

THOSE BIG, SHARP TEETH!

LESSON 191 → Jonah 1-3

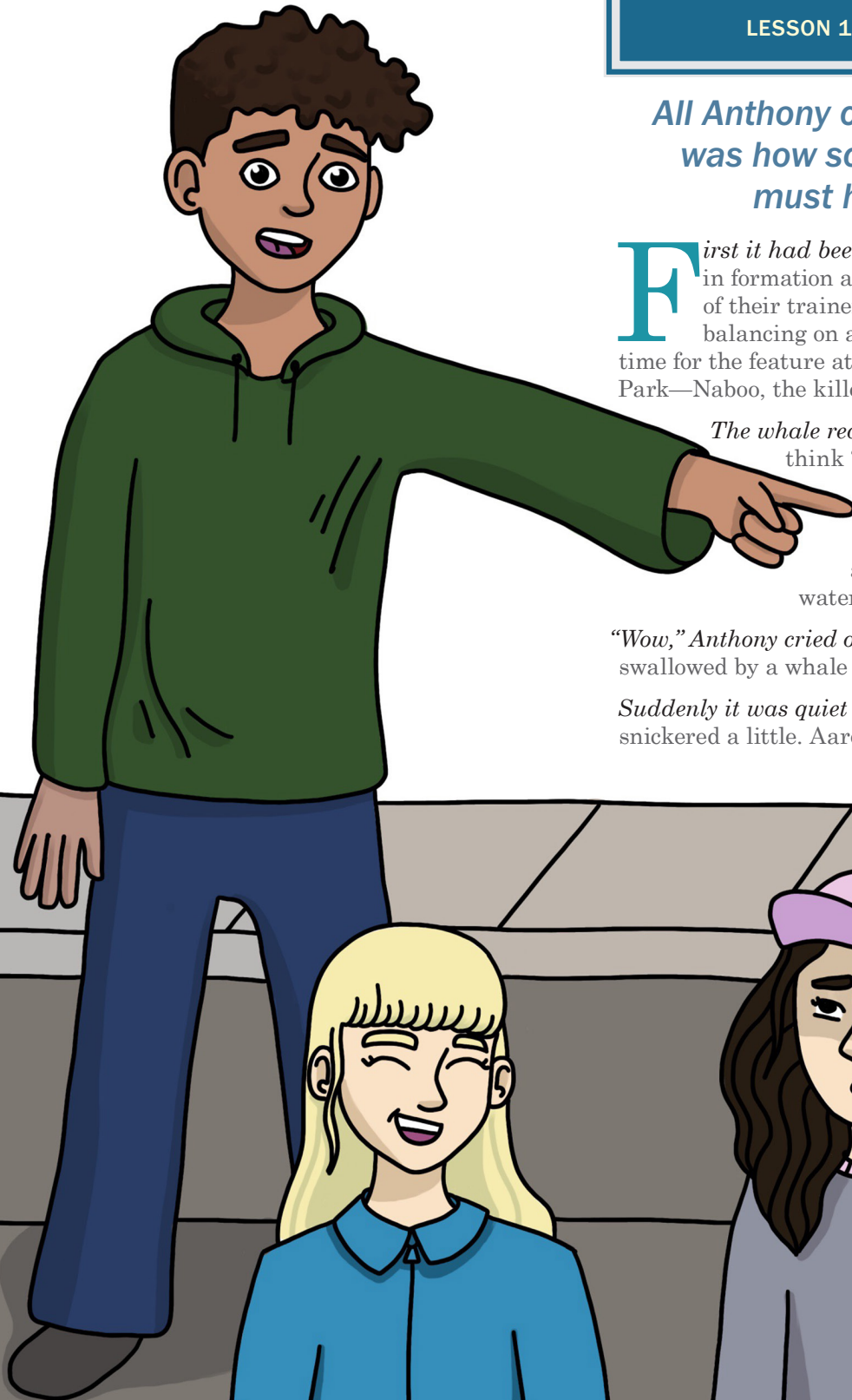
All Anthony could think about was how scary that whale must have been.

First it had been the porpoises, swimming in formation and eating raw fish out of their trainer's hand. Then the seals, balancing on a teeter-totter. Now it was time for the feature attraction of Ocean World Sea Park—Naboo, the killer whale.

The whale really didn't do much—if you think “much” is more than jumping completely out of the water and drenching everybody around with the tons of water he splashed.

“Wow,” Anthony cried out. “Just think, Jonah was swallowed by a whale like that one.”

Suddenly it was quiet all around him. Leilani snickered a little. Aaron pointed at Anthony and





I'M GOING TO OBEY JESUS.

And the word of the LORD came unto Jonah the second time, saying, Arise, go unto Nineveh. — Jonah 3:1-2

sneered, “Jonah? I’m sure!” Several others laughed. Finally, their seventh-grade teacher, Mr. Simmons, spoke up. “Now, Anthony,” he said, “even religious people realize that the story of Jonah in the Bible is only an ancient myth. Did you see the big, sharp teeth in the whale’s mouth? No human being could get past them, much less live inside the animal for three days.”

The next day, Saturday, broke sunny and clear. It was just perfect for the plans Anthony’s Sunday school class had made—visiting the children at the big housing project and inviting them to Sun-day school. These visitations had been planned weeks ago, and he had been asked to be a leader of one of the groups. He had agreed, and all the arrangements had been made.

But Anthony didn’t go. “Only a myth . . . only a myth. . .” kept running over and over in his mind.

Instead, he headed down to the waterfront. He wandered around the fishing boats and sailboats, though he had nothing particular in mind to do.

“Hey, Anthony, whachya’ doing here?” A voice broke through his brooding thoughts.

Looking up, Anthony saw Aaron, a boy from his class, leaning over the side of a rather old and rough-looking sailboat.

“Nothing,” Anthony replied. “What are you doing?”

“I’m going sailing in my boat.”

“Hey, can I go along?” asked Anthony.

“Well, you know, it takes a lot of money to keep up a boat like this,” Aaron said as he looked down at his worn-out little craft. “But for a dollar, you can go!”

Anthony dug through his pockets and brought out a crumpled bill. A few minutes later the boys sailed into the bay. The thoughts of

bringing boys and girls to Sunday school were now far from Anthony’s mind.

Neither boy noticed that the sun had disappeared behind the now rapidly gathering clouds. It wasn’t until a heavy wind came up and whitecaps started to appear that they realized a storm was upon them.

“Where’d this storm come from?” Aaron shouted. “You must have brought me bad luck!”

Just like Jonah, Anthony thought. JONAH!

Aaron grabbed the mast as a heavy gust pushed the boat over on its side. Anthony grabbed frantically, too—and missed.

Those teeth! Those big, sharp teeth! They flashed through Anthony’s mind as a wave hit him and pushed him under the water. All he could imagine was a huge fish with sharp teeth coming after him.

“Those teeth! Those big, sharp teeth!” Anthony struggled to cry out. With an effort he opened his eyes, but in a hospital bed, not in the water of the bay. His mother was beside him crying but his father leaned over him and said, “He’s conscious. Thank God!”

“Those teeth!” Anthony cried again.

“Calm down, Son. You’ll be okay,” his father assured him. “What teeth are you talking about?”

“The big, sharp teeth in the whale that swallowed Jonah,” Anthony replied.

His father looked puzzled, but replied, “Why, Son, there probably were no teeth. The Bible says that God prepared a special fish to swallow Jonah. That was no ordinary whale.”

Anthony thought of his ill-fated boat trip and the visit to the housing project where he should have been instead. God had spared Jonah, and now God had spared him. Doubt God’s Word? Never again! And next time, God’s work would come first.

**DON'T BE
A JONAH!**

There is danger in refusing to obey God, but He is merciful and loving. Below are some questions about Jonah, a man who received mercy even though he ran away from God's call. Answer them and then answer the questions that relate to you. Remember, God loves you!

God asked Jonah to preach to Ninevah. Did he go?

What did Jonah ride on that was going in the wrong direction?

What happened when Jonah disobeyed God? List at least two things.

What did Jonah do while he was in the belly of the fish?

How does the lesson show God's mercy to Jonah?



Do you obey God when He asks you to do something?



What would keep you from going in God's direction?



What might happen to you if you disobey God?



What should you do if you want God's blessing?



How does God show His mercy to you?

