

Kids' Chronicle

Jonah learns to obey God

BY JOE SARNICOLA

"Jonah! I want you to go to Ninevah when the sun rises."

Jonah woke up and looked around. He was the only person in the room. The voice continued. "The people of Ninevah have sinned against me. You are to warn them that they are a wicked city." Jonah realized that it was God who was calling him.

In the morning, Jonah packed a traveling bag, but instead of heading toward Ninevah, he went toward the sea and paid his fare on a ship bound for Tarshish. He was hoping the Lord would not find him.

When the ship was out in deep water, the sky turned black, and a powerful wind tossed the ship about as if it were a toy. The sailors were afraid, and the captain ordered them all to pray to the gods. Jonah came up on deck and said, "It is my fault the weather is bad. I have tried to hide from the true God, but he has found me. Throw me overboard and the Lord will deal with me as he sees fit."

The superstitious sailors were only too happy to do what Jonah had asked. As soon as Jonah landed in the water, the sky cleared and the wind calmed. The sailors immediately became follow-

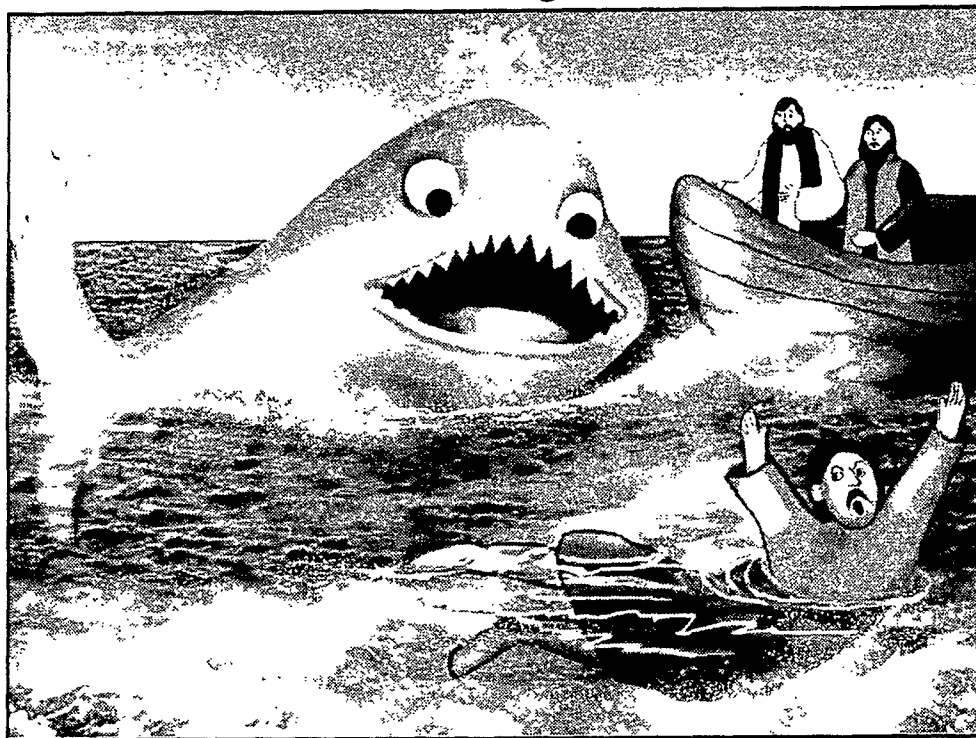


Illustration by Linda Jeanne Rivers

ers of the God of Jonah. Then a huge fish surfaced and swallowed Jonah.

Jonah spent three days inside the fish, so he had plenty of time to think and pray. The fish then spit Jonah up onto the shore. Exhausted, Jonah immedi-

ly fell asleep.

When Jonah woke up, he again heard a voice. "Jonah! I want you to go to Ninevah when the sun rises." This time, Jonah went as fast as he could to the city. As soon as Jonah entered the first gate, he cried out, "Repent, or in forty days God will destroy your city."

When the king of Ninevah heard Jonah's message, he ordered a day of prayer and fasting.

"From this day forward," he declared, "Ninevah will be a city of God's people. We shall turn from our wicked ways and obey the Lord."

When God saw that the people of Ninevah had changed their hearts to serve him, he promised he would now bless, rather than destroy the city.

READ MORE ABOUT IT:

Jonah 1-4

Q&A

1. What did Jonah do when God called him the first time?
2. What happened to the people of Ninevah?



Bible Accent

The Book of Jonah was written as a parable. It was also written with a sense of humor. The characters and events are exaggerated, but there is still a lesson in the story. Jonah was swallowed by a huge fish, he spent three days in its stomach, and then the fish spit him out onto dry land.

But maybe Jonah was like we are. When God first asked him to do something, Jonah did not want to do it. He was stubborn, and he did not want to take God's message to the Assyrians who lived in Ninevah, because they had always been the enemies of the Israelites.

And maybe he was afraid, too. Jonah thought he could run away from God, but God found him. Jonah delivered God's message of warning to the people of Ninevah, and they repented and obeyed the Lord. The Assyrians were spared God's anger, and Jonah learned about obedience.

St. Paula

Paula had wealth, a good husband, and five beautiful children, and she was very happy. But when she was 32, her husband died. She was so heartbroken, Paula lived day after day in unhappiness until a friend suggested she try daily devotions to God. Paula prayed regularly, she donated money and materials to the poor, and she let visiting missionaries stay in her home until they were ready to go somewhere else to preach. But then three of her children died.

In order not to be weighted down with grief, Paula went on a pilgrimage to Bethlehem with St. Jerome and some of his companions. There Paula used her money and influence to establish a convent, monastery and a guest house for pilgrims. She died in the year 404, and was buried under the Church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. We honor her on Jan. 26.

Puzzle

Can you find the names of the five Old Testament prophets that are hidden in the letters below? Each letter is used only once.

Answers on page 9

J	J	J	I	E	E
S	O	O	Z	N	R
E	E	A	K	A	B
M	I	I	I	A	A
E	H	H	H	L	

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Last month's winner was Taylor Volkmar, a sixth-grader at Our Mother of Sorrows School, Greece. In response to the question, **Why is it important for us to worship God together in church?** Taylor wrote, It is important to worship God together in church because together we are a parish, a family, and a community. We are united in prayer. The church is people. People praying together gives strength to one another. We are all members of the Mystical Body which means we are all united in Christ. In unity there is strength so to me praying together in church gives me a real sense of peace, joy, and strength.

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