

Gem Seeking

LITTLE GEMS STORY

Parent/Teacher Preparation:

Please see the [Instructions for the Little Gems Story](#) on the YMTOI website. This will help you to understand how to prepare for the story.

Here is the link for a reading of this story:

https://www.podomatic.com/podcasts/steveberkson/episodes/2022-09-23T06_47_02-07_00

Yom Kippur Edition – The Story of Yonah

Shalom children! Today we are going to take a journey to the land of Yisra'el (**place map of Yisra'el on board**) and learn about a prophet named Yonah (**place sitting Yonah on board**). Do you know what a prophet is? (**Let children answer.**) A prophet is someone whom Yahweh tells to give a message to others. Yahweh used prophets a lot to urge His people Yisra'el to repent and change their ways, so that He wouldn't give them the curses He warned about for disobeying Him. You see, Yahweh loves His people very much; that's why He would send an obedient prophet to give them a chance to turn and follow in His ways so they wouldn't be punished. It's exactly what your parents do, isn't it? They will tell you to straighten up so they won't have to punish you for continuing to disobey them.

In this story Yahweh did something He hadn't done before. He sent His prophet Yonah to people that weren't even the children of Yisra'el. I wonder what Yahweh was up to. Yonah never asked Yahweh about it, but he knew this was something that had never happened before. And there was no way he wanted to go to a city where none of the people believed in Yahweh at all. So he disobeyed by running away from Yahweh and getting on a ship that was heading the opposite way from Nineweh. This ship was going west, to a city called Tarshish, in Spain. (**Remove sitting Yonah and place Yonah walking toward Tarshish sign on board.**)

Yonah must have been very tired, because he went down to the deepest part of the ship and fell sound asleep. But then Yahweh sent a big storm to get his attention. (**Place ship on stormy sea on board.**) The seamen became very afraid and started praying to their pagan god. (**Place men praying on board.**) Their prayers did no good at all, because the storm only got worse. So, they decided to throw away some of the supplies the ship carried, in order to make the ship lighter. (**Place cargo on board.**)

Even the captain must have been afraid, because he awoke Yonah and told him to pray to Yahweh his God. (**Place captain waking Yonah on board.**) But Yonah kept his mouth shut, so the men decided to do something to see if anyone on board might be the cause of the storm. Remember the story of Ester, where Haman cast lots to see what day the Jews would die? Well the seamen did the same thing. They cast lots and it fell on Yonah. (**Place hand casting lots on board.**)

Yonah decided to come clean about what was going on. He explained that his God was Yahweh, who made the sea and dry land, and that He was running away from Him.

This made the captain and seamen even more afraid. They asked Yonah what they should do. Yonah decided that the only way they could survive was for the sailors to throw him into the sea. Well, these men didn't want to do that, so they tried to row hard to get to shore. **(Place men rowing hard on board.)**

Yahweh had a different idea; He made the storm get stronger. Before the crew threw Yonah into the water, they asked Yahweh for forgiveness because they had no other choice. As soon as they threw Yonah overboard, the sea grew calm. The astonished sailors then made an offering and promises to Yahweh. It reminds me of when Yahweh sent all the plagues upon Mitsrayim, so that many Mitsrites started to believe in Yahweh and left their country with the Yisra'elites. **(Remove all characters from board.)**

After Yonah fell into the water, a huge fish came along and swallowed Yonah. **(Place large fish with Yonah inside its belly on board.)** For 3 days and 3 nights Yonah lived in the belly of that fish, where he had a lot of time to think and pray about what he had done. **(Place praying emoji on board.)** He remembered that the one he was running away from was the only one who could save him. **(Place deliverance emoji on board.)** And because Yonah humbled himself and gave Yahweh thanksgiving, Yahweh spoke to the fish, and the fish spit Yonah right out onto dry land. **(Place Yonah spit out of fish on board)**

Yahweh decided to give Yonah a second chance to go to Nineweh and tell them the message He had spoken to him. **(Place Yonah walking toward Nineweh sign on board.)** Do you think that Yonah followed orders this time? You better believe he did! Yonah walked 3 days to get to Nineweh, and immediately began to tell the people that in 40 days Nineweh was going to be destroyed. **(Place number 40 on board.)** If some person you didn't know just showed up in your town and told you such a thing, would you believe him? Well, the people of that city did believe.

They all began to fast and put on sackcloth, which is a type of rough clothing that means you are sad and serious about something. **(Place men in sackcloth on board.)** Remember when Esther's cousin Mordekai also did this? Well, the king of Nineweh heard about what was going on in his palace and decided to do the same thing. He even put ashes on himself, which showed how serious he was. **(Place king in sackcloth and ashes on board.)** Do you think this king had heard stories about what Yahweh did to Mitsrayim and the pagan nations that were in the land of Yisra'el? Well even if he hadn't heard, he must have believed Yonah because he commanded that everyone had to fast, even the animals. He told them that they should all stop doing anything evil or violent, hoping that Yahweh would forgive them and not punish them. **(Remove all characters from board.)**

Now Yahweh saw the good works that the king and his people did, so He told Yonah that He was not going to destroy that city after all. Do you think Yonah was happy that the people of Nineweh repented? No, he wasn't. He knew that Yahweh was kind and compassionate and did not want to have to kill these people. Yonah actually got mad at Yahweh, complaining that his whole reason for fleeing to Tarshish was that he knew Yahweh would probably forgive them and nothing would happen. I wonder why Yonah thought he could talk to Yahweh this way. Have you ever talked back to your parents? Just like your parents, Yahweh was not happy with Yonah's griping. **(Place unhappy emoji on board.)**

Yonah acted so childish that he even asked Yahweh to take his life. Can you imagine an adult acting this way? Yonah decided to sit outside the city to watch what Yahweh was going to do. It must have been pretty hot out there because Yonah tried to find shelter. Yahweh kindly took care of him by causing a plant to grow up very quickly so Yonah's head would be protected from the scorching sun. **(Place plant over sitting Yonah's head on board.)**

Yonah was very happy to have this plant until Yahweh decided to send a worm to cause that plant to dry up. **(Place worm on board.)** Yonah became so hot and miserable under that burning sun that he once again said that he wished he could die. Yahweh had to speak to him the way a parent talks to his child, asking him if he really thought he had a right to act that way. He told Yonah that just as he felt bad about that plant dying, so Yahweh felt concerned about all those people and was glad they repented.

You see, Yahweh had told Abraham long ago that he would be a father of many nations. **(Remove all characters from board and place nations on board.)** The people of Nineweh were part of those people, because following and obeying Torah made them also children of Yahweh.

And so the story ends. Do you think Yonah was sorry for his behavior? Or do you think he was a little bit like the brother of the Prodigal son, who was jealous because Yahweh loved the runaway brother too? I am so glad that Yahweh cares about everyone, and that He forgives those who are truly sorry for what they did so that they can make things right with Him. **(Place praying and deliverance emoji on board.)**

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next time for another exciting Little Gems story!