

Ice Age Clip - with Kids

- Draw out how Diego went to extraordinary lengths to help Manny and the human child
 - in the Bible story over the next couple of weeks, **God goes to extraordinary lengths to save the people of Nineveh**
 - today, we'll see how that involved going to **extraordinary lengths to save Jonah from his own foolishness in trying to avoid God!**
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Introduction

- In lots of ways a hugely familiar story!
 - kids picture books with the whale in - one of those stories that makes up not just our Christian heritage but is part of our wider cultural heritage...
- But what else is familiar about this story of Jonah?
 - its easy to point the finger at Jonah - "**him over there is bad, let God down, ran away...**"
 - but really, **Jonah's story is familiar because it is so often similar to our own story**

Jonah runs off from God because he doesn't like what he hears

- **v.9** makes it clear that **Jonah is not someone who normally ignores the word of the Lord**
 - he isn't someone who would mistake God speaking for his own thoughts
 - he is a worshipper, a believer, a follower of the Lord
- **He is one of us...**
- However, when he gets **this** message from God, he realises it is something he **doesn't** want to do:
 - **he runs away...** ship, even in the storm, hiding below decks...
- Take a long, slow look at ourselves and we'll realise that we do this each and every day
 - how often do we struggle to actually do the things that we know to be right in our daily lives?
 - how often do we struggle with God asking us to do something that we'd rather not, that might inconvenience us?

Jonah knows he is doing the wrong thing, but does it anyway

- In **v.10** we discover that Jonah has told the sailors he is running away from God
 - he is fully aware of what he is doing!
 - he can't come up with a "**I didn't realise**" excuse
 - and that knowledge is simply confirmed when, during the storm, the lot points to him as the cause (**v.7**)
- That long, slow look at ourselves when we realised how often we run from doing what God wants because we don't like what God asks?
 - many times we too, like Jonah, run **consciously, disobediently**
- Oh, we don't like to admit it!
- **Session conference this afternoon story?**

God uses an extraordinary set of events to bring Jonah back to him

- The storm and the fish may sound like the stuff of fairy stories to our modern ears:
 - but God uses them to bring Jonah back to himself
 - that is God's purpose - he's not showing off, or trying to **wow** the sailors - **he's bringing Jonah back to himself**
- Has God ever done that in your life, in your experience?

If God seems far away, who's moved?

- Ever heard the phrase:
 - "if God seems far away, who's moved?"
 - can seem a hackneyed cliché, trite...
 - but it is certainly true here
- Jonah tried his best to distance himself from God:
 - **but God does even more to keep one step ahead of Jonah!**
- Wonderfully, God will never let us get too far away from himself either:
 - all we have to do is respond to his call and come back to him...
 - he will always have us back!