

ST PETER'S CHURCH  
NOTTINGHAM

Family Service  
Sunday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2020

# Jonah the Grumpy Prophet



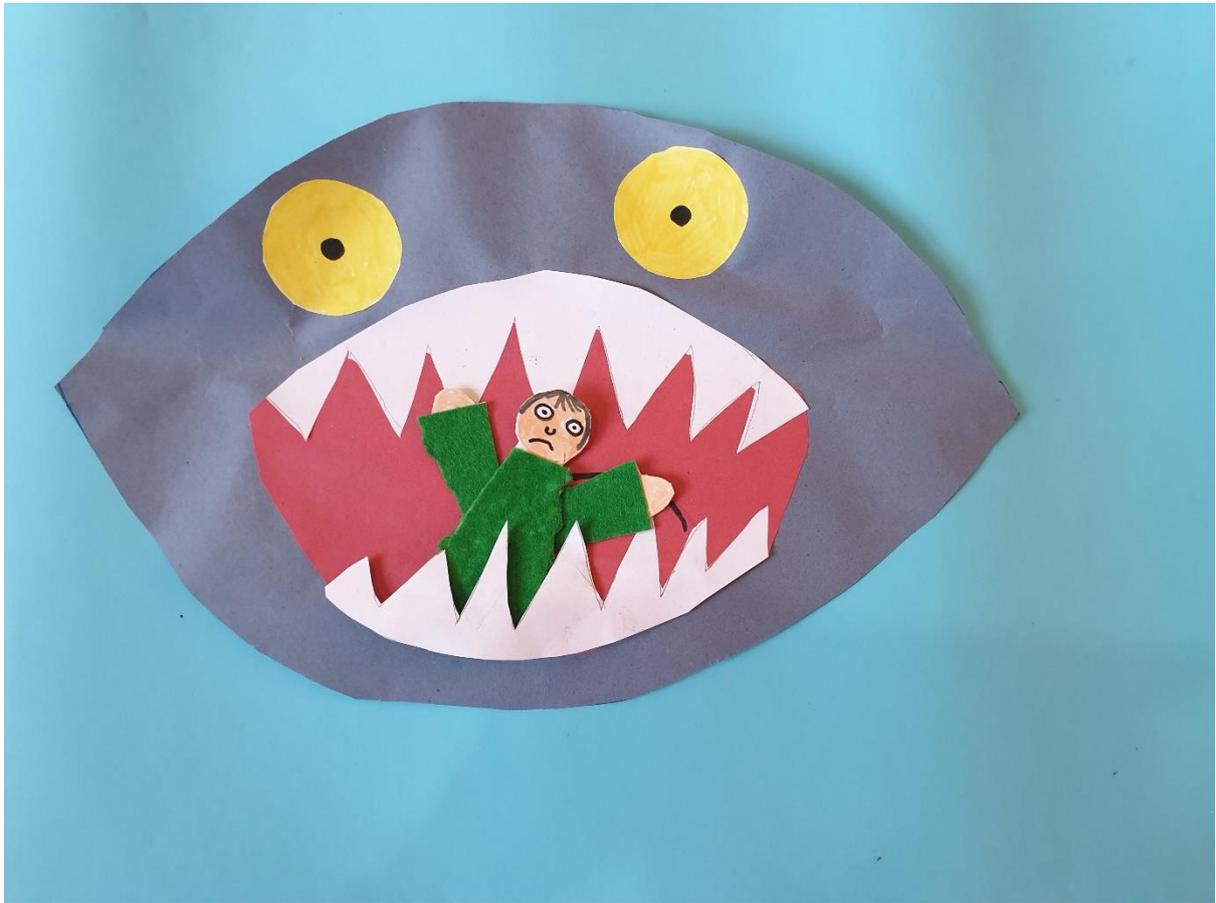
Long ago there was a very grumpy prophet called Jonah. One day, God asked him to go to the City of Nineveh and tell the people there to start behaving themselves. But Jonah didn't want to go to Nineveh, so he stomped off to find a ship going as far away from Nineveh as possible.



They hadn't got very far, when a huge storm blew up. Wind and waves battered the ship, and it looked as though they were going to sink. "Well this is rubbish" Said Jonah "You'll just have to throw me overboard. Typical!" The sailors were very surprised, but Jonah knew that he was the problem. And sure enough, as soon as they dumped him in the sea, the sun came out and the ship sailed away.



Jonah was left all alone in the water. Just when he thought that his day couldn't get any worse, a sea-monster came and swallowed him in one gulp. Inside the creature it was very dark, very wet, and very, very smelly. Jonah was not a happy prophet. He prayed to God and asked whether he could *please* get him out.



God heard and told the sea-monster to swim to Nineveh. The sea-monster was more sensible than Jonah and didn't make a fuss. Instead it swam to Nineveh and spewed the grumpy man out onto the beach. Jonah rushed into the city and told the people that they were very bad, and that God was going to punish them by destroying their town.



Jonah was very scary looking and smelt of sea-monster puke. The people were very frightened by this shouting, stinky man and listened to his warning. They all told God that they were sorry for being bad. The king said he was sorry, the queen said she was sorry, the merchants and the soldiers and the doctors and the bakers and the children said they were sorry. Even the sheep and the donkeys said that they were sorry.



When God saw that the people were sorry and wanted to try to be good, he was very pleased and forgave them. But Jonah was fuming. "This is SO unfair!" He stamped his feet. "I knew that you were going to completely waste my time. That's why I didn't want to come in the first place. You're always being loving and showing mercy. What about the big disaster I was promised? No volcano, no earthquake, no plague of frogs. This is such a let-down!" And God replied "Honestly Jonah, what is your problem?"



Jonah marched off into the desert, hoping that God might change his mind and destroy Nineveh. He sat down on the sand, and was very pleased when God sent a pumpkin plant to grow beside him. First it was the size of an orange, then it was the size of a camel, and finally it was the size of a house. The pumpkin was nice and shady, and Jonah was very pleased with it. This was the kind of treatment he felt that he deserved.



Then during the night, God sent an enormous worm. The worm also really liked the pumpkin plant, and gobbled it all up. By morning all that was left was a stalk. Jonah threw a huge tantrum, falling on the floor and kicking his feet. "I hate my life!" He wailed "I am so angry I could die! I want my pumpkin back!"



“Jonah” Said God “Yesterday you were pumpkinless, you didn’t even know that you wanted a pumpkin. You are upset because a pumpkin which came in a night and went in a night has been destroyed. A pumpkin which I might add, you did precisely diddly-squat to create and look after. How do you think I feel about Nineveh? I made and love all of the people and animals who live there. How much would it hurt me if something terrible happened to them?”



The Bible does not tell us whether Jonah learned anything about God from all of this, but I like to think that he did. God loves the people and animals that he has made, and wants them to enjoy a good life. I hope that Jonah became wiser, less grumpy and eventually managed to wash the smell of sea-monster puke out of his hair.

# THE END

## HYMN

From the tiny ant, from the tiny ant,  
to the elephant, to the elephant,  
from the snake to the kangaroo, from the snake to the kangaroo,  
from the great white shark, from the great white shark,  
to the singing lark, to the singing lark,  
care for them it's up to you, care for them it's up to you.  
Care for them it's up to you, care for them it's up to you,  
no-one else will care for them,  
it's up, it's up, it's up to you.

From the tabby cat, from the tabby cat,  
to the dessert rat, to the dessert rat,  
from the hamster to the chimpanzee, from the hamster to the chimpanzee,  
from the common turn, from the common turn,  
to the crawling worm, to the crawling worm,  
care for them it's up to me, care for them it's up to me.  
Care for them it's up to me, care for them it's up to me,  
no-one else will care for them, its' up, it's up, it's up to me.

From the mongrel dog, from the mongrel dog,  
to the snorting hog, to the snorting hog,  
from the badger to the platypus, from the badger to the platypus,  
from the small minnow, from the small minnow,  
to the white rhino, to the white rhino,  
care for them it's up to us, care for them it's up to us.  
Care for them it's up to us, care for them it's up to us,  
no-one else will care for them,  
it's up, it's up, it's up to us.