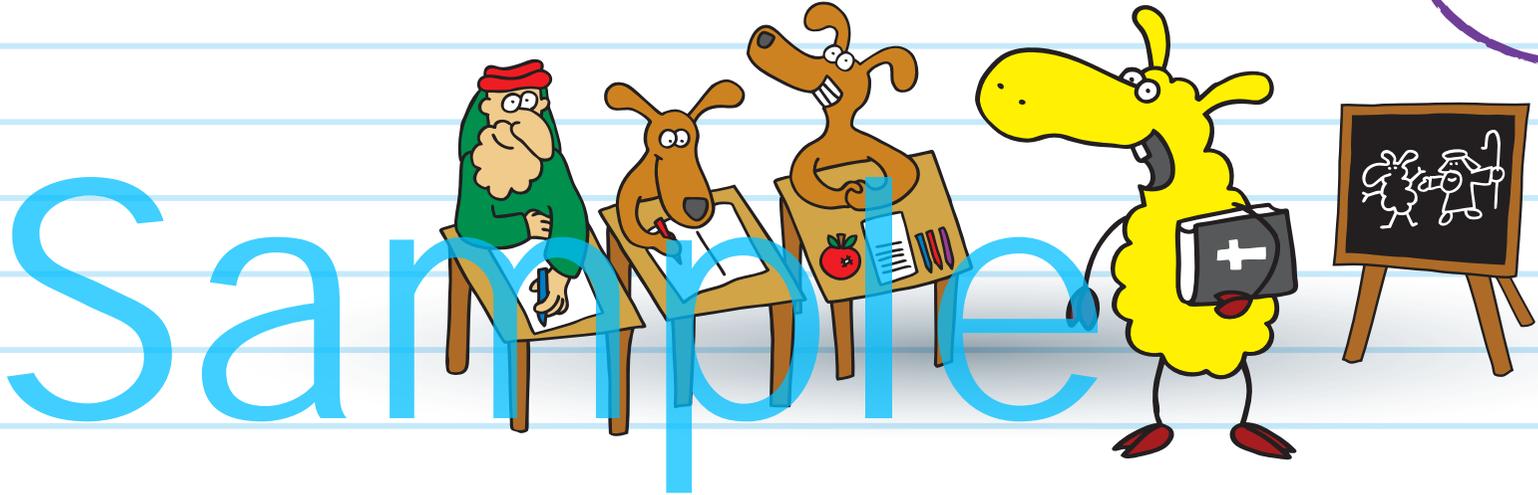




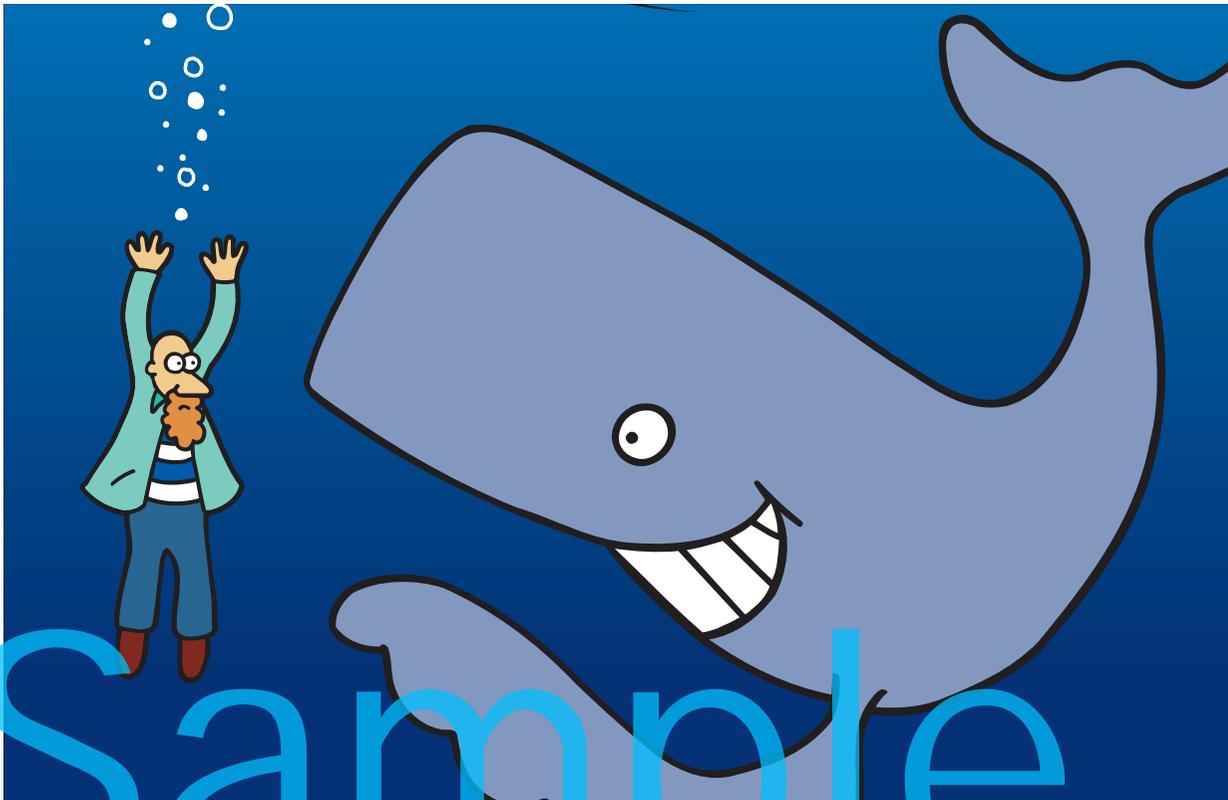
SHEEP DOG SCHOOL™

Jonah and the Whale

Created by
Andrew
McDonough



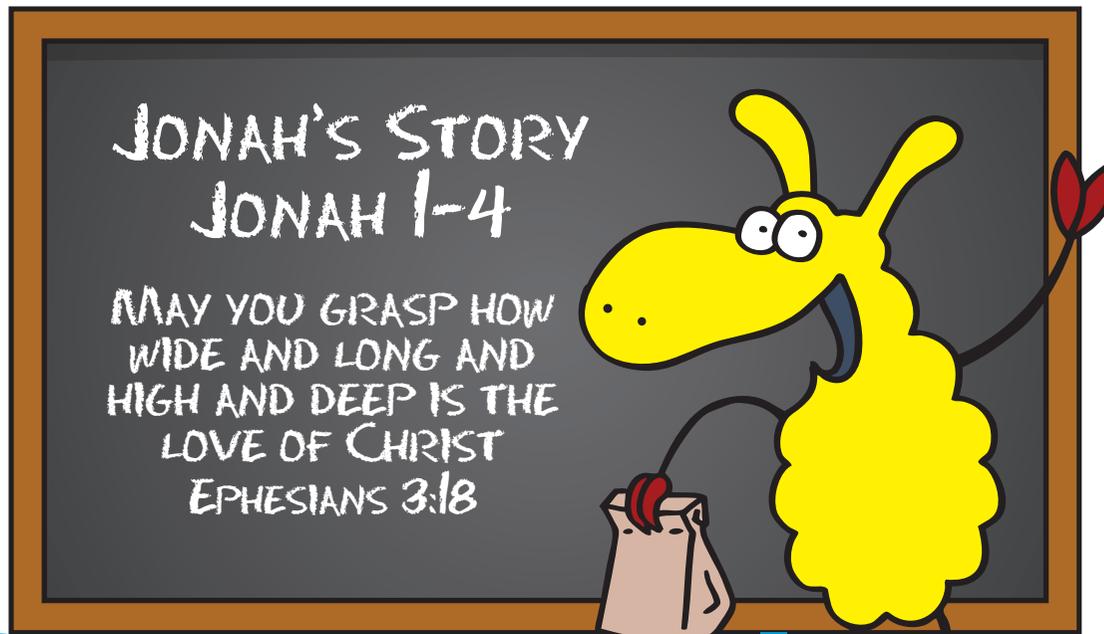
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Introduction



Good morning, Sheepdog School trainees!

I hope you've remembered to bring a packed lunch—we're going on a field trip! You've all been asking me, "Cecil, we know God is loving, but how wide and long and high and deep is his love?" Today I'm going to show you. We are going to see the love of God stretch wide enough to embrace the nastiest mob in the history of the world—the people of Nineveh! Jonah the prophet has just been sent by God to their city with a special message. I've yet to meet Jonah, but I am sure he is one of those cheery, happy-go-lucky types who won't mind if we tag along. Please put your signed consent forms and current life insurance policies on my desk, and we'll be ready to head off to Nineveh—after our history and geography lesson!

Sample

History & Geography

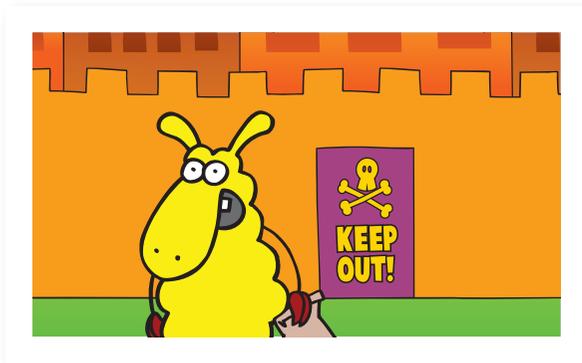


I know you're all itching to hop on the bus to Nineveh, but this isn't a holiday. It is a school excursion. We need to do some background study before we leave. Jonah was a prophet in northern Israel about 750–800 years before Jesus was born. It was a time of wealth and prosperity. Jeroboam II was king, the economy was booming, the rich were getting richer, and the poor were getting poorer. The Israelites worshiped God enthusiastically, but they were just as enthusiastic about worshipping idols!

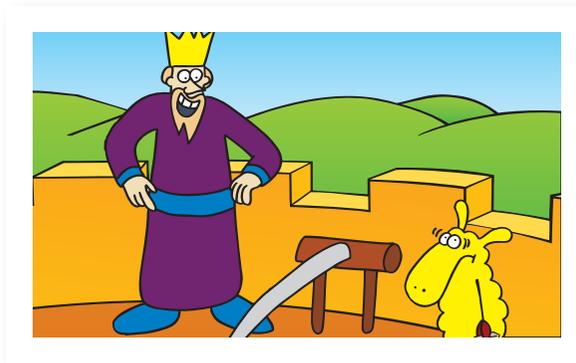
There were other prophets around in Jonah's time. Hosea prophesied against idolatry, while Amos called some Israelite ladies "fat cows" for living it up while the poor starved [Amos 4:1](#). (Despite this biblical precedent, Sheepdog School does not condone calling ladies "fat cows.") In contrast to Hosea and Amos' tough words, Jonah's only recorded prophecy to his own nation was one of blessing. He prophesied that Israel's borders would be dramatically extended, and his words were fulfilled in [2 Kings 14:23-27](#). In these verses, Jeroboam, king of Israel, did evil in the Lord's sight, yet God blessed him. What an amazing expression of God's grace! From Jonah's earliest days, he witnessed how God blessed people who didn't deserve it. I hope you're starting to see how wide God's love is.

Sample

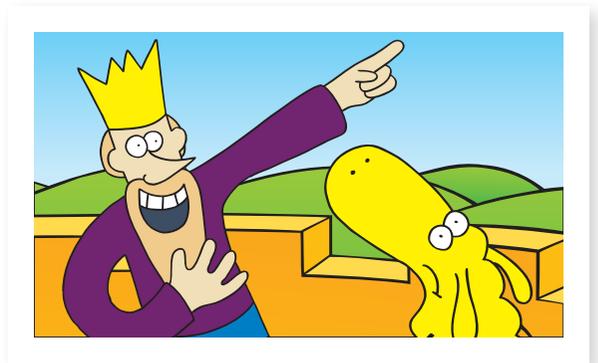
Interviews



Here we are at the front gate of Nineveh. Jonah must already be inside preaching. In [Jonah 3:3](#), it says a visit requires three days. That doesn't surprise me. You can't just walk into an ancient city and do your stuff. There is diplomatic protocol, officials to meet, and hospitality to receive. Then you will visit the major public places, like the gates and the temples, at the times when public announcements are made, and you will want to travel throughout the surrounding suburbs and villages. Let's go inside and have a word with the king. He'll know where Jonah is.



Jonah? No, I can't recall any visitors called Jonah. I'd certainly remember him. I'd have given him a ride in my "How far can I throw visitors over the wall?" machine. If one of the Sheepdog trainees would like to hop in, I'll show the class how it works! School field trips are a wonderful idea. We Assyrians have always enjoyed a good trip. King Ashurnasirpal took his armies on fourteen major excursions, chopping off peoples' heads, arms, legs, and noses, and burning others people to death. Shalmaneser III spent thirty-one of his thirty-five years as king visiting the neighbours, subduing their rulers, and demanding tribute.



You should drop into Kalhu on the way home to see the Black Obelisk and its fine carving of Jehu, the Israelite king, grovelling before Shalmaneser III ([2 Kings 9:1-3](#)). You'll want to get there before those pesky archaeologists dig it up and put it in the British Museum. I'd love to give those archaeologists a ride in my "How far can I throw visitors over the wall?" machine. Are you sure you don't want a shot? There's a tailwind. I think we might be able to break the record!



2. Jonah and Jesus

One of the important jobs for all shepherds, sheepdogs, pastors, parents, and super Sunday school teachers is to help children link the different Bible stories into the big story of Jesus. I'm a sheep from the New Testament, but I need to know the Old Testament stories to understand where Jesus is coming from. Jonah's story is an important part of Jesus' story. The sensational news in the New Testament is that people from every nation are invited into God's family. Jonah's mission to the Ninevites is like an early news report, with the full story of God's love for the whole world yet to come in the New Testament. When Jonah spent three days and three nights in the belly of the whale, it was a signpost, or what Jesus called in [Matthew 12:39–40](#) the "sign of Jonah," pointing to Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection.

Maybe if Jonah had known the story of Jesus dying for the sins of the world, including the terrible sins of the Assyrians, he would have been able to accept God's compassion toward the people of Nineveh. If you want an excellent summary of how the stories of Jesus and Jonah fit together, read [Ephesians 2](#) and keep the people of Nineveh in mind.

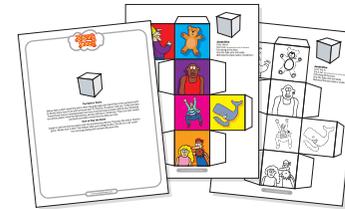
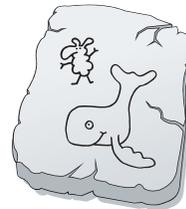
Sample

Activities



Purchase the Activity Book from the Lost Sheep Shop!

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1. What happened next?

One of the great things about Jonah's story is how the ending leaves us hanging. We're left wondering about what Jonah did next. Did he storm home and quit being a prophet? Did he finally go to Tarshish? Did he return to Nineveh to celebrate their repentance? We are not told. This ending is an invitation to consider, "What would I do next if I were Jonah?" Why not ask your class to consider this question. They may even like to write up some different "What Happened Next" stories!

2. Ancient Carvings

Why should those Ninevites have all the fun making carvings? Get some clay and have the children roll out some "ancient" tablets to do some carving. They might like to do a scene from the Jonah story. If you have enough "ancient scribes" and enough clay, your class could carve out the whole story. That will surprise the archaeologists when they start digging around your place in 3,000 years!

3. The Sailors' Game

"Whose fault is this?" asked the sailors. Were the gods angry with them? Was it the captain's fault? Or did the storm have to do with someone else? To find out, the sailors "cast lots." In the Lost Sheep book they are drawing straws, but they could have just as easily rolled a dice. Download the activity sheet, follow the instructions, and you will have a "Jonah dice."

4. Bonus Activities

Download the file below. These are great activities for the classroom including bookmarks for kids to cut out, mazes, and pictures of Jonah to color!

DOWNLOAD

DOWNLOAD

Sample

Bible Verses

Exodus 34:6 CEV

Then he passed in front of Moses and called out, "I am the Lord God. I am merciful and very patient with my people. I show great love, and I can be trusted.

Numbers 14:18

The Lord is slow to anger, abounding in love and forgiving sin and rebellion. Yet he does not leave the guilty unpunished; he punishes the children for the sin of the parents to the third and fourth generation.

Joshua 18:10 NIV

Joshua then cast lots for them in Shiloh in the presence of the Lord, and there he distributed the land to the Israelites according to their tribal divisions.

2 Kings 9:1-3 NIV

The prophet Elisha summoned a man from the company of the prophets and said to him, 'Tuck your cloak into your belt, take this flask of olive oil with you and go to Ramoth Gilead. When you get there, look for Jehu son of Jehoshaphat, the son of Nimshi. Go to him, get him away from his companions and take him into an inner room. Then take the flask and pour the oil on his head and declare, "This is what the Lord says: I anoint you king over Israel.'" Then open the door and run; don't delay!'

2 Kings 14:23-27 CEV

Jeroboam son of Jehoash became king of Israel in the fifteenth year of Amaziah's rule in Judah. Jeroboam ruled forty-one years from Samaria. He disobeyed the Lord by following the evil example

of Jeroboam son of Nebat, who had caused the Israelites to sin. Jeroboam extended the boundaries of Israel from Lebo-Hamath in the north to the Dead Sea in the south, just as the Lord had promised his servant Jonah son of Amittai, who was a prophet from Gath-Hepher. The Lord helped Jeroboam do this because he had seen how terribly the Israelites were suffering, whether slave or free, and no one was left to help them. And since the Lord had promised that he would not let Israel be completely destroyed, he helped Jeroboam rescue them.

2 Chronicles 9:21 NIV

The king had a fleet of ships that could go to Tarshish manned by Hiram's servants. Once every three years it returned, carrying gold, silver and ivory, and apes and baboons.

Psalms 86:15 CEV

But you, the Lord God, are kind and merciful. You don't easily get angry, and your love can always be trusted.

Jeremiah 10:9 NIV

Hammered silver is brought from Tarshish and gold from Uphaz. What the craftsman and goldsmith have made is then dressed in blue and purple—all made by skilled workers.

Ezekiel 27:12 NIV

Tarshish did business with you because of your great wealth of goods; they exchanged silver, iron, tin and lead for your merchandise.

Amos 4:1 CEV

You women of Samaria are fat cows! You mistreat and abuse the

poor and needy, then you say to your husbands, "Bring us more drinks!"

Jonah 2:1 NIV

From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the Lord his God.

Jonah 3:3-4 CEV

Jonah obeyed the Lord and went to Nineveh. The city was so big that it took three days just to walk through it. After walking for a day, Jonah warned the people, "Forty days from now, Nineveh will be destroyed!"

Jonah 4:1-4

But to Jonah this seemed very wrong, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord, 'Isn't this what I said, Lord, when I was still at home? That is what I tried to

Sample

The End



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Jonah and the Whale Sheepdog School

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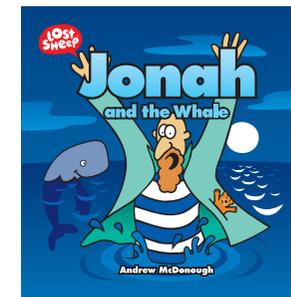
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