

SABBATH SCHOOL

Preteen Sabbath Instruction Program — Teacher's Outline

Level 2 • Unit 2 • Week 2

GOD GUIDES US THROUGH HIS MINISTERS

OBJECTIVE:

To learn how God teaches us through His ministers.

ATTENTION GETTER:

Ask: What would you do if you were swimming in a lake, and a big fish swallowed you whole?

Say: I think I would like some help.

Ask: Who could help you?

Say: God is always there to help you. God knows that we need help many times. Everyone needs help, even our parents and teachers. Everyone must pray for that help. When someone needs help, God sometimes helps directly with some action. We call this a miracle.

Sometimes He puts a thought in our minds that will help.

Sometimes He helps through special people. They are people that know and teach God's word. In very old times they were called priests, judges and prophets. Now He has given us ministers to help us.

BIBLE LESSON:

Say: Today we will talk about a prophet named Jonah.

Ask: What do you think a prophet is?

Say: A prophet is one who is told by God what the future is.

Jonah knew God's word, and God wanted him to tell God's way to the people in the city called Nineveh. He had to warn them that if they did not follow God's way, they would be destroyed. He, like Samuel in last week's lesson, faced great danger to do this.

Ask: Do you think he did what God said?

Say: Let's see...

God said, "Jonah, go to Nineveh that great city, and tell them their wickedness has come to my attention." Jonah was afraid that the wicked people there would kill him if he told them something they did not want to hear. He tried to run away from the Lord.

Ask: Does God know everything we do? Yes! Did God know where Jonah was? Could Jonah run from God? Let's see...

Say: Jonah went on a big ship to get away, but God caused a storm to happen. The captain of the ship and the sailors never saw a storm like this, and they were afraid. They found out that Jonah was trying to hide from God, and asked him why he ran away and what they could do to save their lives. Jonah said, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will become calm for you." They prayed to God for guidance, and then threw Jonah into the sea.

Ask: Do you think that was the end of Jonah?

Say: No, God knew Jonah's heart, and what he could do. So, God had a great fish prepared, and that fish swallowed Jonah whole! Bad things happen when God is disobeyed.

Ask: Was that the end of the story?

Say: No. Like everyone should do when they are in trouble, Jonah prayed to God. He prayed while he was right in that big fish's stomach.

Ask: Could God hear Jonah from the belly of a big fish in a big sea?

Say: Yes! "So the LORD spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land" (Jonah 2:10). This place was three day's journey from Nineveh, where Jonah had to give the warning message the Lord told him to give. The Lord told Jonah again to go there and tell those wicked people to change their ways because bad things happen when God is disobeyed.

Jonah did warn them. He told them that if they did not change their wicked ways and follow God's ways, their city would be destroyed! That was a prophecy. It told what would happen in the future.

The king heard this and believed God's message. He told the people that they should show how sorry they were for their wicked ways by wearing sackcloth and fasting, and perhaps God would not destroy them. The king said they should also stop doing the bad things they were doing. God heard the people and did not destroy their city. Good things happen when God is obeyed.

Ask: Do you think Jonah was happy that the city would not be destroyed now?

Say: No, he was not happy! Jonah did not forgive them for their bad ways. He thought that he risked getting killed to tell them the truth, so God should have destroyed the city. But God is a forgiving God. When people are sorry for doing wrong and change to doing right, He forgives them. This is a lesson that Jonah had to learn. It is one we must learn also.

Ask: How do you think God could teach Jonah this lesson? Let's see...

Say: Jonah climbed a hill outside the city to see what would happen. It was very hot. God made a plant grow up and shade him. But then the plant died, and Jonah was sad for the plant because it had helped him. God said, "You have had pity on the plant ... should I not pity Nineveh, that great city, in which are more than one hundred and twenty thousand persons ... and much livestock?"

Ask: Do you think that God should have had pity on the big city after they said they were sorry?

Say: God always forgives people when they are sorry and don't do the bad thing again.

God made sure the people of Nineveh had someone to help them correct their bad ways and save their lives. We have people to help us correct our bad ways also. They are our ministers.

Ask: What do you think a minister is?

Say: A minister is a person who serves in a God-ordained office. He is to teach the people of God about God's Word. He helps them understand how to live God's way, which makes them happier.

Ask: Did the people of Nineveh listen and change when Jonah told them what God said was right?

Say: Yes, they did!

Ask: Should you also listen carefully to the ministers when they tell you what God says and how He wants us to serve Him?

Say: Yes, we should!

LESSON APPLICATION:

Make a craft relating to Jonah and the big fish. Possible ideas: make a mobile using elements of the story (Jonah, fish, boat, city, gourd plant); make a fish with a man (Jonah) that can slide in and out; have students draw a picture of their favorite part of the story; or provide clay or play dough and have students shape a fish. As they work, remind them of how important it is to always do what God says.

MUSIC:

Teach the students the following simplified Jonah poem.

A lesson for us today—
Hear God by His ministry,
You'll avoid Jonah's bad way.

MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 8:30 (last part) and 31 (first part): "'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?'"

Paraphrase: "God's ministers help us understand the Word of God, which tells us how to live and be happy."

family activity

THE POINT:

To learn how God teaches us through His ministers, through the story of Jonah.

ASK ME...

- Q. What happened to Jonah when he tried to run away from God?
A. He was swallowed by a big fish.

- Q. Did God destroy the wicked city of Nineveh after Jonah warned them?
A. No.

- Q. Why not?
A. They were sorry for the bad things they did, and started doing right things.

- Q. What does this mobile mean?
A. It is a reminder to always do what God says.

FAMILY TOGETHER TIME:

During the week, as appropriate, remind your child: "This is a good thing that God wants us to do" or "This is a bad thing that God does not want us to do."

MEMORY VERSE:

Acts 8:30 (last part) and 31 (first part): "'Do you understand what you are reading?' And he said, 'How can I, unless someone guides me?'"