

The Case of the Wet and Wild Thank You*Jonah***Story-telling Tips**

Ahead of time:

1. Read the Bible verses and story. Pray!
2. Choose story action cues and prepare storyboard figures/Story Scenes, if using. (In Visual Aids book)
3. Practice telling story with the storyboard figures/Story Scenes, timing your presentation. Shorten, if necessary.

During your presentation:

1. Maintain as much eye contact as possible as you tell the story.
2. Put up storyboard figures/add story action cues/hold up Story Scenes as you tell the story. Allow the children to help you put them on the board, if desired.
3. Include the children in your story with a few questions about what they think will happen or words/concepts that might be new to them.
4. Watch the kids for signs that their attention span has been reached. Shorten, if necessary.

INTRODUCTION/ LISTENING ASSIGNMENTS

“Our story is called: The Case of the Wet and Wild Thank You. Here is your listening assignment... ” *Read the assignment for your lesson using Detective Dan’s Listening Assignment sign or the text below:*

Detective Dan’s Lesson #1 Listening Assignment:

I need to know:

1. **Who got wet in the wild storm? Why did he get so wet?**
2. **What did he thank God for doing?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #2 Listening Assignment:**Our Bible Verse is Psalm 107:8, NIV 1984***“Give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men.”*

I need to know:

1. **Who had something wonderful to thank God for? What was it?**
2. **How did the LORD show His unfailing love to him?**

Detective Dan’s Lesson #3 Listening Assignment:I found six clues, but two of them are **NOT** in the story.

They are: a picture, a big fish, a bad guy from Nineveh, a big storm, a sailor, and a car.

Hold each of them up for the children to see as you identify them.

I need to know:

1. **Which four belong in the story and which two don’t?**
2. **Who thanked God for wet rescuing him? What did God do to rescue him?**

Read the assignment questions, THEN SAY,

“Ok, Deep Down Detectives! Put on your best listening ears and see if you can hear the answers to Detective Dan’s questions. When I finish telling the story, we will see if we can answer all the questions.”

Read the Bible Truth story, answer questions, present the gospel and lead in prayer.

Answers to questions; the gospel; and, ACTS prayer are included with the story text.

The Case of the Wet and Wild Thank You *Jonah*

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics) Numbers correspond to storyboard pictures and placement upon the storyboard. Always feel free to use less pictures, if it's best for your kids. Simply black out the numbers next to pictures you do not plan to use. All pictures are found in the Visual Aids book. Put BG (background) pictures on storyboard ahead of time. SB pictures (listed below in story text) are added to board as you tell the story. These numbers are also found on the back of each picture. Tip: Stack pictures in numerical order before telling story for easy use. Use sticky-back velcro to attach pictures to storyboard felt. Use sticky-tac putty to stick a picture on top of another picture. OR, if using the Story Scenes to tell the story, disregard the storyboard picture references listed below.

(SB1) Jonah was a prophet, a special messenger of the LORD. Prophets were SUPPOSED to tell the LORD's messages, so people would obey Him. But this time, Jonah wanted to keep his mouth SHUT!

"Go to Nineveh, the big city of the Assyrians, your enemies. I have a message for them," the LORD had told Jonah. "Tell them: 'I've seen all the terrible things you have done. In forty days, I'm going to punish you,'" the LORD said.

(SB2) "No, I don't want to go!" thought Jonah. "The LORD wants the people of Nineveh to hear His warning, so they will turn away from their sins and not be punished," Jonah guessed. "They are Assyrians, our mean enemies. What terrible things they've done to us, the people of Israel," Jonah exclaimed. "I don't want the LORD to have mercy on them! I want Him to punish them NOW! I am NOT going to Nineveh. I am NOT going to give them the LORD's message. I'm going to run far, far away instead!" he decided.

Uh, oh! Was this a good idea? Can anyone really run away from God and His good plans?

What do you think?

Jonah certainly thought he could!

(SB3) So, Jonah went to Joppa, by the sea. He found a boat headed to Tarshish --a city about as far away from Nineveh as he could get. He paid for his ticket and (SB4) got on board. Jonah was going to escape from the LORD and escape from his job. No, sir! He would not be part of the LORD's plan of mercy this time.

But Jonah was wrong! No one can escape from the LORD—no matter how hard they try. The LORD is everywhere, all the time. He knows everything there is to know. There is no escaping from Him and His good plans! The LORD knew exactly what Jonah was up to. He knew that Jonah was disobeying Him.

Yes, the LORD knew Jonah inside and out! He knew Jonah hated the people of Nineveh. Jonah was acting like he had no sin that deserved God's punishment. Was Jonah right? Was he without sin? Was he better than the people of Nineveh?

What do you think?

Jonah was very wrong!

The truth was that Jonah deserved God's punishment for his own sins, just as much as the people of Nineveh deserved it for theirs. He had chosen to disobey the LORD, just like they had. Yes, Jonah needed to confess his sins and ask for the LORD's mercy, just like they did.

Jonah didn't understand this yet, but the LORD was going to teach this to him, as Jonah was just about to find out.

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

(SB5) Out at sea, Jonah soon fell asleep. He was on his way to Tarshish. Now he could relax, or so he thought.

(SB6) Suddenly, a big storm struck. (SB7, SB8) “Whoosh, boom, bang, slap!” went the strong wind on the sails and the big waves on the sides of the boat. Up and down, side to side, the boat was tossed in the storm. It would sink if something wasn’t done quickly!

(SB9) The sailors were terrified. “Help us! Help us!” they each cried out to their gods. But their gods were just fake gods. They couldn’t stop the storm or help the sailors. “Whoosh, boom, bang, slap!” The waves kept splashing up high and the winds kept blowing as strong as ever.

(SB10) The sailors decided to throw things off the boat. Maybe this would keep it from sinking. (SB11) Off went barrels and ropes, riggings, and supplies. Would this be enough to keep the ship from sinking? No, try as they may, this still was not enough. The sailors were losing all hope. They would surely drown. Were they right? Was there no one who could help them?

What do you think?

But there WAS who could help, and only Jonah knew who it was. It was the LORD. He had brought this big storm and it was only He who could help them out of it.

(SB12) The sailors found Jonah asleep and woke him up. Perhaps his god could help them, they hoped. “Get up, Jonah! Cry out to your god! Perhaps he will help us!” the sailors pleaded with Jonah.

Jonah knew the LORD could help them, but it would take more than praying to Him for this storm to stop. “The LORD has brought this storm upon us because I have disobeyed Him,” he told them. “I have a message from Him that I was supposed to give, but I ran away instead,” he explained. “You must throw me off the ship if you want the storm to stop,” he said.

The sailors didn’t want to throw Jonah off the ship. They knew he would die in the big waves. But they knew they would all die if they didn’t. What should they do?

What do you think they will do?

They had no choice. The storm was getting worse and worse. (SB13) So, they threw Jonah overboard into the big, swirling waves. And as soon as they did, the sea grew calm. Jonah’s God was God. But Jonah was headed down, down, down, into the depths of the sea.

The LORD would have been right to let Jonah die in that storm and Jonah knew it. Jonah had refused to obey Him on purpose. But the LORD treats His people better than they could ever deserve. Jonah cried out to the LORD to rescue him, even as he was drowning for disobeying Him. Would the LORD help Jonah, or was it too late?

What do you think?

No, it was not too late! Instead of letting Jonah die, (SB14) the LORD sent a giant fish to swallow Jonah, keeping him safe and alive inside its big belly.

Story with lines separating paragraphs (text in bold, optional interaction cues in italics)

For three days and three nights, Jonah lay in that yucky, fish belly. And as he lay there, he thought about what had happened. Jonah thought about how he had disobeyed the LORD. He thought about how he had deserved God's punishment. And, he thought about how God had kindly rescued him with the big fish.

The LORD was giving Jonah a chance to turn away from his sins and obey Him, and Jonah took it! How merciful the LORD had been to him! (SB15) How grateful Jonah was! So right there, in the belly of that fish, Jonah prayed to the LORD a prayer of thanks. "I was sinking down in the stormy waters about to die," Jonah said to the LORD. "I deserved Your punishment, but You rescued me when I prayed to You. Thank you, LORD, for saving me!"

The LORD heard Jonah's prayer. He knew his heart had changed. (SB16) The LORD spoke to the fish and it swam near the beach and spit Jonah out upon the dry land.

Jonah was so thankful that the LORD had saved him! He knew didn't deserve it. Now he was ready to obey the LORD. He would go to Nineveh and give the people the LORD's message. He would give them the chance to be spared God's punishment, even though THEY didn't deserve it.

(SB17) So, off went Jonah to Nineveh. Over the hills of Israel, then through dry, wilderness lands he travelled. At last, he could see the great walls of Nineveh, that big city full of their mean enemies.

(Remove BG2, Add SB18, SB19) Jonah walked around Nineveh's great walls, then into the city to find the king. "The LORD says: 'I've seen what you and your people have been up to. I've seen all the terrible things you've done. In forty days, I'm going to punish you for them,' Jonah told him.

And what would the king do? They worshiped fake gods, not the LORD. Would he really believe this message from the LORD?

What do you think he did?

Yes, he did! He believed the LORD's message and turned away from his evil ways. He ordered the people, to repent, also. "Let all the people and even all the animals, put on clothes of sadness," the king of Nineveh ordered. "Let no one eat or drink but spend all your time praying to the LORD. Turn away from your sins. Perhaps He will have mercy and not punish us now," he exclaimed.

(SB20) The people obeyed. Everyone put on the scratchy sackcloth, the clothes of sadness. They even put it on their animals. For forty, long days, they prayed and prayed. "LORD, have mercy, LORD, have mercy," they pleaded. But would He? Would the LORD really have mercy on them?

What do you think?

Yes, He would! Day Forty came and the LORD did NOT punish them. Oh, how the people of Nineveh must have thanked the LORD that day! They had deserved His punishment, but He chose to have mercy on them. What an amazing God is the LORD!

Cracking the Case: (story wrap-up for Listening Assignments)

It's time to see how we did with our Listening Assignment.

Detective Dan's Lesson 1 Listening Assignment:

1. Who got wet in the wild storm? Why did he get so wet? Jonah did. He was thrown into the sea when he admitted that his sin against the LORD was the reason for the storm.

2. What did he thank God for doing? For not letting him drown in the sea, but rescuing him with the big fish. God was merciful to Jonah.

For You and Me:

We may never get thrown into a stormy sea or need God to rescue us from being swallowed by a huge fish. But, there is still something we need God to rescue us from. Something BIGGER than the stormy sea. We need Him to rescue us from the punishment we deserve from Him for our sins! God provides us that rescue through Jesus when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. And if we do, we will have far more than Jonah did to thank God for!

**Detective Dan's Lesson 2 Listening Assignment:
Our Bible Verse is: Psalm 107:8, NIV 1984**

"Give thanks to the LORD for His unfailing love and his wonderful deeds for men."

1. Who had something wonderful to thank God for? What was it? Jonah. For rescuing him from dying in the sea.

2. How did the LORD show His unfailing love to him? He rescued Jonah and gave him another chance to obey Him.

For You and Me:

We may never get thrown into a stormy sea or need God to rescue us from being swallowed by a huge fish. But, there is still something we need God to rescue us from. Something BIGGER than the stormy sea. We need Him to rescue us from the punishment we deserve from Him for our sins! God provides us that rescue through Jesus when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. And if we do, we will have far more than Jonah did to thank God for!

Detective Dan's Lesson 3 Listening Assignment:

Our six clues were: a picture, a big fish, a bad guy from Nineveh, a big storm, a sailor, and a car.

1. Which four belong in our story? The big fish, bad guy from Nineveh, big storm and sailor belong. The picture and the car do not.

2. Who thanked God for rescuing him? What did God do to rescue him? Jonah did. He didn't let him drown in the stormy sea. He sent a big fish to swallow him and keep him safe.

For You and Me:

We may never get thrown into a stormy sea or need God to rescue us from being swallowed by a huge fish. But, there is still something we need God to rescue us from. Something BIGGER than the stormy sea. We need Him to rescue us from the punishment we deserve from Him for our sins! God provides us that rescue through Jesus when we turn away from our sins and trust in Him as our Savior. And if we do, we will have far more than Jonah did to thank God for!

The Gospel (story wrap-up if NOT using Listening Assignments)**Our Bible Truth is:**

**How Does God Want Us to Pray?
Every Night and Day...
He Wants Us to Thank Him!**

How does God want us to pray? Every night and day... He wants us to thank Him. There are many things God's people can thank God for. They know that He is the one who gives them everything good that they enjoy.

But the thing that God's people thank God for most of all, is saving them from their sins and making them His people. How amazing it was that God would send Jesus to die on the cross and take the punishment they deserved from God for their sins. He helped them turn away from their sins and trust in Jesus as their Savior.

If we turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior, God will forgive us and save us, too. Then, we will be able to join all of God's people in thanking God for saving us!

Close in prayer.

Closing ACTS Prayer

- A** We praise You, God, for being so good to us. You fill our lives with so many good gifts! You make the way for us to be Your people.
- C** God, so often we forget just how good You have been to us. We forget that the good gifts we enjoy each day come from You. We forget how amazing it is that You would save us and make us Your people through Jesus. How ungrateful we are! Oh, how we need a Savior!
- T** Thank You for continuing to be so good to us, even when we forget to be grateful to You. Thank You for all of Your good gifts that we enjoy each day. Thank You, especially, for sending Jesus to be our Savior, so we can become Your people.
- S** God, work in our hearts. Help us to turn away from our sins and trust in Jesus as our Savior. Help us to see more of Your good gifts and thank You for them. In Jesus' name, we pray, Amen.

Go to Lesson Plan, p.9 for the script to the rest of the lesson.