



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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Curiosity Activity: Fish Protection

Before the kids arrive, fill the clear container with water and add a few drops of food coloring to make it blue like the sea. Add plastic fish if you are using them. On the plastic cup, draw a fish face. Use the permanent marker to write the name Jonah on the paper towels. Push one paper towel into the bottom of the cup and leave the other one out.

What does this container look like? Allow the kids to answer. **Yes, it does kind of look like the sea or the ocean! We are going to do an experiment. What do you think will happen if I put this paper towel in my “sea”?** Allow the kids to answer. Then put the paper towel into the water. Take it out and show the kids what happened. It should turn blue.

Wow! It turned blue and got wet. What do you think will happen if I put this cup into the water? Allow the kids to answer and then push the opening of the cup into the water. The cup should float and create a suction, so the paper towel won't fall into the water. You may need to support the cup. Take the cup out of the water and show them the paper towel is not wet.

The cup “protected” the towel from getting wet. This reminds me of a story from the Bible where God sent a man with some good news for a group of people, but he refused to go and ended up in the sea! How do you think that happened? Let kids respond. **We'll find out more in today's God's big story about how a fish protected a person named Jonah.**





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?**



Faith

LESSON 2 EARLY CHILDHOOD

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

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Craft: Jonah in the Fish

SUPPLIES: paper plates (2 per kid), paper (several sheets), scissors (prep only), coloring utensils, glue or glue sticks, stapler (leader use only)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: [Jonah Pictures](#) (1 card per kid)

What was the name of the prophet who shared God's good news with the people of Nineveh? Allow the kids to answer. **Yes, Jonah! He was inside a big fish for three days like Jesus was in the grave for three days. We're going to make our own fish with Jonah inside!**

Give each child two plates, a triangle piece from the paper plates for a tail, and a Jonah card. Allow kids to color the backs of the plates as their "fish." Next, the kids can color and glue the tail (triangle piece) to the end of the fish.

When finished, the kids can put Jonah inside through the mouth of the fish and then shake the fish to get him out. They can use their crafts to tell the story of Jonah.





10:45 Service

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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Responding in Worship: Psalm of Praise

SUPPLIES: white construction paper (1 sheet per kid), watercolor paint set (1 set per kid or enough for kids to share)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: songs from the Early Childhood flashdrive

What kind of news does God have for people? Allow answers. **Yes, it's good news! Even though the Ninevites didn't follow God, He had good news for them too. He offers this good news to everyone in the world, and that includes us!**

Let's praise God for His good news by reciting a psalm from the Bible together. I will say the words to each line, and you can repeat them back to me. Then I'll play a song, and you can paint a picture about God's good news.

Sing a new song to the Lord. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

All you people of the earth, sing to the Lord. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

Sing to the Lord. Praise him. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

Day after day tell about how he saves us. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

Tell the nations about his glory. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

Tell all people about the wonderful things he has done. (Invite kids to repeat line.)

([Psalm 96:1–3](#), NIV)

Give each kid a sheet of construction paper and a watercolor paint set. Play songs from the Early Childhood flashdrive and allow the kids to paint anything that reminds them of God's good news. When the paintings are dry, the kids can take them home, or you can display them in your room or ministry area.

10:45 Service

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.