



S2.Lesson 14: God & Our Attention – Jonah Part 2

Middle School Lesson Plans

Supplies Needed: Journals; Handout; tv or laptop to show movie clip (movie clip link is available at rfour.org/curriculum.html); one bamboo stick about 6 feet long or you can use drinking straws taped together or a fishing pole without the reel. You want the item to be about 6 feet long, pretty straight and as light as possible.

OPENING PRAYER

WATCH MOVIE CLIP from CLOUDY WITH A CHANCE OF MEATBALLS

ASK

- What is Flint's invention?
- Is it (in just this clip) a useful invention?
- Who does it affect?
- Does it help anyone? Who? (the weathergirl gets redemption; Flint gets to experience the success of his invention; the people get to eat free hamburgers)

TELL

- Last week we talked about Jonah not paying attention to what God told him to do.
- Jonah went in the opposite direction that he was supposed to go and what happened? (He found himself in a chaotic storm and then was thrown overboard, where he was swallowed by a large fish)

READ Jonah 2:1;10

1 Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the belly of the fish...

10 Then the Lord spoke to the fish, and it spewed Jonah out upon the dry land.

Jonah 3:1-10 NRSV

1 The word of the Lord came to Jonah a second time, saying, 2 "Get up, go to Nineveh, that great city, and proclaim to it the message that I tell you." 3 So Jonah set out and went to Nineveh, according to the word of the Lord. Now Nineveh was an exceedingly large city, a three days' walk across. 4 Jonah began to go into the city, going a day's walk. And he cried out, "Forty days more, and Nineveh shall be overthrown!" 5 And the people of Nineveh believed God; they proclaimed a fast, and everyone, great and small, put on sackcloth. 6 When the news reached the king of Nineveh, he rose from his throne, removed his robe, covered himself with

sackcloth, and sat in ashes. 7 Then he had a proclamation made in Nineveh: "By the decree of the king and his nobles: No human being or animal, no herd or flock, shall taste anything. They shall not feed, nor shall they drink water. 8 Human beings and animals shall be covered with sackcloth, and they shall cry mightily to God. All shall turn from their evil ways and from the violence that is in their hands. 9 Who knows? God may relent and change his mind; he may turn from his fierce anger, so that we do not perish." 10 When God saw what they did, how they turned from their evil ways, God changed his mind about the calamity that he had said he would bring upon them; and he did not do it.

ASK

- In verse 2, what does God tell Jonah to do?
- Last week, what was Jonah's response? (to go the opposite way)
- In verse 3, what does Jonah do? (Goes the correct way)
- Also in verse 3, how big is Nineveh?
- In verse 4, how far into the city does Jonah go? (1 day's walk)
- So what do you think...Was Jonah obedient to God's command?
- In verse 5, what is the response of the people of Nineveh? (they believe; they change their behavior)
- In verse 9, what does the King say God might do? (relent; change his mind; turn from his fierce anger)
- In verse 10, what does God do? (changes his mind)
- The Jonah story is a story of repentance. To repent simply means "to turn around." How many changes of direction in this story (use last week's story, too) of the different characters do you count? (Jonah changes direction from Tarshish to Nineveh; Nineveh changes the direction of their behavior; God changes his mind about what he's going to do to Nineveh; others?)

TELL

- Last week we looked at how our paying attention to God is advantageous for us.
- We said that if we believe that God sees and knows more than us, then paying attention to God is a wise thing to do because then we'll be given access to at least some of the things we can't see/know on our own.
- We used the activity of pick-up sticks and the movie clip from Minority Report to help show how more information and knowledge can give a person an advantage.
- This week, as we see in the story, we see the ripple effect of Jonah (finally) paying attention to God. Not only does Jonah get to experience success (the people listened to him!), but because Jonah pays attention to what God's telling him to do, then a city that's a 3 day walk across changes its behavior and turns its attention to God.
 - If Jonah, by paying attention to God can get a whole city to pay attention, just

think what a whole city that's paying attention to God could do!?!)

- So last week, we said that paying attention to God is advantageous for us. This week we see that paying attention to God is also advantageous for those around us.
- We're going to do an activity now that will hopefully help demonstrate how one person having an advantage gives everyone else an advantage.

EXPLAIN Activity: Helium Stick

- The class will support this bamboo stick/taped straws/fishing-pole-without-a-reel by each person using one finger
- You will start with the stick at about chest height.
- You will then lower the stick to the ground with no fingers losing contact with the stick.

Some things to know:

- If a finger, any finger, loses contact with the stick, the team will return the stick to the chest-high starting position.
- I will be watching and letting you know if you need to start over.
- The stick must rest on your fingers - the stick cannot be grasped or pinched or held in any way.
- If it appears you simply cannot help yourself from grasping or pinching the stick, then the entire team will be instructed to rest the stick on the "top" or outside of their fingers
- You will all be positioned on only one side of the stick.
- Successful completion will be when the underside of your fingers that are holding the stick then touch the ground.

DO Helium Stick

NOTE for teachers: The activity is called "Helium Stick" because the stick tends to go up, instead of down. The activity, as you'll see, is quite difficult. And, hopefully, the students do not figure it out at this point in the class (as you'll see why in a moment). The point of this activity is two-fold. 1. Provide an opportunity for this class to work together. 2. To give one individual an advantage that will help the whole group succeed (see below).

DURING Helium Stick (you'll have to interrupt them)

ASK

- What's happening to the stick? (It's going up instead of down!)
- So in other words, you're going the wrong direction, right? It seems you need to repent...?

- Maybe you need someone who can help you reverse your direction...
- Would you like someone to help you reverse direction?

TELL

- (If they choose to accept the help, then say), I choose (point at person/say name) to step away from the group.
- This person is going to put his/her finger on TOP of the stick and press down on it while the rest of you do what you're supposed to do.
- Let's see what happens.

FINISH activity and sit down

ASK

- What happened once one person reversed (repented) direction? (we succeeded)
- The activity you were asked to complete was not impossible. You could've done it without the help and with a lot of patience. But it was a lot easier with the help, right?

TELL

- This is what we see in the story today with Jonah.
- Once he turns around and trusts God (even if begrudgingly so), he helps Nineveh, then, to be able to turn around too.
- The same thing is true for us.
- If we choose to pay attention to God, we will experience some advantages (like being more confident of what to do in a given situation).
- But we also then, be a helping advantage to those around us, just like we saw in the activity, in the movie clip and in the Jonah story from today.
- Next week, we look at another example of paying attention to God and what that looks like and means for us.

CLOSING PRAYER