

Bringing the
BIBLE
LIFE



Level 6, Quarter A
Teacher Guide Sample (Lesson 4)

THINK!

◦ **Big Idea** To understand timeless truths, grasp what the passage really means!

Bible Passage Jonah 1-2

Study Focus Think—Interpret the meaning of a Bible passage by asking and answering questions.

Lesson Summary

Previous lessons introduced the first two steps of inductive Bible study—**Zoom!** and **Look!** Children began by zooming out to capture the big picture of Jonah 1-2. Next they learned how to discover relationships between words, enabling kids to observe insights that casual Bible readers never see.

In this lesson, you will introduce the third step—**Think!** To understand timeless truths, grasp what the passage really means. Seek the author’s original meaning. As children learn to interpret what Jonah 1-2 means, they will formulate questions and know where to find answers. Also, the kids will discern when a Bible passage uses figurative or literal language.

Bible Background

Scholars believe that Jonah may have actually written this book while in the city of Nineveh. If so, it shows that Jonah recovered from his tantrum over God sparing the city (chapter 4).

Nineveh was the capital city of the mighty Assyrian Empire. Israel and Assyria were enemies at this time, but God still desired the Ninevites’ repentance. The city extended nearly thirty miles long and ten miles wide. It may have been home to a population of one million people.

Teacher Devotional

If you sometimes feel tired of thinking, imagine how the kids feel! They spend hours at school and then go home and spend more time on homework. You have the wonderful opportunity to help your children develop a love for the Scriptures and an appetite to study His inspired Word.

Dear God, remind me of Your love and faithfulness and the transforming power of Your Word. I’m comforted that You don’t ask anything of me that You won’t help me accomplish. Open my mind to think thoughts that come from You. Enable me to speak words that reflect Your truths. May each child come to grow closer to You. In Jesus’ name, amen.



DISCIPLE TARGETS In this lesson, your children will...

KNOWLEDGE (truths)

- K** • Interpreting the Bible is all about finding the author’s original meaning. (2 Peter 1:20-21)
- N** • If a Bible passage makes sense literally, do not seek a figurative meaning.
- O** • Asking and answering questions is vital to interpreting the Bible.

CHARACTER (emotions)

- F** • Excited to know how to find out what the Bible really means.
- E** • Fascinated about the literal and figurative meanings of Bible words.
- E** • Confident that God will help them find answers to their questions about the Bible.

CONDUCT (actions)

- D** • Ask and answer questions to interpret Jonah 1-2.
- O** • Interpret the meaning of figures of speech in Jonah 1-2.
- Give reasons why Jonah was swallowed by a literal fish.
- DiscipleSkill—How to Study My Bible: Explore Cross-references.

Make Disciples

Teacher—Decide where to place these elements into this lesson.

Opening Prayer

Ask God to help them learn to ask good questions and to find His answers in the Bible. Praise God for faithfully hearing and answering the children’s prayers.

WorldWatch

Missionary Biography 4 of 12—Bruce Olson—Pact Brother *Missionary stories can have a profound impact on a child. Take 1-2 minutes to read this brief narrative. Download discussion questions at DiscipleLand.com/downloads.*

The month spent with the Motilones feels like a nightmare, and Bruce does not want to go back. The doctors say that Bruce’s illness, combined with extreme malnutrition, has ruined his health. Common sense tells Bruce he will never be able to return. Yet Bruce knows he has to go back. God has called him to the Motilones, and He has given Bruce a love for the Motilone people. Bruce moves back into the jungle.

After he waits for months in the jungle, the Motilones peacefully invite Bruce to their village. “Bruch-ko,” says the Indian, attempting to pronounce Bruce’s name. From then on, Bruce Olson is called Bruchko. Each day Bruchko fills his notepad with Motilone words as he struggles to understand their language. He observes the women as they weave and the men as they fish and hunt, but Bruchko is growing bored and depressed. After a year, he still cannot communicate. “Is this all a waste?” he ponders.

Fourteen-year-old Bobarishora befriends Bruchko. Bruchko nicknames him Bobby, and the two of them spend all their time together. Bobby teaches Bruchko to spear fish in the river and helps him discover that Motilones speak a tonal language. One solemn day, Bruchko and

DISCIPLESHIP TIP

The middle school years are tough on kids. Their bodies are changing and their emotions act like a roller coaster. Watch for signs of frustration (slamming down a pencil or moving away from another person) to defuse a situation before it turns to anger or despair. Empathize to let a child know that his or her frustration is legitimate (“I understand how frustrating it is to not have an opportunity to contribute in your group.”).

Bobby exchange arrows in a special ceremony. They become pact brothers—best friends for life.

Missions Education—World-class Challenge

To add this component to the lesson, download the teacher script at DiscipleLand.com/downloads.

KeyVerse

Topic: Think!

Reference: *John 16:13a*

Memorization Activity: Kids this age still enjoy silliness—let them have fun and celebrate their unique sense of style. Give each child a sheet of newspaper. While practicing the verse aloud, have them fold the paper to create a “thinking cap.” You may want to provide tape. When all students have their hats ready, create an area for the hat fashion show. Let each child have a turn to say the verse while modeling the latest “mind opening head gear.”

Bonus Resources

Access free downloads for this lesson at DiscipleLand.com/downloads.

- More activity ideas
- Activity templates and resources
- *Explore Scripture* teacher notecards

SUPPLIES

General Supplies

Bibles, Disciple Guides (pages 13-16)
Pencils, markers, paper
Notecards, scissors, tape, glue

Make Disciples

Newspapers

Spark Interest

- LITERAL & FIGURATIVE: none
- TWENTY QUESTIONS: none
- GO FIGURE!: none

Explore Scripture

Bible reference tools
Teaching Picture 6A.4—Jonah and the sailors
Teaching Picture 6A.19—Think! methods

Inspire Action

- UPS AND DOWNS: none
- JONAH—REVISED VERSION: none

Spark Interest

Teacher—Choose one activity that will involve students and grab their attention.

Literal & Figurative (10-15 minutes)

This discussion activity shows kids that many words and phrases have both literal and figurative meanings.

The English language is very colorful! Many words have a variety of meanings such as “space,” “shop,” “cup,” “cap,” and “fine.” Encourage kids to think of others. Many words have figurative meanings as well as literal meanings. One tool we can use as we study Scripture is to discover where the writer used literal or figurative language. Literal language means it is actual and factual; figurative language means there is another symbolic meaning. For instance, what is a literal meaning of the word “cool”? (Somewhat cold.) What is a figurative meaning? (Very good, acceptable.) What are some other words and phrases that have both a literal and figurative (colorful) meaning? Encourage responses. Other examples: hang out, bug, chick, the law, crack up, hood, loaded, riot.

OR

Twenty Questions (10-15 minutes)

This reasoning game encourages kids to formulate good questions.

To discover more about the Bible, we need to formulate good questions that lead to good answers. Let's play a quick game of Twenty Questions to warm up our questioning skills.

Choose a child to think of something/someone/someplace. The other kids may ask one question at a time that can be answered with a simple “yes” or “no.” Keep track of the number of questions asked so you will know when they reach the twenty question limit. If the game ends quickly, choose another child and play again.

How would you ask questions differently if you were asking about a Bible passage? Let's get ready to think of some powerful questions that will teach us more about Jonah.

OR

Go Figure! (5-10 minutes)

This word activity helps kids understand the difference between the literal and figurative meaning of a word or phrase.

Invite the kids to compile a list of popular figures of speech that kids use frequently today. As you do so, make sure to explain the difference between literal and figurative meanings. The “literal” meaning is what a word actually means—what the dictionary would say. The “figurative” meaning is often creative or colorful, sometimes called “slang.”

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Guide kids to understand the concept of figurative language. Complete this page at the beginning of class or after a Spark Interest activity.

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THINK!

Jonah 1-2



The third step of inductive Bible study engages your brain.

- Ask and answer questions (*Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?*).
- Re-create the original setting of the book. Understand what the passage meant to the first readers. Use Bible resource tools as necessary.
- Form timeless truths that bridge “there” to “here” and “then” to “now.”

You make language colorful by using figures of speech when you talk and write. “Figures” are words or phrases that would be ridiculous if interpreted according to the exact “literal” dictionary meaning.

- For example: “My heart is broken.” If taken literally, this means: “The organ that pumps blood through my body has split into pieces.”
- But the figurative meaning is: “I’m experiencing deep emotional pain because someone I care about rejected me.”

>>> Draw a picture of the literal meaning of “My heart is broken.”

When do you interpret a word or phrase literally or as a figure of speech?

Guideline: Interpret sensibly—seek the most sensible, straightforward meaning. The most sensible meaning may be literal or figurative.

If a passage makes sense literally,

DO DO NOT

look for a figurative meaning.

answers will vary

Explore Scripture

Teacher—Teach the Bible lesson. Include Teaching Pictures and exercises from the student Disciple Guides.

Jonah 1-2



Explain to your kids that today you are practicing the **Think!** step of inductive Bible study. Show the Teaching Picture 6A.19 of Think! methods. Commend the children on their growing ability to study God's Word.

Today we will learn how to ask questions that help us uncover Biblical truths. We want to ask questions that will lead us to ideas or insights that casual Bible readers miss.



Some questions we may not be able to answer—that is fine. Our goal is to think about Scripture and to allow the Holy Spirit to guide us into truth. Show the Teaching Picture 6A.4 of Jonah and the sailors.

As we read, listen and think about what questions come to mind. Write down your questions, and afterwards we'll see if we can find answers in our Bibles.

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Have kids come up with questions as volunteers read Jonah 1-2 aloud.

When you're finished reading, ask kids, **What is your best "who" question?** Encourage volunteers to share. After each question, see if anyone can answer it. Explain that complete answers may not be available for some questions. Other questions may require more studying you have time for now. Tell the kids that they will learn to use Bible reference books in a few weeks (lesson 8). Those books will provide answers to many of their questions. Also remind students to turn to the Holy Spirit for help and guidance.

What is your best "what" question? Encourage responses.

What is your best "when" question?

What is your best "where" question?

What is your best "why" question?

What is your best "how" question?

Repeat this process using Jonah 2.

Deciding whether words or phrases are literal or figurative will help answer certain questions.

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Children may want to work together in small groups to discuss the meanings of figurative terms.

As you read the Bible and review Jonah 1-2, write down any questions that you think would benefit your understanding. If you have Bible reference tools at home, use them to look up the answers or gain insight. Explain that the Internet has online Bible study sites. For links, visit DiscipleLand.com/downloads.

Bring in your questions and answers to share with us next time. Let's keep growing in our knowledge of God's Word—it will bring us closer to the Author of those words and truths.

Ask and Answer

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Write down your questions about Jonah 1-2. Use Bible reference tools to help you find the answers.

WHO?

Who threw Jonah into the water (Jonah 1:15 vs.2:3)?

who was the captain?

WHAT?

What made Nineveh so "great" (1:2)?

what did the sailors sacrifice?

WHEN?

How long was Jonah in the water before the fish came (2:6)?

when did Jonah pray?

WHERE?

Where did Jonah finally land (2:10)?

where are the "roots of the mountains"?

WHY?

Why didn't Jonah want to go to Nineveh (1:3)?

why did the cast lot land on Jonah?

GOD WELCOMES OUR QUESTIONS!

HOW?

How did Jonah survive inside a fish (2:1)?

how did Jonah breathe?



Inspire Action

Teacher—Choose one activity that will encourage learners to apply the Bible truth to their lives.

Ups and Downs (10 minutes)

This Bible verse search helps kids see how Jonah’s disobedience led to his “down times.”

Life is full of ups and downs. We’ll take a quick ride with Jonah on the roller coaster of his life. Let’s see if we can figure out what caused each “down time.” Ask for volunteers to read the verses and let the kids tell you the “down time” mentioned in the verse.

- 1:3 (Jonah went down to Joppa)
- 1:5 (Jonah went down below the deck)
- 1:5 (Jonah lay down and fell asleep)
- 1:15 (Jonah was thrown overboard and went down into the sea)
- 2:6a (Jonah sank down to the bottom of the mountains)

Why did Jonah have these “down times”? Let’s see what brought a huge “upper” to his life. Ask a child to read Jonah 2:6b. **What changed?** (Jonah’s repentance led God to bring him up from certain death.) **Jonah’s repentance was the smartest thing he did!**

As we think about Jonah and try to gain knowledge, how can we make sure we also gain “heart knowledge”? Encourage responses.

OR

Jonah—Revised Version (10 minutes)

This creative discussion shows kids how obedience ends in a different story than disobedience does.

Jonah’s story would have been drastically different if he had faithfully obeyed God and headed directly to Nineveh. We’ve talked about questions today. What are some questions you have about Jonah’s life if he had obeyed? Let the children share their questions. **We don’t have any way to research and find answers, but we can have some fun creating our own versions of Jonah 1-2 about an obedient Jonah. What do you think might have happened if Jonah had been obedient?** Give each child an opportunity to imagine what Jonah’s revised story would have been like.

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Complete the HeartBeat, challenging children to decide for themselves how to view the story of Jonah.

Find the Figures

15

The Bible contains many examples of colorful (figurative) language. Write a sensible meaning for each phrase.

VERSE PHRASE	ACTUAL MEANING
1:1 “the Word of the LORD came”	God spoke to
1:9 “I fear the LORD”	I am in awe of God
1:14 “do not put innocent blood on us”	don’t hold us responsible
2:2 “from the depth of Sheol”	the worst situation
2:4 “look again to the Temple”	turn to God
2:6 “the earth barred me”	I felt imprisoned



To understand timeless truths, grasp what the passage really means! Consider the incredible, imagination-stretching “fish story” in Jonah. Did it actually happen? Did Jonah exaggerate or make up the story? Could Jonah have been swallowed by a real fish—and live to tell about it?

>>What do I think? What is the sensible, straightforward meaning? Does Jonah’s fish story make sense, or is it a figure of speech?

Literal Figurative Not Sure

answers will vary

>>Evidence and reasons for my answer:

