

WEEK ONE - DAY ONE - ADULT

Worship - 5 minutes

Close your eyes and imagine that you and the Lord are both in an open field, about 100 feet apart. Imagine slowly walking toward Him, drawing closer. See how He becomes more visible, more detailed? See Him smiling as you draw near to Him and eventually embrace Him? Allow God to just hold you for a few minutes.

Meditation - 2 minutes

What are you most afraid the Lord will ask you to do? Why?

Scripture Reading - Jonah 1:1-8 (NLT) - 3 minutes

The Lord gave this message to Jonah son of Amittai: 2 "Get up and go to the great city of Nineveh. Announce my judgment against it because I have seen how wicked its people are."

3 But Jonah got up and went in the opposite direction to get away from the Lord. He went down to the port of Joppa, where he found a ship leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board, hoping to escape from the Lord by sailing to Tarshish. 4 But the Lord hurled a powerful wind over the sea, causing a violent storm that threatened to break the ship apart. 5 Fearing for their lives, the desperate sailors shouted to their gods for help and threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship. But all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold. 6 So the captain went down after him. "How can you sleep at a time like this?" he shouted. "Get up and pray to your god! Maybe he will pay attention to us and spare our lives." 7 Then the crew cast lots to see which of them had offended the gods and caused the terrible storm. When they did this, the lots identified Jonah as the culprit. 8 "Why has this awful storm come down on us?" they demanded. "Who are you? What is your line of work? What country are you from? What is your nationality?"

Deep Dive - 5 minutes

1. Nineveh was the capital city of the Assyrians, a brutal empire responsible for the deaths of many of God's people. Jonah despised these people, and the last thing he wanted to do was warn them or help them in any way.
2. Find two expressions in verse 3 that show Jonah's determination to disobey.
3. How did God react to Jonah's disobedience? Casually?

Bring it Home - 5 minutes

1. Realize that every decision you make today is a step toward or away from the Lord.
2. Our bad choices affect other people. Jonah's decision to "escape" the Lord put the other men on the ship in danger. Are there decisions you're making (positively or negatively) that are affecting your family?
3. Are there any kinds of people you'd rather not help or talk to? Let God speak to you on this.

Overtime

Pray that the Lord would break your heart for all of humanity. There are so many who need to believe in Jesus, and we may be their only link. We must be people of forgiveness who, like God, desire all people to be saved. If the Lord called you, would you minister to the atheist, the person at work who can't go three words without profanity, or your neighbor who is gay? The moment we say we won't help certain people, we've made the same mistake as Jonah.



WEEK ONE - DAY TWO - ADULT

Worship - 5 minutes

As you play or sing a favorite song, open yourself wide open to the Lord. Spread your arms wide or raise your hands as an act of surrender.

Meditation - 2 minutes

What are you hiding/keeping from the Lord? How has this affected you?

Scripture Reading - Jonah 1:9-17 (NLT) - 3 minutes

9 Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew, and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the land." 10 The sailors were terrified when they heard this, for he had already told them he was running away from the Lord. "Oh, why did you do it?" they groaned. 11 And since the storm was getting worse all the time, they asked him, "What should we do to you to stop this storm?" 12 "Throw me into the sea," Jonah said, "and it will become calm again. I know that this terrible storm is all my fault." 13 Instead, the sailors rowed even harder to get the ship to the land. But the stormy sea was too violent for them, and they couldn't make it. 14 Then they cried out to the Lord, Jonah's God. "O Lord," they pleaded, "don't make us die for this man's sin. And don't hold us responsible for his death. O Lord, you have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons." 15 Then the sailors picked Jonah up and threw him into the raging sea, and the storm stopped at once! 16 The sailors were awestruck by the Lord's great power, and they offered him a sacrifice and vowed to serve him. 17 Now the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights.

Deep Dive - 5 minutes

1. Are there things that need to be thrown overboard in our life?
2. What do you think the phrase, "the Lord had arranged for a great fish to swallow Jonah" means? What exactly was God "arranging"?
3. Let at the lengths God goes to in order to save Jonah and the men on the ship.

Bring it Home - 5 minutes

In order to stop running and hiding:

1. We need to admit who we are. Jonah's disobedience ended when he said who he was and Who he worshiped. Does everyone in our life know who we are, that we worship Jesus?
2. We need to take responsibility. ("This terrible storm is all my fault.") We need to confess our sins to the Lord, who is faithful to forgive them. We need to own what's ours.
3. We need to accept the consequences. If God tells us that something needs to go in our life, or we need to leave something, we need to be willing to do that for God's sake, our sake, and for the sake of our family.

Overtime

How bad will the storm have to get before we finally stop hiding? Ask the Spirit to search your heart for anything hidden. Be completely honest with the Lord, holding nothing back.

WEEK ONE - DAY THREE - ADULT

Worship - 5 minutes

Begin thinking Jesus for saving you from destruction. Tell Him what you think your life would be like today if He hadn't. Be reminded of what the Lord has saved you from.

Meditation - 3 minutes

Spend a few minutes imagining Jesus rescuing you in various ways. Be creative.

Scripture Reading - Jonah 2 (NLT) - 5 minutes

Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the fish. 2 He said, "I cried out to the Lord in my great trouble, and he answered me. I called to you from the land of the dead, and Lord, you heard me! 3 You threw me into the ocean depths, and I sank down to the heart of the sea. The mighty waters engulfed me; I was buried beneath your wild and stormy waves. 4 Then I said, 'O Lord, you have driven me from your presence. Yet I will look once more toward your holy Temple.' 5 "I sank beneath the waves, and the waters closed over me. Seaweed wrapped itself around my head. 6 I sank down to the very roots of the mountains. I was imprisoned in the earth, whose gates lock shut forever. But you, O Lord my God, snatched me from the jaws of death! 7 As my life was slipping away, I remembered the Lord. And my earnest prayer went out to you in your holy Temple. 8 Those who worship false gods turn their backs on all God's mercies. 9 But I will offer sacrifices to you with songs of praise, and I will fulfill all my vows. For my salvation comes from the Lord alone." 10 Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit Jonah out onto the beach.

Deep Dive - 3 minutes

1. This prayer reads like one of David's psalms. It is gut-level honest about Jonah's sins and God's love in rescuing him.
2. Write down 2 or 3 phrases that you can relate to from your own life.

Bring it Home - 4 minutes

God has given you free will, but we need Him every second of every day. How can you depend on the Lord more today?

Overtime

If your life has been rescued like Jonah's write a prayer like his, expressing where your life was headed and how Jesus saved you.



WEEK ONE - FAMILY ALTAR

Opening Prayer - 2 minutes

Pray that the Lord would be the unseen member of the family and that He would be honored by what we discuss today.

Exploring the Word - 7 minutes

So we read about Jonah this week. (You can have people share their favorite parts, if you like.) Usually, the only thing we know about Jonah is that he got swallowed up a big fish and spit out. But there's more to the story than that.

1. How did Jonah end up in the fish? (He was thrown into the sea)
2. Why was Jonah thrown overboard? (He had disobeyed God)
3. How had Jonah disobeyed God? (He wouldn't follow God's direction. He wouldn't warn the people of Nineveh about God's judgment)
4. Jonah was probably a little afraid of being in such a wicked city, but he was also angry. He didn't like these people, because they had done bad things to God's people. Jonah wanted revenge.

Applying the Word - 7 minutes

1. When we disobey God, it doesn't hurt God, it hurts us. Sin isn't just doing evil; it's also not doing what God has asked us to do. Can you give an example of something you were supposed to do but didn't (from God or parents)?
2. It's really hard to do, but like Jesus, we need to love everybody, even our enemies. Everyone who doesn't have Jesus needs the gospel. We might be the only ones to bring it to them. What makes some people so hard to love?
3. Everyone who has sinned against us needs forgiveness from us, even if they don't deserve us. Can you think of someone (outside the family) who you've had a hard time forgiving?
4. Remember that we needed to be rescued from our sin too. We all disobeyed Jesus, but He chose to forgive us and rescue us.

Worship - 7 minutes

Sing or listen to the song, "Rescue" and thank the Lord for saving you from destruction.

Prayer Time - 7 minutes

Go around the room and mention someone who we need to love more, whether it's someone at work, in the neighborhood, at church, or at school. If it's someone everyone knows, you might want to leave some them anonymous.

Pray that the family would love people around us better and better, that we would have no secrets from God. (You can just do this alone or have a couple of people pray, if you wish.)

