

RESPONDING TO GOD- JONAH
SUPPLY LIST

Day 1:

Dry erase board & markers

5 bricks

2 empty boxes similar in size (large enough to hold the bricks)

Dominoes

Day 2:

Bricks with negative causes from yesterday

A baggie or packet of seeds (any kind)

Day 3:

2 dry erase boards & markers OR sheets of paper

“Good sized” bowl of dry uncooked rice (enough that once all campers have 2 grains each, the bowl still appears full)

RESPONDING TO GOD- PART 1

JONAH 1

BIBLE STUDY LESSON #1

Refer to page 10-11 of camper booklet; the answers for these pages are included in this study guide. **Bold type** in this study guide are statement answers for page 10. Definitions for the definition scramble on page 11 are in {brackets}.

- 1) Take the first few minutes to brain storm negative cause & effects. Choose examples of how a person's negative actions affect others, and write on big board & bricks. (examples- lying causes others not to trust you; speaking unkind words about others hurts them; pushing in line may cause physical harm to others; cheating on a test can get you AND your buddy in trouble). When people choose to sin, their sin hurts others.
- 2) "Box of Attitude" chain line. Invite 5 campers to the front, and form a chain of friends. Show the empty box- this represents the heart of the first camper in line. Pass the empty box along the chain and note the level of difficulty- it should be easy & light. Fill the box with the "negative bricks." Now, the box represents a heart full of heavy sin- the heart of the first camper in line. Pass the filled box along the chain and note level of difficulty (heavy, not so fun, weighing others down). When we make sinful choices, we can weigh others down and cause others to fall or suffer as well.
- 3) One camper read Hebrews 12:1. Race 2 campers- one with empty box; one with filled box. The camper with the empty box *should* win. Point: Sin slows us up! Entangles us! And trips us up!! Enter: JONAH!!!
- 4) Read together Jonah 1. The story of Jonah is a great Bible illustration about the meaning of sin & repentance. Despite all his blessings, Jonah refused to follow the mission God had given him. God still loved this reluctant prophet {God's servant who takes God's message to the people} & worked to bring him back to a right relationship. We are all like Jonah & need God's love & patience as we learn to obey. Because of Jesus & the cross, we can be forgiven & welcomed back. Whether it's your 1st time or 100th time hearing about Jonah, God always has something He wants to teach us from His Word. Each one of us has different needs & God knows what we need to hear. So listen like it's the 1st time to ever hear this story so we can individually learn the lesson God wants to teach us. **When we sin against God, there will always be NEGATIVE RESULTS.** Earlier we discussed how our negative actions affect those around us. **Sin always has CONSEQUENCES. God is HOLY and He must PUNISH sin.** God is also merciful {undeserved kindness or compassionate}. He wants people to turn from their sin & turn to Him so they can live a life that pleases Him. Brief history of Israelites- found in 1 & 2 Kings & 1 & 2 Chronicles. Israel was divided in 2 parts- N & S kingdoms. The N kingdom had wicked kings who were evil sinning against God; the S kingdom had good

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JONAH 1

kings who tried to lead the people to obey God's laws. One consequence of the N kingdom's sin was that enemies from other countries attacked the Israelites. Assyria was 1 of these countries. Nineveh was the capital of Assyria. What does God tell Jonah, the Israelite, to do? Let's read 1:2. Jonah feared going to Nineveh because the Assyrians were the enemy. Through Jonah, God was giving the Ninevites an opportunity to turn from their sins. But **Jonah chose to disobey God's instructions and went completely in the OPPOSITE direction that he was told to go.** So he went to Joppa instead, got on a boat and headed to Tarshish. Jonah may have thought he could run from God but that is not possible! **Earthly fathers DISCIPLINE {punishment inflicted by way of correction and training} their children for disobedience because they want their children to make wise choices and do what is right. Jonah belonged to GOD. God was his heavenly Father, and He would DISCIPLINE Jonah for his disobedience.** So the sailors were doing "sailor things" and Jonah was taking a nap when a dangerous storm began to rock the ship. As the ship began to break apart, the sailors began crying out to their "gods," not the One True God though, and throwing cargo overboard to help the ship not sink. Jonah's sin of disobedience was causing the sailors' lives to be endangered. Upon realizing the sailors were suffering because of his disobedience, Jonah told them to throw him into the sea and everything would calm down. Let's read the sailors' prayer in Jonah 1:14. Immediately the sea became calm. How did the sailors respond to all that just happened? Look at verse 16. The sailors were in awe of God's power and they offered a sacrifice to Him and made vows to Him. Jonah chose to disobey; but God did not allow Jonah's disobedience to stop Him from doing what He planned to do. As Jonah sinks into the sea, God provides a great fish to swallow him. **Jonah stays inside this fish for THREE days and THREE nights.** Allowing sin to control our hearts and minds causes our relationships to suffer- our relationship with God, friends, family and maybe even strangers. We read our Bibles less, pray less, and maybe even begin to act and talk like an unbeliever. But God is faithful to you and me, just as He was to Jonah.

- 5) Brainstorm with your neighbor, 10 seconds, POSITIVE causes & effects. Demonstrate a Domino train- once the first domino fell into motion, all others fall down too. Our NEGATIVE or POSITIVE actions are the same- will you spread negativity or positivity?
- 6) Form small groups and work together through page 11 of the camper booklet. Definition Scramble. Quick Review Q (found below). Reflect & Respond Questions (found in the booklet).

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JONAH 1

Definition Scramble

Some terms were used today, some were not; all will be used throughout this Jonah study. Write the following words on the dry erase board to help campers unscramble the terms:

PROPHET
MERCIFUL

AMBASSADOR
FASTING

DISCIPLINE
SACKCLOTH

Quick Review Q

- A) Why did Jonah run away from God? (He didn't want to go to Nineveh because they were Israel's enemies)
- B) How did others suffer because of Jonah's disobedience? (The storm was causing the ship to break apart and the sailors were afraid)
- C) What was Jonah doing while all the sailors were praying to their gods? (Sleeping)
- D) How did the sea become calm? (Sailors threw Jonah overboard; God calmed the sea)
- E) What does God want all people to do? (Obey, repent, turn away from sins & be saved)
- F) What is God faithful to do when believers confess their sins? (He is faithful & just to forgive our sins & cleanse us from all unrighteousness)

Reflect & Respond Questions

These are found in the camper booklet on page 11. These questions are personal and reflective Qs for students to answer themselves, not aloud, unless, of course, they have questions or need sponsor counseling.

RESPONDING TO GOD- PART 2

JONAH 2 & 3

BIBLE STUDY LESSON #2

Refer to pages 12-13 & 26 of camper booklet; the answers for these pages are included in this study guide. **Bold type** in this study guide are statement answers for page 12.

- 1) Using the negativity bricks (from yesterday), ask “What is our natural response to this difficulty? As a believer and following the leading of the Holy Spirit, how should we respond?” Direct campers to page 26 of their booklet, “Respond... At Home.” Match the correct Scripture references to show the best Biblical response to each scenario.
- 2) One camper read Luke 6:36. Merciful. Do we really understand what “merciful” means? A simple definition is “undeserved kindness or compassion.” Today’s lesson on Jonah helps us understand why it’s so important, and Biblical, to show others mercy.
- 3) Enter: JONAH!!! He could have become angry with God and spent the time inside the fish feeling sorry for himself. But he didn’t! Begin by reading Jonah chapter 2. Verse 1 tells us he prayed. He “cried out to the Lord.” Jonah’s prayer in chapter 2 teaches us 2 important truths about prayer: 1) Jonah 2:2- God hears all our cries, and 2) Jonah 2:9- we should pray with an attitude of thanksgiving. Let’s take a minute to unpack these 2 parts of Jonah’s prayer. “God hears all our prayers.” Prayer is such a powerful tool... I don’t even turn to it as much as I should. One of our greatest defenses against satan is praying Scripture. **MEMORIZING Scripture about obedience to God will help us when we are tempted to DISOBEY.** You can find some great verses to begin memorizing on page 26 of your camper booklet. Also, **you can ask other believers to PRAY for you if you continue to struggle with DISOBEDIENCE.** What an awesome privilege we have to pray FOR one another! The 2nd part of Jonah’s prayer- thankfulness. If you struggle with thankfulness, spend time in your daily quiet time writing things in your notebook you are thankful for. You will be amazed at the many things you can actually thank God for!! Chapter 2 wraps up with God commanding the great fish to spit Jonah out onto dry land. God’s discipline brought Jonah to the place where he repented of his sins & turned back to God. He decided that he was going to let God be the boss of his life. He was now back in the position for God to use him for the purpose God had planned for him.

Jonah had experienced God’s mercy and was given a SECOND CHANCE. God has shown sinners great mercy, and believers should respond to those who have offended them with the same kind of mercy. Suppose you woke in the middle of the night and looked out your window to see your best friend’s house on fire... how would you respond? Most would rush to call 911 and check to make sure our friends were ok with great urgency. Of course you would! But what if the house on fire next door was not one

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JONAH 2 & 3

of your favorite people? Maybe they have caused a lot of trouble in the neighborhood and no one really likes them. Would you respond with the same urgency and compassion? Just as the neighbors would be in danger of being destroyed by the fire, each one of us come in contact with people who are in danger of spending eternity separated from God. And this is URGENT! So let's see what we can learn from Jonah's story about this. Let's pick up the story in chapter 3; read Jonah 3 together. God came to Jonah a 2nd time. God is a God of second chances. When a person sins, God doesn't cast them away never to be used for His Kingdom... otherwise, none of us would be here today. Sin hinders a person's service for God but when that person repents and returns to God, He forgives them and enables them to continue to serve in some way for His Kingdom. One minute Jonah was at the bottom of the sea sitting in the belly of a fish; 3 days later, he was propelled from the fish's mouth onto the shore. This was Jonah's 2nd chance to go to Nineveh and preach to them. So off he goes! The city is large- the largest in the world at the time, and it takes Jonah 3 days just to travel throughout it. Verse 4 tells us that as soon as he set foot in the city, Jonah boldly preached God's Word: "Forty more days and Nineveh will be overturned." Jonah became a great ambassador {an official of the highest rank, sent by one sovereign or state to another as its representative} for God and gave the people God's message, and now the results were up to God. How did the people respond? See Jonah 3:5. They did not want their city destroyed; they reacted by fasting {stopping eating} and by putting on sackcloth {a very coarse, rough fabric worn symbolizing mourning or great grief}. These actions showed their grief over the news that God was going to destroy Nineveh. Soon, the king of Nineveh heard the news Jonah was delivering. Being in a position of great authority, the king's reaction was very important. How do you think he responded? He could have been prideful and angry, even having Jonah killed. But he responded completely opposite! He responded with humility and urgency for the safety of his people. He called upon all the people to cry out to God and turn from their wickedness. The king acknowledged that his people were wicked and violent, and he knew the only hope he and his people had was to call on God to have mercy {undeserved kindness or compassion} on them. God saw what the king and all the people did and how they turned from their wicked ways. God had compassion upon them and did not bring the destruction upon their city. How do you think the Ninevites felt to experience God's kindness? Most people are filled with joy and thankfulness when they have been rescued from death. We don't know, but we can assume they were thankful to Him for letting them live. **God has called His followers to LOOK and ACT like Him.** Remember the verse shared as we got started this morning? Luke 6:36- **Be MERCIFUL, just as Your Father is merciful.** God has shown His mercy to every man, woman, boy and girl by providing a Savior who left heaven and came to earth as a baby in a manger. He was sinless and willingly died on the cross taking on the punishment for the sins of all people. But not all will believe. I can't MAKE you or anyone else believe any more than I can

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JONAH 2 & 3

make this seed grow. I can plant it and water it, but must rely on God to make it grow.

People's acceptance or rejection of God's message is not our RESPONSIBILITY.

We are called to spread the Good News, like I must plant the seed. But then, **we need to leave the RESULTS with God. As a believer, my responsibility is to show LOVE, MERCY and COMPASSION to you just as God has done.** This is being a good ambassador for Christ. We each have that choice to make. So is God the boss of your life? What's keeping you from accomplishing your purpose? How will you respond?

- 4) Form small groups and work together through page 13 of the camper booklet. Scripture Matching. Quick Review Q (found below). Reflect & Respond Questions (found in the booklet).

Scripture Matching

Small groups can work together matching the correct Scripture reference with the Biblical truth it describes.

Quick Review Q

- A) What did Jonah do inside the great fish? (Prayed)
- B) Name the 2 things we learned about prayer from Jonah's prayer. (God hears all our cries; we should always be thankful)
- C) What did Jonah do when he was given a second chance? (He obeyed God's instructions and took God's message to the Ninevites)
- D) What would you do with a second chance? (Apologize to a friend or parent? Include a lonely child in your play group? Hold a door for a neighbor at the grocery store? And on and on...)
- E) What was God's message to the Ninevites? (Forty more days and Nineveh would be destroyed)
- F) How did the people respond to this message? (They believed God, fasted and put on sackcloth to grieve their actions)
- G) How did God respond to the Ninevites fasting and mourning? (He showed mercy & compassion on them and did not punish them as He had planned)

Reflect & Respond Questions

These are found in the camper booklet on page 13. These questions are personal and reflective Qs for students to answer themselves, not aloud, unless, of course, they have questions or need sponsor counseling.

RESPONDING TO GOD- PART 3

JONAH 4

BIBLE STUDY LESSON #3

Refer to page 14 of camper booklet; the answers for this page are included in this study guide. **Bold type** in this study guide are statement answers for page 14.

- 1) As you get started, share a time when you've received mercy, undeserved kindness, from another person. Allow a few willing campers to share similar moments. Up until now, what one thing has stood out to you the most about the story of Jonah? Allow a few willing campers to share.

- 2) Have one camper read aloud Lamentations 3:22-23. Go around the room giving each camper 1 grain of rice each. Now, look at my bowl. Does it look like I have less rice than I did when I started? Not really! My bowl is still full! Let's do another round. Give each camper another grain of rice. Okay! Now each camper should have two grains of rice. Now, look at my bowl again. Is it empty? Am I all out of rice? No! It still looks full! You know what's even more amazing? God's love is kind of like this bowl of rice. He can love you, me, and everyone else in the entire world and His bowl of love will still be full. No matter how much love and mercy God gives, He will still have more. His love never runs out! The Bible tells us that the love of God never ceases! It never ever comes to an end! And He also tells us that whenever we need love to give to others, all we need to do is ask, and HE will fill us up with His love, so we can give it away. That way, we will never run out of love, either! IF we respond, God uses us to spread His love around, and bring it to everyone, all around the world. We actually get to be a part of God's great love! So what does God's never-ending love and mercy have to do with Jonah? Let's see!

- 3) The story of Jonah continues! So as we look into the last chapter, let's see how Jonah's response towards the people of Nineveh shifts to the negative once more. Let's read chapter 4. Jonah had been forgiven and given a 2nd chance, but he was furious that God would forgive the Ninevites and give them a 2nd chance. Do you remember from yesterday why Jonah disliked the Ninevites? They were enemies of God's people the Israelites. From a human perspective, it would be hard to forgive the Ninevites for the wicked, violent things they had done to their enemies. But as believers we are not asked to look at others from a human point of view. We are to follow God's example. **We have to know Him well enough to SEE others as HE does.** Jonah did not fully understand God's mercy and kindness towards him. He was hoping to have a front row seat to watch the Ninevites be destroyed by God. But as he watchfully sat just outside the city, the hot sun made it unbearably uncomfortable. God once again shows compassion on Jonah and causes a vine to grow large leaves to shade Jonah from the hot sun. Does Jonah deserve God's loving kindness? No, but God loves Jonah anyway. So this plant brought relief to Jonah... for a moment. God sent a worm to eat the vine destroying the plant. Soon the hot sun and scorching east wind beat on Jonah's head. Jonah questioned God. Let's read God's reply in verses 10-11. God explains to Jonah that he was concerned over a plant that he had nothing to do with its existence instead of the eternal destination of the Ninevites. That was just silly behavior to be more concerned with the plant than the souls of the Ninevite people. Looking back, how many times has my disobedience led to silly behavior? God created men and women as His most special creation. Who created the Ninevites? Yes, they are His creation too! And who created you? YES, YOU are his most special creation too. Sin came into the world and caused us all to be separated from Him. God desires

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JONAH 4

all people to be rescued from the destruction that sin brings into a person's life. The book of Romans tells us that **every person faces God's punishment for SIN unless they receive His GIFT of salvation through His Son Jesus.** As Christ's ambassadors we have been given a high calling to faithfully share the Good News with others. So how will you respond? **Will you be an ambassador of Christ?** If you have not responded to God with a YES and want to know more about Jesus becoming your Lord & Savior, please talk with your camp sponsors after this study. If you say YES, fill in the last blank- **Name a place God has placed you as His ambassador** (home, school, playground, sports, swimming pool, etc).

- 4) Form 2 small groups and work together through the following activity. GROUP 1- Find every reference to God throughout chapter 4. What are some character traits you learn about God from this chapter? On a piece of paper or dry erase board, list your answers together as a group. GROUP 2- What do we discover about Jonah from chapter 4? On a piece of paper or dry erase board, list the WHO, WHAT, WHEN, WHERE & WHY of Jonah from this passage. Bring the 2 groups back together to share their findings with one another.
- 5) Return to your small groups to discuss Quick Review Q and Reflect & Respond Questions.

Quick Review Q

- A) As chapter 4 begins, why was Jonah angry? (Because God had forgiven the Ninevites)
- B) How did God show Jonah kindness when he sat in anger in the hot sun? (He created a vine that provided shade for him)
- C) Who/ what was Jonah more concerned about? (Himself, the vine and shade)
- D) Who is God concerned about? (People because He wants everyone to turn from their sin and be saved)

Reflect & Respond Questions

These are found in the camper booklet on page 14. These questions are personal and reflective Qs for students to answer themselves, not aloud, unless, of course, they have questions or need sponsor counseling.