

11: Theme – Obedience

SONG: “Jonah’s Song” (CD track 11)

Optional Bible Reading: Jonah 1

AIM: If someone tells you to do something important, it’s best to do it straight away.

Introductory Activities

If the children aren’t familiar with the story of Jonah and the whale, then please recount the story to them either straight from the Bible (Jonah 1) or in your own words using the main points below:

- Jonah was asked by God to go to the city of Nineveh to tell them about Him
- Jonah was frightened at the thought of this, so he ran away and boarded a ship going the other way
- God sent a terrible storm and everyone on the ship thought it was going to sink
- Jonah who had been hiding below deck at first, told the sailors that the terrible storm was sent by God because he was running away
- Jonah told the sailors to throw him in the sea, they did and immediately the storm stopped
- Jonah didn’t drown because a big fish (believed to be a whale) swallowed him whole
- Jonah was in the whale for three days and three nights
- The fish spat Jonah out on dry land
- Jonah had learnt his lesson and went to Nineveh after all

Remind the children that one of the main things we can learn from this story, is that it’s good to be obedient, and that if someone asks you to do something, you should do it first time without arguing, making excuses or even trying to run away like Jonah did.

Stories/Further Activities

The Messy Day!

Matthew had everything a boy of 10 could want, a lovely home, caring parents, great friends, and just recently his Mum had had a beautiful baby girl. You would think that he would be very, very happy, wouldn’t you? However, poor Matthew was feeling very fed up with things at the moment, because ever since the arrival of his baby sister, things in Matthew’s house had become very busy, very hectic, and very noisy! There were always lots of people coming to visit and he wasn’t able to go out to play much these days, because he always ended up having to help his mother in one way or another.

Today was no different! Grandma was coming to visit, which Matthew was fairly excited about, as he hadn’t seen her in a while. However, it was also a beautiful hot summer’s day outside and Matthew wanted nothing more than to just go out and play with his friends, even for a little while!

Matthew had just got dressed and was on his way down the stairs, hoping to sneak outside, when he heard a knock at the door. He answered it quickly, praying that it would be one of his friends asking if he could go out to play. Fortunately, he was right. It was his friend Jack from school, who wanted Matthew to go to the park with him. Matthew

ran to find his mum who was busy changing a disgusting smelly nappy. Sadly though, Matthew's mum told him that there was no way he could go out to play yet, because he had to help her tidy the house ready for his Grandma coming.

Later, after Matthew had finished doing his cleaning jobs there was another knock at the door. This time it was his other friend from school, Liam. He was also asking if Matthew could go to the park.

"Surely," Matthew thought to himself, "Mum's got to say yes this time!" But sadly, the answer was still no. Matthew's mum needed him to go down to the shop to get three things for her. Then after that, she promised, he could definitely play out with his friends. Reluctantly Matthew agreed and went off to the shop with his shopping list, which was made up of the following items:

A box of chocolates – for Grandma
A tub of butter – for mum
A tub of ice-cream – for dessert

Ten minutes later, Matthew had bought the shopping and was on his way home. Then as he was walking past the park, he heard someone call his name. He turned to see Liam and Jack. They were playing football against three boys from another school.

"Can you come and play now?" Liam asked.

"No," replied Matthew with a sigh, "I've got to take this shopping home to mum first, and then I can come and play."

"OH PLEASE," said Jack, "we need you on our team. The others are winning and it isn't fair because they've got one more than us. But with your help we'll win easily."

"Well I shouldn't really," responded Matthew, "because I promised my mum I would take her shopping home first."

"OH PLEASE," said the boys yet again, "just for ten minutes."

"Well, I suppose ten minutes won't hurt," said Matthew with a big grin on his face. He put the shopping down on the ground and went off to play. Very soon, Matthew was enjoying himself so much that he forgot all about the time. Then, before he knew it, ten minutes had turned into a whole hour! "OH NO!" he thought to himself when he realised how long he'd been there, "I don't think mum's going to be very pleased!" He yelled a quick, "See-you!" to the other boys, grabbed the shopping and ran all the way home.

When he got there, his grandma had already arrived and his mum did not look pleased at all!

"Where have you been all this time?" she asked. "You look like you've been rolling around in mud! Have you been playing football?"

"Sorry," said Matthew in a very sheepish sort of way.

“Just give me the shopping,” said his mum in a bad tempered voice, “and go upstairs, change your clothes, then come and see your grandma.” So off Matthew went to get changed.

When he came down a few minutes later, his mum looked even angrier than she had before! His mum asked him to go into the kitchen. When he got there, she had each of the three items from the shopping list sitting on the table, which she asked him to open up one at a time. Can you think why? What could have happened to them?

*First, he opened Grandma’s chocolates, WHAT A STICKY MESS!
Then he opened mum’s butter, WHAT A STICKY, SLIMY MESS!!
Finally he opened the ice-cream, WHAT A STICKY, SLIMY, SLOPPY MESS!!!*

Yes that’s right everything had melted in the heat of the sun. OH DEAR! His mum then told him that because he hadn’t done as he was told, he would have to go back to the shop to buy the shopping again, but she wasn’t giving him any money this time! He would have to pay for the shopping out of his own pocket money.

Therefore, off Matthew went to the shop for the second time that day. He realised that he had been disobedient and knew that in future he would always have to try to do as he was told straight away!

Summary

Whether, you are a grown adult like Jonah or a child like Matthew, no one likes to be told to do a job that they don’t want to do. It can make you feel fed up, annoyed, lazy, worried or even scared. If you are in this situation, some of the worst things you can do are, make excuses, put the job off, argue about it or even run away. The best thing to do is to just get on with it and do the job straight away without complaining. If you do, you will feel a lot better afterwards and other people will notice how trustworthy you are and reward you with better, more exciting challenges in the future.

Prayer

*Dear Lord Jesus Christ,
Help us always, to do things that we are asked to do, willingly, and without complaining.
Amen.*