

## Jonah

**Note:** Any activities involving photographing or filming pupils must have parental permission.

### ***Introducing the subject***

Talk about the 'S' word (sorry), and how it can be the hardest word to say. Learn the sign for sorry (prime hand held as a fist makes a circular motion on chest). Sometimes signing sorry can help pupils to express their thoughts. Today's story is about being sorry and being forgiven.

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### **Biblical material**

The biblical material can be used before or after the shoebox presentation. Pupils can put the two together and discuss how they relate and if the shoebox story reflects the meaning of the Bible story.

### **The Story of Jonah: The Book of Jonah (adapted)**

Jonah lived in Israel and one day God told him to go to his enemies and say that God saw how bad they were and they should change their cruel ways. 'I don't want to do that,' thought Jonah, 'they might not believe me, they might beat me up. I know what God is like, he will be kind and forgive them and they don't deserve it!' Jonah ran

as fast as he could and got on boat going far away.

While he was on board there was a terrible storm. The waves rose and the boat rocked. The sailors were frightened. 'I know why this has happened', said Jonah, 'It's because I won't go to my enemies and tell them to change. Throw me over board and the storm will stop.' The sailors did not want to do this but in the end they did because the storm just got wilder and wilder. Jonah sank into the sea and was swallowed whole by a great fish. The storm stopped.

Inside the belly of the fish Jonah thought and Jonah prayed. 'I'm sorry God, I will go to my enemies and I will warn them that they should stop their cruel ways.' The great fish swam to the shore and spat Jonah out on the land. Jonah went to his enemies and told them what God had said and they believed him! They stopped doing bad things and God forgave them.

You would have thought that this would have made Jonah happy, but no, Jonah was angry. He stormed off in a temper and sulked beneath a plant. He hated his enemies; he did not want God to forgive them. God saw Jonah and sent a worm to nibble the plant and it died. This made Jonah even angrier as the hot sun made his head hurt.

'Jonah,' said God, 'you are angry and upset about a plant.'

'I should think so!' replied Jonah, 'I liked that plant, it kept me cool.'

'I liked and cared for those people,' said God, 'isn't it right that I forgive?'



**The shoebox story of**

**Jonah**

**You will need**

- A shoebox
- Covered in wrapping paper and a ribbon
- A piece of blue cloth or large sheet of blue paper (crepe paper works well)
- A piece of green cloth or large sheet of green paper (crepe paper works well)
- 6 people: 1 man, 3 enemies, 2 sailors
- A worm (paper or felt or foam)
- A big fish (paper or felt)
- A boat (card box with a card boat shape stuck on the front)
- Silver paper tears
- Sun (circle of yellow card)
- Plant (roll of card or felt with felt or tissue detachable leaves)
- Script for the story

**Opening the box**

Ask pupils to guess what sort of story might be in the shoe box. A pupil can undo the ribbon.

The teacher takes out the items one at a time in response to the pupils' question 'What's in the box?'

As they are taken out the items are laid ready for storytelling.

**PUPILS**

**TEACHER**

**'What's in the box?'**

There is green in the box, the green hills of a land far away.

**'What's in the box?'**

There is a stormy sea in the box.

**'What's in the box?'**

There is a man in the box who runs away.

**'What's in the box?'**

There is a fish in the box and a worm who likes to wiggle.

**'What's in the box?'**

There are people in the box who do bad things. (x3)

**'What's in the box?'**

There is a boat in the box and sailors (x2) who sail it.

**'What's in the box?'**

There are tears in the box.

**'What's in the box?'**

There's a sun in the box and a plant that gives shade.

**'What's in the box?'**

There's a story in the box.

*Place the cloth/paper as indicated in the scripts and add the items as the story unfolds. Pupils can join in actions and sounds as appropriate.*



## The story script

Our story takes place on the deep blue sea,  
sometimes stormy, sometimes calm.

Our story takes place on a green cloth  
in a land where people come and go.

This is a man who lived in the land.

He listened to the Voice and the Voice said  
'Go!'

'Go to your enemies. Go to them and say: "God  
knows the bad things that you do.

He calls on you to change before it is too late."

'No!' said the man, 'I will not go,

Let them reap what they sow.

I will not warn them to change their ways  
for they might be sorry and you will forgive.'

The man ran from God as far as he could,  
he ran all the way to the sea.

He boarded a boat and he went far away,  
as far away as the ship would sail.

'Blow!' said the Voice and the sea blew rough.

'Rise!' said the Voice and the waves rose high.

'Swim!' said the Voice and a great fish swam,  
deep in the sea by the boat.

On board the boat the sailors prayed,

'Help us, Lord, for our ship sinks.'

'It's all my fault,' said the man who ran,  
'throw me over the side.'

The sailors wept, the sailors cried,  
but faced with the storm they did as he said.

The man hit the water and sank down deep  
into the mouth of the fish.

The storm died down.

Deep inside the belly of the fish the man who  
ran prayed to God,

*Place blue cloth*

*Bunch up then smooth*

*Place green cloth beside*

*Walk fingers on green cloth*

*Place man in middle of green cloth*

*Point finger*

*Place enemies on edge of green cloth away  
from blue*

*Sign NO*

*Sign forgive (point to mouth then make a  
circle with one palm on the other)*

*Move man to edge of blue cloth*

*Place boat, add 2 sailors*

*Place man in boat*

*Wind noises*

*Bunch cloth or raise hands*

*Swim fish near boat*

*Hands together or raise hands*

*Lift and replace man*

*Sprinkle tears*

*Drop man in the sea*

*Place fish over the man*

*Smooth cloth*

*Hands together or raise hands*

'I'll go to my enemies and tell them to change,  
I'll tell them you will forgive.'

The fish swam close to the enemies' land and spat out the man on the strangers' shore.

He spoke to the people and told them to change and God kept his word and forgave.

The man who ran, stormed off in a temper he ran from the town and sulked beneath a plant.

'I wanted them punished, you know I did! But you are kind and forgave them instead!'

The man sat and sulked in the midday sun and the leaves gave shade to his throbbing head.

'Wiggle!' said the Voice and a worm it wiggled.

'Chew!' said the Voice and the worm it chewed right through the roots of the plant.

In the midday sun the leaves all died and sun beat down on the angry man's head.

'I liked that plant and now it is gone 'I might as well be dead!'

'Listen' said the Voice, 'you care about a plant that gave shade for a day.

These people are mine and I care for them that's why I want to forgive.'

*Move fish with man 'inside'*

*Drop man on green cloth*

*Remove boat and fish*

*Move man*

*Place plant with detachable leaves*

*Thump fist in palm*

*Place sun*

*Wiggle worm to plant*

*Use fingers as teeth*

*Pull out leaves*

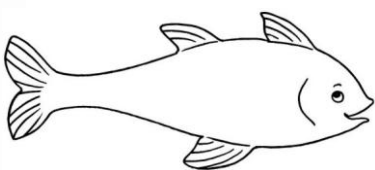
*Hand on head*

*Hand on head*

*Touch enemies*

### Conversation

- What is unusual puzzling or interesting?
  - I wonder who the Voice is?
- Why didn't the man want to go to his enemies?
  - Why was the man cross at the end?
- How would you describe the man's behaviour?





### Select from the following activities:

#### 1. Explore the Bible phrase

The saying from the Bible in the story is 'You reap what you sow' (Galatians 6:7). This means that *generally* what you put into life you get out. Sow hatred and you are likely to get hatred back. Sow love and you are more likely to get love back. If people sow bad behaviour they are likely to suffer the consequences of that. But life is not like a sum, it is not a guarantee, sowing good just makes good results more likely. Ultimately, Christians believe that justice will be done. Dramas of sowing and reaping different types of behaviour can be created using pupil suggestions.

#### 2. Make a three dimensional display

Make a three dimensional display of the story with the characters identified and add captions. Make links with the Bible story. Make sure all items are child-safe.

#### 3. Film signing sorry and forgiveness

Learn the signs for sorry and forgiveness and film them. Talk about when we might use them.

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#### 4. Role-play

Make links to the story and pupils' experience of sorry and forgiveness (handle sensitively). Role-play situations with alternative endings. Sorry and not saying sorry, forgiveness and lack of forgiveness. Photograph some role-plays and add to the display with captions. Stress that forgiving someone does not mean allowing wrong behaviour to continue. People should not just say sorry but be committed to change.

#### 5. Assembly

Use what you have learned about the story of Jonah to create an assembly for the rest of the school.

#### Reflection

Forgiveness is letting go of the bad feelings we have about another person when they have done something wrong to us. When one person forgives another they agree to behave in a certain way towards that person and work on the feelings. The bad feelings do not always go straight away.

Pupils can take a piece of scrap paper and screw it up in their hand. They can let it drop as they think about letting go of the bad feelings when they forgive.