

Jonah the Groaner

Directions

The children stand in a line with a leader at one side narrating the story. As the narrator tells the story, the children respond by echoing the narrator, saying some response lines, and doing lots of actions. The children should get the hang of what to do with a couple of practises. Leaders can join in to help guide the children when performing in church.

To engage the audience, teach them this response at the beginning and encourage them to join in along with the children.

When you hear the line '**What did Jonah do?**' respond by saying '**Jonah groaned**' and then **groan loudly**. Have a practise before you begin.

Narrator: Jonah was a groaner. That's right - a groaner. So when God told him to go to Nineveh and tell the people who lived there to change their evil ways, what did Jonah do?

Children: **Jonah groaned. [groan loudly]**

Narrator: Not Nineveh!

Children: **Not Nineveh! [shake heads]**

Narrator: Anywhere but Nineveh!

Children: **Anywhere but Nineveh. [nod heads]**

Narrator: You see, the people who lived in Nineveh were the enemies of the Israelites and Jonah for one wasn't too keen on them! So Jonah thought for a while.....

Children: **[pose looking thoughtful]**

Narrator: and then Jonah bought himself a ticket.

Children: **[large, exaggerated movements - rummage in pocket, pull out imaginary coin, hold up between finger and thumb, hand over money and mime taking ticket]**

Narrator: A ticket for a boat ride.

Children: **A boat ride? Oh goody! [rub hands together]**

Narrator: A boat ride that would take him far away from Nineveh.

Children: **Far away from Nineveh! [big smiles, thumbs up]**

Narrator: God listened to Jonah groan. God watched him buy his ticket. But God still wanted Jonah to go to Nineveh. So when the boat reached the deepest part of the sea, God sent a storm.

Children: **[sway violently from side to side, wave hands in the air, make wind sounds]
Whoop, Whoop, whoosh, whoosh,**

Narrator: The sailors cried out, 'God, save us!'

Children: **'God, save us!' [look heavenward and put hands together in praying mode]**

Narrator: We're sinking!

Children: **We're sinking! [look down and mime looking very frightened]**

Unit 10

Narrator: The captain said, 'God must be very angry with someone onboard'.
And what did Jonah do?

Children: **Jonah groaned! [groan!]**

Narrator: Jonah groaned, 'It's me!'

Children: **'It's me,' [with groany, moany voices]**

Narrator: 'I'm the one God's angry with. God told me to go to Nineveh.....

Children: **[point to the right]**

Narrator: ...and here I am, sailing in the opposite direction.

Children: **[point to the left]**

Narrator: Throw me into the sea and your troubles will be over.'
So reluctantly, the sailors tossed Jonah into the water.

Children: **1.....2.....3.....SPLASH!! [swing arms as if tossing something heavy]**

Narrator: And almost at once, the sea grew calm. What did Jonah do?

Children: **Jonah groaned. [groan loudly]**

Narrator: Oh dear!

Children: **Oh dear!**

Narrator: **I'm siiiiiinking!**

Children: **I'm siiiiiinking! [wave arms and slowly sink down]**

Narrator: I'm going to drown!

Children: **I'm going to drown! [continue waving and sinking down]**

Narrator: Then Jonah saw the biggest fish he'd ever seen coming toward him. What did Jonah do?

Children: **Jonah groaned. [groan loudly]**

Children: **That's the biggest fish I've ever seen!**

Narrator: And before he could groan another groan, the fish opened its mouth...

Children: **[stretch out two arms in front of body with palms together and then open separate palms like a giant mouth opening]**

Narrator: and swallowed Jonah up!

Children: **[with arms still outstretched, bring hands together with a big clap, like a giant mouth closing]**

Narrator: It was God who sent the fish - to rescue Jonah, and to give him time to think. He had plenty to groan about, of course; the fish's slimy stomach.....

Children: **YUCK [Hug yourself]**

Narrator: and the stinky smell

Children: **YUCK, YUCK [wave hand in front of nose]**

Unit 10

Narrator: But Jonah was still alive - and that was something to cheer about!

Children: **HURRAY! [punch air with fist]**

Narrator: So Jonah stopped his groaning

Children: **[mime zipping lips together]**

Narrator: and said a prayer instead. I was drowning, Lord.

Children: **I was drowning, Lord. [hands together and head bowed in prayer]**

Narrator: But you saved me.

Children: **But you saved me. [hands together and head bowed in prayer]**

Narrator: So now I will do whatever you want.

Children: **So now I will do whatever you want. [hands together and head bowed in prayer]**

Narrator: Three days later, the fish spat Jonah....

Children: **[Vomiting sound]**

Narrator:up on a beach.

Children: **[Jump forward as if being flung out of the fish's mouth]**

Narrator: And Jonah kept his promise and went straight to Nineveh to share God's message with the Ninevites.

Children: **[Turn 90° to right and march on spot]**