NINEVEH, A BIG FISH, AND LISTENING TO GOD IN CHAKHI

Do you know the Bible story of Jonah being swallowed by the big fish? Remember how the Lord told Jonah to go to Nineveh and share how God loves the world? God wanted people there to turn from their evil ways and follow Him. But Jonah didn't think God should forgive people there for not listening to God in the first place. Which is funny, because at first, Jonah didn't listen to God either. That's why he ended up in a fish's belly!

So crazy!

What does God say is right that is hard to do?

Today, we can be a lot like Jonah and the people of Nineveh. We don't always want to do what God says is right and often need to be reminded of God's great love for us. The Chakhi people in the Middle East live in a place much like Nineveh. Most people there make bad decisions and don't know that God wants them to live differently for their own good. The Bible can tell us this, but the Chakhi people have a problem. They can't understand what God says in Scripture because it isn't translated into their language.

Say Chah-kee

Translators are working to change this, and one story they've worked on is the book of Jonah. Now that Jonah is available to read, hear, and understand in Chakhi, kids like you are learning about what it means to listen to God. At one event, 11 boys and 13 girls came together for a week to study the Bible. A huge storm came and all the electricity went out in the building. The adults in charge were thinking of stopping the event. But the young people said no. They wanted to continue talking about Jonah even through the storm.

Like a church camp

One of the boys who attended the event was a 16-year-old who was invited to join last minute when a spot opened up. He listened closely to the story and asked thoughtful questions. He wanted to know more about God and His love for us. And as he learned, he also thought of the rest of his family. His younger siblings didn't know the good news that Jonah was sent to share with the people of Nineveh. But the boy went home to tell them. Like Jonah, he became a messenger to tell others that God gives us many chances to follow Him, even when we don't do it perfectly.

Are there People in your life like this?

LET'S TALK ABOUT IT!

- How is the place where the Chakhi people live kind of like Nineveh? How is where you live similar to those places? How might it be different?
- The kids at the event didn't want to stop studying Jonah, even during a scary storm. Why do you think that is? Would you have wanted to keep going? Why or why not?
- Jonah didn't listen to God right away, but God gave him another chance. And God gave the people of Nineveh chances too. What does the Bible say that is good news for you when you don't listen to God right away?
- Just like Jonah was sent to tell people in Nineveh about God's love, the 16-year-old boy went home to tell his siblings what he'd learned. Who is someone you could share God's love with this week?

DIG DEEPER

How is God's Word good news for you and others around you? Make a list or draw a picture of things God says in the Bible that you're happy you know.