Dramatizing of the Story of Jonah and the Great Fish
(adapted from Jonah 1, 2)

Use readers' theater to dramatize this story. Give all of the actors copies of the script so they can read their parts aloud as they improvise the appropriate actions.

This dramatization can be done with all ages. While younger children will not be able to read their parts aloud, they can join in acting out the story.

Characters: Narrator (teacher)
Jonah
Captain
Mariners (all)

Props: dry land (blanket or rug on the floor)
ship (arrange chairs or desks to form the ship)
great fish (have Jonah crawl under a table to be inside the great fish or make the
fish's belly with a blanket thrown over a desk or two chairs)
Nineveh (make a sign to place in one corner of the room)

Advance Preparation:

1. Make copies of the script for everyone and use a highlighter to mark the speaking parts for each character. Highlight all of the lines for the narrator on one script, all of the parts for Jonah on another copy, *etc.* Note: The captain says his part and also joins the rest of the mariners in what they say.

2. Gather materials for props.

Script for Dramatizing the Story of Jonah and the Great Fish

Narrator: Now the word of the Lord came to Jonah, saying, "Arise, go to Nineveh, that great city, and cry out against it; for their wickedness has come up before Me." But Jonah arose to flee to Tarshish from the presence of the Lord. He went down to Joppa and found a ship going to Tarshish. He paid the fare and went down into [the ship].

But the Lord sent out a great wind on the sea, and there was a mighty tempest on the sea, so that the ship was about to be broken up. Then the mariners were afraid. Every man cried out to his god and threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten the load. But Jonah had gone down into the lowest parts of the ship, had lain down, and was fast asleep. The captain came to him, and said…

Captain: What do you mean, sleeper? Arise, call on your God. Perhaps your God will consider us, so that we may not perish.

Mariners: Come, let us cast lots, that we may know for whose cause this trouble has come upon us.

Narrator: So, they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah.

Mariners: Please tell us! For whose cause is this trouble upon us? What is your occupation? And where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?

Jonah: I am a Hebrew. And I fear the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.

Narrator: Then the men were exceedingly afraid, because Jonah had fled from the presence of the Lord and the storm was getting worse.

Mariners: Why have you done this? …What shall we do to you that the sea may be calm for us?

Jonah: Pick me up and throw me into the sea. Then the sea will become calm for you. For I know that this great tempest is because of me.

Narrator: The men rowed hard to return to land, but they could not, for the sea continued to grow more tempestuous against them. Therefore, they cried out to the Lord…

Mariners: We pray, O Lord, please do not let us perish for this man's life, and do not charge us with innocent blood. For You, O Lord, have done as it pleased You.

Narrator: So, they picked up Jonah and threw him into the sea, and the sea ceased from its raging. Then the men feared the Lord exceedingly….

Now the Lord had prepared a great fish to swallow Jonah. And Jonah was in the belly of the fish three days and three nights. Then Jonah prayed to the Lord his God from the fish's belly.

Jonah: I cried out to the Lord because of my affliction, and He answered me.
Out of the belly of Sheol I cried, and You heard my voice.
For You cast me into the deep, into the heart of the seas….
You have brought up my life from the pit, O Lord, my God….
I remembered the Lord; and my prayer went up to You….
I will pay what I have vowed. Salvation is of the Lord.

Narrator: So, the Lord spoke to the fish, and it vomited Jonah onto dry land.