ **Teacher Tip**
When asking for volunteers, don't call on specific students to read, especially if you do not know them or their reading ability. If no one volunteers to read the verses, simply read them yourself.



Lesson 1 Visual 3



Lesson 1 Visual 4

Where was Jonah while all this racket was going on? He was sound asleep, deep within the ship. (*Optional: Helper snores from offstage.*) Can you imagine sleeping through a storm like that! Suddenly, Jonah's sleep disappeared. The captain of the ship was shouting something—and he was upset. “What do you mean by this? Get up!”

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 3 or PowerPoint visual 3. **READ:** Jonah 1:6.

So Jonah stumbled up onto the deck. He had tried to run away from what God wanted, but God was in control. God had sent the storm.

Now God showed the sailors that the storm was Jonah's fault. As you can imagine, they had a lot of questions! “Who are you?” they gasped to Jonah. “I worship the Lord, the God Who made both the sea and dry land,” Jonah answered. The sailors already knew that Jonah was running away from God. Now they could not believe Jonah would be that foolish. Imagine going against the God Who is powerful enough to control the sea! “What should we do?” the sailors wanted to know. Jonah told them to throw him into the sea.

The sailors refused at first. They tried to row as hard as they could to return to land. But it didn't work—God made the sea even more rough and dangerous. Finally, the sailors knew they had no choice.

DISPLAY: Show visual picture 4 or PowerPoint visual 4. **READ:** Invite a volunteer to read Jonah 1:14, 15.

The sailors begged God for mercy. “Please do not punish us for this,” they said. They picked Jonah up and threw him into the sea. And then they were amazed—the sea became calm! The waves quieted down. The wind stopped.

The sailors felt awe. They knew they'd just seen that God alone is the true God. Together they worshiped this great God.



Materials

- Bible; salvation poster (32436).

ASK: If I were in a maze, how many routes could I use to get out? (*One.*) A maze has only one route for getting from start to finish. So I could choose to go off the right path, but I would eventually run into a dead end and not be able to complete the maze.

Sometimes we can be like Jonah and think our ways are better than God's ways. God's Word calls this way of living “sin.” Sin is anything wrong that we think, say, or do. But just like God showed mercy to the sinful people of Nineveh, God has shown mercy to me and you. He did this by sending His one and only Son,

Jesus Christ. Believing in Him is the only way to get out of the maze of our sin and become a child of God.

ACTIVITY: Use the salvation poster to share the gospel. Invite students to bow their heads and close their eyes. Ask any students who want to know more about Jesus and how to become part of God’s family to look up at you. Assign workers to counsel and pray with students who respond.

Maybe you already have trusted in Jesus. Will you be ready and willing to show God’s mercy to others? People in our world, like the people of Nineveh, need help in understanding they need God’s mercy. Someone must show them the right way out of the sin maze. By sharing Jesus with them, we show them the same mercy God has shown us.



Option 1: Anchored

Materials

- Anchor from sea voyage cutouts (32485) or another picture of an anchor; strips of paper to make a paper chain, enough for 4 strips per student; markers; stapler.

Before class: Post the anchor on your classroom wall.

(Point out the anchor on your classroom wall.) Who can tell me what an anchor does for a ship? (*Keeps it in one place on the water; keeps it from running onto the rocks.*) God’s Word is like this anchor for us. God, through His Word, tells us what is true, good, and right for us to do. The Bible keeps us safely where we need to be.

ACTIVITY: Give each student four strips of paper and instruct students to write or draw what happened in today’s lesson (e.g., God’s Word comes to Jonah, the storm comes, Jonah talks with the sailors, Jonah is thrown overboard). Once students have completed their descriptions, staple all the strips together in loops forming a paper chain. Connect the chain to the anchor.

Option 2: What Stuck with You?

Materials

- Large piece of gray or silver poster board; scissors; sticky notes; pens; *optional:* big anchor jointed cutout (32487).

Before class: Cut out the poster board in the shape of a large anchor. Post the anchor on your classroom wall. Above it, post a sign with the question, “What Stuck with You?”

ACTIVITY: Give each student a sticky note and pen and instruct students to write down one thing from the lesson today that really stuck with them. Once they have written it on their sticky note, they may come and stick it to the large anchor.

Teacher Tip ►

Hold your Bible open as you teach the verse, emphasizing that the verse is from the Bible.



“Be ye therefore merciful, as your Father also is merciful” (Luke 6:36).

God has shown us so much mercy! He sent Jesus to die for our sins. That should help us want to show the same mercy to others. Not one of us deserves to be forgiven by God. We who have received God’s mercy must show to others the same kindness and love that He has shown us—even to those who don’t deserve it.

DISPLAY: Show PowerPoint of the verse from the Director Resources CD (32402). Instruct students to read it aloud together multiple times.

Option 1: Racing Rowers

Materials

- Cardboard or poster board; scissors.

Before class: Cut cardboard into the shape of 16 oars. Divide the verse and reference into eight sections, writing each section on one oar. Make an additional set so two teams can play.

ACTIVITY: Divide your students into two teams. Pile each set of oars on one side of the front of your classroom. Students take turns racing to the front of the classroom, grabbing an oar from their team’s pile, and then running back to their team. Teammates then work together to line up their oars in the correct order of the verse.

Option 2: Color Coded

Materials

- Colored pencils or crayons; index cards; scissors.

ACTIVITY: Instruct students to cut twelve even squares from their index cards. Have students write one word of Luke 6:36 on each square. Next, have students turn the squares over and color the back with a different color for each square. Once the squares are colored, students will mix them up. Using only the color side, students then rearrange squares into the correct order. Once all the squares have been rearranged, students recite the verse,

turning over each square as they say the word on it. Repeat until all students have memorized the verse.



Option 1: Sailor's Log

Materials

- Bible; mini notebooks for each student; nautical shape stickers (32541) or other nautical stickers; markers.

Before class: Design a sample sailor's log.

In our lesson today, God told Jonah to go to Nineveh so the people there would have an opportunity to receive God's mercy. God doesn't speak to us directly like He did with Jonah. Instead, He has given us His Word. (Show your Bible to the students.)

Sailors would sometimes log their journeys in a little book called a sailor's log. Today we're going to make our own logbooks. Use yours to record what you are learning as you read God's Word.

ACTIVITY: Give students their own notebooks and allow them to decorate the fronts and backs of their notebooks using the markers and stickers.

Option 2: Compassion by Compass

Materials

- Printed compass from the Director Resources CD (32402), one per student; colored pencils; paper.

Before class: Create workstations for students and prepare materials at each station. Provide these Scriptures at each station, printed or written on slips of paper: Psalm 86:15; Romans 12:18; Ephesians 4:32; 1 John 4:11.

Just as a compass shows us the right direction, God's Word shows us the right ways to go. He wants us to reflect His character and follow His ways as we read about Him in the Bible.

ACTIVITY: Give each a student a printed-out compass. Encourage students to work together in groups to read the verses and then write on their compasses characteristics of God that they are to show to other people.