

## In God's hands - God shows us mercy

Last week we thought all about making choices to do the right thing and how God can help us do that. I wonder if sometimes though, we know we haven't made a good choice about something? What do we do?



Today we're going to hear about someone who loved God but didn't make a good choice and something very extraordinary happened!

**Watch** our video: <https://youtu.be/KEEJx-1wDeo> where Mary tells the story and you can also **read** it in the Bible in Jonah, chapters 1 and 2. (We will read the chapters 3 and 4 next week!)

- I wonder what you found most surprising in this Bible story?
- I wonder at what point you think Jonah realised that what he had done was wrong?
- I wonder why you think God gave Jonah a second chance, showed him 'mercy'?
- I wonder what God is saying to you through this story?

God showed Jonah 'mercy' because he loved him, he didn't punish him for being disobedient, instead he rescued him and forgave him when he said he was sorry. God is merciful to us too - we do lots of things that are wrong and that would separate us from him, but God chooses to forgive us - to not give us what we deserve.

**Pray** - Spend a few moments thinking about things that you have done wrong this week, maybe you have thought unkind thoughts or said unkind things or maybe just not lived as you know God wants you to live. You could write or draw them on a piece of paper as you say sorry to God and then scrunch up the paper and throw it in the bin, thanking God that he forgives us and shows us mercy.

Or you may prefer to light a candle and just sit and think quietly about your week and things that you have done or said or thought that you shouldn't; bring them to God and say sorry in your head and your heart. Then say a prayer together thanking God for loving us, forgiving us and showing his mercy to us.

**Praise poster** - Write 'God is merciful' on a large sheet of paper and think about what this means. God is merciful because he loves us and always gives us opportunities to say sorry and be forgiven. Think of as many words as possible that describe God, beginning with each of the letters of the word 'merciful', such as 'mighty', 'everlasting'...

**Make** a paper plate fish as a reminder of the mercy shown to Jonah by God - cut a triangle shape from a paper plate and then attach it on the opposite side from the cut to make a tail. Cut out circles from shiny or coloured paper and stick them onto the plate like scales. Add an eye and the words 'God shows us mercy'. If you don't have a paper plate you could use some cardboard from a cereal packet and cut out a fish shape.



You might like to try making this Jonah craft by cutting a fish shape out of card and cutting it in half as in the picture. Attach each half to the sides of a peg so that when you open the peg by squeezing

the ends together the 'mouth' of the fish opens. Draw and cut out Jonah and attach him behind the bottom half of the fish so that he appears in the fish when the mouth is open!

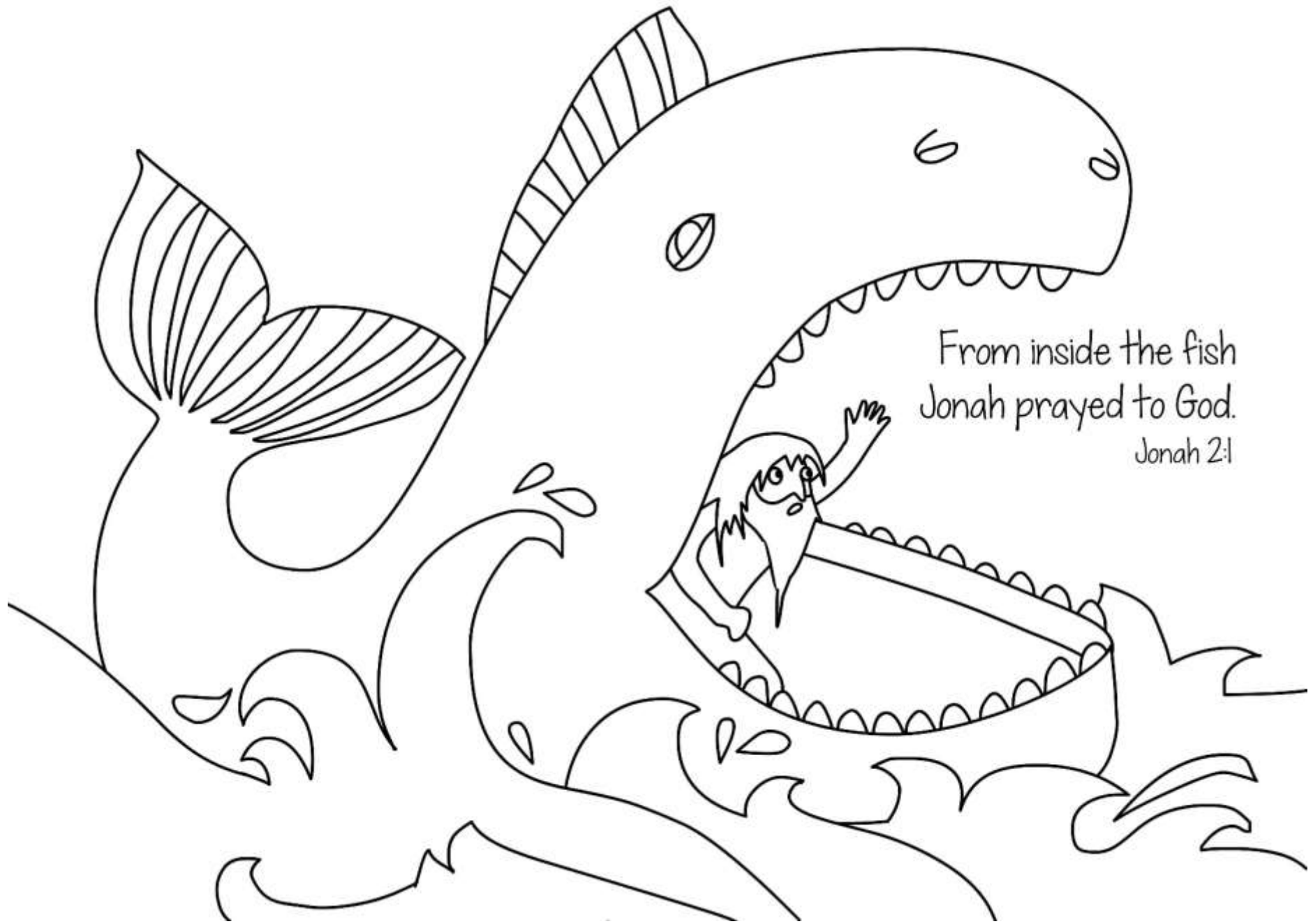
**Reflect:** God shows us mercy - should we show mercy too?

*'And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.'* Micah 6:8

Think about what this means for you, is there someone you need to show mercy to, to forgive? Just as God has shown mercy to you?

You could also read the parable of the unmerciful servant in Matthew 18:21-35

**Discover:** do some research about whales and big fish, what amazes you about them? How do we help care for our oceans so that they can live well and thrive?



From inside the fish  
Jonah prayed to God.  
Jonah 2:1