

JONAH

a big wild story

AN ONLINE RESOURCE FOR ALL AGES TOGETHER

preparation

As you advertise your conference call event ask everyone to bring with them something they have made. Encourage people to think widely about this – a picture, a lego structure, a piece of furniture, a cake, a spreadsheet, a story, a photo of a meal they made, a bunch of flowers in a vase – don't let people say "I am not creative!", we all create things.



introduction

Welcome everyone to your video conference call.

Ask everyone to show what they have made and to talk about it. If you have a large group you might want to break into smaller "rooms" so that is easier for everyone to share. Come back together and ask everyone to think about how they would feel if the thing they had created was destroyed? Ask everyone to write or draw that emotion on a piece of paper and to hold it up to the screen.

Say that we are all creative people because we are made in the image of God who is the creator. Today's story is about that creator God and how he feels about all the people and animals he has created.



the story

Explain that you are going to tell the story together. There are two words that will keep repeating through the story – **DOWN** and **BIG**. Whenever you say these words there are some actions you want everyone to do...

DOWN – put one hand on top of the other, palm down, and push them down towards the ground. As if you are pushing something into a box!

BIG – hold both hands together, as if you were praying, and then move them quickly as far apart as possible.

You can invite everyone to shout out the words as well as doing the actions but depending on the size of the group this might prove problematic on a video conference call, you decide what you can cope with!

Practice the actions a few times and then tell this version of the story of Jonah.

Once there was a **BIG** city, full of **BIG** powerful, violent, cruel people. God asked Jonah to go and tell them to turn back to him and change their ways.

Jonah hated the **BIG** city and its people; they had done terrible things and he didn't want God to help them. He went **DOWN** to the seaside and got on a boat that was going to sail **DOWN** the Mediterranean Sea to Spain. Very, very, very far away from the **BIG** city.

Jonah went **DOWN** below deck. God sent a **BIG** wind on the sea, and a **BIG** storm swept over the boat and it seemed as if the **BIG** storm was going to destroy the boat. The sailors were terrified and prayed to their own gods.

Jonah was **DOWN** below deck; he had gone **DOWN** into a deep sleep. The captain went **DOWN** to see him and told him to wake up and pray to his God. All the sailors wanted to know who Jonah was and why he had come **DOWN** to the sea, and why he was sailing **DOWN** to Spain. He told them he worshipped a **BIG** God who made the whole **BIG** earth. The sailors asked him what they should do, and Jonah told them to throw him **DOWN** into the sea.

The sailors didn't want to do that, so they tried to sail back to the shore, but the **BIG** storm got even **BIGGER** and **BIGGER**. They prayed to Jonah's **BIG** God to forgive them, then they threw Jonah **DOWN** into the sea. The **BIG** storm calmed **DOWN**. All the sailors worshipped Jonah's **BIG** God.

God sent a **BIG** fish that swallowed Jonah, and Jonah went **DOWN** into its belly. He was **DOWN** there for three days and three nights. While he was **DOWN** in the fish, he prayed. Then God told the **BIG** fish to vomit Jonah up from **DOWN** in its belly and he landed on the beach back near to the **BIG** city.

God asked Jonah to go to the **BIG** city and tell the **BIG** powerful, cruel people his message. This time Jonah went to the **BIG** city and told them that in 6 weeks their **BIG** city would be destroyed. All the people in the **BIG** city believed God's message, everyone. From the **BIG** powerful King right **DOWN** to the smallest child. Everyone in the **BIG** city gave up their evil and violent things they had been doing and asked God to not destroy them, and he didn't.

Jonah went out of the **BIG** city and sat **DOWN** under a shelter he had made. He got angry, his anger was really **BIG**. He didn't want the people of the **BIG** city to be saved. He hated them. He hated the **BIG** cruel things they had done. He didn't want to show **BIG** grace, **BIG** love, **BIG** love to them. His anger was so **BIG** he wanted to die.

While Jonah was sitting **DOWN** in his shelter, God made a **BIG** plant to grow up to give Jonah a **BIG** bit of shade to cool him off in the **BIG** sunshine. Jonah was very happy about the **BIG** plant, his happiness was really **BIG**. When he woke up the next day God had sent a **BIG** worm that ate the **BIG** plant and the **BIG** plant died. God also sent a **BIG** wind from the east, and the sun was really hot and produced a **BIG** heat that made Jonah feel faint, and he was very angry again.

God said to Jonah, “Is it right that your anger is so **BIG** about this plant dying?”. Jonah said, “Yes, my anger is so **BIG** I want to die!”

God said, “You had a **BIG** concern for this **BIG** plant even though you didn’t make it grow or look after it. Shouldn’t I have a really **BIG** concern for the **BIG** city of Nineveh and all the people and animals who live there who don’t know how to live?”

This is the end of this story, we don’t know what happened to Jonah, did his **BIG** anger stop? What about us? Do we have a **BIG** love for all people and animals like God does, are we glad that God’s love is so **BIG**?



the game

Using the whiteboard feature on the conference call to play a game of Pictionary, give each household on the call an item from the story using the list below and send the this by personal message so only they can see it (It will help to assign someone else to do this while you explain the game).

- Big city
- Harbour
- Ship
- Big Storm
- Sailor
- Sleeping
- Jonah thrown into the sea
- Big fish
- Jonah in the fish
- Praying
- King
- Angry
- Shelter
- Big Plant
- Sun
- Worm
- Animals (*if you have lots of people at your event you could have specific animals*)

Everyone takes turn to draw their word, and everyone else guesses.

prayer

After you have had fun with the game, invite everyone to be quiet and to think of someone (either that they know or have heard of) who they find difficult to love. Then pray this prayer...

Lord Jesus,

Thank you so much for this BIG wild story!

Thank you that it shows us how BIG your love is.

We are sorry that sometimes we let your love drop DOWN out of our hearts

There are some people we find hard to love, like... *(ask people to think of the person they thought of earlier)*

Help us to know that you made them

You love them

You want them to follow you.

Fill us with your BIG BIG BIG love

Amen



at home idea

Before you say goodbye ask everyone to create a picture of this Big Wild Story from the Bible and in the picture show what it taught them about God. Invite them to take a photo of the picture and send it to you so you can share it on your social media platforms.