

# Five Questions that Must be Answered

## Lesson 1—What is the Great Commission?

### OVERVIEW

Background Bible Passage: Jonah 2:10-3:4

Key Verse: Matthew 28:18-20

### BEFORE CLASS

**Preparation:** *Your preparation will determine the direction your class will go.*

- On a scale of 1 to 10, how willing are you to surrender to God's call?
- Do you treat the Great Commission as the Great Commission or the Great Suggestion?
- Study and prepare your lesson so that you are familiar with the teaching outline.
- Pray for each student by name.
- Use the Contact 1-2-3 system to the right to follow up on students who have recently missed on Sunday morning.
- Look for ways to connect with the students in your class outside of the walls of the church.

### CONTACT 1-2-3 SYSTEM

*CONTACT 1--The first time a student is absent, give him a call.*

*CONTACT 2--Following the second absence, send him a postcard.*

*CONTACT 3-- The third week they are absent, pay him a visit.*

*THINK ABOUT IT: What does it say to a student when they miss multiple weeks in a row and are never contacted? It says, "It really doesn't matter if you're here or not." Small things communicate great messages. Let the three "small" things above communicate that you care and miss your students when they are absent.*

### OPENING ACTIVITY

#### Opening Questions

- *Can anyone tell a story about a hero?*
- *What do you think it would be like to be a hero? What do you think it would be like to save someone's life?*
- *Do you think there will be heroes in heaven? If so, who do you think these people will be?*

- *Spiritually, can you save others?* (No, *you* cannot save anyone spiritually—only God can do that but you can be a witness that might lead to their salvation. You can't *save* them but you can *lead* them to Christ.)

SAY: Today we're going to take a look at a story of a man who didn't want to tell others about God. When God gave Him the command to act, he ran away. *Can anyone guess who this might be?* (Jonah)

## BIBLE LESSON

### Turn to Jonah.

- *Who can summarize for me the story of Jonah?* (Jonah was a prophet whom God had instructed to go to Ninevah, his worst enemies, and tell them that if they didn't repent of their sins, God was going to destroy them. Jonah resisted, "ran away" from God by getting on a boat and going the opposite direction. God sent a storm to stop him and the only way the storm would stop was for the sailors to throw Jonah overboard. When they did, God appointed a big fish to swallow him. He spent three days and three nights in the fish where he repented and prayed.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 2:10-3:4

- *How would you have felt if God would have given you the command to go throughout a city proclaiming that it would be destroyed in forty days if they didn't repent of their sins?*
- *Would you have obeyed or would you have resisted the way Jonah did?*
- *Would you have been embarrassed or afraid of what people might think or say?*
- *Why do you think it's hard for some people to witness to others?* (Fear, a feeling of unworthiness, selfishness, etc.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 3:5-9

- *How did the Ninevites respond to God's word?*
- *Why do you think they called a "fast"?* (Fasting is a way of totally humbling yourself before God, a way of physically picturing that all you really need in life is Him.)
- *Why do you think they put on sackcloth and sat in ashes?* (In their culture this was a way of showing sorrow, a sign that they were mourning over the wrong things they had done.)
- *What else did they do?* (The men called on God to forgive them and they turned from their wickedness.)

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Jonah 3:10

- *How did God show mercy?* (He did not destroy them for their sins because they had repented and turned from them.)
- *Will God always show mercy to someone who repents of their sin and turns to Him?* (Yes—regardless of the bad, even terrible things they’ve done.)

**KEY VERSE**

*SAY:* Let’s think about some other people who were hesitant to be used by God.  
*Consider:*

- (1) Gideon who claimed to be “the least.” How could God use him?
  - (2) Moses at the burning bush tries to explain to God why he can’t be used...I am slow of speech, what if they won’t believe me, “*Please, Lord, send someone else...*” (Exodus 3-4).
  - (3) When God called Jeremiah he “*protested, ‘Oh no, Lord God. Look, I don’t know how to speak since I am only a youth’*” (Jer. 1:6).
  - (4) Now we have Jonah who is hesitant for a different reason. His reason is that he didn’t want the people to turn to God.
- *How does Jonah’s heart compare to God’s heart?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Luke 19:10

*SAY:* God’s heart is to seek and save those who are lost. It might be easy for us to condemn Jonah for his unwillingness, but what about our own. We asked, “How does Jonah’s heart compare to God’s heart,” but there is a greater question:

- *How does your heart compare to God’s heart?*

Choose a volunteer to read—Read Matthew 28:18-20

*SAY:* Jesus spoke these words as His last statement to His followers. He wanted to remind them one last time what the heart and soul of their life’s work should be.

*SAY:* These verses are called the Great Commission and they are God’s call to every believer. Jesus didn’t speak this just to missionaries. He didn’t say it just to those to whom He has called to ministry. He said this as the life-call of every believer and it is a command. This is the Great Commission not the Great Suggestion.

**ILLUSTRATION:** You can picture these verses in the following way—Imagine a sandwich with three layers: The bottom piece of bread, the top piece of bread, and the meat of it. In these verses the bottom slice would represent Christ’s *power*, His complete authority with which He sends you out. The top piece of bread would be the promise of His *presence* to always be with you. And the meat of it all would be the command “to make disciples.”

- *To what extent have you obeyed the call given to you in the Great Commission?*
- *To what extent do you desire to be faithful to this call? What might this say about your relationship with Christ?*
- *What obstacles might you need to overcome in order to be faithful to God’s call in these verses?*

## **WRAP IT UP**

**SAY:** There is no greater joy outside your own salvation experience as the joy you experience when you lead someone else to Christ and disciple them as a follower of His.

## **Prayer Time**

*Pray specifically today that your students will have a boldness and willingness to continually share Jesus with others.*

List prayer requests below and on the back of this page and pray for your students throughout the week. *Ask if any of your students want to pray today.*

## **Prayer Requests**