LESSON 9

JONAH IN NINEVEH



Aim: **To show the children that God forgives those who repent and turn to him for salvation.**

Scripture Reading: **Jonah 3:1–10; Matthew 12:40–41**

Memory Verse: **Exodus 20:7**
(the Ten Commandments)
"You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God, for the Lord will not hold anyone guiltless who misuses his name."

Review last week's memory verse and complete verse 7 this week.

Presenting the Lesson

Starting Point

When the planting season comes the farmers look for signs of rain. When the rain stops the sun may shine so fiercely that the seeds or small plants die. Sometimes it happens that the rain comes again and then farmers do some more planting. They get a second chance and also get to harvest.

Main Points of the Lesson

1. God asked Jonah a second time to go and preach to the people of Nineveh. That time Jonah did go (Jon 3:13).
2. Jonah warned the people of that large and evil city to turn back to God, otherwise their city would be destroyed in 40 days (3:4).
3. Jonah's message from God had a great effect on the Ninevites. They believed what the prophet told them, and they said they were sorry for the evil they had done. The king led his people in changing their behaviour. They took off their grand clothes and fasted so they could concentrate on God in prayer (3:5–9). **Show Picture 9.** Jonah, on the left, stands preaching to the repentant people of Nineveh.
4. God saw that the people were sorry and had changed their behaviour, not just their clothes. So God did not punish them for the evil they had done (3:10). To repent means not only to be sorry for what you have done, but also to change your way of life and not to return to your old evil ways.

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Our Response to the Story

We are like the people of Nineveh sometimes. We forget about God and his commandments, and we disobey the Lord. All we can do is repent and call on God to show us mercy.

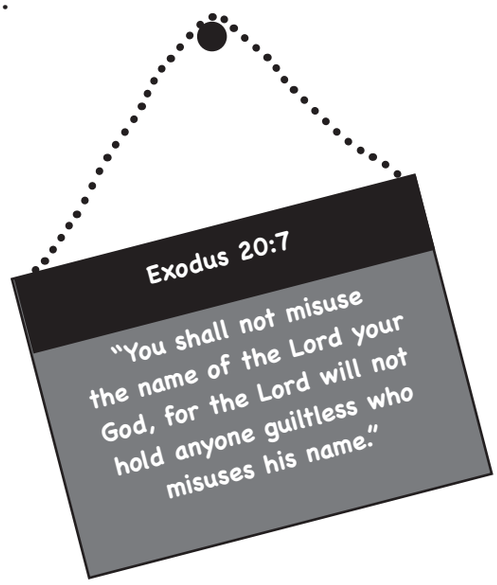
When Jesus prophesied that he would die and spend three days in the darkness of the grave, he used the example of Jonah, who spent three days in the darkness inside the fish (Matt 12:40). The people of Nineveh are an example to us. Like them we deserve punishment. We need to turn to God and thank him for Jesus, who has brought us everlasting life through his death and resurrection. He is the "one greater than Jonah" of whom Matthew 12:41 speaks.

If you get dirty playing outside you can just change your clothes, but you will not be clean unless you wash your body as well. In the same way, for true repentance you need to tell God you are sorry and change your way of living. Once you have experienced the love God has shown you in Jesus Christ, you will want to please him and turn your back on evil (2 Cor 5:17).

Instil the Memory Verse

The people of Nineveh changed and wanted to obey God's commandments. They understood the warning of this verse and took it seriously.

Review all the verses of Exodus 20 learnt so far.



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