

Group discussion *Each number below includes questions that relate to the scripture. I offer a few answers, but your perspective may be better. The point is to discuss, not to get 100% agreement. Rule of thumb: the fewer questions you ask, the better. Save time for "the big question."*

Read Jonah 2 aloud.

1. Where was Jonah when he offered this prayer?

How did he get to this spot?

Why was Jonah thanking God when he had been running away?

2. What are the main ideas in this prayer?

Would you call it a prayer of thanksgiving, repentance, pleading, or something else?

Some scholars think this prayer is misplaced – thanksgiving should follow 2:10. But could you say that God saved Jonah by providing the whale? The terror in 3-6 is from drowning, not from the smell of fish.

3. Go through the prayer, asking the group to re-state each verse in their own words...

In verse 2, what happened when Jonah cried out to God?

How does Jonah describe his predicament in verses 3-6?

In what ways did Jonah find comfort in God (6-9)?

4. How does verse 8 fit with this prayer?

Why is Jonah thinking about idol worshippers? Which idol worshippers had he been with most recently?

Probably thinking his situation with God was better than the sailors with their gods.

What blessings do we miss if we do not worship God?

5. What kind of vows was Jonah making in verse 9?

What kind of sacrifice do you think Jonah intended to make?

If you read the rest of the story, you'll find that Jonah appreciated God's mercy but didn't want to see Nineveh enjoy it.

How could Jonah's sacrifice have been more pleasing to God?

Flip over two pages to Micah 6:8, where God tells what kind of sacrifice he loves.

6. When have you prayed a prayer like this one? In what sense has God rescued you from certain death?

† **The million-dollar question** *If you ask only one question, let this be it. Allow at least 20 minutes. Go around the circle and give each person an opportunity to answer. It's okay if they pass, but at least they get a chance to respond.*

Which part of Jonah's prayer fits with your walk with God this week?

Thanksgiving for deliverance?

Hanging on for dear life and looking to God?

Worried about friends living without God?

Needing to follow through on promises to God?

This prayer doesn't really fit where I am this week.

Something else?

Resources

Bible notes

- A similar passage is Psalm 18. You might read it ahead of time to get in a Psalm-ish mood!

Kid-friendly activity. *An activity designed to help kids and adults grow in faith together. Do this first, then dismiss the kids so the adults can talk.*

“Belly of the whale”

Pick the largest car in the driveway and see how many of your group members can pack into it.

Now pick the smallest car. See how many can get into it.

Make a picture. The group who sends the photo with the most people in the smallest car will get \$10 in Baskin-Robbins certificates.

How did it feel having everybody packed into a small vehicle?

How do you think Jonah felt in the fish’s belly? Jonah 2 tells us.

Read Jonah 2 aloud.

What is the main idea of this prayer?

God saved me from drowning! God is good. I will worship him and keep my vows.

When have you felt like God has saved you?

How should we respond to a God who helps us during troubled times?



October 4, 2009

LIFE Group Guide

Jonah 2 – A prayer of thanksgiving

By John Grant (jgrant@collegehills.org)

The theme for this meeting: **God rescued Jonah from the sea, so Jonah gave thanks. Just like we should.**

Kevin is preaching from the book of Jonah. This week, we look at Jonah 2, the prayer from the belly of a fish. It reflects Jonah’s thanks for God rescuing him from the sea.

This LG guide considers the rescue imagery and invites the group to consider how God has rescued us.

Willow Creek Church in Chicago offers a national SG conference each October. This year, parts of the conference will be simulcast in Nashville on Saturday October 24. I would like to go but not by myself. Would you consider going with me? It will be a fun and enriching day.

Leadership tip:

Thank you for serving! I am blessed to get to work with the small group ministry at College Hills. Every time we meet, we are touching lives and building faith. It is exciting to be your co-worker in this ministry!

Relate *Use a few to introduce the theme, check everyone’s spiritual pulse, and “break the ice.” No right or wrong answers – maybe goofy but not wrong! Look for opportunities to affirm and encourage through these questions.*

- ❖ If you could drive any car for a week, what would it be?
- ❖ Check the kid-friendly activity. It would work with adults.
- ❖ Who is your favorite football team and how many games do you think they will win this season? If you don’t have a favorite team, how many games will the Titans win?
- ❖ What is the biggest fish you have ever seen? Biggest fish you have ever caught?