

RESPOND 10

Open the leaflets and pass out scissors and tape.

Tear off leaflet square.

1. **Cut out the numbered blue tabs on the front flap.** Kids may need help cutting. Destroyed tabs won't be helpful.
2. Ask volunteers to read each thought bubble. Work together to determine which tab label describes each part. **Tape the blue tabs where you think they belong. Some may have more than one tab.** Assist with taping as needed.
3. **Did everyone make the same choices? Why or why not?**
4. **What part of Jonah's journey sounds a little like your own life?**
5. **God wanted Jonah to tell the people of Nineveh how badly they had acted. That would have been a hard job. What do you do when someone asks you to do something that feels too difficult?**

LAUNCH 10

Circle up with kids for a quick review.

Jonah finally overcame his reluctance and followed God's lead. Believe it or not, he *still* didn't have a good attitude! What happens when you obey with a bad attitude? Take time to hear kids' responses.

Return to the leaflet panels.

Let's find an easier way. Give the kids a few minutes to cut out the back panel green tabs. **Write words that mean yes inside each arrow. Tape them to the map to show a quicker route to obedience.**

Send kids out.

Gather in a circle holding your squares. Walk around the circle, shining the flashlight on each kid's square. **On the count of three, shout, "Jonah saw the light!" Ready? One. Two. Three.**

Pray together: **God, help us find our way around reluctance whenever we run into it. Train our hearts for obedience. Amen.**

Thank kids for exploring how they decide to say yes or no. Remind them of the Family Square on the other side of the leaflet.

Jonah in Nineveh

RELUCTANCE • EPIPHANY 3 • YEAR B

JONAH 3:1-5, 10

Grades
3-4



What is happening in this story?

The book of Jonah is unique. It's a four-chapter book that tells one continuous story about a guy named Jonah who was perhaps one of the most reluctant prophets. The story doesn't end with the fish spewing out Jonah. Jonah tried to run away, but God kept at him. Jonah eventually agrees, even with an angry attitude, and is successful in spite of himself. The Ninevites receive God's mercy and grace. Jonah was an instrument of God even when Jonah was not cooperating.

Why does this story matter for kids?

Kids likely haven't had this experience of running away from God's call, but they know what it's like to do things that aren't fun because their parents or teachers ask it of them. Doing the right thing is hard. Sometimes we need second chances to get "doing the right thing" right. The faithful action may not be the easiest one, but God loves us even when we need those second, or more, chances.

What is the lectionary connection?

The season of Epiphany is filled with call stories—from reluctant prophets to Jesus' disciples to early Christians. All of the stories may seem different from each other, but the common theme is that God calls humans to work with God!

AGE LEVEL TIP

Most kids this age will be fine with safely operating scissors on their own, but watch out for playfulness! Scissors should remain on the table unless they're being used in an activity.



GENERAL SUPPLIES

- Markers
- Scissors
- Tape

LESSON SUPPLIES

- Map
- Flashlight
- Cups (2)
- String

WHIRL SUPPLIES

• WHIRL NRSV BIBLES

• DVD

• WALL CHART

• LEAFLETS

Do some kids arrive early? Try this.

Tell the first kids to arrive that today we will all talk about our response when we're asked to obey. Suggest taking turns as "mother" in a game of "Mother, May I?" and turn them loose.

Invite kids to look at the Wall Chart.

Point out today's date, church season, color, and icon. **God has unique ways of getting our attention! We've got to make sure we're listening for that call, even if it doesn't come on a phone.** Invite kids to draw a phone in today's wedge. **As the season of Epiphany continues, remember that the story of Christ coming isn't winding down—we're just getting started! In Epiphany, God's light comes on in our lives! It's a season of calling. How will you respond?**

Kids gather in a circle, eyes closed. **On the count of three, open your eyes and shout, "Let there be light!"** Shine a flashlight on a map. **One. Two. Three.**

Pass out leaflets and markers.

When grown-ups want you to do something, it's called "making a request." Put a #1 in the circle by **REQUEST.** The other words show some ways you might respond, consequences that might happen,

or another name for that action. Ask kids to tell you what each word means or share an example. **Number the rest of the tabs in the order they might happen when a parent insists on obedience.**

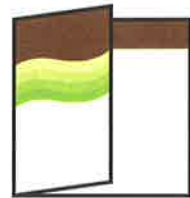
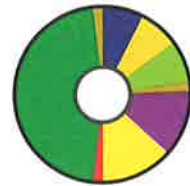
Gather kids around the screen where you'll watch the video.

Today Ruby has to work through some disappointment to get a project done.

View Episode 10, "Craft Crabs," on the Whirl Year B Winter Grades 3–6 DVD.

Ask kids these questions about the video:

- How do you usually get divided into groups at school or church?
- How do the people in your group affect your mood?
- What was Ruby's attitude like at the beginning of the project?
- What did she learn?



Pass out Whirl NRSV Bibles and help kids find Jonah 3:1-5, 10.

Do the Epiphany 3 Preview Activity together on page 1061 and compare responses.

What do you know about the story of Jonah? After kids respond, offer the following background. **Jonah was a prophet of God. A prophet is someone who gets a request from God to speak God's word to people. But when God called Jonah to go somewhere, he just didn't want to go! So he ran away. He tried to run away on a boat. To get his attention, God caused a storm to wash over the boat. Jonah knew God was on to him, so Jonah made the crew throw him overboard. After spending a few days inside a fish, Jonah was ready to listen. The fish threw up and a very sticky Jonah landed on the beach, fired up and ready to put all this behind him.**

Read Jonah 3:1-5, 10 in this creative way together: Hold one end of a cup-to-cup "telephone"—two cups joined by a string. Write "God" on the cup you're holding and "Jonah" on the cup kids will take turns holding. Have them pass the cup to another kid after reading each verse.

Ask these questions after you read the story:

- How do your parents or teachers ask you to do things? Are they always nice about it?
- What was Jonah feeling about being asked to go to Nineveh?
- In verse 1 it says he was asked *for the second time*. What happened the first time?
- What do you do when you don't want to do something you're told to do?



BIBLE BIT

"Is it a fish or a whale?" It doesn't matter. Don't get hung up here. The fish is a vehicle (literally) for Jonah's repentance from reluctance.

WATCH IT AGAIN

Pay special attention to Burt this time—sometimes a person we call a bully is simply trying to cover his or her own pain. What's bothering Burt?

OUR CHURCH

Ask a pastor to visit your class to talk about their call to ministry. Did they jump at the chance or did they have to work through some reluctance?

Jonah in Nineveh

EPIPHANY 3
JONAH 3:1-5, 10



This week's theme is **RELUCTANCE**.
Jonah was an unwilling prophet who ended up in a fish belly, but there's more to the story! Try these activities to learn more about what happened with Jonah.

Punishing Questions

Ask family members about a time when they did something wrong and deserved to be punished but weren't. What did that feel like? Why did God choose not to punish the Ninevites?

Fast(ing) Family

In Jonah 3:5, the people of Nineveh "proclaimed a fast." If family members' health allows, try fasting by not eating dinner one night, going without snacks for several hours, or giving up a certain type of food for the entire week.

Sackcloth Q & A

Do some online research to learn more about sackcloth. What is it made of? How is it used? Why do you think people in the Bible wore sackcloth to show they obeyed God?

Repentance → Forgiveness

When the people of Nineveh repented, God forgave. Talk about times when it is easy to forgive others, and times when it is hard to forgive others. What is the difference?

A Long Walk

Calculate the distance of a "three day's walk" like Jonah walked. Choose a walking speed and assume you walk for 8 hours in a day. How far could you walk? How large in diameter might the city of Nineveh be? How many people do you think could have lived in Nineveh in Bible times?

You Want Me to Do What?

Jonah was reluctant to share God's message—but he did. Can family members think of other people in the Bible who were reluctant at first to answer God's call?

Season of Light

Epiphany is a longer season than Advent or Christmas. How is your family enjoying this season of light together? Try lighting a candle during mealtime or placing a nightlight in the hallway to remind family members of the season.

This week our family is praying for . . .



Jonah in Nineveh

EPIPHANY 3 • RELUCTANCE

Grades
3-4



3

Apology

Hissy Fit

Request

Time Out

Reluctance

Obedience



Jonah's escape plans fell through when God rocked the boat with a big storm.



This is where Jonah actually went. Phew! Nothing like a little time to think.



★ **Jonah's House**

Jonah was minding his own business when God called him to action.

★ **TARSHISH**

This is where Jonah *thought* he was going.



★ **Nineveh**

A little worse for the wear, Jonah finally delivers God's message.