

IN GOD'S HANDS - GOD'S LOVE IS FOR EVERYONE

I wonder if you remember the story from last week? Jonah had ignored what God asked him to do and had gone in the opposite direction. There was a terrific storm and the ship Jonah was on nearly sank, Jonah



was thrown overboard and the sea became calm and all the sailors on the ship were safe! But what about Jonah? Do you remember? A great big fish swallowed him up and Jonah spent three days and three nights in the fish's belly before the fish spat him out onto dry land! (Jonah 1 and 2)

I wonder what you think Jonah might be going to do now?

Watch our video: <https://youtu.be/OCMtOylgGYo> where Mary tells the rest of the story and you can also read it in the Bible in Jonah chapters 3 and 4, or from a Bible story book.

I wonder what surprised you most about this part of the story?

I wonder why you think that God didn't give up on Jonah or the people of Nineveh?

I wonder what God is saying to you through this story of Jonah?

Jonah discovered that God's love is for everyone! He was pretty grumpy with God and really didn't want to share God's love with the people of Nineveh, but God helped him to change and do the right thing. We learned last week how God loves us even when we get things wrong, he shows us mercy and that's exactly what God did for Jonah and the people of Nineveh. God loves each and every one of us - his love is so big and wonderful!

Pray - Nineveh was a huge city full of people. God told Jonah he loved everyone and was glad they said sorry. God showed his mercy and he did not punish them; he forgave them.

Draw a large heart shape on a large sheet of paper and write 'God's love is for everyone' on or beside the heart. Cut out faces from an old magazine (don't forget to ask first) and stick them in the heart. Or you could just draw faces in the heart, don't forget to draw yourself there too!

Spend some time looking at the faces and then thank God, that his love is for everyone. If you have drawn faces of people you know you can thank God, that he loves each one of them.

Sing this great song- God's love is bigger than a burger - which talks about how big God's love is and has great actions too: <https://youtu.be/bfwwmpieo00>

Watch an animated version of the whole story of Jonah here: <https://youtu.be/WOSadLyqshq>

Make a woven heart to remind you of God's love. Fold a piece of A4 paper in half and draw a half heart shape on one side with the fold in the middle of the heart. With a pencil draw some lines across as in the picture, about 1cm apart. With the paper still folded in half, cut out the heart and cut along the lines, making sure you don't go too near the edge of the heart.

Cut some strips of paper about 1cm wide.



Weave the strips of paper into the heart as in the picture, it's best to start at the centre and work outwards. You can use a little glue or sticky tape on the back to keep the strips in place. You might like to add names of people you are praying for or maybe a Bible verse to remind you of God's love.

Reflect: God showed Jonah that even the people of Nineveh, who were really mean and nasty, could receive his mercy when they said sorry and changed their ways. Spend a few moments thinking about people that perhaps you don't like or who you think are not very nice. Pray silently, asking for God's help to think of these people as God does - that he loves them and they are worthy of his mercy.

Read these verses from Matthew 22:37-39 which show us the two things that Jesus said are most important for us to do:

Jesus answered, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, all your soul, and all your mind. This is the first and most important command. And the second command is like the first: Love your neighbour as you love yourself."

Why not see if you can learn these verses off by heart over the next week? And then maybe remember these verses when you come across people that you find it hard to love and ask God to help you love them as he does.

"Jonah obeyed the word of
the Lord and went to
Nineveh." (Jonah 3:3, NIV)

