

Faith Adventures Youth Resource

Free to use – please acknowledge when using beyond local church children's and youth work so others can find and use the resource themselves.

Embedded in Faith Adventures: Children Together, this youth resource is intergenerational in nature and designed to foster God-connection in church, home and beyond.

For guidance on the purpose of the resource and how to use it as a launch pad for your engagement with children and families, please use this link: www.bit.ly/How-To-FAYR

Title: Jonah 4: 1-10

Theme: Is it right for you to be angry?

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Introduction: What would be helpful to know in my planning?

Today's session takes place at the end of the book of Jonah. Some people may know nothing of Jonah or may know the story of Jonah and the whale. Therefore, it's important that some context is given to this week's session. You will notice that the songs and stories give an overview of Jonah's life as does the Explore section.

In chapter 4 Jonah is basically angry with God for not following through with his plan to destroy the Ninevites, instead saving them. This is because the people are sorry and try to change their ways so God forgives them. Jonah starts to sulk and so God tries to teach Jonah through some quite extreme ways.

Is it ok to be angry? Is there ever a time when it's appropriate? Or is it more about how you express that anger? Today's session hopes to explore that theme in relation to the world we live in.

Trigger: Jonah expresses his anger to God through words, saying he'd rather die than see the people forgiven. If this is a group that is new to you consider leaving out those verses as they may

be a trigger for some – you know your own group so again if you feel it will be a trigger please leave them out as the session will still work without them.

Together – prayer and games

Let's start our time with God and each other well

Use this opening prayer or encourage young people to open the session with a prayer of their own.

All mighty God,

Be with us as we learn more about you through stories and people in the Bible.

Help us to walk in your way and follow your path.

Be with us as we make decisions that affect our lives, and the lives of those around us.

Amen

Alternatively, you may join with the widget prayer found in the Faith Adventures: Children together or else the Lord's prayer found at the end of this session.

Active game – It's fair, it's not fair.

Everyone should stand behind a line that's drawn on the floor with masking tape, chalk or similar.

When the person leading the game calls 'it's fair', everyone should jump and land with both feet over the line.

When the person leading the game calls 'it's not fair', everyone should jump back to the other side of the line where they started.

Everyone should play a few rounds like this.

When everyone's got the hang of the game, explain that when 'balance' is called everyone should jump and land with one foot on either side of the line.

If anyone makes a mistake and jumps the wrong way, they're out of the game.

They should step out the game and start help to spot people making mistakes.

Try calling 'it's fair' or 'it's not fair' twice in a row to catch people out.

Everyone should keep playing until there's one or two people left.

You could say congratulations to the winners, as well as to anyone who showed teamwork, helpfulness, or care. You could also discuss how we balance fairness or unfairness.

Quiet game - Scissors

If you have played this game before you may need to have an alternative game to hand, as it can only be played once with the group.

You will need:

- a pair of scissors or two sticks or pencils or a match box

If you do not have a pair of scissors, two sticks, two pencils or anything which can simulate open or closed scissors, you could use a match box, or anything really which can open and close.

Have the group sit in a circle. While passing the scissors to the person on his/her right, say "I pass these scissors either open or closed".

The person receiving repeats the statement while passing to the next person. The leader (and anyone else who has caught on to the trick) announces if that person has chosen the right answer i.e closed, unclosed.

At the beginning of the game positions and movements should be natural. Towards the end, they will need to be heavily exaggerated.

Continue until everyone has worked out what is going on.

The trick has nothing to do with the scissors. Open and closed refer to whether the person's legs or feet are crossed (closed) or uncrossed (open) when receiving and passing.

This activity can generate some discussion about how fair or unfair it is to play a game when not everyone knows the rules.

Alternatively, you can play it, by passing any item and saying thank you as you receive it, as the trick to the game, especially if you have played the game before it slightly changes the trick.

Experience – Bible story and songs

Hear, watch and sing the Bible story

This link takes you to Modern English version

<https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jonah%204&version=MEV>

You may wish to research different versions of this reading on www.biblegateway.com
Recommended versions to try are NRSV, Easy-to-read, The Message, NIRV

4 Now this greatly displeased Jonah, and he became angry. ² He prayed to the Lord and said, "O Lord! Is this not what I said while I was still in my own land? This is the reason that I fled before to Tarshish, because I knew that You are a gracious God and merciful, slow to anger, abundant in faithfulness, and ready to relent from punishment. ³ Therefore, Lord, take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live."

⁴ Then the Lord said, "Is it right for you to be angry?"

⁵ So Jonah went out of the city and sat down east of the city and made for himself a booth there. He sat under it in the shade, waiting to see what would happen to the city. ⁶ Then the Lord God appointed a plant, and it grew up over Jonah to provide shade over his head, to provide comfort from his grief. And Jonah was very happy about the plant. ⁷ But at dawn the next day, God appointed a worm to attack the plant so that it withered. ⁸ When the sun rose, God appointed a scorching east wind, and the sun beat upon the head of Jonah so that he became faint and asked that he might die. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

⁹ Then God said to Jonah, "Is it right for you to be angry about the plant?"

And Jonah replied, "It is right for me to be angry, even to death."

¹⁰ The Lord said, "You are troubled about the plant for which you did not labor and did not grow. It came up in a night and perished in a night. ¹¹ Should I not, therefore, be concerned about Nineveh, that great city, in which there are more than a hundred and twenty thousand people, who do not know their right hand from their left, and also many animals?"

The Holy Bible, Modern English Version. Copyright © 2014 by Military Bible Association. Published and distributed by Charisma House.

Watch: Jonah a bitter prophet by Share faith kids - <https://youtu.be/fVcNkJr-ApU?si=toFeZK4Rh6zxwLuy>

Questions for discussion

- I wonder if you've ever found yourself in the same situation as Jonah?
- I wonder if God's explanation makes sense to you?

Explore

Ideas and activities to explore this week's Bible passage together

A new way to explore the theme

This is a new way to explore the Bible passage and the theme for this week.

Alternatively, you may wish to use the explore section from this week's Faith Adventures: Children Together to guide your exploration of the theme this week.

Print out the story sections below on separate pieces of paper and hand out in a random order. Participants should work together to place the story into the correct sequence. Read the story together once completed. (A shorter version of this activity with only 5 story sections can be found in this week's FACT resource.)

God calls Jonah

God told Jonah to go to Nineveh and speak out against the people's wrongdoing. Jonah did not want to obey.

Jonah runs away

Jonah boarded a ship to flee from God's call. He thought he could escape.

The storm begins

God sent a violent storm. The sailors were terrified, fearing for their lives.

Jonah explains the situation

Jonah told the sailors the storm was because he was running from God.

Jonah thrown into the sea

The sailors reluctantly threw Jonah into the sea. The storm stopped immediately.

**Jonah in the big fish**

God sent a large fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah stayed inside for three days and nights, praying and reflecting on God's call.

Jonah is saved and follows God's instructions

The fish spat Jonah onto dry land. Jonah listened to God and went to Nineveh to deliver God's warning.

The people of Nineveh respond

The people listened, repented, and changed their ways. God showed mercy and did not destroy the city.

Jonah is unhappy

Jonah was upset that God forgave the people. Jonah sat outside the city, feeling frustrated and disappointed.

God teaches Jonah

God made a tree grow to give Jonah shade. Then God caused it to wither. God reminded Jonah that the people of Nineveh deserved forgiveness and should be kept safe.

Capture the scene – recreate the story

Each group should take one of the story sections above and recreate the scene using their bodies and optional props.

Think about the people involved in each section of the story. What emotions do you think they would feel?

You could provide a range of emoji faces to help facilitate this discussion. Ask participants to pick an emoji that shows how the characters might feel and invite them to explain why they picked that emoji.

 Happy / glad

 Excited / cheerful

 Sad / upset

 Scared / worried

 Shocked / frightened

 Angry / mad

 Frustrated / annoyed

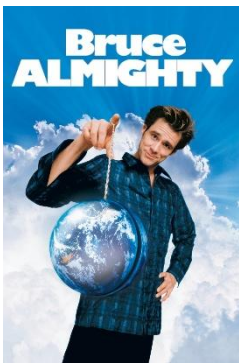
 Confused / unsure

 Surprised / amazed

-  Loved / cared for
-  Friendly / warm
-  Tired / sleepy
-  Worried / uncomfortable
-  Thinking / curious

Modern parables

This section includes references to TV programmes, films, books, TED talks, TikTok etc aimed at this age group that will have been widely seen, or where a clip is available to use as a stimulus for discussion. You may also enjoy the picture book recommended for Faith Adventures: Children Together and explore the relevance of the story to the theme of the session in more depth – young people and adults are often well tuned in to the deeper meanings in materials aimed at younger people and the authors are often very aware of the adults reading the books to or with younger ones.



Bruce Almighty (2003) by Universal Studios

Smite Me, O Mighty Smiter! Clip by Sheitla D. Modore

<https://youtu.be/qmfG467sap8?si=QGEYJBOth2TEPyLr>

Like Jonah, Bruce doesn't think God is making the right choices – or doing their job properly!

- What do you think Bruce would like God to do for him?
- What about Jonah – what do you think he wanted God to do?
- If you could ask God any question, what would you ask?

Group discussion

- The people of Ninevah were perceived as not living well, who do we look at and view in the same way?
- *I wonder why Jonah felt death would be better than living?* (Only use this question if you feel it is right for your group)
- I wonder why God gave Jonah things only to take them away?
- I wonder if there is ever a good time to be angry?

Personal reflection

- I wonder if God gets angry?

- I wonder if you can relate to how Jonah is feeling?
- I wonder if you can think of a time when things were not fair? How did you react?

Express – prayer and creative activities

Praying together: enabling your group to respond spiritually

Praying together

Prayer Respond to the theme by writing or saying a short prayer. Alternatively use the creative prayer from Faith Adventures: Children Together for this session, or use the prayer activity below. Alternatively light a candle and play some music while you listen and talk to God together.

Umbrella prayers

Use the umbrella to hang different types of prayers.

Jonah was sad that he had been swallowed by a whale, angry when God forgive the Nineivites and happy when God gave him some shade. Create your own prayers.

Use tear drops for sad prayers, thunder bolts for angry prayers and hearts for happy prayers.

Hang them from the umbrella or stick them on.

The leader could either bring the prayers together with their own prayer or by combining the children's or else using the spoken prayer below.



Spoken prayer

God, we bring to you the situations where fairness is needed.

(Pause for personal reflection / write thoughts)

God, help us act with fairness and treat everyone with respect.

God, we bring to you the situations where forgiveness is needed.

(Pause for personal reflection / write thoughts)

God, help us forgive when we are hurt and say sorry when we make mistakes.

God, we bring to you the choices we need help with today.

(Pause for personal reflection / write thoughts)

God, help us listen, reflect, and make wise choices in the ways we treat others.

God, we bring to you the situations where love is needed.

(Pause for personal reflection / write thoughts)

God, help us show your love through our words and actions.

Amen

Responding together

This is an opportunity for a social justice challenge, some research, craftivism, or a craft or STEM activity. You may have a specific activity chosen but free choice is also an option. Here are some suggestions for this week's theme. Choose whatever will work best for your group.

Cake and debate

Either offer some issues which are often raised in conversation or the news or invite the young people to contribute their own suggestions. Split the group into two, one side for and the other against and give 10/15 minutes to prepare a debate on the issue. As this can take quite a long time and once people start debating it can carry on and on you could either give a time limit for each subject, a minute or two perhaps or if appropriate research this session and debate next week.



Challenge

Discipleship doesn't stop when you walk out of the church door – it is a part of everyday life. Take a challenge with you and try to make it part of your week.

You may think of your own suggestion of what you as an individual or a group might do in the coming week in response to what you have explored today? If not here are some suggestions:

- Use one of the "conversation starter" questions or the question below to talk with someone of a different generation or from a different setting and share your questions, thoughts, insights together. **Can unfair for one be fair for another?**
- Research something suggested by JPIT, Resources (jpit.uk) *Commitment for Life* cforl.co.uk
- Are there other stories in the Bible where it might have seemed unfair? Could you find out about any of them? Some suggestions: Noah/ Esther/ Samuel/ the Prodigal Son story.

Thank you for exploring the **Jonah** passage with us.

Please let us know what you liked or what you would find useful by emailing sharon.lloyd@urc.org.uk or by sharing it on www.bit.ly/FACT_FB



The Lord's Prayer

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 sins As we forgive those who sin against us

Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil

For thine is the kingdom, the power and the glory

For ever and ever . Amen

This is an image of Jonah getting angry with God, add some colour to the picture, write in the speech bubble what you imagine Jonah might be saying to God.

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