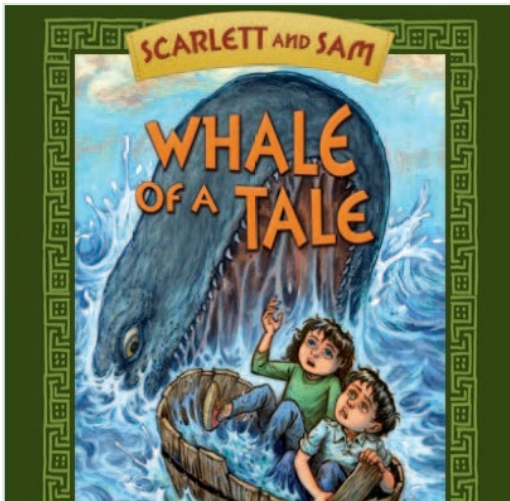


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How do you take responsibility?

He Could Run, But He Couldn't Hide

Every year the Book of Jonah is read aloud on Yom Kippur (the Day of Atonement) in synagogues around the world. In the original Bible story, Jonah is a prophet, which means it is his job to hear God's voice and give people instructions. But when God tells Jonah to travel to Nineveh and warn its residents to change their ways, Jonah sneaks onto a boat headed in the opposite direction. God sends a storm that threatens to sink the boat with its wild waves. When the crew throws Jonah overboard to reverse their luck, a giant fish swallows him up! Jonah stays in the fish's belly for three days and three nights. He calls out to God with a song of praise, and God makes the fish spit Jonah out. God repeats his command to go to Nineveh, and this time Jonah does – but he still isn't sure that he's done the right thing. The story of Jonah is both exciting and meaningful: It helps us think about whether we are ready to accept responsibility to make changes in our lives.

HANDS ON!

Make a Vision Board



Jonah finds himself inside the belly of a whale because he is running away from challenges. A vision board can help you visualize the challenges you face and set goals to deal with them head on. What better time to do that than the start of the Jewish New Year?

Supplies

- Poster board
- Old magazines
- Scissors
- Glue



Start with a large piece of poster board (optional: cut into the shape of a whale!). As you flip through the magazines, cut out images of things that relate to your own personal goals and challenges. Glue the images onto the poster board.

A Persian Heritage

Scarlett and Sam's Grandma Mina comes from Tehran, Iran. Iranian Jews are also called Persian Jews, and they lived in Iran (formerly Persia) for over two thousand years. During political unrest in the late 1970s, many Iranian Jews left, but they still value their connection to Iranian history and culture. Traditions that help express this special Jewish identity include games like backgammon and chess; foods like grape leaves, pomegranate, *koofteh* (meatballs), and crispy saffron rice; and art like the woven carpet that begins the adventures of Scarlett and Sam. To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/whaletale.

Geography Lesson

This story helps us imagine the geographic journeys described in the Book of Jonah. The prophet starts out in Jaffa, on the coast of Israel, and sails toward Tarshish, probably located in modern-day Spain! He travels by boat, by foot, and even by fish before he gets to his final destination, the large city of Nineveh in Mesopotamia. His journeys make for a very dramatic story and give us a kind of map of the ancient world. However, many think that Jonah's most important journey is the one he takes inside himself: understanding and accepting his responsibilities.

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

DO Jonah's actions make you think differently about the people chosen to be leaders in the Bible?

DURING one dark moment, Sam says, "Maybe we're not abandoned. Maybe we've all been given a challenge and we just need to figure out how to meet it." Why does Sam feel hopeful?

WHAT are the consequences for Nineveh when the slaves are treated with justice and kindness?