

Jonah

(week 3 – chapter 1)

1. If you could be any bible character (apart from Jesus) who would you most want to be and why?

Intro question to get started. Chances are they will want to be someone pretty awesome. In reality they will discover through the study that it is more likely that they are actually like Jonah.

Read Jonah Chapter 1

2. What are your initial impressions of what Jonah as a person is like?
He seems like a bit of a fool. He is meant to be a prophet (God's chosen person to spread God's messages to the people), and yet he seems like a coward who tries to run from God.
3. How does Jonah respond to the LORD's initial command? (verses 1-3)
Jonah runs and heads in the opposite direction (about 3200km in the other direction in fact!). He tries to 'flee from the LORD'.
4. Why do you think that it is foolish for Jonah to try to run from God?
A chance for their own opinion. Hopefully they will be aware that this is plainly foolish. There is nowhere that anyone can go to get away from God – he is everywhere.
5. From verses 4-16 identify the different attitudes of the sailors and Jonah to:

	The storm	The gods / God
<i>Sailors</i>	<i>Greatly afraid (remember these guys are experienced sailors!)</i>	<i>Turn to the gods in order to try to calm the storm. Note their response to the LORD – they greatly feared him.</i>
<i>Jonah</i>	<i>Ignores it and simply sleeps</i>	<i>Recognises that his actions have caused the storm (but note that he doesn't appear to repent – he merely tells them to chuck him overboard)</i>

6. Think about the way in which you have responded to God's commands. Is your response more like that of Jonah or the sailors?
Be aware that this is not solely referring to the command to go and tell others the gospel – it includes all instructions for how we are to live out our Christian lives. Chances are their response is closer to that of Jonah.
7. Identify some specific areas in which you need to stop 'running from God'. How are you going to achieve that?
A chance to get really practical in application. Probably good stuff to share with the group for the sake of being able to keep each other accountable in the things identified.
8. How does this chapter show us that:
- a. God is merciful?
He is concerned for Ninevah (which was not part of the nation of Israel); he provides a great fish to save Jonah from drowning.
 - b. God is everywhere?
Jonah can't run from God – wherever he goes God is there to act.
 - c. God is in control?
God is completely in control of the storm – he sends it and he stops it at his will; he sends the fish to save Jonah.
9. How might knowing these three things have an impact on the way in which you live out your faith this week?
A chance to apply the above points to our lives. Some suggestions:
- *If God is merciful to all people we need to be concerned with being a witness to others regardless of who they are. Are we more concerned with our own group of friends, or are we outward focussed?*
 - *If God is everywhere we must not ignore or flee from God's commands to us. We mustn't bail out of having gospel conversations even if it seems tough or scary.*
 - *If God is in control we need to respond to him as though he is. Obedience!*