



Messy Church at home

26 July 2020 - Jonah's Messy Olympics

The Olympics in Tokyo might have been postponed, but now it's time for the Jonah Olympics in your own home!

Even though some things are slowly returning to normal, we still won't be able to meet together as a Messy Church on 26 July, so how about trying Messy Church at home?

Read - Jonah 1: 1-6 & 11-17, running away from God (The Message bible)

One day long ago, God's Word came to Jonah, Amittai's son: "Up on your feet and on your way to the big city of Nineveh! Preach to them. They're in a bad way and I can't ignore it any longer."

But Jonah got up and went the other direction to Tarshish, running away from God. He went down to the port of Joppa and found a ship headed for Tarshish. He paid the fare and went on board, joining those going to Tarshish—as far away from God as he could get.

But God sent a huge storm at sea, the waves towering.

The ship was about to break into pieces. The sailors were terrified. They called out in desperation to their gods. They threw everything they were carrying overboard to lighten the ship. Meanwhile, Jonah had gone down into the hold of the ship to take a nap. He was sound asleep. The captain came to him and said, "What's this? Sleeping! Get up! Pray to your god! Maybe your god will see we're in trouble and rescue us."

They said to him, "What are we going to do with you—to get rid of this storm?"

By this time the sea was wild, totally out of control.

Jonah said, "Throw me overboard, into the sea. Then the storm will stop. It's all my fault. I'm the cause of the storm. Get rid of me and you'll get rid of the storm."

But no. The men tried rowing back to shore. They made no headway. The storm only got worse and worse, wild and raging.

Then they prayed to God, "O God! Don't let us drown because of this man's life, and don't blame us for his death. You are God. Do what you think is best."

They took Jonah and threw him overboard. Immediately the sea was quieted down.

The sailors were impressed, no longer terrified by the sea, but in awe of God. They worshipped God, offered a sacrifice, and made vows.

Then God assigned a huge fish to swallow Jonah. Jonah was in the fish's belly three days and nights.

You might also like to [watch this version of the story on YouTube](#).

Activities

Here are some activities to try, using bits and pieces you might have at home. If you can't find the exact same items, what things could you use instead?

Fish races

You will need:

- Paper, pens/crayons and scissors
- Magazines or newspapers

Draw a fish shape on the paper, colour it in and cut it out. Set a course, perhaps the length of a room, or the length of the garden if it's nice weather.

Line up your fish at one end of the course and on the word 'go', bat your fish with your magazine, along the course to the finish line. See who gets to the end first.



How did you propel your fish along? How far did your fish carry on the wind you made? Think about the terrible wind that blew in the storm in the story. How do you think the ship's crew felt? Who did they pray to for help? Who do you pray to when you need help?

Find Jonah!

You will need:

- A lego figure (or other small toy figure)
- Shaving foam/hair mousse/sand and blindfold OR just some places to hide your figure



If using the shaving foam, hair mousse or sand, fill a tray or bucket with it. Take it in turns to hide your figure in the tray/bucket. Then take it in turns to put on the blindfold and search for Jonah. Alternatively, simply hide your figure around the house or garden and take it in turns to search for it. Either way, set a timer and see who can find Jonah in the quickest amount of time.

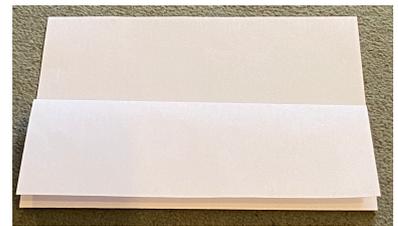
Think about what you do when you're searching for something. Do you overturn everything in a frenzy, or do you make a logical, planned search? Do you just look for a bit and then give up if you can't find it? Where did Jonah hide from God in the story? How did God find him?

Folded fish

You will need:

- Paper
- Pens/crayons

Start by folding your paper. Place it in portrait orientation and fold it in half bringing the bottom of the page up to the top. Then take the top layer and fold that in half again back towards you. Unfold the paper again and you should have two folds. One across the middle and one half way between the middle and the bottom.

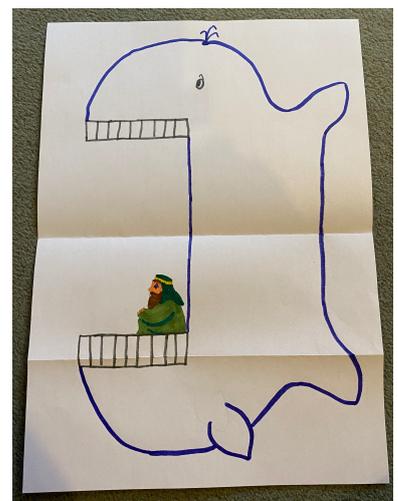
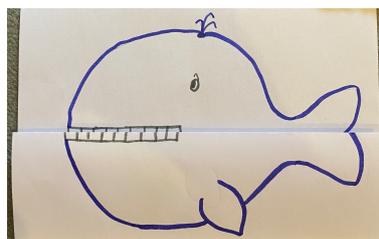


Refold the paper and draw a big fish/whale shape, so that the mouth corresponds with where the fold lies. Then unfold and enlarge your fish, so it stretches across the folds. Then draw Jonah in the mouth of the fish and colour in the whole picture.



When you fold up the paper again, you should see a big fish. When you unfold it, you should reveal Jonah sitting in its belly.

God had given Jonah a job to do, so why did he run away? What do you think it was like for Jonah sitting in the belly of a big fish for three days? What do you think Jonah thought about while he was in there? That was certainly a different kind of lockdown! But it gave Jonah a chance to think about the things that were important.



Olympic rings

You will need:

- Paper, pens/crayons
- Picture of the Olympic rings to copy (search 'Olympic rings' on the internet)

Draw out the Olympic rings on the paper (you might find it useful to draw round a cup or saucer to get a good circle shape). Jonah had a gift from God for public speaking and teaching others. Think about what you're good at. What gifts and talents do you have? If you can't think of many things, ask someone else. Write and/or draw inside the rings a list of all your different gifts.



Think about the sportspeople who train for the Olympic games. They are all gifted, but they also spend years working really hard, building up to competing in the Olympics. The games usually only come round every four years - five in the case of this year, as they are now postponed to 2021. It takes enormous perseverance to develop your skills enough to be able to represent your country at the Olympics. Look at the list of gifts and talents God gave you. How can you develop and improve them? How can you put them to good use?

Reflect

Have you ever run away from something difficult to do, like Jonah did?

Have you ever felt called to do something?

Do you have a gift you could use to give glory to God?

We might not all be Olympic athletes, but every one of us can use our gifts and talents for good. And we know we can always ask God to help us - to persevere, to improve and to get through challenges.

After Jonah got out of the big fish's belly, he went to Nineveh, as God had originally asked him to do and there, many people heard God's word and turned to him. Imagine if Jonah hadn't used the gifts God had given him - God wanted Jonah to use his gifts to help share his love with everyone.

Learn a new song

Don't forget to keep singing Jesus' love is very wonderful.

You might like to try fitting the the following words about the story of Jonah to the tune of 'I'm a little teapot'.

Jonah ran from God to get away
He didn't want to hear what God had to say.
He climbed on board a boat and sailed to sea
He told the Lord to let him be.

God said to Jonah, "not so fast",
My time with you has not yet passed.
The Lord sent a storm and rocked the boat
Jonah fell into the sea and tried to float.

A fish swam by and swallowed the man
Jonah prayed, "Lord, I'm sorry I ran"
God forgave Jonah after three days
Jonah thanked God and was on his way.

DLTK songs

Pray

THANK God for the wonderful gifts and talents he gives us all to share with one another.

SAY SORRY to God for all the times you've not done something important you should have done.

ASK God to help you always persevere and work hard to develop and use the gifts he has given you.

You might also like to say The Lord's Prayer. And perhaps you'd like to finish with Messy Grace - can you remember the actions we do when we say it? Here's a reminder...

May the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ (Hold out your hands in front of you)
And the love of God (Put your hands on your heart)
And the fellowship of the Holy Spirit (Hold hands)
Be with us all now and for ever. Amen (Raise hands together on the word 'Amen' and shout loudly!)

As always, there will be a break from Messy Church in August. Have a great summer everyone and stay safe.

More news about Messy Church and when we might be able to meet together again will follow in September.