



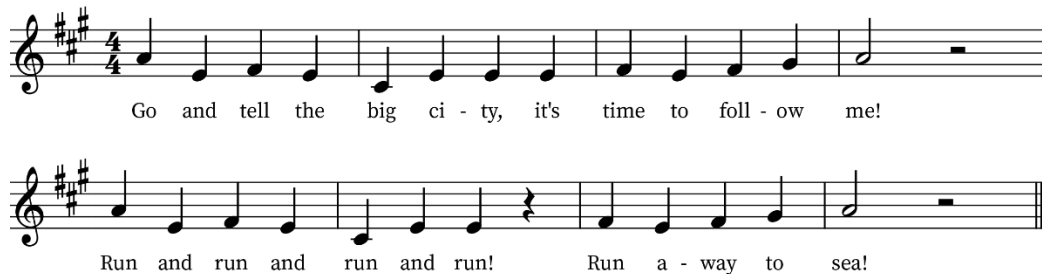
Jonah's story

Jonah 1: 1-17

Song: 'Go and tell the big city!' Words: © Sharon Moughtin

Tune: 'A sailor went to sea, sea, sea' (traditional)

Words: © Sharon Moughtin



Appropriate for mixed groups of babies, toddlers, and children up to the age of 9. This story is slightly longer and more complex than some of the other stories. However, it is a classic! If your group does not include any children over the age of 7 you may find other stories from the storybox more appropriate.

Today's story is Jonah's story!

Optional:

Jonah means dove or pigeon!

Pigeons and doves are very good at carrying messages!

People used to tie a message to the pigeon's leg and send it off!

The reason we have so many pigeons around
is that we used to keep them to send messages!

In our story today, Jonah is named after a messenger pigeon.

But he's not a very good one! *Shake head*

God gives Jonah a message to take... *Point one way*

and Jonah goes in the opposite direction! *Point opposite*

It's time to tell our story.

Our story begins in Nineveh.

Nineveh is the BIGGEST city

Can you show me big?

Bigger, even bigger!

Nineveh was the BIGGEST city in the world!

And freeze!

God called Jonah and said....

'My turn' *point to self*, 'your turn' *leader's hands out to group*

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

Let's be God and sing that twice to make sure Jonah understands!

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*



And Jonah....

What do you think Jonah did?

Jonah went the other way! *Point in the opposite direction*

Jonah didn't want to take God's message to Nineveh! *Shake head*

Jonah ran away to sea!

After 3, let's be Jonah and run on the spot as we sing:

'Run and run and run and run! Run away to sea!'

1, 2, 3...Lead the group in running on the spot and singing:

Run and run and run and run! Run away to sea!

Run and run and run and run! Run away to sea!

But it's hard to run away from God!

God can see us even when we're out at sea!

God sent a BIG storm to the sea!

The wind went whoosh! *Throw arms out. This will become the 'wind action'.*

The waves went crash! *Throw arms downwards. This will become the 'waves action'.*

upon the stormy sea! *Clasp hands together and wiggle to show a stormy sea.*

This will become the 'storm action'

Let's sing 'The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash upon the stormy sea!'

with our stormy actions!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The sailors were terrified.

They started throwing things into the sea to make the boat lighter!

But the storm got worse!

Let's show the storm again!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

Where's Jonah?!

Jonah's asleep at the bottom of the boat.

Who'd like to be Jonah?

Choose one of the children.

To the child: You're Jonah.

You're going to sleep at the bottom of the boat

To the group: the rest of us are going to be the storm!

God has sent us to wake Jonah up!

Shall we try?



Whisper to Jonah:

Remember you're not listening to God at the moment.

So don't wake up!

Let's go!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

Jonah didn't wake up! *Shake head*

Let's all be Jonah and sleep.

Lead the group being Jonah asleep

Then captain came to Jonah!

Get up! Said the captain.

So Jonah got up! After 3, let's jump up!

1, 2, 3! Up!

Lead the group in jumping up.

Jonah was better at listening to the captain than to God!

Optional as this is already a longer story:

Then the sailors all picked sticks.

They said whoever takes the shortest stick
has made the storm happen!

Let's all be the sailors and imagine picking a stick!

Mime choosing a stick and picking it up.

Guess who had the shortest stick?!

Accept responses

Jonah had the shortest stick!

The sailors said to Jonah.

'My turn' *point to self*, 'your turn' *leader's hands out to group*

Singing:

Who are you? Who are you? *Point*

Who are you running from? *Run on spot*

Who are you? Who are you? *Point*

Who are you running from? *Run on spot*

Who are you? Who are you? *Point*

Who are you running from? *Run on spot*

And Jonah told them that he was running from God!

The God who made the stormy sea!

How do you think the sailors are feeling?

Can you show me?

Accept responses



All this time the storm was getting louder and louder.

Let's be the storm again!

Let's go!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

And louder!

Let's go!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

'What can we do?!' said the sailors.

'Throw me in the sea!' said Jonah.

'We can't do that!' said the sailors.

The sailors tried to row back to land.

But the storm got even bigger and louder!

Let's be the storm!

Let's go!

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

The wind went whoosh, the waves went crash *Wind action then waves action*
upon the stormy sea! *Storm action*

So the sailors threw Jonah in the sea!

And what do you think happened?!

The storm stopped.

Everything was quiet...

And Jonah went down, down, down into the sea.

And down there in the sea...

God called a big fish!

God sent the big fish to swallow Jonah!

So what do you think the big fish did?

Accept responses

The big fish swallowed Jonah.

Even the fish and storm are better at listening to God than Jonah!

Jonah was inside the fish for three days and three nights!

Let's count to three.

1, 2, 3!

After 3 days the fish spat Jonah back up on the land.

Then God called out to Jonah and said....



'My turn' *point to self*, 'your turn' *leader's hands out to group*

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

And again!

'Go and tell the big city: it's time to follow me!' *Point*

And what do you think Jonah did?

Jonah went to the big city!

And said: 'My turn' *point to self*, 'your turn' *leader's hands out to group*

God says follow me!

God says follow me!

And the people of the big city did follow God!

Even they were better at listening to God than Jonah!

Let's sit down for a moment.

When the group is ready

When God calls us, we're not always ready to hear God calling. *Shake head*

Sometimes we want to run the other way like Jonah. *Running action with arms*

Or shut our ears. *Hands over ears*

Jonah's story reminds us that it's hard to run from God!

If your group knows the 'God has a special job for you' song.

Let's sing our 'God has a special job for you' song.

Let's sing 'Even when you want to run away! *Running action with arms*

God has a special job for you!'

Even when you want to run away! *Running action with arms*

Even when you want to run away! *Running action with arms*

God has a special job for you! *Point*

Even when you want to run away! *Running action with arms*

Even when you want to run away! *Running action with arms*

God has a special job for you! *Point*

Lead the group in pointing around the room. Make sure everyone is pointed at, including any adults or sleeping babies present.

God has a special job!

God has a special job!

God has a special job for you! Yes you!

God has a special job!

God has a special job!

God has a special job for you! Yes you!