



LESSON 2 FOR LEADERS

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

LESSON AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH: God Has Good News for the Whole World

SCRIPTURE: [Jonah 1–4](#); [Matthew 12](#)

WORD OF WONDER: [From Titus 3:5](#)

Have you ever driven through a torrential downpour? With your windshield wipers going at full blast, you slowly navigate the blinding rain. Maybe you’ve had to pull over until the storm passed. It can be difficult to navigate when you can’t see what lies ahead.

But guess what? The storm eventually passed. There were clear skies and possibly a rainbow awaiting you on the other side. It’s amazing how what was once dark becomes light-filled.

The beauty of dark skies is knowing that the sun will shine again. After three days and three nights in the belly of a huge fish, Jonah saw the sun and returned to the one place he had run from, the place where people most needed to hear God’s good news. (Read his story in [Jonah 1–4](#).) Similarly, the sun shone brightly when Jesus emerged from the tomb after three long days and three dark nights. (Read [Matthew 12:38–41](#).)

Jesus’ resurrection was good news to the whole world. He didn’t stay in that dark tomb. He brought light and a renewed sense of hope.

- When has God met you in a dark place?
- How has your life changed because of the good news of Jesus?
- What has been the result of your obedience to God?

Take heart, friend. You will come out on the other side. The sun will shine again.

—**Kathie Phillips**

Senior Director of Next Gen Ministry

Contributor to Wonder Ink

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Jonah was a reluctant messenger of God, but his reluctance was different than other prophets who feared rejection. Jonah feared acceptance! He ran because he wanted God to judge Nineveh harshly. He knew God to be forgiving and gracious beyond measure ([Jonah 4:2](#)).

WHAT?

God asked Jonah to prophesy to the people of Nineveh and to warn of God's coming judgment. Although the Ninevites were ruthless and cruel, God was concerned for the people and their animals ([Jonah 4:11](#)). When the people repented, God forgave them.

WHERE?

Nineveh was a very important city in the ancient Assyrian empire. The Assyrians conquered the northern kingdom of Israel in 722 BC, sending 10 tribes into a permanent exile. God told Jonah to go to Nineveh, but Jonah fled in the opposite direction, toward Tarshish.

WHEN?

[Second Kings 14:25](#) mentions Jonah as a prophet during the reign of Jeroboam II, in the eighth century BC. The book could date later, for memories of Jonah would be preserved by a school of prophets (called "company of the prophets" in [2 Kings 2:3 \(NIV\)](#)).

CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

Jonah was reluctant to communicate God's mercy to his enemies. Jesus is a different kind of messenger. He was willing to give His own life for people who remained sinners ([Romans 5:8](#))! Jesus shows God's overflowing and abundant mercy.



Curiosity

LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

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Play Stations: Easter Egg Find

SUPPLIES: plastic Easter eggs (4), scissors (prep only)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Easter Egg Find Pictures](#) (1 set)

Before the kids arrive, print a copy of the [Easter Egg Find Pictures](#), and cut the images apart. Put each picture into an egg and hide the eggs around the room. Make them pretty obvious so kids can find them quickly.

Greet the kids warmly and welcome them to church.

Welcome! I am so excited you are here today with us! I have hidden four colorful eggs around the room. They have a special message inside about God's big story! Can you help me find them?

Once the kids find the eggs, open them and have the kids tell you what each picture shows.

Those are all good thoughts! Each one of these pictures has to do with our story today. I wonder how they all fit together in God's big story. Save the pictures to use during the God's Big Story section.



Belief

LESSON 2 **EARLY CHILDHOOD**

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

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Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:
God, thank You for the good news that Jesus saves us. Help us hear Your voice as we listen to Your big story and see how sharing Your good news can change people's lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.

God's Big Story

Pull out the Bible.

Ask: What is this called? *The Bible*

Ask: Why is the Bible important? *Because it is God's word. Everything in it is true. It really happened.*

TELL THE BIBLE STORY

Read from the Big Picture Bible p 108
Jonah, Prophet to Ninevah

Word of Wonder

WORD OF WONDER

He saved us. It wasn't because of the good things we had done. It was because of his mercy. He saved us by washing away our sins.

— Titus 3:5 NiRV

Encourage the kids to do the motions and say the verse with you.

Gather kids to discuss these questions:

- **Why did Jesus come to earth?**
- **Our verse says that Jesus gives us new life. What do you think a new life means?**



Identity

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

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Prayer and Blessing

After the kids finish their activity, pray with them, thanking God for loving us enough to share good news that Jesus came to save us and give us hope!

God, thank You for the great plans You had for Jonah and the plans You have for us! Thank You for sending Jesus to be our Savior. We praise You for the good news of Jesus. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Encourage the kids to hold their hands out in front of them, with palms up, as if their hands were open to receive something. Tell them to listen and receive the blessing as you speak it over them.

Blessing: May God's good news of Jesus coming to save you bring you great joy today and every day. May you have courage to share the good news about Jesus with others!

Closing Activity: Go Fishing

Do you remember what the fish did in God's big story? Allow the kids to answer. **The fish swallowed Jonah. Let's play a fishing game to help us remember the story!**

Invite kids to pretend to fish using the rod with a magnet. Kids can "catch" as many fish as possible.