



# God Shows Mercy to Jonah and Nineveh

*Jonah 1–4*



## LESSON GOAL

Students will rejoice that God is gracious and compassionate.

## LESSON OBJECTIVES

Students will be able to

- Explain why Jonah did not want to preach in Nineveh.
- Tell what happened to Jonah after he fled to Tarshish.
- List examples of God's mercy from the book of Jonah.
- Analyze what God taught Jonah from the plant and worm incident.

## KEY VERSE

“Now the word of the LORD came to Jonah the son of Amittai, saying, ‘Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me’” (Jonah 1:1–2).

## APPLICATION

- Repent of not being compassionate and merciful like God.
- Rejoice that God has mercy on sinners.
- Pray that God will use you to show His mercy to others.

## NEXT WEEK

God Uses Daniel to Interpret the King's Dream  
Read Daniel 2.

### Symbol Key



Craft



Memory Verse



Object Lesson



Game



Visual Aid



Activity



Q & A



Work Sheet



2 Grade Level



## PREPARE WITH THE TRUTH

*“Therefore you shall lay up these words of mine in your heart and in your soul....You shall teach them to your children” (Deuteronomy 11:18–19).*

Please take time to prepare your mind and heart to accurately handle the truths of God’s Word (2 Tim. 2:15). Read through the Bible background and study the truths contained in this lesson. Crucial background information is included here to aid you in understanding the Scripture.

### Bible Background

#### Historical Context

Although the Lord eventually would send the northern kingdom of Israel into exile, He had mercy on them for nearly 200 years. He could have carried out the prophesied exile much earlier (1 Kings 14:14–16). Instead, He patiently sent prophets such as Elijah and Elisha to call both king and people to repentance. The people’s hardness to the Lord did not change His compassion for them. One of the most striking reports of God’s care for His people came while Elisha was dying. Elisha’s last prophetic act was telling the wicked king Joash that the Lord would deliver Israel from Syria (2 Kings 13:15–19). Second Kings 13:22–25 records how Joash recaptured cities that had been taken by Syria. The author gives the reason for Israel’s deliverance: “The Lord was gracious to them, had compassion on them, and regarded them, because of His covenant with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, and would not yet destroy them or cast them from His presence” (2 Kings 13:23). Even though judgment was coming, the Lord acted mercifully toward His people. Even when the Lord returned to Israel’s control most of the land that once had been ruled by Solomon, neither Joash nor his son Jeroboam II repented of their wickedness. No doubt, Jeroboam II attributed his success to the fact that Israel’s oppressor, Syria, had recently been weakened by Assyria, who also was now in a period of decline. With the surrounding nations weakened, Israel was able to regain power. Although the Lord worked through Syria’s defeat and Assyria’s decline, the real reason for Israel’s return to power was the Lord’s mercy. Second Kings 14:25 says that the king “restored the territory of Israel...according to the word of the Lord God of Israel, which He had spoken through His servant Jonah the son of Amittai, the prophet who was from Gath Hepher.” Instead of sending the judgment Israel deserved, the Lord sent a prophecy through the prophet Jonah, saying that Israel would prosper.

The prophecy of Jonah was unique during this period. Other prophets, such as Amos and Hosea, Jonah’s contemporaries, were not sent by the Lord to proclaim a return of power, but rather to warn of impending judgment. The prophet Amos warned that Israel would go into exile beyond Syria (Amos 5:27), into land controlled by the nation of Assyria. Hosea similarly prophesied that Assyria would rule over Israel (Hos. 11:5). Although the first half of the eighth century (the time in which Jeroboam II reigned in Israel) was marked by Assyrian weakness (caused by foreign invasion, political unrest, and famine), Assyria returned to power when Tiglath-Pelser III came to the throne in 745 B.C. Within 23 years, the Lord would use Assyria to exile Israel from the Promised Land. Israel’s prominence, as prophesied by Jonah, would be short-lived. As other prophets warned, Assyria would soon dominate Israel.

### **God Sends Jonah to Warn Nineveh (Jonah 1:1–3)**

Israel was not the only nation warned of coming judgment. For the first time in Israel's history, the Lord sent a prophet to a Gentile nation. Jonah must have been surprised when he received the Lord's command to warn Nineveh that judgment was coming because of its wickedness (Jonah 1:1–2). Nineveh was a powerful Assyrian city nearly 500 miles northeast of Israel. Although the city proper was much smaller, the surrounding area was 60 miles in circumference and had a population of nearly 600,000. As part of the Assyrian empire, Nineveh presented a danger to Israel. Jonah must have wondered why the Lord would send him to warn Israel's enemy.

Jonah may not have wanted to go to Nineveh for a number of reasons. Perhaps he had heard Hosea's prophecy that Israel would come under Assyrian domination. Going to warn Israel's enemy of coming judgment must have seemed like treachery to Jonah. He may also have been jealous of God showing kindness to any nation besides Israel. Perhaps he feared that Nineveh would repent and not suffer God's judgment, thus shaming Israel, who would not listen to similar warnings from God's prophets. Regardless of the exact reason, Jonah did not want to warn Nineveh because he knew that if Nineveh repented, God would relent from sending judgment. Jonah knew God's compassion. He later said to the Lord, "I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm" (Jonah 4:2). It is ironic that the prophet who had been sent by God to pronounce blessing to unrepentant Israel (2 Kings 14:25) was unwilling to pronounce God's judgment lest Nineveh repent and experience God's compassion.

Hoping that his disobedience would ensure the destruction of Nineveh, Jonah became the first prophet to ignore God's commission (Jonah 1:3). He went as far as he could in the opposite direction, fleeing to Tarshish, most likely located on the coast of Spain. His desire was to flee from the presence of the Lord. Although it is impossible to be where the omnipresent God is not (Psalm 139:7–12), Jonah was attempting to place not only a spiritual but also a physical barrier between himself and God's will.

### **God Punishes Jonah for Disobedience (Jonah 1:4–17)**

Although Jonah thought that he could thwart God's plan with his disobedience, the Lord had other plans. He disciplined Jonah until he was willing to fulfill the purpose for which he had been called. "The Lord sent out a great wind on the sea...so that the ship was about to be broken up" (Jonah 1:4). While the sailors were terrified and crying out to their gods (1:5), Jonah was asleep in the bottom of the boat. They woke up the oblivious Jonah and pleaded with him to call on his God (1:6). Jonah's sin had jeopardized not only his life, but also the lives of the men on the boat. Even after God directed the casting of lots to reveal that Jonah was the cause of the storm, the men were unwilling to throw him overboard (1:7, 13). They were afraid that the Lord would charge them with innocent blood if they threw Jonah overboard and asked God to forgive them (1:14). The pagan sailors (who later came to fear the Lord and offered a sacrifice to Him when the storm stopped; 1:15–16) showed more compassion to Jonah than Jonah had shown to the 600,000 inhabitants of Nineveh.

Jonah's spiritual state on the boat is disturbing. There is no doubt that he had an orthodox knowledge of God. He was not involved in the paganism of Israel and had no respect for the sailors' gods. He admitted that he feared "the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land" (Jonah 1:9). He also admitted that he had fled from the presence of the Lord and told the sailors that the ship and

their lives were in jeopardy because of his sin (1:12). He willingly told the men to toss him into the sea. Yet sadly missing from the story is any sign of Jonah crying out to the Lord. Jonah preferred to be thrown into the Mediterranean Sea and die rather than submit to God's decree that he go and warn Nineveh of coming doom. Even when facing death by drowning, Jonah was not willing to cry out to God.

### **God Has Mercy on Jonah (Jonah 2)**

Even while Jonah was hoping that the Lord would not have mercy on Nineveh, God graciously had mercy upon Jonah. To discipline Jonah, the Lord had sent a storm. To save Jonah, He "had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah" (Jonah 1:17). At some point during his three days and nights inside the fish, Jonah prayed to the Lord his God (Jonah 2:1). The Lord's discipline had its intended effect as Jonah turned in complete submission to the Lord. Jonah was left with no hope but to cry out to the Lord (2:2). While in the sea, he admitted that his judgment had come from God (2:3). Only then did he understand what it was like to be cast from God's sight (2:4), the very thing he had been eager for God to do with Nineveh. Jonah responded to God's affliction by desperately turning his attention to God's presence in the temple, the same presence from which he previously had tried to flee. Jonah further described the horrifying judgment he faced (2:5–6). Finally, he praised God for rescuing his life from destruction. By casting Jonah into the sea, the Lord taught Jonah his absolute dependence upon Him (2:7). Perhaps thinking of both the Israelites and the people of Nineveh, Jonah affirmed the hopelessness of those who worship idols (2:8). Unlike idol worshipers, who have no relationship with God, Jonah promised to offer sacrifices with thanksgiving and to fulfill his vows (perhaps referring to a commitment to go to Nineveh; 2:9). Jonah learned that God is glorified when a person facing judgment turns to Him for salvation.

After Jonah cried out to the Lord, "the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land" (Jonah 2:10). God had rescued Jonah from the pit. At least for a while, Jonah became a man who loved God's saving mercy.

### **God Has Mercy on Nineveh (Jonah 3)**

When God sent Jonah to Nineveh the second time, Jonah was willing to obey (Jonah 3:1–3). Jonah went throughout the great city, warning the people that Nineveh would be destroyed in 40 days (3:4). In the most dramatic revival ever, "the people of Nineveh believed God, proclaimed a fast, and put on sackcloth, from the greatest to the least of them" (3:5). All Nineveh joined in public mourning over their wicked deeds, for which they were about to suffer God's wrath. Even the king, perhaps Adad-nirari III (810–783) or Assur-dan III (772–755), joined in the mourning (3:6) and proclaimed a fast for both men and their animals in order that the people might "cry mightily to God" (3:8). He not only demanded verbal submission to God, but also called on everyone to repent of their wickedness. In the same submission that Jonah had exhibited in the fish's belly, the king said, "Who can tell if God will turn and relent, and turn away from His fierce anger, so that we may not perish?" (3:9). Assyria had no hope of escaping God's wrath except God's being compassionate.

True to His awesome character, the Lord had mercy on Assyria, and Jonah's fears became a reality. When God saw how the Assyrians repented, He "relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it" (Jonah 3:10). The compassionate and merciful Lord is always willing to show grace to those who repent. He knew how the Assyrians would respond to His Word. He ordained both the preaching of the Word and the change that occurred in their hearts. Jonah had become the instrument through which God glorified His mercy and grace.

## God Teaches Jonah about His Mercy (Jonah 4)

The Lord's mercy on Nineveh "displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry" (Jonah 4:1). Jonah had not changed at all. He had learned nothing from the pity and compassion that God had shown him when He rescued him from the fish's belly. In his second prayer, Jonah justified his fleeing in the first place, saying that he had known that God would act according to His character (4:2). Jonah wished that his flight had been successful because then God would not have been able to have mercy on Nineveh. Even though God had lavished mercy on him, Jonah did not want God to have that same compassion on others. Jonah so despised the mercy that Nineveh received (and despised being the object through which God had accomplished that mercy) that he begged God to take his life. Jonah had once before been willing to suffer death rather than obey, and now that he had obeyed, Jonah again wished he could suffer death (4:3). While in the fish, Jonah pitied those who worshiped idols, but now out of the fish, Jonah pitied himself and regretted that God was not an idol, something that Jonah could conform to his own merciless character.

The Lord responded to Jonah's prayer by simply asking him whether he had a right to be angry (Jonah 4:4). Knowing how wicked Jonah's anger was, the Lord prepared a way to show him that even he had mercy. Jonah was deeply committed to his bitterness and his resentment of God's character. He had even made a shelter outside Nineveh where he waited and watched the city, perhaps hoping that he had convinced God to change His mind or that Nineveh would revert to their sin and suffer judgment. In Jonah's first lesson, the Lord had sent a storm and a fish. This time He sent a plant, a worm, and a strong wind. Jonah at first was thankful for the plant because of the shelter it gave (4:6). But after the worm destroyed the plant and the hot, scorching wind sapped Jonah's strength, he again wished that he were dead (4:7–8).

The Lord again asked Jonah whether he had a right to be angry (4:9). The first time Jonah had been angry because the Lord had shown mercy to others, and now he was angry because the Lord had not shown mercy to him. Jonah had the same response to the salvation of thousands as to the death of a plant. He valued his own physical comfort more than the spiritual state of a city. Rather than admit his wickedness, Jonah continued in obstinacy. He answered the Lord: "It is right for me to be angry, even to death!" (4:9). Jonah was consistent. He believed that he had a right to be angry over everything God did. Ultimately, Jonah judged the rightness or wrongness of what God did by his own comfort.

The book ends with the Lord's rebuke of Jonah. Jonah felt he was right to pity a plant, a plant for which he had done nothing and that lived only a day. But the Lord questioned how Jonah could be right to pity a plant, but God could be wrong to pity "Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons who cannot discern between their right hand and their left—and much livestock" (Jonah 4:11).

From Jonah's first leaving for Tarshish to his sitting outside Nineveh, he exhibited unwillingness for God to choose whom He would be gracious and compassionate to. Jonah rejoiced in God's compassion as long as he was the object of it, but he resented God's character when God had compassion on others. The believer must not be like Jonah. God is sovereign over everything: the storm, the fish, the plant, the worm, and the wind. It is for Him to choose whom He will have compassion on. Rather than wish that God is not who He is, the believer must try to be as gracious and compassionate as He is.

## POINT TO THE TRUTH

*“Give ear, O my people, to my law; incline your ears to the words of my mouth”  
(Psalm 78:1).*

This section includes questions to review last week’s lesson and ideas to prepare students for this week’s lesson. Choose from the following ideas to point to the truths of this lesson.



### Grace

It has been said that justice is getting what you deserve, mercy is not getting what you deserve, and grace is getting what you do not deserve. Grace is a positive act of benefiting or blessing someone in a way they do not deserve. One of the best examples of grace is found in the parable of the Good Samaritan, who went out of his way to help a man he did not even know (Luke 10:25–37). You may want to tell or read this story to give the students an example of grace. You also could give the students some practical scenarios to illustrate the concept—for example: (1) two children get an equal amount of candy, and one student eats his and then wants more; (2) a child steals his friend’s toy and then breaks it; (3) a friend makes fun of you; etc. In each situation, ask the students how the child deserves to be treated and what an example of grace would be.



### Repentance

Repentance is a key biblical concept. The word *repentance* simply means turning around. When used in the Bible, it refers to a person turning from his sin and toward God in faith. It is essentially a change of mind that results in a change of behavior. Repentance may refer to turning from individual sins, or it may refer to the initial turning from sin as a whole, which occurs at salvation (Acts 11:18). A “U-turn” sign is a good visual aid for conveying the concept of repentance.



### Election and Sovereignty

Election is a concept that most people struggle to understand at some point. The students do not need to understand the intricate details of the doctrine, but it is important that they do begin to understand and accept the fact that God has the right to do whatever He chooses. This is a crucial step in accepting God’s sovereignty. Why did God warn only Nineveh and send a prophet only to them and not to other cities? That was God’s free and fair choice. You could bring to class a bag of assorted candy and let each student choose one piece. Once every student has a piece, ask a few students why they chose the piece they did, and not some other piece. Explain that God has the same freedom to choose; He can do whatever pleases Him. God not only has the right to do whatever He chooses, but He also has the power to do it. This is God’s sovereignty—His freedom to choose whatever He will and the power to carry it out.



### But I Don’t Feel like It

Ask the students to name some things that they do not like doing. Why do they dislike these things? Have they ever tried to get out of doing them? In today’s lesson we will learn about a prophet who was told to do something he did not want to do. We will also find out why he did not want to do it and how he tried to get out of it.



## Let's Go Fishing, Part 1

Materials: fishing pole or stick with string, magnet, paperclips, numbered cards with questions written on them

Directions: This is a preview game of new questions for this week's lesson. Have each student "go fishing" for a question. It is his job to find out the answer to the question that he "caught." Bring in a fishing pole or some that resembles one. Place a magnet at the end of the string. Attach a paperclip to each question card. (The cards should be numbered so that the students can read them in the correct order.) Put all the cards in an area where the students can "catch" them. To add a challenge, the students could be blindfolded. (See "Let's Go Fishing, Part 2" in the "Proclaim" section.)

# PROCLAIM THE TRUTH

*"Telling to the generation to come the praises of the LORD, and His strength and His wonderful works that He has done" (Psalm 78:4).*

This section includes the Bible lesson, lesson questions, and praise and worship ideas. Song suggestions are included that you can use to proclaim your worship to God. Use the lesson questions to check the students' understanding. This section also includes various presentation ideas to use during the teaching time. Read the Bible passage several times before you read these pages. All teaching should be done directly from the Bible.

## Bible Lesson

### Passage Outline

### Reading of the Text

Read portions of Jonah 1–4.

### Introduction

Have you ever not wanted to do something nice for someone who was not nice to you, but then you remembered what God says about loving others? What did you do? Did your actions and words say that you loved that person as God does? In today's lesson we will see what Jonah did when God asked him to give the people of Nineveh a very important message. Let's see how Jonah and the people of Nineveh responded.

### Leadoff Questions (LOQs)

**LOQ:** What is mercy?

**Answer:** Mercy is not giving people punishment that they deserve.

**LOQ:** What did God tell Jonah to do?

**Answer:** God told Jonah to leave his town and go to warn the people of Nineveh of punishment that would come if they did not repent.

**LOQ:** Was Jonah obedient to the Lord's commands?

**Answer:** No. Jonah decided that he would do what he wanted rather than what God commanded him to do.





**LOQ:** Where did Jonah go instead of Nineveh?

**Answer:** Jonah went the opposite way from Nineveh by taking a boat from Joppa to Tarshish.

**LOQ:** What happened while Jonah was in the boat to Tarshish?

**Answer:** God sent a great storm that was very frightening for all the sailors.

**LOQ:** What did the sailors think was the cause of the storm?

**Answer:** They believed that it was because of one of the men that the storm was happening.

**LOQ:** What did they do to find out which man it was?

**Answer:** They drew lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

**LOQ:** What did Jonah tell the sailors to do to stop the storm?

**Answer:** Jonah said for them to throw him overboard to make the storm stop. So the sailors threw him overboard, into the sea.

**LOQ:** What happened to the sea once Jonah was thrown in?

**Answer:** The storm stopped raging.

**LOQ:** What happened to Jonah?

**Answer:** Jonah sank into the ocean, and a huge fish swallowed him. Jonah prayed to God inside the fish, and the fish spit him out onto the beach.

**LOQ:** Was the Lord merciful to Jonah?

**Answer:** Yes. The Lord gave Jonah a second chance to obey Him by sending a fish to save Jonah from the sea.

**LOQ:** Where did Jonah go after being spit out by the big fish?

**Answer:** Jonah went to Nineveh and did as God had instructed him.

**LOQ:** Did the people of Nineveh repent?

**Answer:** Yes. After hearing the word of the Lord from Jonah, the people repented and changed their ways.

**LOQ:** Was God merciful to Nineveh?

**Answer:** Yes. God was merciful to Nineveh by holding back His punishment because the people repented.

**LOQ:** Was Jonah happy that God had mercy on Nineveh?

**Answer:** No. Jonah said he knew that God was merciful and slow to anger. He did not want Nineveh to be given mercy, so he went out of the city and pouted.

**LOQ:** Did Jonah have a right to be angry at God for giving mercy to Nineveh?

**Answer:** No. God rebuked Jonah for his attitude. God is God and can have mercy on whom He chooses.

### Summary

Through God's Word we can see that God's character is just as Jonah observed. He said, "I know that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and

abundant in lovingkindness” (Jonah 4:2). God was merciful to Jonah after he disobeyed God’s instructions. God was also merciful to the city of Nineveh by not giving them the punishment that they deserved.

### Application

Just as God was merciful to Jonah and Nineveh, He is patient and merciful with us. When believers sin, God does not kill them on the spot. He is patient with them, leading them to repent and change their actions and attitudes. For the unbeliever, God also is merciful. Although we all deserve eternal punishment in hell, God gives men, women, and children a chance to repent and trust in His saving grace while they are alive. Thank God for His great patience and mercy.

## Presentation Ideas



### A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards

Use appropriate A Beka Book Flash-A-Cards with the lesson.



### Betty Lukens Flannelgraph

Use appropriate flannelgraph pieces with the lesson.



### MERCY Acrostic

Write the word MERCY on the board vertically, in large bold letters. Tell the class that as they study the book of Jonah, they need to be looking for ways in which God showed mercy to people. After each part of the lesson, fill in the acrostic with the following phrases. The last statement reviews the application of the lesson.

Made the storm cease

Engulfed Jonah with a fish

Relented from punishing Nineveh

Caused a plant to grow over Jonah

You should be merciful like God



### Going Fishing

Materials: table, fishing pole, fishing line or string, clothespin, ear (1:1–2), ship (1:3), waves (1:4–6), dice, life preserver (or LifeSavers candy; 1:10–16), large fish (1:17), praying hands (2:1–10), cityscape (3:1–6), empty paper plate (3:7–10), plant leaf (4:1–6), gummy worm (4:7–10), the word MERCY (4:11) (Note: Most of these items can be made, drawn, brought from home, or purchased inexpensively at a toy store or party-supply store.)

Directions: Have an assistant hide behind a table. Throughout the lesson, call on various students to come “fish” behind the table. The assistant should use the clothespin to hook the items onto the line in the order given above. You can use each item as a visual aid for teaching the passage it corresponds to (listed above). So, the first student will “catch” an ear, and you can explain that the Word of God came to Jonah in Jonah 1:1–2 (and so on).



### Let’s Go Fishing, Part 2

Before the teaching time, have the students read their cards (from the “Let’s Go Fishing, Part 1” activity in the “Point” section) in the correct order. For younger students, you may need to go around and read each card for them. Ask the students to listen for the answers to the other students’ questions, too, so that they

can help them if they need it later. During the lesson time, be sure to address all the questions. After the lesson, ask the students to read their cards in order again and to give you the answer to each. If a student has trouble answering any question, the other students can help him.

## Praise and Worship

*Create in Me a Clean Heart*

*I Will Sing of the Mercies*

*Make Me a Servant*

*O-B-E-D-I-E-N-C-E*

*Rejoice in the Lord Always*

*Rescue the Perishing*

*Trust and Obey*

*Who Did Swallow Jonah?*

## PRACTICE THE TRUTH

*“That they may set their hope in God, and not forget the works of God, but keep His commandments” (Psalm 78:7).*

Choose ideas from this section to review and apply the truths of the Bible lesson.



### “God’s Mercy to Jonah”

Materials: copies of the “God’s Mercy to Jonah” craft pages, crayons, glue

Directions: Give each student a copy of the first craft page and a copy of Jonah from the second craft page. Direct them to color the big fish and Jonah. Then they can fold the fish page in half, placing Jonah inside, and glue the sides of the paper together (being careful not to put glue inside the fish outline). When they hold the picture up to the light, they will be able to see Jonah inside the fish.



### Jonah and the Big Fish

Materials: copies of “Jonah and the Big Fish” craft page, crayons, glue, scissors

Directions: Give the students a copy of the craft page and have them color and then cut out the pictures. Glue the front and inside of the fish together by placing glue along the top edge of the fish’s insides. Glue Jonah to the inside of the fish. The students can lift up the front of the fish to reveal Jonah praying.



### Jonah Is Spit onto Dry Land

Materials: party horns (the type that unroll when you blow in them), copies of the “Jonah Is Spit onto Dry Land” craft page on cardstock, glue or tape, crayons

Directions: Give each student a copy of the craft page, and have him color Jonah and the fish. Then give each student a party horn, and instruct him to stretch it out and glue or tape his picture of Jonah to the end. (This may require the help of a teacher or another student.) The horn will roll back up with Jonah inside. Glue or tape the horn’s tube to the back of the fish, so that when the students blow their horns, the fish will spit Jonah out of its mouth. A verse also could be glued or taped to the fish.



## God Is Abundant in Lovingkindness

Materials: copies of the “God Is Abundant in Lovingkindness” craft page on light-green paper, copies of the water ripples on blue paper, copies of the fish on white paper, crayons, tape

Directions: Give each student a green base sheet, a blue half-sheet, and several fish. Instruct them to cut out the “water” along the solid lines and then staple or tape it to the bottom half of the base sheet, creating a pocket to insert the fish. The students should then cut out their fish. Read the Jonah 4:2 to the students, and ask them what it means that God is abundant in lovingkindness. With help or on their own, the students should think of ways that God is abundant in lovingkindness. The suggested ways can then be written on their fish and placed in the pocket to take home.



## A Lesson in Compassion

Materials: coloring page of Jonah under the tree, leaves cut from brown construction paper, crayons, glue

Directions: Have the students glue brown leaves all over the tree to illustrate how God taught Jonah a lesson in compassion.



## “God Shows Mercy to Jonah”

Use this work sheet to reinforce the key truths of today’s lesson. The work sheet is located at the back of the lesson.



## Journal Page: “Wisdom”

Give each student a copy of the journal page at the back of this lesson. The students can complete the page individually, in small groups, or at home.

## Coloring Pages

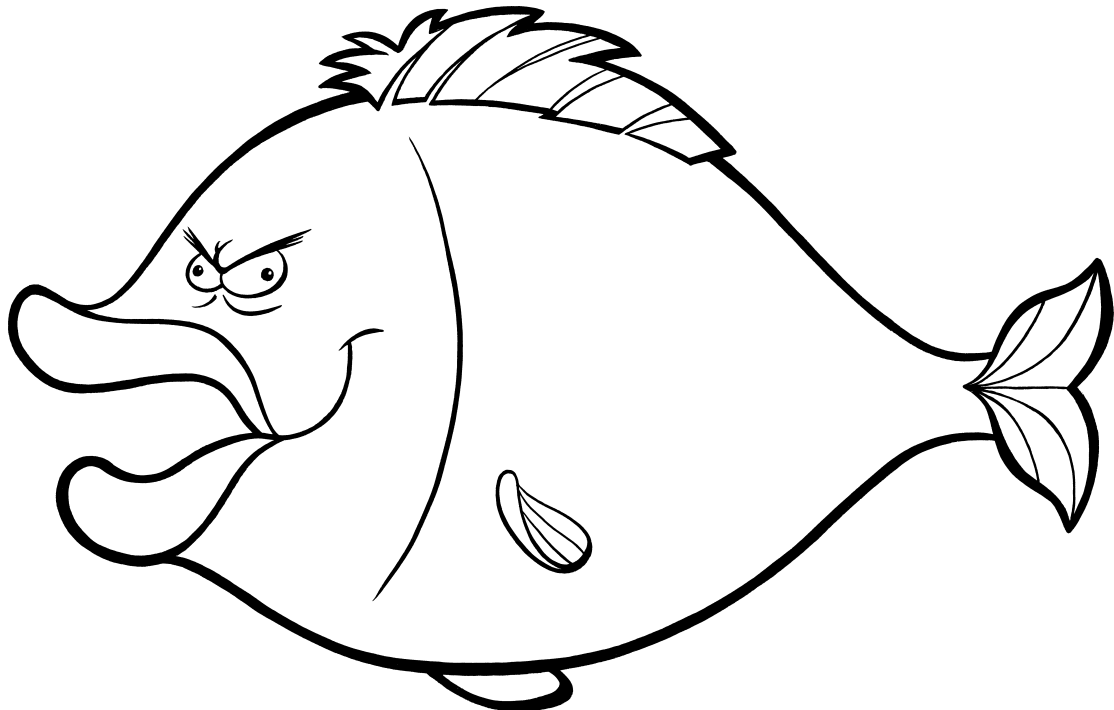
Give each student a copy of the coloring pages at the back of the lesson. Students can color the pages in class or at home.



## MEMORY VERSE

“I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness” (Jonah 4:2b).

# God's Mercy to Jonah



God showed mercy to Jonah by saving his life and giving him time to repent while he was in the fish (Jonah 1:17).



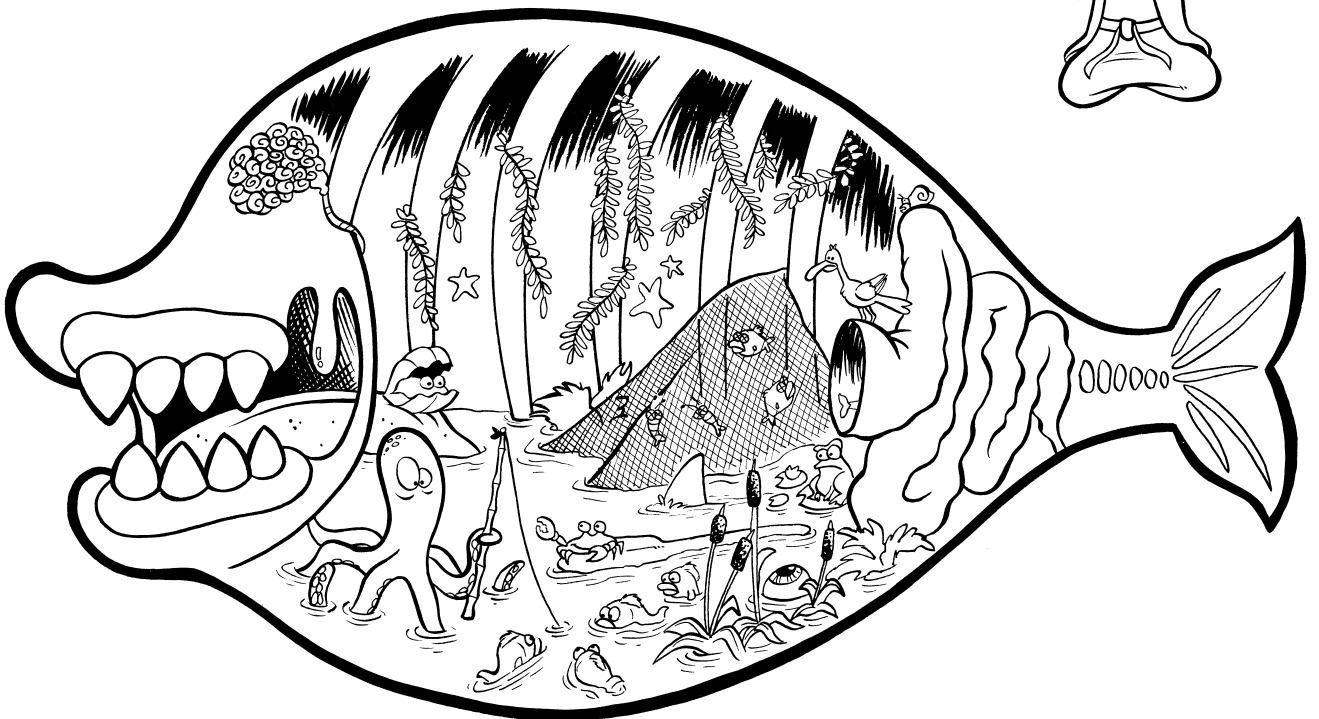
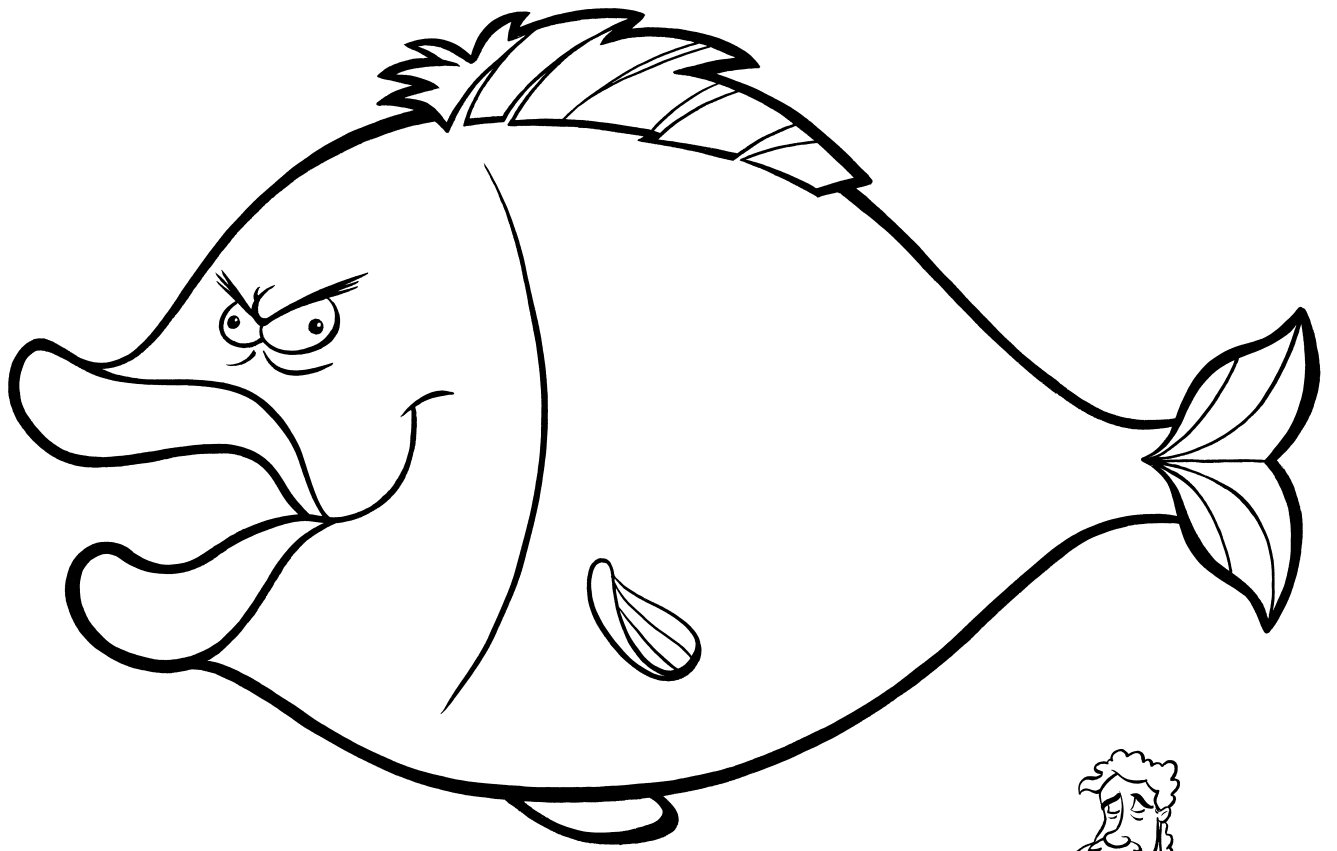
# God's Mercy to Jonah







# Jonah and the Big Fish





# Jonah Is Spit onto Dry Land

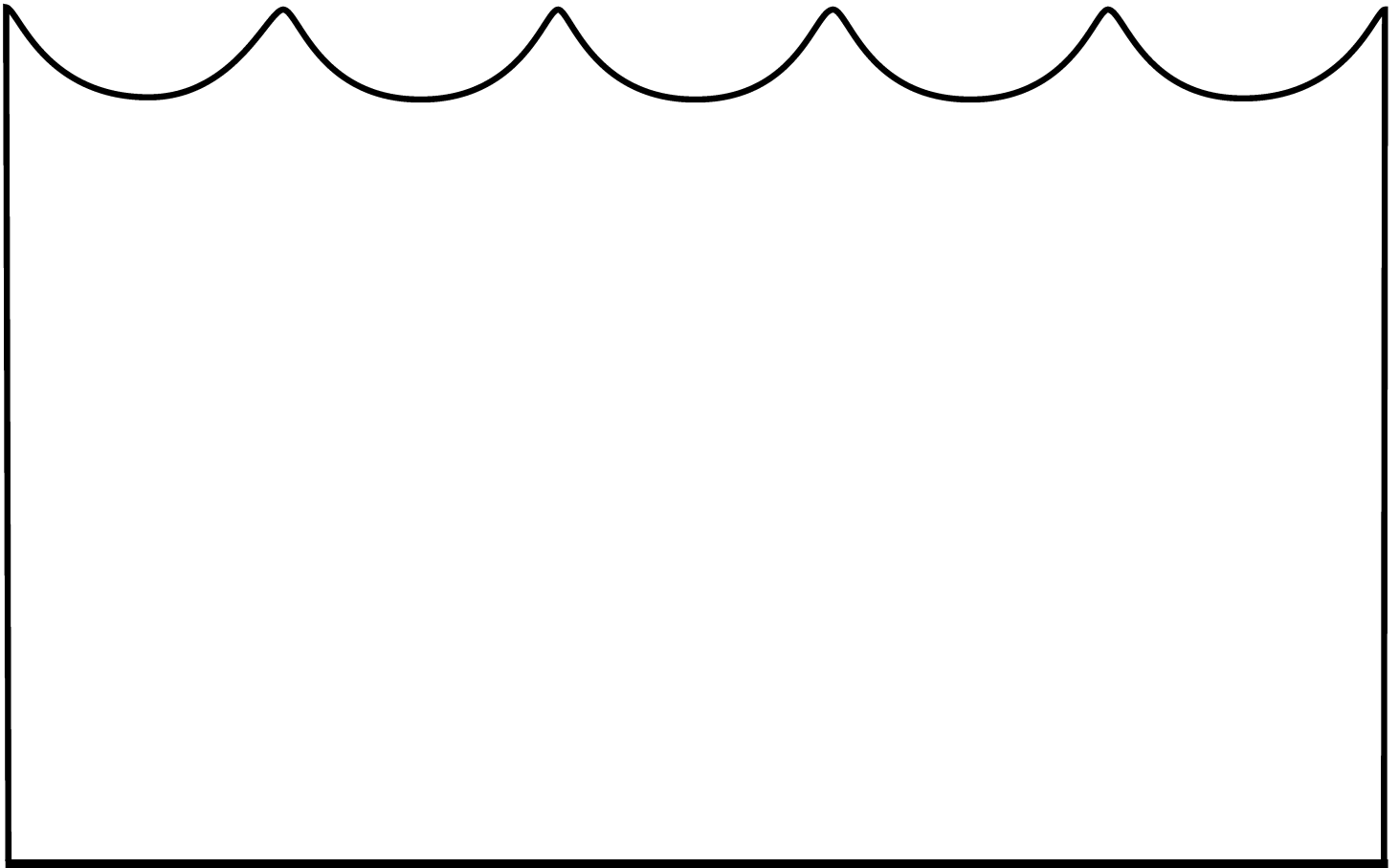
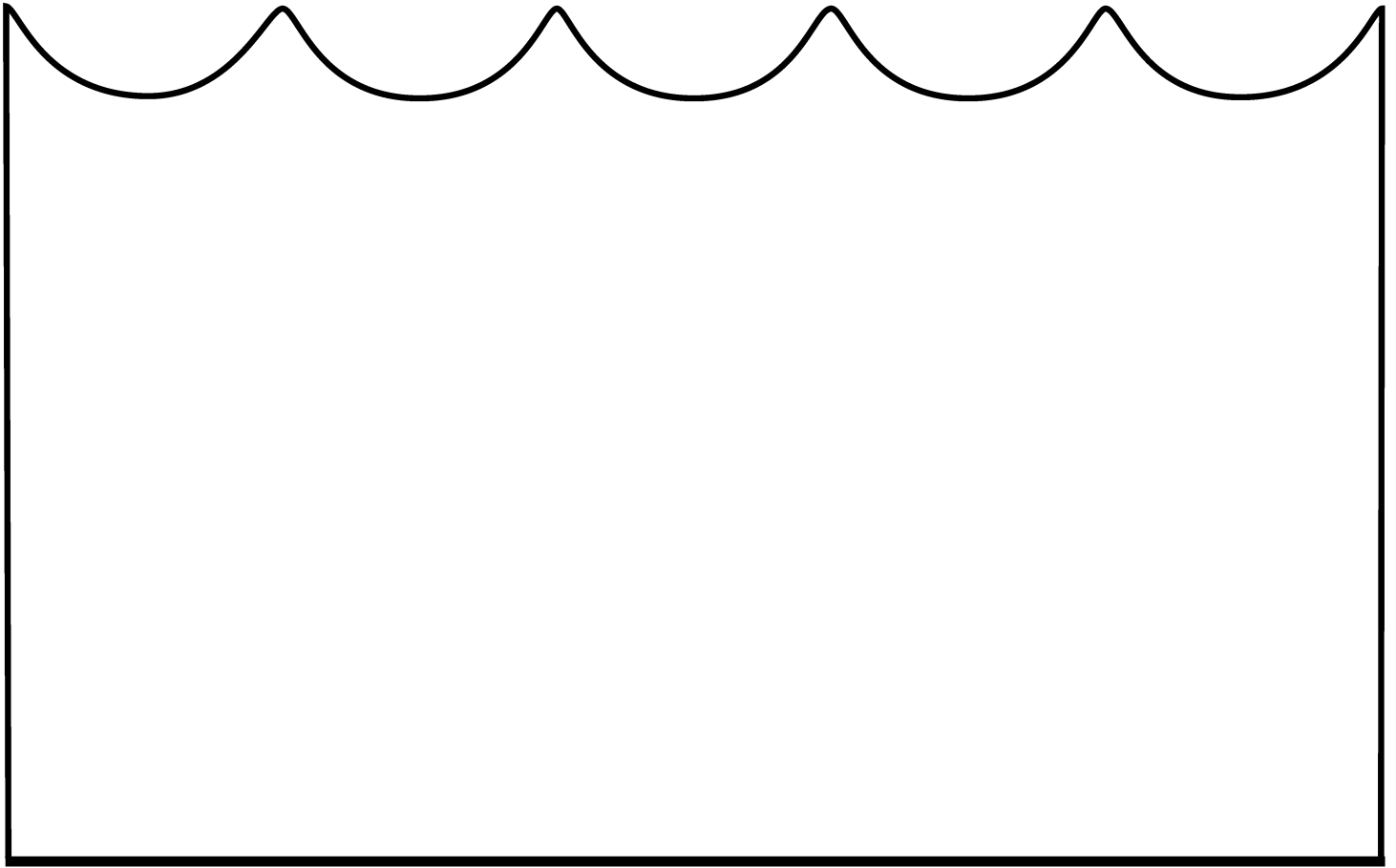




# God Is Abundant in Lovingkindness

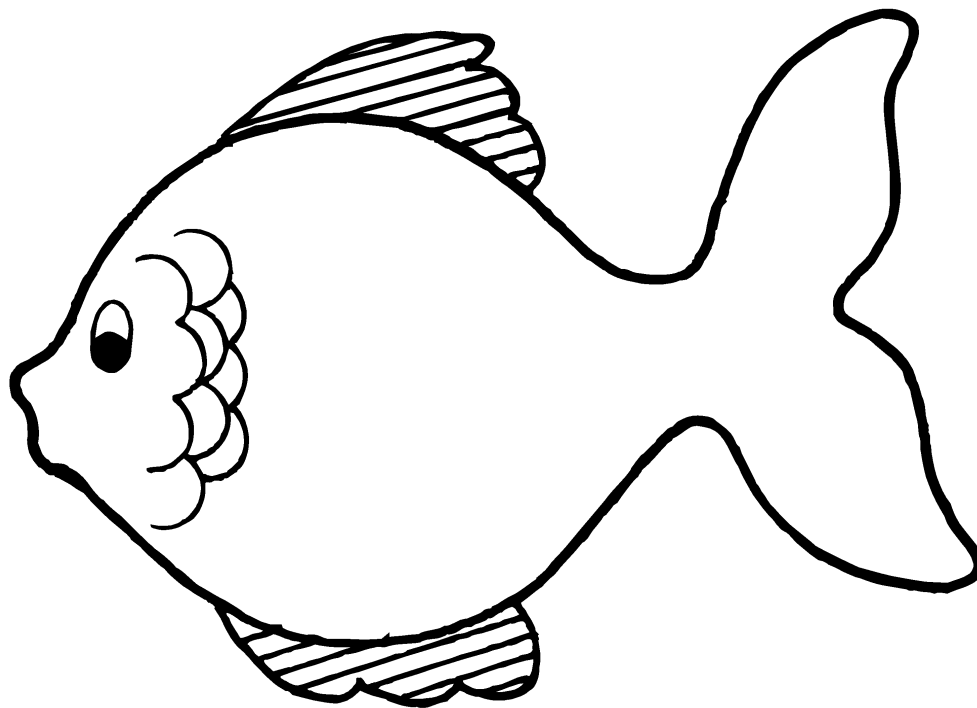
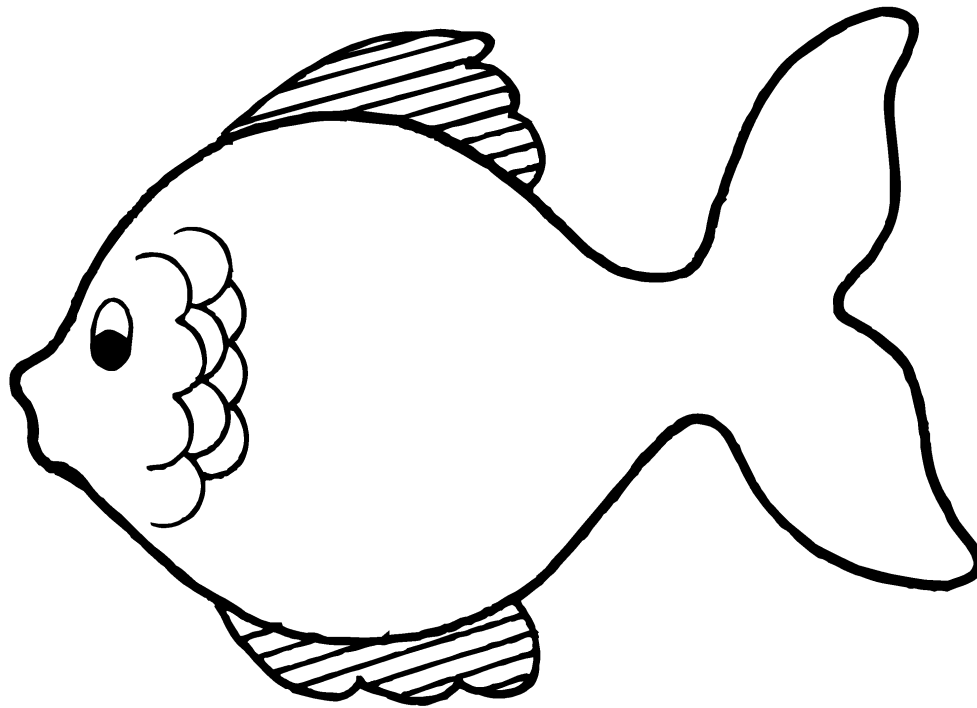
“I know that you are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm” (Jonah 4:2).













# God Shows Jonah Mercy



Jonah 1-4

Name \_\_\_\_\_

1. God told Jonah to go to \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Why was it impossible for Jonah to hide from God?

God knows everything.

God sees everything.

God is everywhere.

all of the above

3. True or False: Everyone on the ship was in danger because of Jonah's faithfulness.

\_\_\_\_\_

4. What did God prepare to swallow Jonah? \_\_\_\_\_

5. While in the belly of the fish, Jonah \_\_\_\_\_ to God (2:1).

6. Did the people of Ninevah listen to Jonah and believe God? \_\_\_\_\_

7. Through the plant and the worm, God showed Jonah that He shows \_\_\_\_\_  
to whomever He wants.

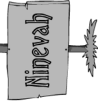
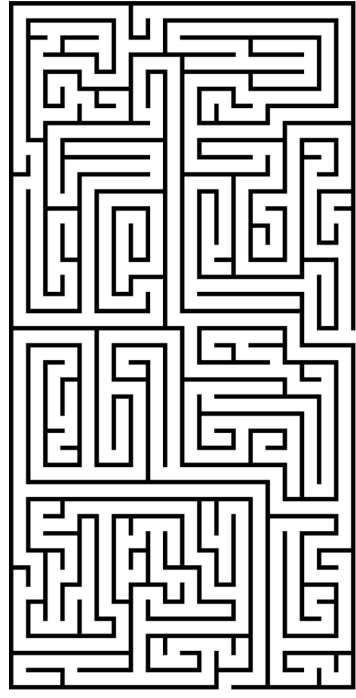


# A Merciful God

“But it displeased Jonah exceedingly, and he became angry. So he prayed to the LORD, and said, ‘Ah, LORD, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm’” (Jonah 4:1-2).

Do you know what mercy is? God is merciful; He shows mercy to sinners. In the book of Jonah, God gives us an example of His mercy. By giving the people of Nineveh an opportunity to repent and receive a blessing instead of the punishment they deserved, God showed mercy. He also showed mercy to disobedient Jonah by sparing his life in the big fish instead of having the big fish chew him up for dinner. God’s mercy gave Jonah an opportunity to repent and receive blessing instead of punishment.

In response to God’s mercy, Jonah obeyed God and ran to Nineveh. Help Jonah find his way to Nineveh through the maze below.

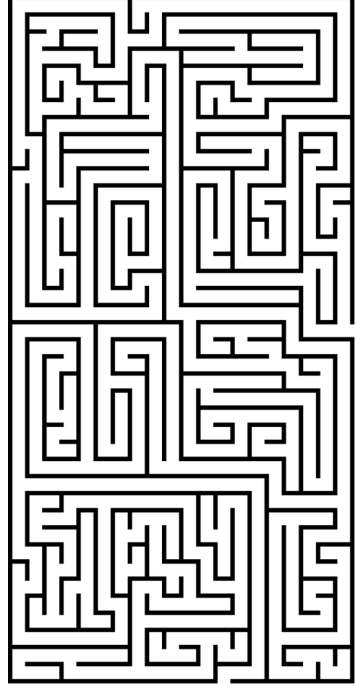


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Ephesians 2:4 tells us that God is rich in mercy. He has a lot of mercy to show sinners. How has God shown mercy to you?

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Did you know that God showed His great mercy to you by giving His son, Jesus Christ, to die on the cross for your sins?

Have you asked Him for mercy to forgive you of your sins?

---

If you have not, you can ask Him to forgive you now. If you have asked Christ to forgive you of your sins, you can be like Jonah and tell others about God's mercy and forgiveness.

This week I can tell \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_ about God's mercy for sinners. I will tell them:

---

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**PRAYER**

Lord, thank You for being a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. Thank You that Your mercy was shown to me by Your dying on the cross for my sins. Give me a joyful heart that willingly tells others of Your mercy and lovingkindness to forgive sinners.

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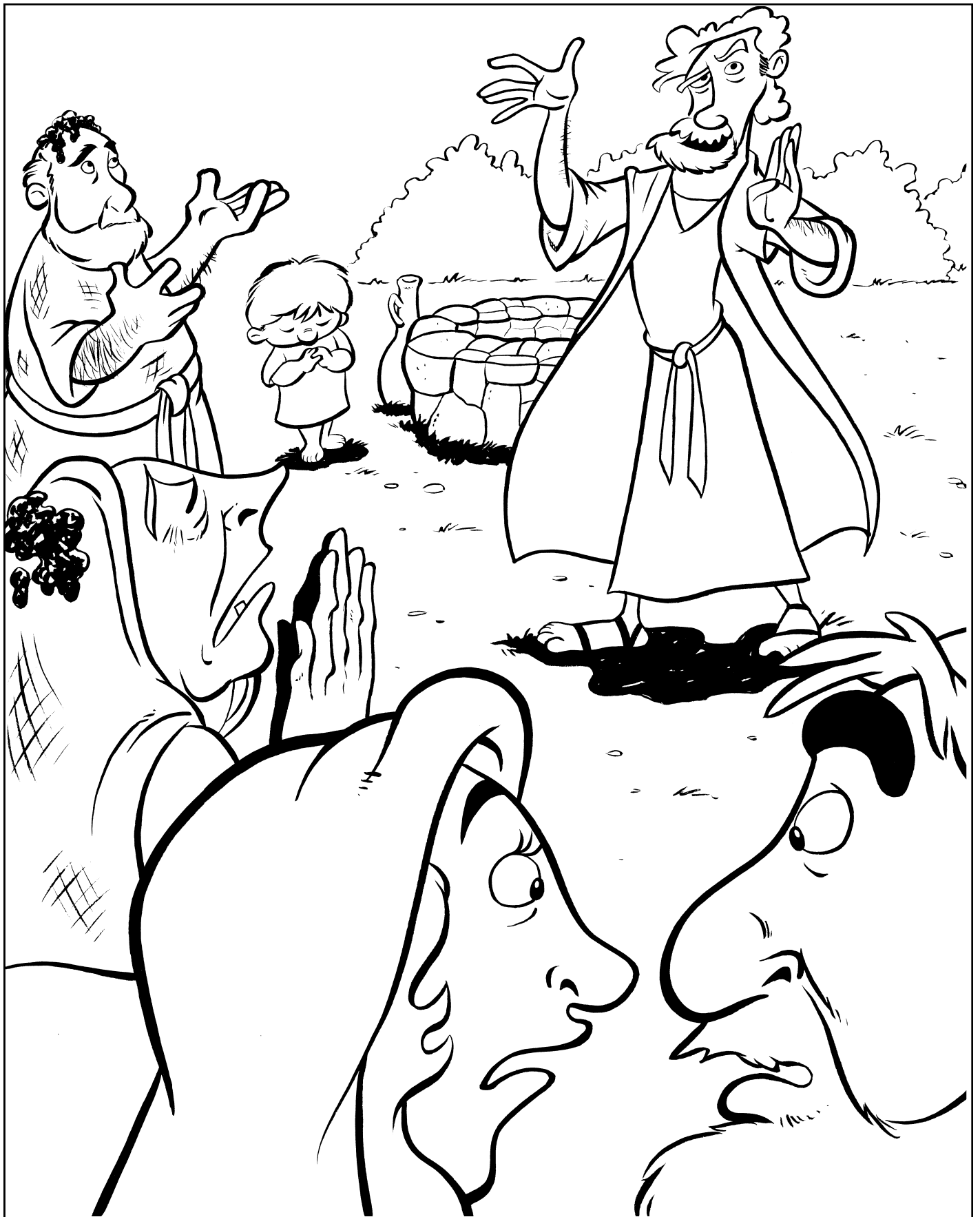
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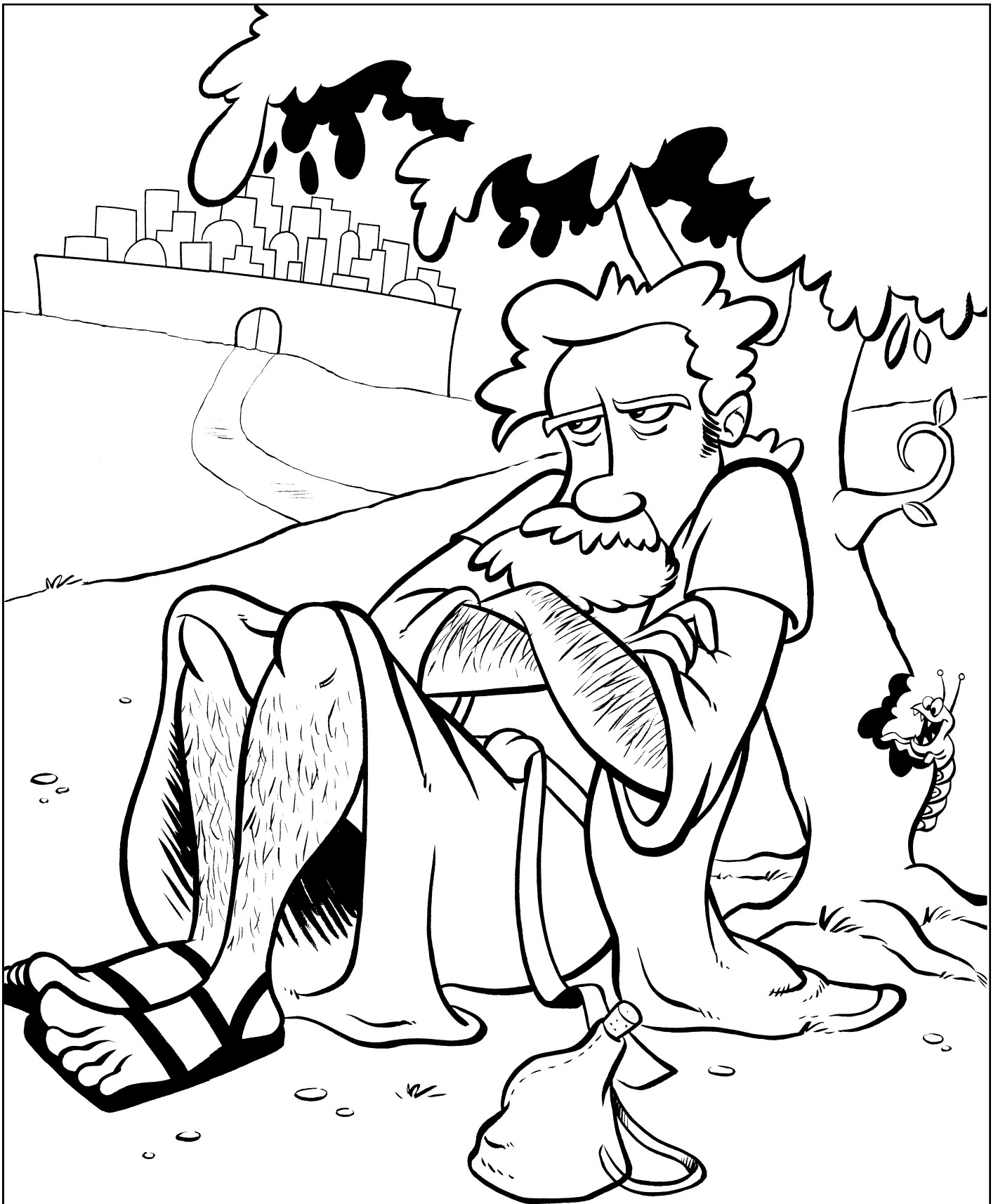
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**“So the people of Nineveh believed God....Then God saw their works, that they turned from their evil way; and God relented from the disaster that He had said He would bring upon them, and He did not do it” (Jonah 3:5, 10).**







Jonah was angry that Nineveh repented and that God had mercy on them. He said, "I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness." Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?" (Jonah 4:2, 4).

