



Southwest Indian Ministries Camps

Elementary Devotional

May 2022

We can trust God no matter what.

God gave instructions for Jonah to preach to the city of Nineveh, but Jonah was consumed with his own desires and went his own way. It wasn't until God sent a fish to swallow him up, that Jonah learned how to trust in God.

Introduction:

Last month's devotion told you about an \$800 LEGO set with the Star Wars Millennium Falcon. This LEGO set has 7,541 pieces, and it's taken LEGO master builders a week to assemble. That's a lot of hard work – and a great act of trust.

Why is it a great act of trust? Because the LEGO builders who spend \$800 on this set are trusting that all 7,541 pieces are in the box. They trust that the directions they are given are accurate. They trust that they're not going to spend a week building a spaceship only to discover they've been building a Batmobile. And they trust that every one of the 7,541 pieces, big or small, is going to be in that box.

If you didn't trust the box, if you didn't trust the brand, you wouldn't buy the LEGOs, would you? It doesn't matter if the LEGO kit costs \$800 or \$8, if you didn't believe in LEGO, you wouldn't spend the money.

We all put our trust in things like this every day. We trust that Mom remembered to put the Fudge Round in our lunch box. We trust that our teachers will only test us on the material they covered in class. We trust our teammates in sports to play their position and guard their man so we can do our job as well. We place our trust in other people daily. Most times they come through, but sometimes, they let us down.

Maybe that's why it's so hard for some to trust God. We're used to broken promises and dropped balls. We've had our trust broken by people we see so many times, it's hard to trust someone we cannot see, no matter how many promises He makes. Still, God asks for our trust, and if we want to fulfill the plans He has for us, He needs our trust.

Today we're reading a story about a whale.

The whale is just one part of a much larger story. This is the story of a man who was afraid to trust God – a man named Jonah.



JONAH 1:2-2:10

² "Get up, go to the great city of Nineveh and preach against it. I see the evil things they do."

³ But Jonah got up to run away from the Lord. He went to the city of Joppa. There he found a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish. Jonah paid for the trip and went aboard. He wanted to go to Tarshish to run away from the Lord.

⁴ But the Lord sent a great wind on the sea. This wind made the sea very rough. So the ship was in danger of breaking apart. ⁵ The sailors were afraid. Each man cried to his own god. The men began throwing the cargo into the sea. This would make the ship lighter so it would not sink.

But Jonah had gone down into the ship to lie down. He fell fast asleep. ⁶ The captain of the ship came and said, "Why are you sleeping? Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe your god will pay attention to us. Maybe he will save us!"

⁷ Then the men said to each other, "Let's throw lots to see who caused these troubles to happen to us."

So the men threw lots. The lot showed that the trouble had happened because of Jonah. ⁸ Then the men said to Jonah, "Tell us what you have done. Why has this terrible thing happened to us? What is your job? Where do you come from? What is your country? Who are your people?"

⁹ Then Jonah said to them, "I am a Hebrew. I fear the Lord, the God of heaven. He is the God who made the sea and the land."

¹⁰ Then the men were very afraid. They asked Jonah, "What terrible thing did you do?" They knew Jonah was running away from the Lord because Jonah had told them.

¹¹ The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming much stronger. So the men said to Jonah, "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

¹² Jonah said to them, "Pick me up, and throw me into the sea. Then it will calm down. I know it is my fault that this great storm has come on you."

¹³ Instead, the men tried to row the ship back to the land. But they could not. The wind and the waves of the sea were becoming much stronger.

Jonah's Punishment

¹⁴ So the men cried to the Lord, "Lord, please don't let us die because of taking this man's life. Please don't think we are guilty of killing an innocent man. Lord, you have caused all this to happen. You wanted it this way." ¹⁵ Then the men picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea. So the sea became calm. ¹⁶ Then they began to fear the Lord very much. They offered a sacrifice to the Lord. They also made promises to him.

¹⁷ And the Lord caused a very big fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the stomach of the fish three days and three nights.

2 While Jonah was in the stomach of the fish, he prayed to the Lord his God. Jonah said,

² "I was in danger. So I called to the Lord, and he answered me. I was about to die. So I cried to you, and you heard my voice.

³ You threw me into the sea. I went down, down into the deep sea. The water was all around me. Your powerful waves flowed over me.

⁴ I said, 'I was driven out of your presence. But I hope to see your Holy Temple again.'

⁵ The waters of the sea closed over me. I was about to die. The deep sea was all around me. Seaweed wrapped around my head.

⁶ I went down to where the mountains of the sea start to rise. I thought I was locked in this prison forever. But you saved me from death, Lord my God.

⁷ "When my life had almost gone, I remembered the Lord. Lord, I prayed to you. And you heard my prayers in your Holy Temple.

⁸ "People who worship useless idols give up their loyalty to you.

⁹ Lord, I will praise and thank you while I give sacrifices to you. I will make promises to you. And I will do what I promise. Salvation comes from the Lord!"

¹⁰ Then the Lord spoke to the fish. And the fish spit Jonah out of its stomach onto the dry land.

Main Point:

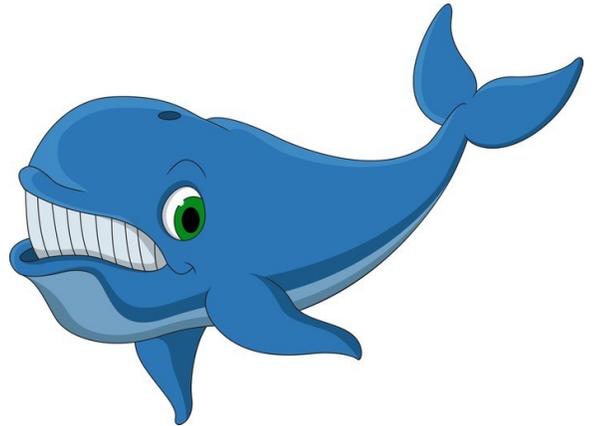
God wanted someone to preach to the wicked city of Nineveh. Nineveh was very sinful, and God wanted to give them one more chance to turn from their sin. He knew their hearts, and He knew that the right man could preach to them and save them from destruction.

Jonah was the man God chose for the job. Jonah might have been a great preacher, but he was a man of little faith in the beginning of this story. He knew how wicked the Ninevites were, and he was afraid to go where God called Him.

Jonah tried to run from God, but God would not let Him get away. God wanted to prove He is trustworthy. He proved it to Jonah, and he proved it to the Ninevites, who repented of their sin and were spared from punishment.

God is worthy of our trust. He needs us to trust Him so He can fulfill His work in our lives.

Last month's devotional mentioned God's Word, the Bible. We compared it to the instructions in the LEGO box, and we told you that we need to be obedient to God's instructions. The challenge with following God's Word versus following the LEGO box is that the LEGO box shows us the big picture. We can see the fire station, the airplane, the Millennium Falcon. We know what that LEGO kit will look like.



God didn't show Jonah what was going to happen in Nineveh. He said, "Go to Nineveh and tell them to repent." That's it! God knew the big picture, but he wanted Jonah to trust Him. Jonah finally found the trust, and God did a miracle. He saved an entire city from sin because of one man's trust.

God doesn't let us see the big picture very often either. He wants us to trust Him so that he can show his faithfulness. The more we trust, the more God proves Himself to be faithful, the more faithful we will become.

Jonah didn't want to trust God at first. He wanted to do things his way. God set him straight with a giant fish. God isn't going to send a fish after us, but He wants us to learn from Jonah and the other heroes of the faith in the Bible. God wants us to choose His way. He wants us to trust that obeying God is better than following the crowd.

If we want God to build us into faithful disciples, we must be willing to trust Him with everything. The more you trust, the more you will see you can trust Him, and the greater your faith will become. You can trust in God because He sees the big picture. You can trust Him because He loves you!



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Answer the questions and mail to: SIMCamps | 14202 N 73rd Ave | Peoria, AZ 85381.
Please print legibly.

Camper's Name:

Mailing Address:

Text #:

E-mail:

1. What did God tell Jonah to do?
2. Why did Jonah run away instead?
3. How did God set Jonah back on the right track?
4. Why do we need to trust God?
5. How can we build up our faith so we can trust God more?

Receive a \$5 off camp fee coupon by completing the questions and returning them to
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