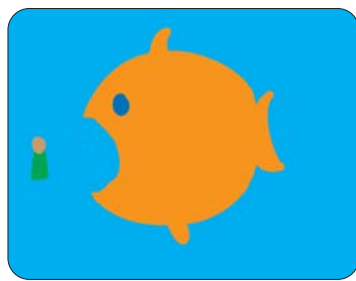
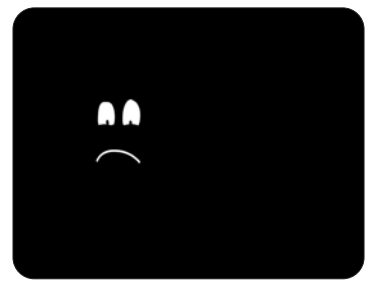
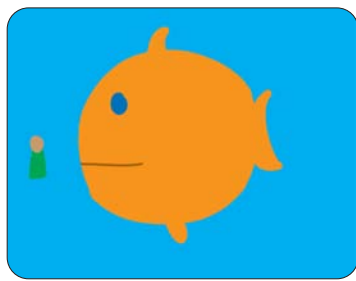
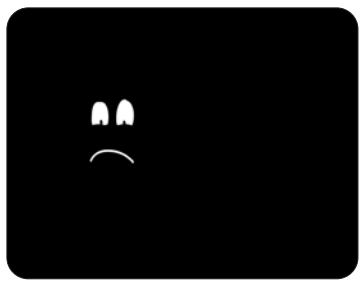
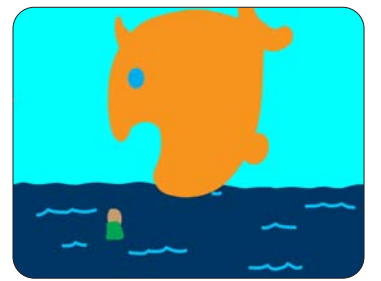
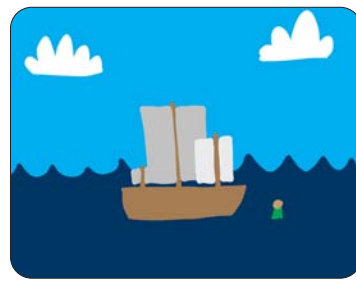
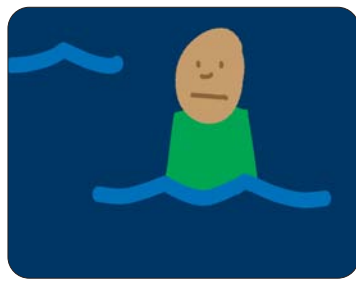
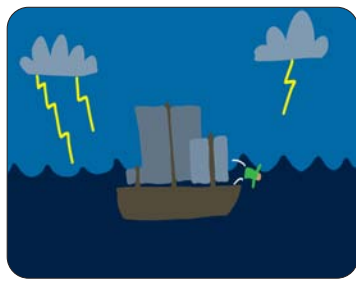
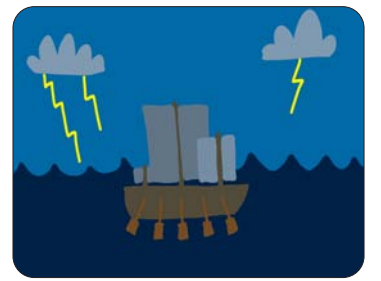
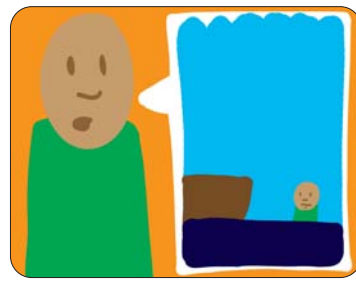
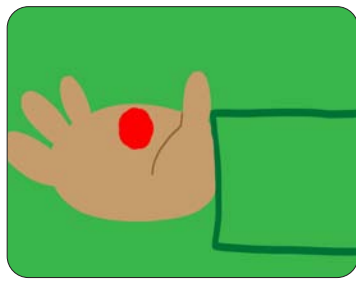
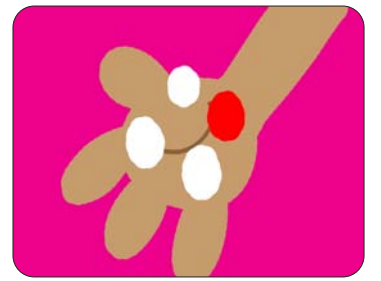
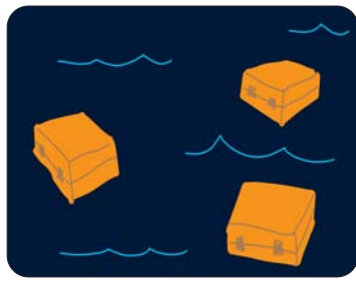
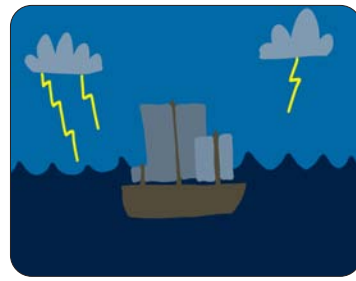
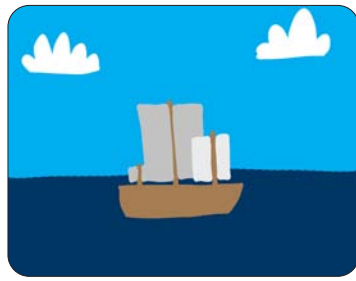
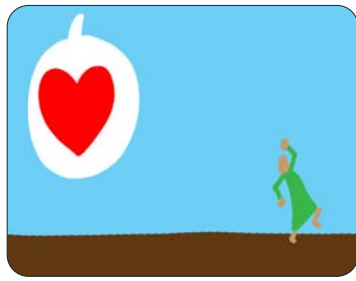
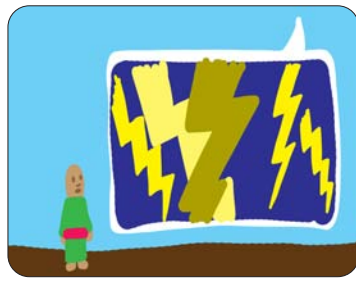
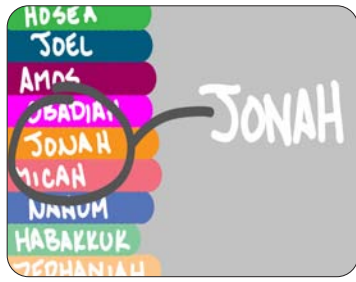


GOD'S STORY

JONAH





So, part of God's story is in the book of Jonah, and it begins like this.

God told Jonah, "Go to the city of Ninevah and tell the people they have been wicked, and they should stop being wicked, or I will destroy them." But Jonah got scared and decided to go to the city of Tarshish by boat. Tarshish is in the opposite direction of where God wanted Jonah to go.

Can you imagine running away from God?

Anyway, when the boat was at sea, God sent a storm. The storm was so scary that all the sailors thought the ship was going to be destroyed. So they threw a bunch of stuff off the ship. I don't know how less luggage was going to help, but that's what they did. While all of this was happening, Jonah was inside the ship sleeping. The captain saw him and said, "How can you sleep right now! Pray to your God and ask for help!"

Then the sailors decided to cast lots to find out who was responsible for the storm. Casting lots is like the lottery. Except when lots are cast, whoever wins doesn't always really win. Like this time, when the lot fell to Jonah. The sailors asked him what he had done to cause the storm and what they should do to make it stop. Jonah said, "Pick me up and throw me into the sea. That will calm the storm." But the sailors didn't want to do that. They tried to row back to shore, but the ship didn't go anywhere.

So they apologized to God for throwing Jonah over, and then they threw him overboard. I don't know if they ever apologized to Jonah, but God is the one that made the scary storm. And if you're going to apologize to anyone, you should apologize to God. It's just a good idea in general.

So, as soon as Jonah was off the boat, the storm stopped. I wonder if Jonah thought to himself, "What am I going to do now?". Well, God had an answer. All of a sudden, a big fish swallowed Jonah. Yep, Jonah was now inside a fish. Things went from bad to worse real quick. Now, the Bible says a fish swallowed Jonah. We don't know if it was a whale or something else. But whatever it was, it had to be big enough to swallow a man whole without having to chew.

(Kids, always chew your food before swallowing. You're not a giant fish.)

Anyway, Jonah was in the stomach of the fish for three days and three nights. Can you imagine being stuck in a dark and stinky place for three days straight? Like a port-a-potty. Well, imagine being inside a big fish. Dark and sloshy and really stinky. Basically a port-a-potty with fins. After the three stinky dark days, God made the fish spit out Jonah. Fish can't really "spit". Jonah got vomited out. Vomit is also known as puke, barf, hurl, oatmeal seconds, upchuck, blown grits, ralph, tossed cookies, technicolor yawn, and chunder. Basically, the fish got rid of Jonah through it's mouth. Do you get the idea?

So, while stinky Jonah was there on the beach, God told him a second time to go to Nineveh and tell the people to stop being wicked. This time Jonah went to Nineveh. Listening to God is always a good idea.

When he arrived, he told the people that God said they should turn from their evil ways. They believed him, so everyone (and I mean everyone) fasted and put on sack cloths. Fasting is when you don't eat and pray really, really hard. Putting on a sack cloth is...putting on a sack cloth. Now, when God saw how they stopped doing bad things and were really sorry, he decided not to destroy them.

And THAT'S the book of Jonah.

So, in case you missed it...here's the quick version. God told Jonah to go to Ninevah. Jonah ran away on a boat. Jonah got thrown off the boat to stop a storm. Fish swallowed Jonah. Three days later...fish threw up Jonah. Jonah told people at Ninevah to stop being wicked and they stopped. God didn't destroy them.

And THAT'S a part of God's story.

