

JONAEL



Jonah Youth Bible Study

by Pat Kampenga

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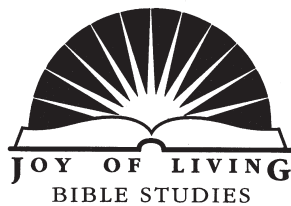
Joy of Living Jonah Youth Bible Study
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Jonah

Youth Bible Study

by Pat Kampenga



Before you begin

An ideal curriculum for home-school, Bible class, Sunday School or personal Bible Study, **Joy of Living Youth Curriculum** is flexible and easy to use. Each lesson covers the same scripture passage as the adult **Joy of Living Study**.

Age:

This course encourages students of various ages to develop a habit of personal Bible study. Since the study requires reading the Bible and writing answers to the questions, the minimum age should be about 6 years old. Although the questions are geared to about age 10, older students will profit by gaining a basic knowledge of the Bible. Students over the age of 14 may be mature enough to study the adult **Joy of Living** course.

The lessons:

The study is divided into weekly units. Each week is divided into three sections:

- a suggested class schedule including craft and game ideas
- leader's lesson sheets (these contain the answers for the lesson completed by the students during the previous week)
- student questions for the next lesson (these are passed out at the end of the class)

Students complete the written lessons at home and are encouraged to do a few questions each day rather than trying to complete all the questions in one day. This will aid the students in developing a pattern of daily Bible Study. The "HARD" and "RISKY" questions are to inspire the student to think and reason and help them dig deeper into God's Word.

For homeschool or personal Bible study:

The curriculum may be used in a variety of ways:

- Lessons may be completed by the individual student and graded for accuracy. Discussion time is optional, although it is encouraged.
- Students within the same family or group may work on the lessons together. A discussion time with a parent or other adult is suggested.
- Adults may work one-on-one with the student(s) while they complete the lesson.
- Lessons may be used as part of family devotions. Read the portions of scripture aloud and use the questions to prompt discussion of the Bible passage.

For use with groups:

There is great flexibility in implementing this curriculum. Since each class has its own needs, space, finances, and time frame the class schedule is supplied as a general outline and can be changed to suit specific situations and needs.

Each class session has free time, recreation/snack time, question discussion time, and craft time.

Remember - Keep the pace moving to avoid boredom and trouble, while providing continuity.

Suggested time SCHEDULE to be adapted to individual group:

- 15 - 20 minutes. - unstructured free time
- 15 - 20 minutes. - game/snack time
- 15 - 20 minutes. - discussion time
- remaining time for craft

Helpful Hints for Groups

Facility/Equipment

- Whatever the class size, access to a gym or large game room is worthwhile for team play and group activities.
- If the church has the room, a separate cupboard for supplies is a plus.
- A volleyball or similar ball is good to have on hand for a variety of games.

Discussion Time

- Use the counting off system to divide the class into groups for discussion time. (Avoid, if possible, separating into groups according to age or family.)
- Each discussion group should have an adult leader. Older children should not be used (unless absolutely necessary) as leaders or sitters; they are there for fellowship and learning, too.
- With many of the questions there is no right or wrong answer. The questions are to encourage the student to think and reason and to dig deeper into God's Word. However, since discussion time is also a form of teaching, the leaders are given answers on their question sheets to aid them in the discussion, with occasional commentary insights added in brackets.
- As you discuss the lesson be careful not to belittle a student's opinion or idea. Even if the answer is wrong you can encourage the student by saying something similar to, "I like to see that you're thinking, do you think perhaps... (then give the correct answer)" or "I can see that you are thinking about the question, does anyone else have thoughts on this question?"

Teachers/Leaders/Helpers

- The number of leaders and helpers is determined by the size of the class. The ideal situation is one discussion leader per every 5 children.
- In addition to the main leader, it is helpful to have a game leader, and craft leader.
- Responsibilities are determined within each class structure.

- Parent volunteers may be requested when extra help is needed. If there is a large number of children, the parents have to volunteer only once or twice the entire year.
- Scheduling parents to bring treats is a financial bonus. Keeping cost to a minimum is being a good steward of God's resources.

Game Time

Although board games, puzzles, hidden pictures, crosswords, coloring, and quiet activities do not keep the attention of active children, they should not be ruled out as alternative game time activities. Ball games, races, or tag games are suggested and favored to holding everyone's interest.

Suggestions for obtaining craft ideas & supplies:

Garage/yard/rummage sales

library craft books

children's magazines

YMCA, Park & Recreation Dept., churches (almost every city has a summer program for children, which includes a craft time; they may have leftover craft supplies they would like to donate)

Supplies to have on hand for crafts not in kits:

glue, glue sticks, glue gun

scissors (at least 1 pair for every 2 students)

paint (tempera-washable)

paint brushes

paper towels

newspapers

construction paper

crayons

colored markers

colored pencils

paper cups, napkins (snack time)

various items to pass in relay races

balls, basketball, nerf, etc.

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The Holy Bible, New International Version, Holman Bible Publishers, Nashville, TN. 1986

Jonah — Game & Craft List

	Game	Craft	Page
Week 1	Stepping Stones	Daisy Flower	8
Week 2	Peanut Relay	Sandpaper Stationary	12
Week 3	Shoe Relay	Bark Painting	20

JONAH – WEEK ONE

NO LESSON DISCUSSION

15 – 20 minutes free time – games, fellowship

15 – 20 minutes snack and group recreation: STEPPING STONES

You will need four sheets of paper (construction, newspaper, etc.) of any size, any color. Divide class into two teams. Give the first person of each team two sheets of paper. Draw the start line and the finish line on the playing area with masking tape. At the signal the first person of each team must throw one sheet of paper onto the floor and jump onto it. He then throws the second sheet forward, steps on it, turns around and picks up the first sheet of paper. Rotating papers in this manner until he reaches the finish line. Then he runs back to his team, tags the second in line, and game continues until all have raced.

15 – 20 minutes discuss class rules

to end of class CRAFT: DAISY FLOWER*

MATERIALS:

small paper cups
small shell macaroni
glue
scissors

large elbow macaroni
spaghetti or green pipe cleaners
spray paint (optional)
pencils

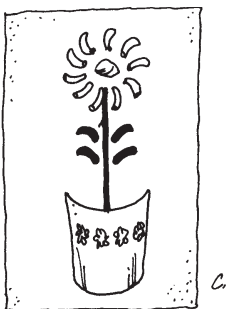
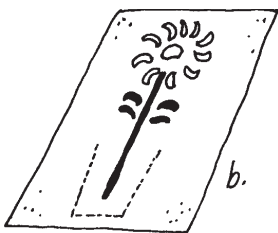
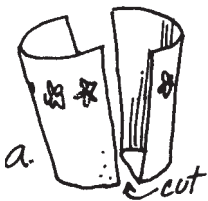
felt-tip pens

6" x 9" colored construction paper or poster board

styrofoam meat trays (to hold glue for dipping)

If colored flowers are desired, spray paint macaroni & spaghetti before class.

Cut one paper cup at a time in half from top to bottom (sketch a). Draw outline of cup on each piece of construction paper (sketch b). Glue pipe cleaner or spaghetti piece onto paper with end extending into "vase." Use shell and elbow macaroni pieces to make flower and leaves on stem. Use felt pens to decorate cup. Glue cup onto construction paper for vase (sketch c).



*from *A Treasure Chest of Crafts*, Gospel Light Publications, 1985, page 21. Used by permission.

JONAH LESSON 1

Before you begin your lesson:

- a. Pray for God’s Holy Spirit to help you answer the questions.
- b. Some questions may be too hard; it’s ok to write, “I don’t know.”
- c. Think about what God’s Word is telling you for today.
- d. With some questions, it might be helpful to write all the scripture verses on your paper.

Read Jonah chapter 1, verses 1 – 3.

Jonah was written between 785-760 B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam II, who was Israel’s most powerful king. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. In 722 B.C. Assyria would invade and conquer the northern kingdom, Israel. Jonah preached about 30 years before this invasion. If the Bible were written in chronological order, the book of Jonah would fall between 2 Kings 14:16b, and 2 Kings 14:27.

1. The Lord gave Jonah, the son of Amittai, a message for the people of Nineveh. Besides being the son of Amittai, what more do you learn about Jonah from these verses?

2 Kings 14:25

Matthew 12:39,40

2. Where was Jonah to go and why?

3. Jonah didn’t want to do what God asked. So he decided to run away to Tarshish. Where did Jonah go to catch his ship for Tarshish?

4. **CHALLENGE:** Sometimes we want to run away from things that seem too hard for us to do. Is there any place we can go to get out of God's sight? You will find your answer in the following verses.

2 Chronicles 16:9a (Only the first part of this verse.)

Psalms 33:13-15

Jeremiah 16:17

Read Jonah chapter 1, verses 4 – 17.

1. After the ship set sail, what did the Lord do to get the sailors' attention?
2. How did the sailors react to the storm?
3. What was Jonah doing all this time?
4. **RISKY:** Why did the captain get Jonah?
5. What did Jonah tell the sailors about his God and why did he ask to be thrown overboard?
6. How did the raging sea get calm in Matthew 8:26,27?

7. When did the sailors throw Jonah overboard? Give the verse(s) with your answer, but tell it in your own words.
8. Where did Jonah spend three days and three nights?

Read Jonah chapter 2, verses 1 – 10.

1. What did Jonah do when he was inside the fish?
2. **RISKY:** Finish this story using words or sentences from Jonah 2:3-8.
You are in a boat at night. Clouds cover the stars and there is no moon. All of a sudden the boat tips over, and...
3. **HARD:** Can you find the clue in verse four that tells us Jonah will be rescued? HINT: Jonah looks into his future.
4. How did Jonah get back to shore?
5. **PERSONAL:** Do you know this sentence of Jonah 2:9 by heart? Why not memorize it and Acts 4:12?
Jonah 2:9 “Salvation comes from the Lord” (NIV).
Acts 4:12 “There is salvation in no one else! Under all Heaven there is no other name for men to call upon to save them.”

JONAH — WEEK TWO

DISCUSSION LESSON 1

- 15 – 20 minutes free time — games, fellowship
- 15 – 20 minutes snack and group recreation: PEANUT RELAY

You'll need bowls and peanuts in the shell. Divide into teams. Place a peanut filled bowl in front of each team. At the goal end, place an empty bowl for each team. At the signal, the first player in each team scoops up as many peanuts as he can using the BACK of his hand. He races to the goal line and dumps his peanuts in the empty bowl. Any peanuts outside the bowl may not be retrieved. He races back to his team and taps the next player. As soon as a team is finished, game ends. The winner is the team with the most peanuts in their second bowl.

- 15 – 20 minutes discuss LESSON 1
- to end of class CRAFT: SANDPAPER STATIONERY

MATERIALS:

fne sandpaper	white paper
crayons	iron/ironing board
envelopes	newspapers

Use the crayons to draw a design onto the sandpaper. Lay newspaper over the ironing board. Lay a white sheet of paper on newspaper. Lay the colored side of the sandpaper on top of the white paper. With hot iron, press the sandpaper until the design transfers to the white sheet. To repeat, add more color to the original design and iron onto a clean sheet of paper. Design an envelope as well, or make your own.

SUGGESTION: You may wish to cut the sandpaper in half in order to multiply pieces. Try different grades of sandpaper: rough, medium, fine, etc. White paper can also be cut smaller to increase the amount of stationery. You may want to color the whole piece of sandpaper and iron that on the white sheet. To make an envelope, fold a piece of paper the size necessary to hold your stationery. Fold the raw edges in, and glue into place on the folded side of the paper. Fold the flap over and secure with a sticker.

JONAH LESSON 1 — ANSWERS

Read Jonah chapter 1, verses 1 – 3.

Jonah was written between 785-760 B.C., during the reign of Jeroboam II, who was Israel's most powerful king. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. In 722 B.C. Assyria would invade and conquer the northern kingdom, Israel. Jonah preached about 30 years before this invasion. If the Bible were written in chronological order, the book of Jonah would fall between 2 Kings 14:16b, and 2 Kings 14:27.

1. The Lord gave Jonah, the son of Amittai, a message for the people of Nineveh. Besides being the son of Amittai, what more do you learn about Jonah from these verses?

2 Kings 14:25 “Jeroboam II took back the lost land of Israel between Hamath and the Dead Sea. He did just as the Lord God of Israel had promised. The Lord had spoken through Jonah, the son of Amittai. He was the prophet from Gathopher.” [Gathopher was about three miles north of Nazareth. Biblical prophets spoke for God. Like the ministers and preachers we have today, their task was to change how people acted. Biblical prophets would first preach God's message, and then it would be written down to keep for posterity. A prophet would remind the people of things past, criticize for their current behavior, and then tell them what would happen to them if they didn't change their ways. Biblical prophecy can be broken down to foretelling which is prediction or “forth-telling” which is exhortation. Most of biblical prophecy is exhortation and not prediction.]

Matthew 12:39,40 “But Jesus said, ‘Only an evil, faithless nation would ask for more proof. And none will be given except what happened to Jonah the prophet! Jonah was in the great fish for three days and three nights. In the same way, I shall be in the grave three days and three nights.’” [Jesus' prophecy of his burial. Since Christ mentions Jonah, there is no reason to believe that what happened to Jonah was a fairy tale. Jewish tradition accepts Jonah as history. And, there are historical resources that record large sea creatures swallowing people whole. In fact, one incident records that a man who was swallowed by a whale was recovered alive.]

2. Where was Jonah to go and why? Verse 2: “Go to the great city of Nineveh. Give them this message from the Lord: ‘I am going to destroy you. For your wickedness rises up before me. It smells to highest Heaven.’” [Nineveh is one of the oldest of the large cities. It is located east of the Tigris River. Its location today would be near the city of modern Mosul in the country of Iraq. The Assyrians had a reputation for being cruel to those they conquered.]
3. Jonah didn't want to do what God asked. So he decided to run away to Tarshish. Where did Jonah go to catch his ship for Tarshish? Verse 3: “But Jonah was afraid to go. So he ran away from the Lord. He went down to the seacoast, to the port of Joppa. He found a ship that was leaving for Tarshish. He bought a ticket and went on board. He went into the lower part of the ship to hide from the Lord.” [Remember Nineveh is inland 500 miles northeast of Jonah's hometown

of Gathepher, and Joppa, modern day Jaffa/Tel Aviv, was a southwest port city on the Mediterranean Sea. Tarshish was a considerable distance from Nineveh: it was located in southern Spain, about 2,500 miles from Joppa.]

4. **CHALLENGE:** Sometimes we want to run away from things that seem too hard for us to do. Is there any place we can go to get out of God's sight? You will find your answer in the following verses.

2 Chronicles 16:9a (only the first part of this verse) "For the eyes of the Lord search back and forth across the whole earth. He tries to find people who have given their hearts to him. He wants to show his great power in helping them."

Psalms 33:13-15 "The Lord looks down on mankind from heaven where he lives. He has made their hearts. And he closely watches all that they do."

Jeremiah 16:17 "For I am closely watching you, and I see every sin. You cannot hope to hide from me."

Read Jonah chapter 1, verses 4 – 17.

1. After the ship set sail, what did the Lord do to get the sailor's attention? Verse 4: "The ship set sail for Tarshish. But suddenly the Lord created a great wind over the sea. It caused a huge storm that was about to send them to the bottom." [Because Tarshish was a Phoenician colony, the sailors were probably Phoenicians, therefore believing in many gods.]
2. How did the sailors react to the storm? Verse 5a: "The sailors were afraid for their lives. So they shouted to their gods for help. And they threw the cargo overboard to lighten the ship."
3. What was Jonah doing all this time? Verse 5b: "And all this time Jonah was sound asleep down in the hold."
4. **RISKY:** Why did the captain get Jonah? Verse 6: "So the captain went down after him. 'What do you mean by this?' he roared. 'How can you sleep at a time like this? Get up and pray to your god! See if he will have mercy on us and save us!'" [Everyone aboard ship was praying to their god to help them. So far, nothing worked. It would appear Jonah was the only one not praying.]
5. What did Jonah tell the sailors about his God and why did he ask to be thrown overboard? Verses 9,12: "And he said, 'I am a Hebrew. I worship the Lord, the God of Heaven. He is the one who made the earth and sea.' Then he told them he was running away from the Lord.... 'Throw me out into the sea,' he said. 'Then it will become calm again. For I know this terrible storm has come because of me.'" [The sailors had prayed to their gods and nothing happened. They resorted to the ancient custom of casting lots, and the lot fell to Jonah. It is unclear as to his reasons for

this request. He may have been so caught up in pagan theology that he was offering himself up as a sacrifice.]

6. How did the raging sea get calm in Matthew 8:26,27? “But Jesus answered, ‘O you men of little faith! Why are you so afraid?’ Then he stood up and spoke to the wind and waves. The storm stopped! The sea was calm! The disciples just sat there, in awe! ‘Who is this?’ they asked themselves. ‘Even the winds and the sea obey him!’”
7. When did the sailors throw Jonah overboard? Give the verse(s) with your answer, but tell it in your own words. Verses 13-16: “They tried harder to row the boat ashore, but they couldn’t make it. The storm was too fierce to fight against. Then they shouted out a prayer to the Lord, Jonah’s God. ‘O Lord,’ they begged, ‘don’t make us die for this man’s sin. Don’t hold us guilty for his death, for it is not our fault. You have sent this storm upon him for your own good reasons.’ Then they picked up Jonah and threw him overboard into the raging sea. And suddenly, the storm stopped! The men stood there in awe before the Lord. And they made sacrifices to him and promised to serve him.” [The sailors really didn’t want to toss Jonah overboard because they were afraid they would be held responsible for his death. The concept of only one God was new to them and they didn’t want to offend Him. When the sea calmed they realized He could do what their gods could not. The original language indicates the sailors believed in Jonah’s God and sacrificed to Him and not to their god of the sea.]
8. Where did Jonah spend three days and three nights? Verse 17: “Now the Lord had arranged for a fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was inside the fish three days and three nights.”

Read Jonah chapter 2, verses 1 – 10.

1. What did Jonah do when he was inside the fish? Verse 1: “Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from inside the fish.” [Jonah’s prayer was not one asking to be freed from his problems, but one of thanksgiving. The way the original is written follows the pattern of other prayers of thanksgiving found in the Psalms. Jonah is thanking the Lord for delivering him from death before the actual event happens.]
2. **RISKY:** Finish this story using words or sentences from Jonah 2:3-8.

You are in a boat at night. Clouds cover the stars and there is no moon. All of a sudden the boat tips over, and...
3. **HARD:** Can you find the clue in verse four that tells us Jonah will be rescued? HINT: Jonah looks into his future. “But I will never worship anyone but you! For how can I thank you enough for all you have done? I will surely keep my promises. For my deliverance comes from the Lord alone.”
4. How did Jonah get back to shore? Verse 10: “Then the Lord ordered the fish to spit up Jonah on the beach. And he did.”
5. **PERSONAL:** Do you know this sentence of Jonah 2:9 by heart? Why not memorize it and Acts 4:12?

Jonah 2:9 “Salvation comes from the Lord” (NIV).

Acts 4:12 “There is salvation in no one else! Under all Heaven there is no other name for men to call upon to save them.”

JONAH LESSON 2

Before you begin your lesson:

- a. Pray for God's Holy Spirit to help you answer the questions.
- b. Some questions may be too hard; it's ok to write, "I don't know."
- c. Think about what God's Word is telling you for today.
- d. With some questions, it might be helpful to write all the scripture verses on your paper

Read Jonah chapter 3, verses 1 – 10.

1. God spoke to Jonah a second time. Did Jonah obey Him this time?

2. The first day Jonah was in Nineveh he shouted, "Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!" What did the people do when they heard Jonah's message?

3. When the king heard what was going on in his city, he sent out an order calling for a countrywide fast. Who was supposed to go without anything to eat or drink?

4. What did the king hope for by calling for this fast?

5. Did the fast work?

6. **CHALLENGE:** What does 2 Peter 3:9 tell us God wants from sinners?

7. Jonah finally did what God wanted him to do. The Bible tells us to obey God, our parents, the law, and people in authority. Sometimes we don't want to obey. That's when we get into trouble. What does God promise us in James 1:25 if we keep on obeying His rules?

The dictionary says the word compassion means: “Sympathy for the sorrow or suffering of others, with a desire to help” (HOLT).

8. The Ninevites were enemies of the Israelites. It might not seem fair to us that God would not destroy them. But because they turned to God, He had compassion on them and they weren't destroyed. Why did God do this? See the following verses for your answer.

Jeremiah 18:7,8

Romans 9:15

Read Jonah chapter 4, verses 1 – 11.

1. How did Jonah respond to God's compassion for the Ninevites?
2. What does 1 Chronicles 16:34 say Jonah should have done?
3. What did Jonah know about God?
4. God asked Jonah if he had a right to be angry. What does God say to Job in Job 38:4,36?
5. **RISKY:** Do you know the answers to the questions God asked Job in Job 38:4,36?
6. In Job 40:2 God says “Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? Or will you give in? Do you have the answers to all these questions?” How does Job answer God in Job 42:2?

7. Where did Jonah go to pout?

8. **PERSONAL:** Are you ever angry with God for something you think He should have or should not have done? God took care of Jonah even when Jonah was angry. And God takes care of you even when you are angry with Him. How do we know God loves us even when we are the most unlovable? See the following verses.

Romans 5:8

1 John 4:10

9. God forgave the Ninevites. Jonah wasn't as quick to forgive them. I John 1:9 says "If we confess our sins, he can be depended on to forgive us. He will cleanse us from every wrong. It is proper for God to do this because Christ died for our sins." Since God forgives us, we should forgive others. What does Ephesians 4:2,32 say should have been Jonah's attitude and our attitude towards others?

10. God cared for the Ninevites. He cared for Jonah. He cares for you. What does 1 Peter 5:6,7 tell you to do because God cares for you?

11. **PERSONAL:** Maybe you don't yet belong to Christ. Maybe you are still angry with Him. Maybe you haven't asked forgiveness for your sins, and your anger. Therefore it is hard for you to forgive others. Why not do as 1 John 1:9 tells you to do and confess your sins. Ask Jesus to come live in your heart to lead and guide you to live for Him. God is waiting for you to repent, just as He waited for the Ninevites.

JONAH — WEEK THREE

DISCUSSION LESSON 2

15 – 20 minutes free time — games

15 – 20 minutes snack and group recreation: SHOE RELAY

Have all players remove their shoes and place in a pile at the FINISH line. Divide into teams and line up behind the START line. At the signal, the first player from each team races toward the pile of shoes. The shoes must be completely put on at the finish line, that means laces tied, buckles snapped, Velcro closed. On belly (infantry) crawl, make their way back to their team. The next player does not start until the previous player is at the end of the team line. The first team with all players in their original position is the winner.

15 – 20 minutes discuss LESSON 2

to end of class CRAFT: BARK PAINTING*

MATERIALS:

brown paper grocery bags	fluorescent paints/brushes
bowls	black wide-tip markers
scissors	cotton swabs
ruler	newspaper
brown tempera paint	large shallow pan
stapler	yarn

Cover work area with newspaper. Cut bags into 10” x 12” rectangles, and place with the printed side down on the newspaper. Draw a border (straight line, a double set of lines, a squiggly line and a straight line, double squiggly lines, etc.) around the edge of the paper with the black marker. Draw a picture inside the border. Crumple the paper into a ball as tightly as possible. Then open and smooth out. Pour paint into bowls. Use the swabs to add touches of paint to the picture and inside the border. Not all the picture needs to be painted. You may want to try using the paint brushes to paint in the picture, but not too much paint on the brush. Allow the paint to dry. To hang the picture, fold top edge of picture back over a piece of yarn. Staple the fold shut.

SUGGESTION: Before drawing the picture prepare a mixture of water and brown tempera paint in the shallow pan. The end result will look more like bark. Dip the crumpled paper into the “bark” mixture, open and allow to dry before creating the picture. You may wish to add pieces of twigs or bark around the edge to make the border.

** from Celebrating Families*

JONAH LESSON 2 — ANSWERS

Read Jonah chapter 3, verses 1 – 10.

1. God spoke to Jonah a second time. Did Jonah obey Him this time? Yes. Verse 3: “So Jonah obeyed and went to Nineveh. Now Nineveh was a very large city with many towns around it. It was so large that it would take three days to walk through it.” [Cities in the ancient world always had walls around them. Nineveh had an outer and inner wall. The outer wall included the nearby smaller towns and fields. The inner wall was eight miles in circumference and was 50 feet wide and 100 feet high. A person could walk 15-20 miles in open country, and this was considered a day’s journey. Nineveh was first excavated in 1847. Following Jonah’s visit, Nineveh reached its greatest wealth.]
2. The first day Jonah was in Nineveh he shouted, “Forty days from now Nineveh will be destroyed!” What did the people do when they heard Jonah’s message? Verse 5: “They believed him and called everyone to stop eating. From the king on down, everyone put on sackcloth.” [These were traditional signs of mourning.]
3. When the king heard what was going on in his city, he sent out an order calling for a countrywide fast. Who was supposed to go without anything to eat or drink? Verse 7b: “Let no one, not even the animals, eat or drink anything.” [To include the animals would put added grief and penance to the owners.]
4. What did the king hope for by calling for this fast? Verse 9: “Who can tell? Perhaps even yet God will decide to let us live. Maybe he will hold back his fierce anger from destroying us.”
5. Did the fast work? Verse 10: “And God saw that they had put a stop to their evil ways. So he decided not to destroy them.” [However, the Ninevites returned to their evil ways, and about 150 years later, in 612 B.C., God did destroy the city. See the book of Nahum for more about the destruction of Nineveh.]
6. **CHALLENGE:** What does 2 Peter 3:9 tell us God wants from sinners? “It may seem like he is slow in coming back as he promised. But he isn’t. He is waiting because he does not want anyone to die. He is giving more time for sinners to repent.”
7. Jonah finally did what God wanted him to do. The Bible tells us to obey God, our parents, the law, and people in authority. Sometimes we don’t want to obey. That’s when we get into trouble. What does God promise us in James 1:25 if we keep on obeying His rules? “But some people keep looking into God’s law that sets people free. They don’t walk away and forget about it. Such people will not just remember it. They will also do what it says. Then God will greatly bless them in all they do.”

The dictionary says the word compassion means: “Sympathy for the sorrow or suffering of others, with a desire to help” (HOLT).

8. The Ninevites were enemies of the Israelites. It might not seem fair to us that God would not destroy them. But because they turned to God, He had compassion on them and they weren't destroyed. Why did God do this? See the following verses for your answer.

Jeremiah 18:7,8 "I am the one who says that a nation or kingdom is to be taken up and destroyed. But that nation might turn from its evil ways. If it does, then I will not destroy it as I had planned."

Romans 9:15 "For God had said to Moses, 'If I want to be kind to someone, I will. And I will take pity on anyone I want to.'"

Read Jonah chapter 4, verses 1 – 11.

1. How did Jonah respond to God's compassion for the Ninevites? Verse 1: "This change of plans made Jonah very angry."
2. What does 1 Chronicles 16:34 say Jonah should have done? "Oh, give thanks to the Lord, for he is good. His love and his kindness go on forever."
3. What did Jonah know about God? Verse 2: "He complained to the Lord about it. He said, 'This is exactly what I thought you'd do, Lord. I told you this when I was there in my own country. That's why I ran away to Tarshish. For I knew you were a kind God. I knew you were merciful and slow to get angry. I knew how easily you could cancel your plans for destroying these people.'"
4. God asked Jonah if he had a right to be angry. What does God say to Job in Job 38:4,36? "Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you know so much! Who gave the heart wisdom? Who gave knowledge to the mind?"
5. **RISKY:** Do you know the answers to questions God asked Job in Job 38:4,36? God.
6. In Job 40:2 God says "Do you still want to argue with the Almighty? Or will you give in? Do you have the answers to all these questions?" How does Job answer God in Job 42:2? "I know that you can do anything. No one can stop any of your plans."
7. Where did Jonah go to pout? Verse 5: "So Jonah went out and sat sulking on the east side of the city. He made a leafy shelter to shade him from the sun. He sat there and waited to see if anything would happen to the city."
8. **PERSONAL:** Are you ever angry with God for something you think He should have or should not have done? God took care of Jonah even when Jonah was angry. And God takes care of you even when you are angry with Him. How do we know God loves us even when we are the most unlovable? See the following verses.

Romans 5:8 “But God showed his great love for us. He sent Christ to die for us while we were still sinners.”

1 John 4:10 “In this act we see what real love is. It is not that we love God but that he loved us. He sent his Son to satisfy God’s anger against our sins.”

9. God forgave the Ninevites. Jonah wasn’t as quick to forgive them. 1 John 1:9 says “If we confess our sins, he can be depended on to forgive us. He will cleanse us from every wrong. It is proper for God to do this because Christ died for our sins.” Since God forgives us, we should forgive others. What does Ephesians 4:2,32 say should have been Jonah’s attitude and our attitude towards others? “Be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other. Allow for each other’s faults because of your love.... Be kind to each other and tenderhearted. Forgive one another just as God has forgiven you because you belong to Christ.”
10. God cared for the Ninevites. He cared for Jonah. He cares for you. What does 1 Peter 5:6,7 tell you to do because God cares for you? “Humble yourselves under the mighty hand of God. In his good time he will lift you up. Let God have all your worries and cares. He is always thinking about you and watching everything that concerns you.”
11. **PERSONAL:** But maybe you don’t yet belong to Christ. Maybe you are still angry with Him. Maybe you haven’t asked forgiveness for your sins and your anger. Therefore, it is hard for you to forgive others. Why not do as 1 John 1:9 tells you to do and confess your sins. Ask Jesus to come live in your heart to lead and guide you to live for Him. God is waiting for you to repent, just as He waited for the Ninevites.