

Jonah and the whale essay sample



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

Jonah sat in the whale's belly for three days and nights. He spends that time in prayer, thanking God for saving him. He realizes the miracle that God has affected to save him and is truly grateful. I'm not certain how grateful I'd be sitting in a whale's belly come day two or three. I would certainly have been glad at first, but possibly would have started complaining pretty quickly. This is often the case for people: we beg for relief from our circumstances and when it comes, we aren't satisfied with it. But Jonah doesn't complain. He is sincere in his prayer and God tells the whale to spit Jonah out on shore.

(Jonah 2: 1-10) Then, the Lord tells Jonah again to go to Nineveh and preach repentance. Imagine being Jonah, walking into a city of your enemies and preaching a message that is bound to be unpopular. It would be terrifying! But, Jonah this time does as he's told and amazingly the people repent. The king orders all to fast, put on sackcloth and beg for forgiveness. (Jonah 2: 1-10) Nineveh is spared and Jonah walks away from the situation mad at God. He builds himself a little shelter outside of town and pouts. He thinks that God should have destroyed the Ninevites rather than spare them.

So angry is Jonah that he says he'd rather die than live! “ 2 So he prayed to the Lord, and said, “ Ah, Lord, was not this what I said when I was still in my country? Therefore I fled previously to Tarshish; for I know that You are a gracious and merciful God, slow to anger and abundant in lovingkindness, One who relents from doing harm. 3 Therefore now, O Lord, please take my life from me, for it is better for me to die than to live!” (Jonah 4: 2-3 NKJV) What a tantrum. What Jonah is really angry about is that God has given the gift of salvation to a nation that Jonah finds undeserving. Jonah felt that it was wrong for Jews to be sharing their God with people they considered

heathens. It may seem foolish to us that Jonah got mad at God for saving the Ninevites. Think about this, though. Are there people that you resent and would like to see fail? Are there those that have wronged you and you'd like to get revenge on them?

This is just what Jonah wanted. He didn't want the Ninevites getting God's mercy he wanted them to suffer. God's mercy and salvation is for everyone, not just those we think deserve Him. If only those that deserved His love got it, we'd all be headed for hell. Jonah never does grasp this. He continues to whine about his own condition but feels no pity or mercy for the Ninevites. God tells Jonah, " 11 But Nineveh has more than 120, 000 people living in spiritual darkness, not to mention all the animals. Shouldn't I feel sorry for such a great city?" (Jonah 4: 11 NLT) Thankfully, God does feel sorry for us and spares us in spite of ourselves. And, God can work through us in spite of ourselves. He was able to use Jonah to deliver a message despite Jonah's unwillingness and complete distaste for the message. But, Jonah suffers consequences for not doing things God's way. And, so do we.

Jonah and the whale

The story of Jonah and the whale is too important to be left as just a children's story. There are lots of life lessons in the Book of Jonah for children and adults. Jonah's story teaches us about obedience, willingness of spirit, gratitude, compassion and God's patience and mercy. Jonah was a prophet from Galilee and his story takes place somewhere between 780 B. C and 760 B. C. During this period of history, Assyria was a powerful, evil nation and Israel's most dreaded enemy. The Lord spoke to Jonah and told him to go to

Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, and preach to the Ninevites. (Jonah 1: 2) Jonah was supposed to warn the Ninevites to repent or suffer the consequences of their wickedness. Jonah had other ideas, though. Instead of heading for Nineveh, he took off for Tarshish, Spain. His motives could have been fear or revenge or both. The Assyrians had committed terrible atrocities against the people of Israel: traveling into their midst would have been frightening. Jonah also despised the Assyrians and probably would have liked to see God punish them. Yet, Jonah knew God's nature. He knew that if he preached repentance to the Ninevites, they would repent and God would spare them. (Jonah 4: 2) Jonah hops on a boat headed for Tarshish, attempting to hide out from God. At night, a huge storm comes up and tosses the boat wildly. The sailors are afraid and all start to pray to their gods, while Jonah sleeps soundly below deck. (Jonah 1: 4-6)

The captain goes down to Jonah's cabin and pulls him out of bed. " And they said to one another, " Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us." So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah." (Jonah 1: 7 NKJV) The sailors all question Jonah about what he's done to bring this storm on them. He confesses that he is running away from the Lord's will and tells the sailors to throw him overboard to spare their lives. This they do. (Jonah 1: 8-15) As Jonah is sinking into the sea, a big fish (whale) swallows him. (Jonah 1: 17) Here we see God's great mercy. He could have let Jonah suffer the consequences of his actions and drown. Yet, God intervenes and spares Jonah's life. We often complain to God about the consequences of our sins but do we ever wonder how often He has spared us from consequences? I rarely ever think about that.