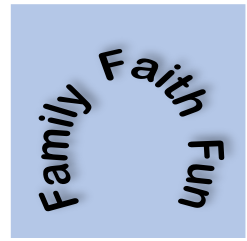
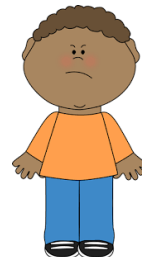




Registered Charity No 251394



DO I HAVE TO?



MARCH 2025

How often is this our response when asked to do something we really don't want to do? Perhaps putting our clothes and toys away, helping at home, getting our homework done, putting our phones away. At some time, all of us, young and old, will say: "Do I have to?" Though the answer will probably always be yes, it's often up to ourselves to decide to do what we know is right.

In the Bible we are told of a man who really didn't want to do what God asked him to do.

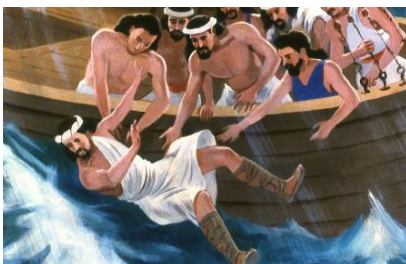
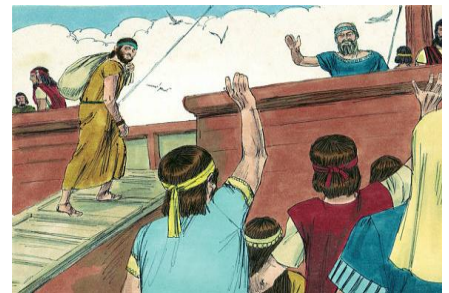
The man was a prophet and a preacher. He spent his time telling people about God. Mostly people would listen to him, but one day God told him to go to a place called Ninevah, a city of their worst enemies!

He was to tell the people of that city that God was not happy with them. They seemed to have forgotten God's rules and were behaving in very bad ways. He was to tell them that God still loved them and if they changed their behaviour their city would not be destroyed. God wanted to forgive those people so he wanted them to have a chance to change their ways, and this upset the man, who was called Jonah.

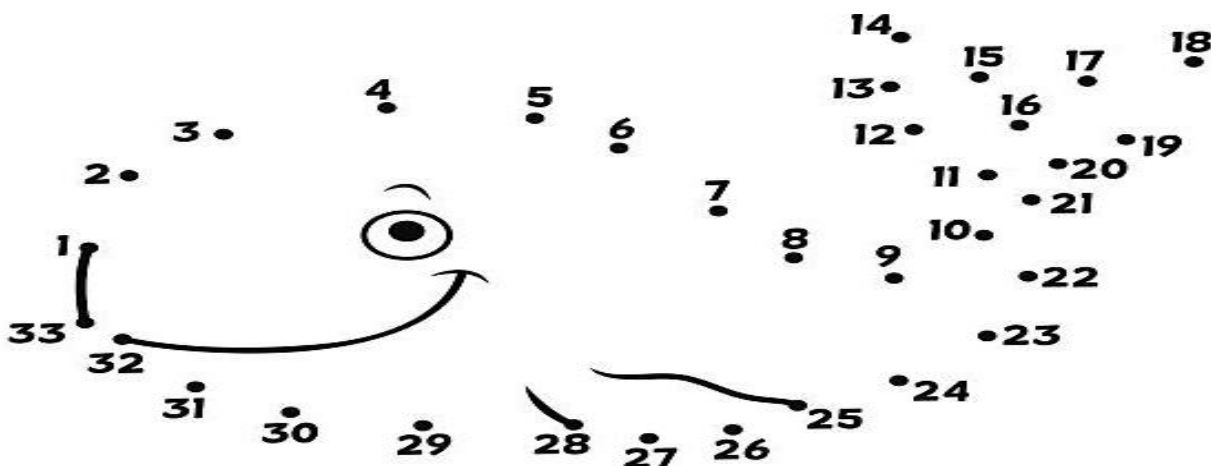
"I won't do it", he said. He thought they should be punished.

Jonah thought he would be able to get away from God and avoid having to do as He asked. He ran to the harbour where he found a ship that could take him far away from Ninevah. The ship set sail, but soon a terrible storm blew up. It was so bad the sailors were afraid that their ship would sink, so they started to throw things overboard to try to make the ship lighter.

Jonah knew that God had sent the storm so he shouted to the sailors, "It's all my fault. Throw me overboard"- and they did.



The storm stopped, but Jonah sank deep into the sea, until he was caught and swallowed by a giant fish. Jonah knew this was part of his punishment for trying to disobey God so he prayed, "Help me, help me God".



Join the dots to see the big fish.

The story continues:

After a while the fish spat Jonah out on to a beach. “Now go to Ninevah”, said God. This time Jonah obeyed and gave the people God’s message. When the King heard Jonah’s message, he ordered his people to listen and change their ways, which they did. God forgave them all.

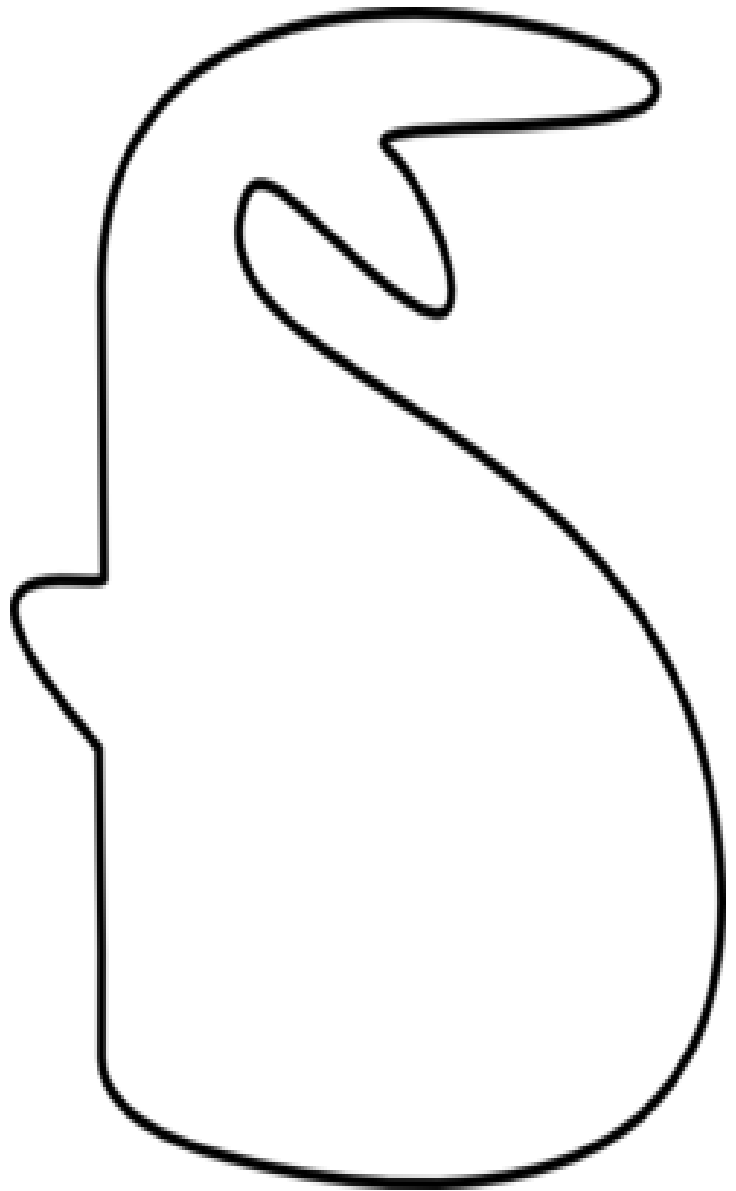


To remember how God forgave Jonah for disobeying him, and that he forgave the people of Ninevah, make a **Jonah & the Whale** wall hanging.



Use the picture above as a guide.

Paint a small paper plate blue, or cut a circle of light blue card. Trace out the whale shape onto darker blue paper. Add the water spout and eye. Draw your own picture of Jonah in the whale, or copy/cut out the one below, and stick it onto a circle of paper to represent the whales stomach, then stick both pieces onto the whale’s body. Punch some holes round the outside of the bottom half of the plate/card, and thread blue wool in and out across the picture to make the waves. Cut out a few fish to lodge in the strands of wool.



You could make a card to hang below saying:

God is happy when we say “I WILL” instead of “Do I have to”.