**Jonah**

**(Three Days in the Belly of a Fish)**

Dramatis Personae:

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Jonah | 1 student |  | Narrators | 4 students (mixed voices) |
| Ship captain | 1 student |  | Citizens/children | As needed |
| Sailors | 5 students |  |  |  |
| God | Teacher |  | Props & Scene change | Student helpers |

**Scene 1 – Jonah’s house**

**Narrator 1** Long, long ago,

**Narrator 2:** in a far away land called Israel,

**Narrator 3:** there lived a man called Jonah. *(Jonah sits reclined, studying a scroll)*

**Narrator 4:** One day he heard God talking to him directly.

**God:** Jonah! *(Jonah sit up abruptly)*. Jonah, it’s me. *(Jonah fix gaze upwards to where voice came from)*

**Jonah:** My God in heaven?

**God:** Yes. I’m glad I got your attention.

**Jonah:** I am so happy! Thank you for talking to me like this.

**God:** The reason is that I have an urgent work for you to do.

**Jonah:** And you think I can do it?

**God:** I know you can. And I’ll always be with you.

**Jonah:** OK, I’ll do what you want me to do.

**God:** You will need to travel over one week on foot.

**Jonah:** I’ll go where you want me to go. Just tell me where.

**God:** Good. I want you to go to the biggest and most powerful city in the world. *(Jonah’s face change to fear and displeasure)*

**Jonah:** Is it Nineveh?

**God:** Yes.

**Jonah:** But why, Lord?

**God:** I want you to tell the people of that city that I know how bad they are, that I love them very much and want them to change. But if they do not change their evil ways, their city will be destroyed. *(pause)* Thanks, Jonah.

**Jonah** *(worried, get up and pace the stage)* Nineveh. Seriously?

**Narrator 1:** Jonah found it hard to believe that God’s task for him was for real.

**Jonah:** *(to himself)* Go to Nineveh ….. tell the people about God’s love ….. ask them to change their wicked ways. Why?

**Narrator 2:** The more Jonah thought about the duty, the more he disliked it.

**Jonah:** *(pace back and forth)* The people of Nineveh are our enemies. Why should I help them? Let them die, for all I care!

**Narrator 3:** It didn’t take long for Jonah to reach a decision.

**Jonah:** I will NOT go to Nineveh. I will go in the OPPOSITE direction. *(start packing)* Instead of walking over the desert, I will take a ship across the sea! *(bag on back, walk off stage)*

**Narrator 4:** So Jonah walked towards the sea.

**Narrator 1:** Then to the port area of Joppa.

**Scene 2 – Joppa, by the docks**

*Sailors getting ready to sail*

**Jonah:** Hi there! Where’s your ship going?

**Captain:** To the city of Tarshish.

**Narrator 2:** Tarshish was far away across the sea.

**Jonah:** Perfect! I will sail with you. Here, take this gold as my payment.

**Captain:** *(take gold coin, look at it)* OK, get on board.

**Jonah:** Thanks. *(board ship, find space for himself)*

**Narrator 3:** Jonah was running as far away from God as he could.

**Narrator 4:** And he felt pretty good about it. *(make himself comfortable, close eyes and sleep)*

**Narrator 1:** The ship sailed smoothly and everything was normal.

**Sailor 1:** Smooth sailing for so many hours!

**Sailor 2:** Yes, this is really nice.

**Sailor 3:** And easy job for us.

**Sailor 4:** The Captain says it will be the same tonight. *(all sailors relax)*

**Narrator 2:** In the middle of the night, the Lord set out a great wind into the sea.

**Narrator 3:** The ship rocked back and forth.

**Narrator 4:** The sky turned black and a big storm hit the ship.

**Narrator 1:** The sailors worked hard to steady the ship. *(sailors swaying and working hard with the ropes and getting water out)*

**Captain:** Work and pray! Come on boys, work and pray!

**Narrator 2:** All the sailors prayed to their gods.

**Narrator 3:** But to absolutely no effect.

**Sailor 1:** We pray to you Baal, lord of the universe.

**Sailor 2:** Listen to our prayers and help us through this storm.

**Sailor 3:** Oh heavenly Yamm, god of the sea, lead us to safety.

**Sailor 4:** Asharte,beautiful queen of heaven, hear our prayers.

**Narrator 4:** During this whole time, Jonah was sleeping peacefully.

**Narrator 1:** Lightning flashed, and the Ship Captain saw Jonah.

**Captain:** Hey, *(nudge Jonah)* wake up!Why are you not praying to your god? *(Jonah act disinterested)*

**All Sailors:** Save us from this storm.

Have mercy on us.

Hear our prayers.

**Captain:** We need to find out who among us is the cause of this evil. Everyone come here! *(make all to draw string/straw. Everyone compare what they drew. Jonah got the short string/straw)*

**All Sailors:** *(point at Jonah)* It’s you!

**Sailor 1:** Tell us, what sort of evil is this?

**Sailor 2:** What is your work?

**Sailor 3:** Where did you come from?

**Sailor 4:** And what country are you from?

**Sailor 5:** Hurry up! What evil are you bringing on us?

**Captain:** Be quiet! Let him talk!

**Jonah:** I am a Hebrew. I am running away from my God.

**Captain:** But why are you running away from your god?

**Jonah:** Well, . . . *(miming telling his story)*

**Narrator 2:** Jonah told them all that happened.

**Jonah:** It is my fault that the sea is so violent for you.

**All Sailors:** So, what shall we do now?

**Jonah:** Throw me into the sea and the sea will calm down for you.

**Captain:** No. No matter what you have done, we cannot throw you overboard and let you die. That’s not right.

**Sailors:** Agree.

**Sailor 1:** Let us try to harder to steady the ship. When we get to shore, we’ll leave this man there.

**Other Sailors:** Yes, let’s do that!

**Narrator 3:** The sailors worked and worked, but their ship was about to sink.

**Narrator 4:** At last they decided to toss Jonah overboard.

**Captain** O God of this man, forgive him and take care of him. *(throw Jonah overboard)*

**Narrator 1:** The LORD had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. *(giant fish swallow Jonah)*

**Narrator 2:** Jonah was not very comfortable but safe in the belly of the fish.

**Scene 3 – In the fish belly**

**Narrator 3:** Jonah was in the belly of the giant fish for three days and three nights.

**Narrator 4:** He was totally alone in the dark.

**Narrator 1:** He had plenty of time to think about what he had done.

**Narrator 2:** Then he called back to God.

**Jonah:** Oh Lord, my God!

**God:** Hello, Jonah.

**Jonah:** Oh God, I’m so glad that you’re here with me.

**God:** You tried to hide from me.

**Jonah:** Yes. I now know that it was really wrong.

**God:** You have learned your lesson. Come on, Jonah, let’s get you out of here. *(out of fish mouth)*

*(Lights turn on brightly)*

Jonah, Nineveh is behind those hills. *(Jonah looks)* Go tell the people there about me and my love for them.

**Jonah:** God, I’m ready. *(get up and start walking)*

**Narrator 3:** So Jonah went to Nineveh.

**Narrator 4:** He delivered God’s message to that city. *(citizens/children listen)*

**Narrator 1:** All the people, young and old, listened to God’s message.

**Narrator 2:** And they changed their lives. *(everyone slowly stand and gather on stage)*

**Narrator 3:** Because of His great love for them,

**Narrator 4:** God saved the people of Nineveh.

**Jonah:** And God saved me!

**THE END**