

**Lesson Plans that Work**  
**Year B – Third Sunday after the Epiphany**  
**Lesson Plans for Younger Children**  
*Revised Common Lectionary Old Testament Readings – Track One*

**Scripture: Jonah 3:1-5**

**Background**

The Sundays after Epiphany contain stories that show forth the divinity of Jesus and the great power of God. We hear miracles, teachings, and events that make manifest God’s saving action in the world. We begin at the beginning: Genesis and the creation of the world. Then we hear stories of the prophets God called to tell the world of God’s goodness and mercy and often of the people’s need for repentance. We hear stories of healing, of promise, and of hope. We come to know that we are part of a long history of God’s love and redemption. We consider how we might share this good news with others.

**A Notation for This Week**

Whether you tell the entire story of Jonah (whale and all) or just the verses assigned for today, the message of repentance and forgiveness are clear. God has sent his prophet, Jonah, to preach a message of warning to the people of Ninevah. Surprisingly, they listen to his message and repent. God changes his mind and chooses to spare the people from destruction. If only we were as quick to repent!

**Theme: Jonah Brings the Word of God**

**Before Class:** Choose and learn music. Gather different bible story books and picture books that include the story of Jonah. Gather brown fabric scraps (or dish towels) to use as sackcloth.

**Sing:** Sing “Peace Before Us” - Wonder, Love and Praise or My Heart Sings Out

**Opening Prayer:** Forgiving God, we know that we all have made mistakes. Help us to say we are sorry, and assure us of your forgiveness. Amen.

**The Story: Scripture Jonah 3:1-5**

Although the verses assigned for this week tell enough of the story, children may remember that Jonah was in the belly of a whale for a bit. Consider telling the whole story (there are plenty of children’s bible storybooks that include this story). The NRSV works well for this age.

You will need to talk about what the word “repent” or “repentance” means so they understand it. Repentance is the action of expressing honest sorrow or regret about doing something wrong.

**Reflection Questions:**

- I wonder how Jonah felt when he was called to go to Ninevah?
- I wonder if he was surprised that the people repented or said they were sorry for doing wrong?
- I wonder how he felt when God forgave them?
- I wonder what a messenger would tell us if God sent them here?

**Art Response:**

Make “U-Turns Allowed” signs - talk about times when they knew they were going the wrong way or doing the wrong thing and they were able to turn themselves around and do something different. Say that we are called to admit when we are wrong and change our ways. God is a God of forgiveness and mercy. Often we need a reminder. So these “U-Turn” signs can serve as our reminders.

**Game:**

Play Follow the Leader and ask the leader to change direction dramatically several times. Talk about how it felt when everyone had to change direction.

**Sorry/Prayer Poster:** Take a large scroll of paper and divide it down the middle. On one side, invite the children to draw what they are sorry about. On the other side, invite them to draw their prayers to God.

**Music:** Consider playing “Didn’t My Lord Deliver Daniel” from LEVAS II or “Ubi Caritas” from Wonder, Love and Praise while they are working.

**Sing:** Ubi Caritas from Wonder, Love and Praise

**Closing Prayer:** Pray the Lord’s Prayer together. If the children don’t know it, you can do it line by line and have them repeat each line as you say it. Before saying it, you may want to talk about what the word trespasses means.

Our Father  
Who art in Heaven  
Hallowed be thy Name,  
Thy kingdom come,  
Thy will be done,  
On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
And forgive us our trespasses,  
As we forgive those  
Who trespass against us.  
And lead us not into temptation,  
But deliver us from evil.  
For thine is the kingdom,  
And the power,  
And the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.

*Our Father  
Who art in Heaven  
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Thy kingdom come,  
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On earth as it is in heaven.  
Give us this day our daily bread.  
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For thine is the kingdom,  
And the power,  
And the glory,  
Forever and ever. Amen.*

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