

3

Living Waters

JONAH 1-3; ROMANS 6:3-11



GOAL

Children practice saying yes and no and making choices in living out God's teachings.

- A** Art
- AM** Active/Movement
- C** Conversation
- D** Drama
- F** Food
- G** Game
- M** Music
- NS** Nature/Science
- QC** Quiet/Contemplative
- S** Service
- T** Technology
- X** Extra Prep

Note: bit.ly addresses are case-sensitive.



PRAYER

Lord, thank you for giving me new life. Thank you for forgiving me. Help me to do what is right. Help me be who you want me to be. Amen.

THIS SESSION

In this session, we look at what it means to live out one's baptism. Once the old is washed away, a new life begins (Romans 6:4). Baptism is a new beginning, living and responding as God's children, which at times means saying yes and other times saying no, which also means being willing to *take up* as well as *give up*.

THE BIBLE STORY

Jonah, a prophet, has problems saying yes to God. We are not certain why, but maybe because the Israelites and the Ninevites did not accept each other. Maybe Jonah was scared. Maybe he did not want to share "his God" with "those people." Jonah says "No," runs in the opposite direction, and suffers the consequences. He ends up in a bad situation, far from God, or so he thinks. But God still hears Jonah, pulls him up from the waters (from the great fish), and saves him. Jonah finally says yes to God and goes to Nineveh.

In sharing this story with children, the focus is often on Jonah as a hero, but really, Jonah is like us. We turn our backs and run away. Even when we try to go as far as possible, literally or figuratively, God is there, putting us on dry land. This story is about saying yes and saying no and realizing that, in our baptism, God does not turn away from us.

CONNECTIONS WITH CHILDREN

Young children want to please adults in their life. They receive positive reinforcement for good behavior. Young children also are learning boundaries. Saying no can be quite powerful, and sometimes that is good and appropriate. Sometimes saying no is just to see where the boundaries and limits are. Consistent and loving messages and actions from the adults in their lives are important to give them freedom to test the boundaries, yet assurance to know that they are always loved. Practicing saying yes and no, and learning when it is best to make those choices, is part of both human and faith development. Adults modeling choices is helpful for young children as they grow.

SESSION PREPARATION

Depending on the options you choose:

- "Saying Yes in a Story" (p. 28): Obtain *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004) or use the YouTube video "Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr Seuss" (bit.ly/FMHorton, 10:02).
- "Prayer Pretzels" (p. 28): Gather supplies for making pretzels. Be aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions and make substitutions or have alternatives.



GETTING STARTED

- Copies of Resource Page 1
- Crayons

NO AND YES

G

As the children enter, greet them by name. Invite them to color a copy of Resource Page 1. When there are four or five children present, invite them to play a game together like “Duck, Duck, Goose.” Explain that everyone will sit in a circle and one child will be It. That child will walk around the circle and tap each person on the head, saying, “No” or “Yes.” If they say “No,” they continue tapping on heads. If they say “Yes,” the tapped person jumps up and chases It around the circle. If It can get to the empty space before being tagged, the tapped child becomes It and the play continues. Play until all who would like to have a chance to be It.

- Bowl of water (preferably a clear bowl)
- Small table

WATERS OF BAPTISM

Place a bowl of water on a small table where the children can sit in a circle or semicircle around it. Gather the children by chanting:

I have some good news, good news.

I have some good news. Come sit with me.

As each child comes to the area, invite them to dip their fingers in the water. As they do, say to each child, “(Name), through the waters of baptism, God loves you and calls you God’s own beloved child.”



INTRODUCING THE PRACTICE

CHOICES

C QC

Baptize is not an event but rather a way of living, practicing the gift and name given at baptism: child of God, follower of Jesus. Tell the children that when a person is baptized and part of God’s family, they want to live as a follower of Jesus. Explain that this means they will have to make choices about doing and saying things that say yes to God, which means that they will have to say no to other things that would not be following Jesus. Wonder together:

- ➔ What are some things people do or say when they want to follow God’s ways of living?
- ➔ What are some things people do or say when they don’t follow God’s ways of living?

Give the children a couple of examples:

- If you want a toy that your friend is playing with, what will you do? Jesus says that we should treat one another with kindness. Acting as a baptized child of God, we want to say yes to God and treat our friend with kindness. Therefore, we’d let our friend play with it.
- If you are angry with your mom or dad, what do you do? If we say no to God’s way of living, then we may hit them or call them names. We made a choice, but it’s a choice that does not show that we are acting as a baptized child of God.

Ask the children what examples they can think of that are choices to follow God's ways and choices that do not follow God's ways. Use the following prompts if you need them:

- Your parent says it is time to go to bed, but you want to keep watching a television show.
- One of your classmates at school wants you to take extra snack when the teacher isn't looking.
- Your sibling is sad and wants to play with you, but you want to go to a friend's house and play.
- You really want some candy at the checkout line and no one is looking.
- It's time for church, but you want to stay in bed.

FINDING THE PRACTICE IN THE BIBLE

The prophet Jonah is someone who is already chosen by God but finds it difficult to do what God wants him to do. He just does not want to say yes to God. When he says no to God, he finds himself in some trouble, but God never leaves him and God gives him another chance.

LETTING THE STORY FLOW OVER YOU



Resource Page 2

Invite the children to sit in a circle on the floor and to listen carefully to the story. Tell them to say “Yes, Jonah” when they hear something Jonah did right and “No, Jonah” when Jonah did something God would not like. Read the adapted Bible story from Jonah 1–3 on Resource Page 2.

REMEMBERING THE STORY



Invite the children to sing the Jonah song below to the tune of “London Bridge Is Falling Down,” as you lead it. The words and phrases repeat, so they should be able to catch on quickly. Sing the song through once, then encourage the children to create motions to go along with each verse. Sing a verse at a time with motions. Then sing the whole song together with motions.

God told Jonah, “Go right now! Go right now! Go right now!”
God told Jonah, “Go right now, to Nineveh!”

Jonah said, “I will not go, will not go, will not go.”
Jonah said, “I will not go. No! I won't go!”

Jonah got right on a boat, on a boat, on a boat.
Jonah got right on a boat. God sent a storm.

Sailors threw him overboard, overboard, overboard.
Sailors threw him overboard, into the sea.

He was swallowed by a fish, by a fish, by a fish.
He was swallowed by a fish, sent there by God.

In the belly Jonah prayed, Jonah prayed, Jonah prayed.
In the belly Jonah prayed, for three whole days.

God told Jonah, “Nineveh! Nineveh! Nineveh!”
God told Jonah, “Nineveh!” (*pause, and speak deliberately*)
“Yes. I will go!”

It is never, never too late, never too late, never too late.
It is never, never too late, to tell God “Yes!”

Words by Joy Christian and Lynne Pabst



FINDING THE PRACTICE ALL AROUND US

Choose one or both options.

- Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss (Random House Books for Young Readers, 2004) or internet-connected device

SAYING YES IN A STORY



Read *Horton Hatches the Egg* by Dr. Seuss or show the YouTube video “Horton Hatches the Egg by Dr Seuss” (bit.ly/FMHorton, 10:02). Talk with the children about Horton’s response to the request to take care of the egg. Wonder together:

- ✦ How do you think Maisie’s actions were like saying no to God?
- ✦ What kind of things should we not do to be like Maisie?
- ✦ How do you think Horton’s action was like saying yes to God?
- ✦ What did Horton do to be faithful?
- ✦ What kind of things can we do to be like Horton in our lives?

- Copies of Resource Page 3
- Crayons

MAKING CHOICES

Hand out copies of Resource Page 3 and invite the children to color the pictures that show saying yes and no to following God’s way of living. Talk about the pictures and the choices made in each picture. Assure the children that we all make choices, good choices and poor choices, but no matter what, God loves us and calls us part of God’s family, even when we mess up!



PRACTICING THE PRACTICE

Choose one or both options.

- Frozen bread dough, thawed
- One egg yolk
- Water
- Coarse salt
- Knife or pizza cutter
- Baking sheet
- Parchment paper
- Teaspoon
- Oven
- Plastic ziplock bags
- Cards cut from copies of Resource Page 4



Be aware of any food allergies or dietary restrictions and make substitutions or have alternatives.

PRAYER PRETZELS



Tell the children that one way we can practice saying yes to following God’s ways and no to ways that are not God’s ways is by praying and asking God for help. Comment that it is not always easy to know when to say yes or no and sometimes it is hard to do so when we want to do the opposite, like Jonah. Prayer, or talking with God, helps us follow God’s ways.

Tell the children the story of how pretzels were first made by monks and handed out to children as a reward for learning prayers. The folded pretzels represent the folded arms of the monks as they prayed.

Make pretzels with the children. Have the children make several pretzels: one to eat and one or more to share with others. Use a knife or pizza cutter to cut strips of the thawed bread dough. Show the children how to make pretzel-shaped twists with the dough. Then place the twists on parchment paper on a baking sheet. Brush the pretzels with a mixture of

one egg yolk and a teaspoon of water. Sprinkle the pretzels with coarse salt. Bake in preheated oven at 475° for 12–15 minutes.

When the pretzels have cooled, have children enjoy eating a pretzel. Have them put the other pretzels in a ziplock bag along with a card from Resource Page 4. Encourage the children to share the pretzels with their families or a friend.

SAYING YES AND SAYING NO

G

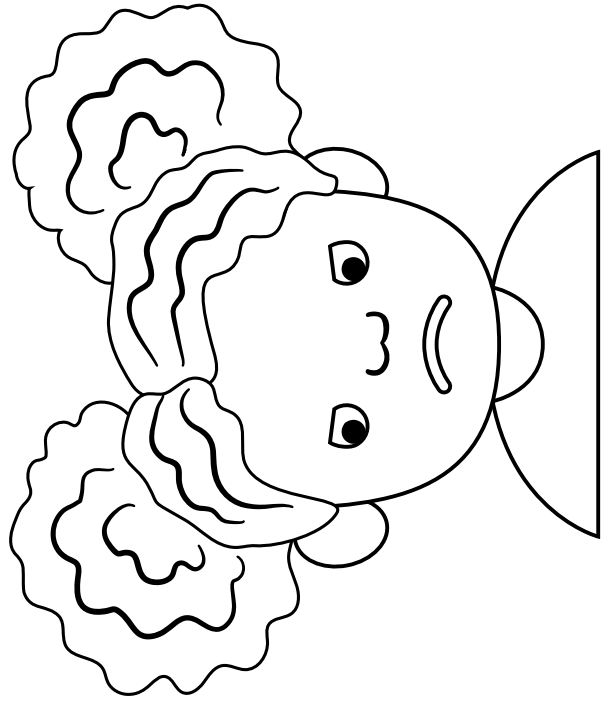
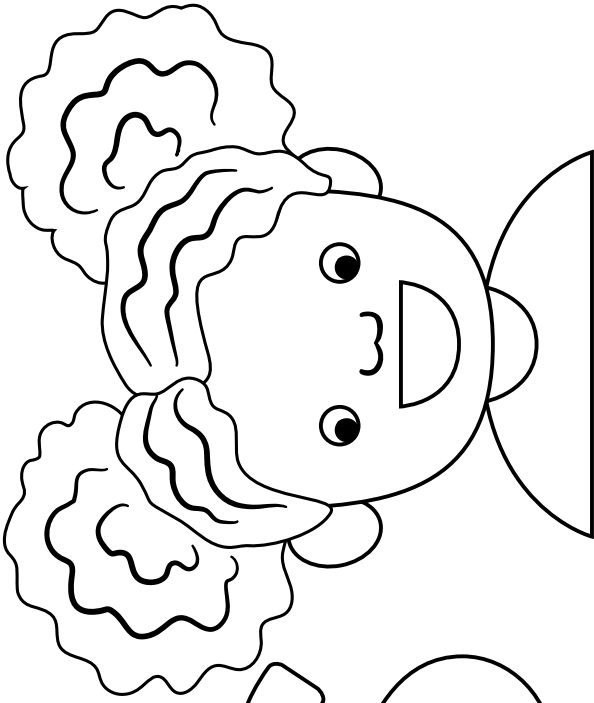
Tell the children that being part of God’s big family means that we try to follow God’s ways of living. Lead the children in a version of “Simon Says,” but instead call it “People Say.” Explain to the children that, in this game, people say to do different things. The children need to figure if what they are being told to do is something to say yes to or something to say no to doing. Tell the children that when “People Say” to do something that follows God’s ways, they should respond, “Yes, I will.” When “People Say” to do something that does not follow God’s ways, they should respond, “No, I will not.”

Use some of the following examples, and add some of your own: pray, lie, cheat, share, help, break toys, hit, go to church, and so forth.



FOLLOWING JESUS

As the group gets ready to leave to follow Jesus in their daily lives, gather in a circle. Invite the children to bless one another by following your example. Turn to the child on your left and take their hand, saying, “(Name), you are a child of God. Go and follow God’s ways.” Tell the children that it is their choice to hold a hand, place a hand on a shoulder, do an elbow bump, or have a high-five as they offer the blessing. Have the children take turns going around the circle until the blessing comes back to you and you say, “And all God’s children say. . . .” Pause, and have the children say “Amen” with you.



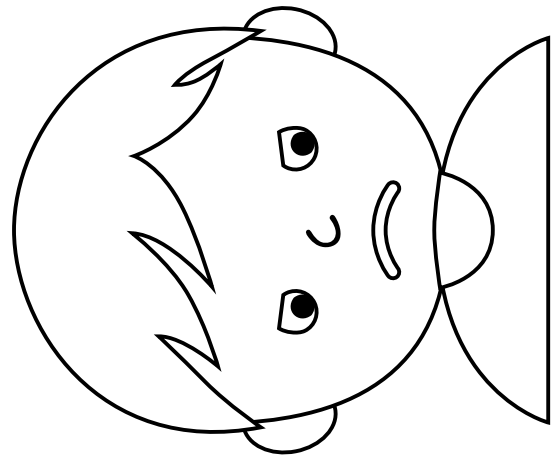
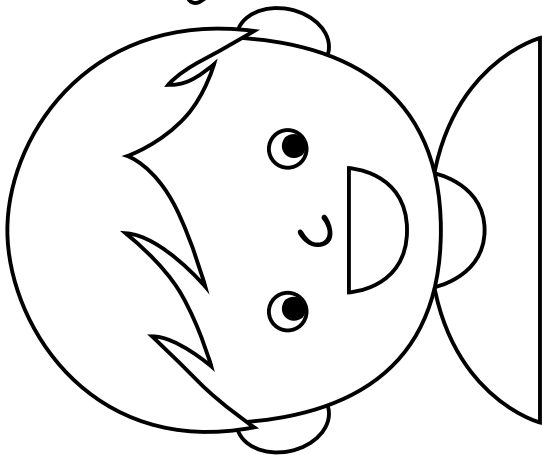
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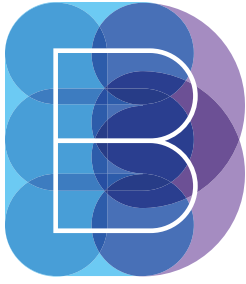
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BIBLE STORY

BASED ON JONAH 1–3

Jonah was a prophet of God. He went around telling people about God. **Yes, Jonah!**

One day, God picked the prophet Jonah to go to preach to the people in Nineveh. But Jonah said, “No, I won’t.” **No, Jonah!**

Jonah got on a ship and went as far away from God and Nineveh as he thought he could get. **No, Jonah!**

God sent a raging storm with wind and big waves. The ship rocked back and forth. But Jonah slept in the bottom of the ship, not seeming to care about the safety of those on the ship. **No, Jonah!**

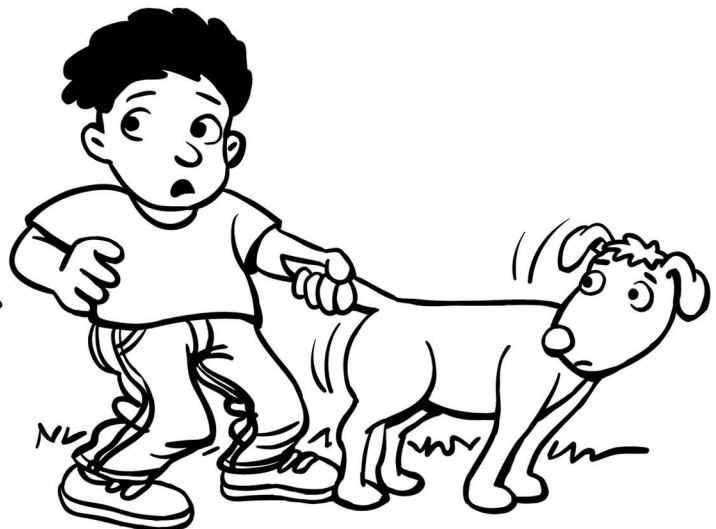
The captain of the ship woke Jonah and asked why Jonah was not praying. **No, Jonah!**

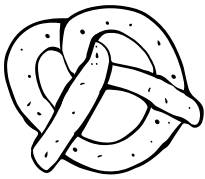
Jonah was running away from God. **No, Jonah!**

Jonah confessed to the sailors that he was running away from God and that if they threw him overboard the storm would stop. **Yes, Jonah!**

So that is what the sailors did, and the storm stopped. The sailors began to worship God and pray thanks. God sent a big fish to swallow Jonah. Inside the big fish, Jonah began to pray. **Yes, Jonah!**

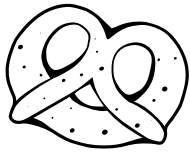
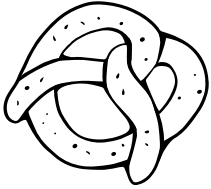
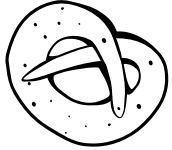
God had the big fish spit Jonah out on the shore. Again, God told Jonah to go preach to the people in Nineveh. This time Jonah said yes and went to Nineveh preaching God’s word. **Yes, Jonah! Yes, Jonah!**



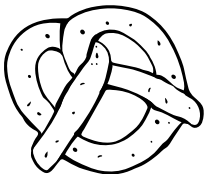
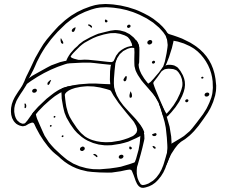
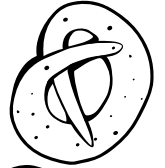
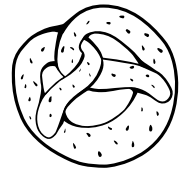
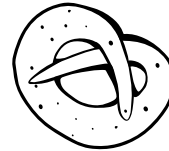
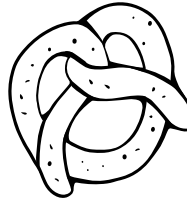
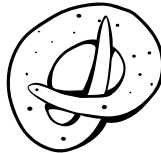
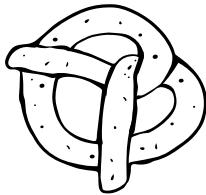
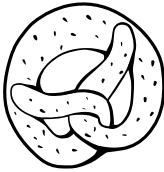


Prayer Pretzels

The story goes that around the year 610, an Italian monk made a treat for the children who had learned their prayers. In those days, people prayed with their arms crossed and with each hand touching the opposite shoulder. So the monk took bread dough and twisted it to look like the children's arms when they prayed. Whenever you see a twisted pretzel, you may think of your prayers.

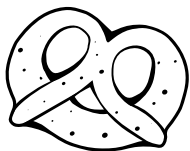
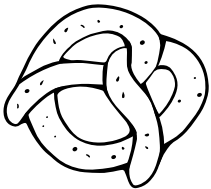
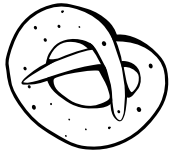


Dear God, as I cross my arms, please hear my prayer. May I follow your ways of loving you and loving others each and every day. Amen.



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