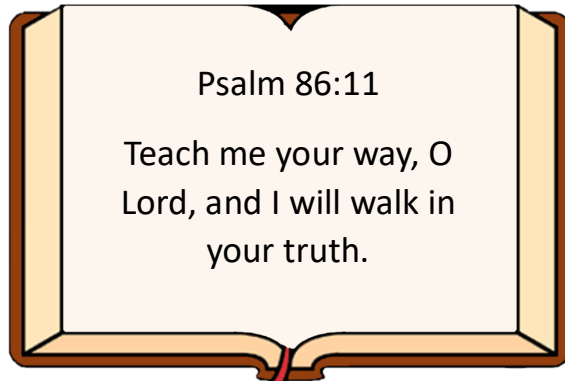


## Weekly Memory Verse



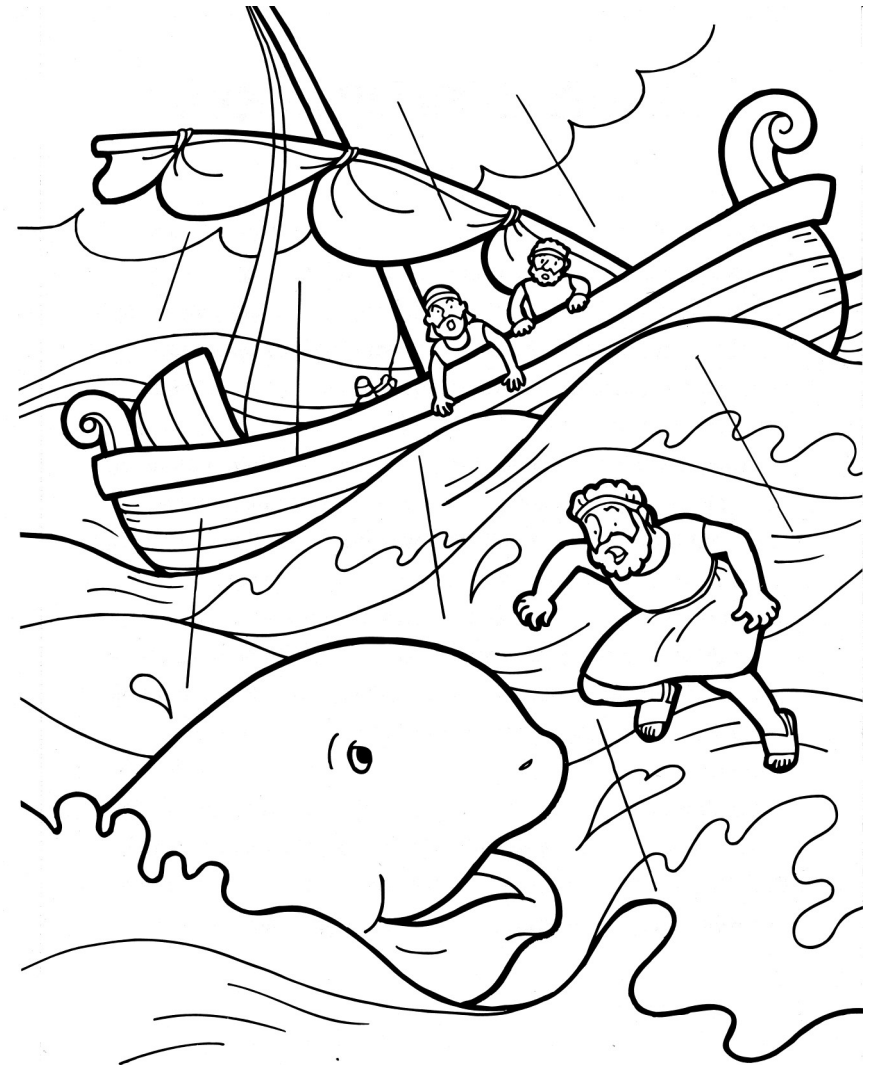
What should we ask the Lord to teach us? \_\_\_\_\_

How should we walk? \_\_\_\_\_

# Jonah 1-4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

## Jonah Runs Away from God



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**Lesson Link**

Visit [BibleClubKids.com](http://BibleClubKids.com)  
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After Elisha died, God chose Jonah to be a prophet to the northern kingdom of Israel. Assyria was the strongest nation in the world at that time. The people who lived there were very wicked.

Nineveh was the capital city of Assyria. Since the Assyrians were idol worshippers, Nineveh was full of gods and temples. They knew nothing of the true and living God and His love for them and His hatred of sin.

God prepared a way for the people of Nineveh to hear that they needed to stop their evil ways and turn to Him. His plan included the prophet Jonah. God said to Jonah, "Go and preach to the people in the city of Nineveh. Tell them I have seen all the evil things they are doing, and I am going to destroy them."

Jonah felt that the people of Nineveh deserved to be punished. He didn't want God to show kindness and mercy to them. Jonah tried to run away from God, but no one can hide from God.

Instead of traveling east across the desert to Nineveh, Jonah went down to the city of Joppa located by the Mediterranean Sea. There he found a ship that was headed for Tarshish, which was in the opposite direction. As soon as the ship set sail, Jonah went below deck and fell asleep.

Soon after the ship set sail, God sent a violent wind across the sea, which caused a terrible storm. The wind roared and the waves tossed the ship around, causing water to come into the ship. The sailors were afraid and they began to pray to their own god for help. Then they threw some of the cargo overboard to keep the ship from sinking. But it didn't do any good; the storm just got worse and worse. During the storm, Jonah was sleeping below deck.

The ship's captain went below deck and began yelling at Jonah, "How can you sleep in this storm? Get up! Call on your god. Maybe he will notice what is happening and will save us."

Then the frightened sailors said to each other, "Let's cast lots to find out who is responsible for this trouble." When they were finished, the lot pointed to Jonah. They questioned Jonah, "Who are you and where do you come from? What is your country and who are your people?"

Jonah answered, "I am a Hebrew and I worship the Lord, the God of heaven who made the sea and the land."

"What have you done?" they asked. They knew he was running away from God because Jonah had told them.

They continued to question Jonah. "What should we do to you to make the sea calm down?"

Jonah replied, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea, and it will calm down. It is my fault that this has happened." Jonah knew that God was controlling the storm.

But the sailors did not want to throw Jonah overboard. Instead they rowed as hard as they could to get to land. When the storm grew even stronger, they realized they must follow Jonah's instructions. But they did not want to be held accountable for taking his life. In desperation they cried out to Jonah's God, "Oh Lord, please do not blame us for doing this. Do not let us die for taking this innocent man's life."

Then they took Jonah and threw him into the raging sea. The Bible tells us that the storm stopped immediately. The sky became still, and the sea grew calm.

Jonah sank down into the waves and swirling sea. He knew he had disobeyed God and he deserved to die. But God loved Jonah, and He still wanted to use Jonah to take His message to the people of Nineveh. So, God caused a very big fish to swallow Jonah. But Jonah didn't die in the fish; he lived in the stomach of that fish for three days and three nights.

While Jonah was in the big fish, he prayed. Jonah knew he could not run from God. Jonah was thankful to be alive. He said, "I will keep the promises I made to You." Jonah was now willing to obey God.

After 3 days, God commanded the fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. God spoke to Jonah a second time. "Get up!" He said. "Go to the great city of Nineveh and give them My message." Jonah didn't try to run from God this time. Instead, he immediately obeyed God. He got up and started on his journey to Nineveh.

When Jonah arrived in Nineveh, he began walking through the city shouting, "In forty days Nineveh is going to be destroyed." It took him three days to walk through the entire city.

And then an incredible thing happened! When the people heard Jonah's message, they believed God's Word. To show they were sorry for their sinful actions, they refused to eat for a while, put on rough cloth, and covered themselves with dust.

When God saw that the people were sorry for their sins, He forgave them and did not destroy their city at that time. He showed them mercy instead; He did not give them what they deserved. Because Jonah chose to obey God and cooperate with His plan, God was able to use him to save the entire city of Nineveh from death.

Circle the correct answer.

Jonah was (*asleep, praying, eating*) during the storm.

Jonah was in the F \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ \_\_\_\_ for three days and nights.