



# Christ Church

## UNLOCKING CHRIST CHURCH CATHEDRAL: FAMILY/SCHOOL RESOURCES

### A VIRTUAL VISIT ONLINE

#### The Jonah Window



#### **Introduction: The story of Jonah.**

Inside Christ Church Cathedral, you can see a very detailed stained-glass window, showing a man called Jonah looking down at a city called Nineveh. This window tells one of many different episodes from the story of Jonah which is one of the books in the Old Testament, the oldest part of the Bible.

The window shows the part of the story where Jonah was quarrelling with God. He was angry that God wanted to forgive the people of Nineveh who had been very wicked for a long time. Jonah thought they had been so bad God should not forgive them. But Jonah finally accepted God's mercy was wider than he had thought. He listened to God and learned a valuable lesson. He realized God's love for everyone is limitless. God just wants to have a close and good relationship with all people.

**Background:** Stained glass windows used to be very important inside churches. Most poor people could not read or write. They couldn't understand the Bible in church because it was being read in Latin. So, the windows helped tell Bible stories through pictures. Stained-glass windows came to be known as the Bibles of the poor.

**Introduction:** This is a stained-glass window by a Dutch artist who worked for several years in Oxford in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. Abraham van Lingen made this window in 1633. It is dedicated to a Prebender (a Canon priest) whose name, in Latin, was Carolus (Charles).

**History:** This window is rather special because it is the only one that survived out of 18 windows which were smashed to pieces during the Civil War between King Charles and Parliament. After the war, Oliver Cromwell and the Puritans ruled the country for 11 years and in many cases destroyed what they saw as unnecessary and distracting decoration inside churches. Many beautiful stained-glass windows were broken and there was a great deal of destruction in churches and cathedrals across the country.

**Look carefully:** Can you see that the blue and red areas are made of glass that is stained blue and red but, in the rest of the window, the clear rectangles of glass have been painted. They show the city of Nineveh and a gourd tree, with yellow gourds (similar to butternut squash from the squash family).

**Bible story:**

The story of Jonah and the Whale (or big fish) is one of the strangest events in the Bible. The theme of the story is obedience. Jonah was a rather rebellious prophet who thought he knew better than God and tried to run away from what God wanted him to do. But in the end, he served God well. On the way, he learned that the Lord's mercy extended beyond Jonah and Israel, to all people who believe, even the wayward people of Nineveh.

While he was inside the belly of the great fish or whale, Jonah said this prayer....

**Bible reading: Jonah 2: 1-10**

<sup>1</sup> From inside the fish Jonah prayed to the LORD his God. <sup>2</sup> He said:

'In my distress I called to the LORD,  
and he answered me.

From deep in the realm of the dead I called for help,  
and you listened to my cry.

<sup>3</sup> You hurled me into the depths,  
into the very heart of the seas,  
and the currents swirled about me;  
all your waves and breakers  
swept over me.

<sup>4</sup> I said, "I have been banished  
from your sight;  
yet I will look again  
towards your holy temple."

<sup>5</sup>The engulfing waters threatened me,  
the deep surrounded me;  
seaweed was wrapped around my head.  
<sup>6</sup>To the roots of the mountains I sank down;  
the earth beneath barred me in for ever.  
But you, LORD my God,  
brought my life up from the pit.  
<sup>7</sup>'When my life was ebbing away,  
I remembered you, LORD,  
and my prayer rose to you,  
to your holy temple.  
<sup>8</sup>'Those who cling to worthless idols  
turn away from God's love for them.  
<sup>9</sup>But I, with shouts of grateful praise,  
will sacrifice to you.  
What I have vowed I will make good.  
I will say, "Salvation comes from the LORD."

#### **Things to do at home - a few ideas:**

- Read 'Jonah the Groaner', written by Bob Hartman and published in the Lion Storyteller Bible (1995)
- Try writing a rhyming poem called 'Jonah the Groaner' about this story.
- Colour, cut out and make the Pop-Up of Jonah landing on the beach. Use paper glue to fix the tabs and make the scene stand up in 3D.
- Find out how stained-glass is made with this link to the Khan Academy.  
<https://www.khanacademy.org/humanities/medieval-world/gothic-art/beginners-guide-gothic-art/a/how-stained-glass-is-made>
- Which words come to mind as you think about Jonah? One of those words might be 'STUBBORN'. Can you find other words that would describe him?
- Draw a picture of Jonah being thrown overboard or sitting inside the whale or big fish.
- Explore different types of gourds and squashes.  
The main distinction between squashes and gourds is that squashes are grown and harvested to eat, while gourds are cultivated for decoration purposes.
- You may be able to buy and cook some butternut squash or pumpkin. The BBC website has several recipes to choose from and make, with an adult to help you.  
<https://www.bbcgoodfood.com/recipes/collection/butternut-squash>