

**Computer Workshop**  
**Jonah: The Prophet of Second Chances**  
**God's Compassion**  
**Lesson Plan**

**Focus: Compassion and Grace**

**Chapter 4:** God teaches Jonah about compassion

God heard the repentant cries of the Ninevites and he had compassion on them. He didn't destroy them. Now we might think that Jonah would rejoice over the success of his mission. Not so! Instead, Jonah was angry! He told God that this is exactly why he didn't want to go to Nineveh. He knew God was compassionate, tender and kind, slow to anger and full of love! He knew that God didn't really want to destroy the Ninevites. Here we see the true condition of Jonah's heart. He obeyed God outwardly, but his heart still wasn't in it. In his heart he still resented the enemies of his people. He secretly hoped that they wouldn't listen to his message so that God would destroy them! After all, it isn't fair! How can God allow a happy ending for these mean and wicked people? In fact, because of his prejudice and hatred of the Assyrians, Jonah would rather die than see this ending.

God sends a plant and a worm to teach Jonah a lesson: how could Jonah care for a plant and not understand God's concern for 120,000 people?

**God's love is for everyone.** We get disgruntled or angry when good things happen to people who don't deserve them. Like Jonah, we sometimes wish people would be punished for their wrongdoings. But God's ways are not our ways. God uses all circumstances to bring about his purpose and plan for good. When we repent, God rejoices! God is glad to have us back and welcomes us with open arms! (Think about the story of the Prodigal Son) We are called to be like God and be welcoming and happy for others too! God showed compassion to Jonah and the Ninevites. How can we show compassion?

**Grace is a gift from God for everyone.** We all have done wrong things and deserve to be punished. Grace means undeserved favor. It is a free gift of God's love. There is nothing we can do to earn it or buy it. We just accept the gift and live our lives showing how thankful we are for God's mercy.

**Overview of the workshop:** Children will explore the story of Jonah using

1. "Elijah and Jonah" software for Gr 1 through Gr 7 classes
2. Use "The Play & Learn Children's Bible CD" for the kindergarten class.

**Preparation and Room Set Up:**

1. Review the Background Information and Lesson plan.
2. Preview the software.
3. Copy the handouts, one per computer station, plus teachers and shepherds.
4. Turn on the computers before children arrive.

Notes for Computer Workshop Leaders:

This workshop can always use extra hands, especially for the younger children. Ask the Shepherds to sit with the children at a computer station and help with navigation, reading text and discussion. As much as possible, try to sit with your students as you go through the software together. The lesson is not what's on the computer. It's what you and the students do with what's on the computer. Guide your students through the content, share yourself and facilitate their sharing with

each other. Model your enthusiasm for the Word of God. Please make sure that children take turns at the mouse and keyboard. If necessary, set a time limit to help the children switch roles.

**Teacher Notes:**

Each workshop includes the Bible story. One of our primary goals is to improve the children's Bible literacy! Shepherds should help the children locate the stories.

Remember, that as the rotation progresses, the children will become more familiar with the story. When this happens, allow the children to tell you what they know. The children should still locate the story in their Bibles every week. You can use the bold headings in the Bibles to guide your discussion. You may want to review some of the Bible notes as well. Be sure to fill in any missing information and add additional details using the Background Information to help you. One of the greatest advantages of this model is that children who come regularly learn the story in great depth.

Because the children are studying this story for four weeks, you can focus on aspects of the story that match the focus of this workshop. Be sure to follow the time guidelines and leave ample time for the activities.

**Time Guidelines:**

Welcome/Introduction	5 minutes
Bible Study	10 minutes
Software exploration	30 minutes
Closing	5 minutes

**Welcome and Introductions:**

Gather the children together in the chairs with their Bibles. Welcome the children and introduce yourself. Make sure you are wearing your nametag and that the children have picked up their nametags. Always begin each class with since the children may not know you. Please include the shepherds in introductions. Tell the children that today they will learn about one of the most well known prophets in Israel's history.

**Opening Prayer:** Please open class with prayer each week. You may pray your own prayer or use the prayer below:

Dear God, We praise you and thank you for all you do for us. Be with us today as we learn more about you. In Jesus' name, AMEN.

**Bible Study:**

**Introduce the Story:**

God raised up a prophet for Israel. This prophet's name was Jonah. Now at that time, another nation, Assyria, was very powerful. They had strong armies who tried to take over lands and people. The people of Israel worried that the Assyrian army would take over their land too. The capital city of Assyria was called Ninevah. It was a huge city with great walls surrounding it. The people in Ninevah did not worship the one, true God. So, the people of Israel looked down on the people of Ninevah. They thought they were better than them. They also didn't like them because the Assyrian army was very cruel. The people of Ninevah were their enemies.

But, God wanted to teach his people a lesson. And so he called a new prophet, named Jonah, to show his people that God loves everyone – no matter where they live or what they do. Jonah had great difficulty with what God asked of him, and in understanding the lesson that God was teaching. Let’s find out more about the story now.

**Find the Story in the Bible:**

Jonah lived about 700 years many years before Jesus was born. Where would we find the story of Jonah in the Bible? (Old Testament)

Jonah is one of the Minor Prophets. This means that his book is a short book of prophecy. Long books of prophecy are called Major Prophets.

Let’s find the story of Jonah in our Bibles now. (Help the children locate the story. The Shepherd should help. You can tell them what page to look on.)

Paraphrase the scripture using the bold headings to direct the children to the different parts of Jonah’s story. Basically there are four key parts:

1. God calls Jonah; Jonah disobeys.
2. Jonah submits.
3. Jonah completes his mission.
4. God teaches Jonah another lesson: compassion and grace.  
Jonah’s motives are contrasted with God’s motives.

Since the focus of this workshop is compassion and grace, it would be good to read chapter 4 to make sure everyone is familiar with the lesson God tried to teach Jonah: Jonah was more concerned about the plant than the Ninevites.

Some suggestions for discussion on compassion and grace could be:

How often do we secretly wish evil on our enemies?
Do we really want God to forgive them?
Do we believe that we deserve special treatment from God because we feel we are “better” or more deserving than others?
Do we truly want God to love and care for people we don’t like or who are different than we? Are we kind and welcoming to others?
Are we nice to people at school? Do we welcome the new kid in class? Do we stand up for someone who is being picked on? Do we come to church on Sunday, but act totally different the other six days of the week? Do we cheat, lie, or steal? Do we gossip and say mean things about others?
How do we show forgiveness in our lives? How do we tell others about the good news of God’s grace and love? How can we change our attitude toward others who are different than us or who are not easy to love?

Some general questions for discussion about the story:

What is a prophet?	(someone who speaks for God, God’s messenger)
What did God tell Jonah to do?	(go to Nineveh to preach to the people there)
Why did Jonah run away?	(he didn’t want to do what God asked)

How did Jonah feel about the people of Nineveh?	(didn't like them, they were his enemies)
How did God feel about the people of Nineveh?	(loved them, wanted to save them)
What happened to Jonah?	(thrown overboard, swallowed by giant fish)
I wonder what Jonah thought about while inside that great fish?	
What did Jonah do inside the fish?	(prayed in thanksgiving to God, promised to obey)
What happened after Jonah preached in Nineveh?	(people repented, God showed them mercy)
How did Jonah feel about that?	(angry)
What can we learn about God from this story?	(God loves everyone, grace, mercy, forgiveness)

### Memory Verse:<sup>1</sup>

Each rotation we encourage the children to memorize one verse. Locate the verse and review with the children at this time.

“When I was in trouble, I called out to you. And you answered me.” Jonah 2:2

### Computer Exploration: Jonah’s Story

Software: Elijah and Jonah by Sunday Software ([www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com))  
and The Play & Learn Children’s Bible (also available from Sunday Software)

Advanced Preparation:

1. Preview the software.
2. Turn on the computers and monitors. Turn sound down.
3. You may want to demonstrate how to navigate the program for the first couple of pages.

Software Information (from Neil MacQueen’s Teaching Guide at [www.sundaysoftware.com](http://www.sundaysoftware.com)):

#### A. “Elijah and Jonah” Software:

This software teaches the entire Jonah story. A minimum of 30 minutes is needed to go through all the content and play the games.

Study notes are imbedded throughout the program. Tell the children to watch for these and pause to discuss them with their partners. Follow the handout for specific instructions.

Mini-games are also imbedded in the program. Children may play the “Smoochie Spittin’ Game” for a few minutes, but be sure that they play the ending games to review content: the matching game and the “Wormie Game.” The “Wormie Asks” questions can be used for discussion at the end of class during Closing time.

There are two navigation buttons. The large green arrows move the entire page forward or back. They can be clicked at any time, even when dimmed. The small double arrows (and the green triangular arrows in the circles) move the individual “frames” of the story. Sometimes the frames advance themselves, at other times they must be clicked. Premature clicking of navigational arrows will bypass content. Make sure to wait until each frame has finished before moving on!

Directions:

---

<sup>1</sup> We did not continue with the “memory verse” idea. Memorizing a verse, while it has merits, does not mean an idea is understood. We put the emphasis on understanding. Jonah was our first story workshops, and lesson plans and approaches evolved over the years.

1. Gather children 2 to 3 at each computer station.
2. Demonstrate to the children how to open the program – double click on the Elijah-Jonah desktop icon.
3. Have children view the opening preview – (music and spitting Jonah out)
4. Click on Jonah (to the right).
5. Follow the navigation handout.
6. The story content is narrated. However, some of the notes are not and will require individual reading. Be sure to pair readers with non-readers or have adults available to help non-readers.

**Highlights and Discussion Guide:**

See handout.

You can have discussion with the kids as they come to the discussion questions.

After 30 minutes of computer time, bring Group together for discussion.

**Closing Time:**

Gather the children together. Review with them one word or concept that they learned during today's session (compassion, mercy, love are some suggestions). Encourage them to come back next week and to bring a friend.

**Closing prayer:**

Ask for prayer requests and close with prayer. Or, you can use the following prayer:

Dear Lord, We are so glad to know that You will never leave us. You are always by our side. Even when we make mistakes, You love us unconditionally, and want us to try again. May we always remember Jonah and the grace and compassion You showed the people of Ninevah. In Jesus' name. Amen.

**Clean up:**

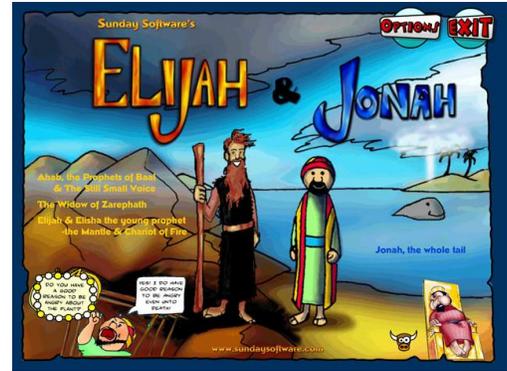
Exit the software and shutdown the computers.

## **“Elijah and Jonah” Navigation Handout**

(Copy one per computer station, teacher, and shepherd)

Directions: Follow the instructions below to guide you through the software. Be sure to stop and answer the questions and do the activities listed.

1. Double click on desktop icon to open program.
2. View introduction.
3. Click fast or medium for computer speed.
4. Click Jonah (on the right).
5. Listen to the narration.
6. Click the large green arrows in the circles (near the bottom or center of the screen) to move page left or right.
7. Click the circle with double arrows or the green triangles to advance each frame.
8. Discuss Study Notes.



### **Page by Page Highlights and Discussion**

Page 1 - Opening Questions: Pay attention to these – they are the key questions that will be asked and answered in the program!

- Who is God for or against?
- Does God care about those who don't worship him?
- How are we supposed to act toward those who don't follow God?
- How far are we supposed to go to carry God's message to others?

Page 3 – Chapter 1: The Story Begins

- Click the sailor's hand to pay the fare.
- You must smash all three barrels and answer the questions.

Page 4 - The Storm

- Click to make storm effects (lightning and waves).
- Click on the sailors to hear them pray to their gods.
- Practice throwing cargo – click the Fling lever when the power meter is at the top for greatest distance.
- Click the sleeping mouse.

Page 5 - The lot falls on Jonah.

- Click the sailors.

Page 6 - The sailors are compassionate to Jonah.

- Click the Stroke megaphone to move the boat toward land.

Page 7 - Click each sailor to hear their “vows” to God.

Page 8 - Jonah is swallowed by the fish.

Click the whale icon and read the study note about the meaning of Hebrew word for fish.

Page 10 - Spit Jonah and the mouse onto dry land. Read the Study note about Jonah's Psalm and the meaning of mercy. Play Smoochie's Spittin' game. (the power and angle arrows adjust how far Jonah will go. Game ends after about 10 spits)

Page 11 – Chapter 3: Jonah goes to Ninevah

Page 12 - The King and Ninevah repent.

Click on the study note where the King writes his decree – Use Handout #1.

Page 13 – Chapter 4: Jonah gets angry with God.

Near the end of the page children are asked “What will Jonah do next?” Stop and compare Jonah's attitude with God's. Read and answer the Study note asking “What's Jonah's problem?”

Page 14 - The Worm is God's agent to teach Jonah a lesson.

Discuss the issue of “fairness and unfairness.”

Page 15 - God and Jonah argue. The story ends abruptly.

Jonah is the only book in the Bible that ends with a question.

Discuss: What do you think happened to Jonah?

Last Page: Discussion/Activity links:

1. “The End?” How do you think the story ended? What ever became of Jonah?
2. Further Study: More about Compassion....
3. Jonah's Story Game: Can you put the story together?
4. Wormie's Game: Wormie takes away Jonah's comforts...

## **“Play & Learn Children’s Bible” Software:**

Review the concepts of “Compassion” and “Grace” before they use the software. This version of the story does not include chapter four, the plant and the worm.

(some thoughts to get started...)

### **God’s love is for everyone.**

1. What does the story of Jonah tell us about God’s love? Who did he show love for in the story?
2. The Ninevites were Jonah’s enemies. How did Jonah feel about going to Nineveh with God’s message?
3. How would Jonah feel about God forgiving the Ninevites? This was showing compassion.
4. How can we show compassion to others? Who are some people we should show compassion to?
5. How can we change our attitude toward others who are different than us or who are not easy to love?

### **Grace is a gift from God for everyone.**

6. Both Jonah and the Ninevites did “wrong”. What wrongs did they do?
7. Both deserved to be punished, but God forgave them and showed grace. Grace means undeserved favor. It is a free gift of God’s love. There is nothing we can do to earn it or buy it. We just accept the gift and live our lives showing how thankful we are for God’s mercy. Can we think of ways that God’s grace is shown in our lives?

### **Procedures for using the software:**

1. Turn computers on before the children arrive. Leave only 1 set of speakers on.
2. To start the program, click on **Bible Stories**  
Then click on **Heroes and Heroines**  
Click on **Jonah and the Big Fish**
3. When it says “Do you want this story to be read aloud?”, have only the one with speakers on to say “yes”, all others should select “no”. This prevents the “echo” effect. Everyone will follow along on their screen as it is read aloud.
4. Ask that they explore their screen but not turn to the next page until everyone is ready.
5. Move the mouse around until it turns into a black movie camera. They can then click and something will happen.
6. When they have had enough time to explore the page, and the page is finished reading, select the arrow to move to the next page.

7. When the story is finished, they can go into the “Games Room” from the main menu to colour a picture from the story on the screen, or do a puzzle from the story, etc. To get to the “Games Room”, click the back arrow (bottom left corner) from the “Heroes and Heroines” page. The speakers can be turned on now.

After 20 minutes, gather the class together for closing discussion.