The Book of Jonah
Workbook

published by

Leadership Resources International
12575 S. Ridgeland Ave.
Palos Heights, IL 60463
United States of America
www.leadershipresources.org

Copyright © 2015 Leadership Resources International
All rights reserved.

Scripture taken from The Holy Bible, English Standard Version. Copyright © 2001 by Crossway Bibles, a division of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.
Welcome!

You’re holding the Workbook for the Jonah Workshop, part of Leadership Resources’ TNT training.

This workbook is designed to be used especially before and during, but also after, the training workshop. As a learner or participant in the workshop, you should read through it before the workshop, and you can use it to write out your work as you prepare before the workshop. During the workshop you can use it to take notes. Later, as you go out to teach others, you can use it as a teaching outline. It includes:

- a condensed explanation of the concepts being taught
- blank space to write notes as you work through passages or listen to teaching and preaching

The other version of this curriculum is the Reference Guide. It should be given to you at the end of the workshop and is designed to help you study and prepare before you go out to teach others. It has fuller explanations and instructions and has questions and answers to help you study through passages of Scripture. We hope you find each of these versions helpful.

May the Lord bless you, challenge you, and change your heart as you study His Word, teach others how to study and teach it, and discover more of who He is through it.
Contents

Pre-Assignment ................................................................. 4

Session 1
Charting the Course .......................................................... 6

Session 2 – Dig and Discover
Asking Good Questions (with Jonah 1) ..................................... 14

Session 3 – Demonstrate
An Example Sermon from Jonah 1 .......................................... 18

Session 4 – Dig and Discover
Understanding Genre (with Jonah 2) ......................................... 20

Session 5 – Dig and Discover
Traveling Instructions ............................................................ 26

Session 6 – Dig and Discover
Structure (with Jonah 3) .......................................................... 30

Session 7 – Do
Jonah 3 ............................................................................. 34

Session 8 – Dig and Discover
Biblical Theology ................................................................. 36

Session 9 – Do
Jonah 4 ............................................................................. 40

Session 10 – Dig and Discover
Finding the Main Idea and Intended Response
of a Book of the Bible ............................................................. 42
Session 11 – Demonstrate

An Example Sermon on the Main Idea and Intended Response of the Book of Jonah .......................... 46

Session 12

Reflecting on the Journey ................................................................. 48

Optional Session – Dig and Discover

Finding the Main Idea and Intended Response of a Passage .......... 50
We look forward to our time with you and believe it will be rich. We are asking God to speak powerfully through His Word and continue to change our lives and ministries for His own glory. Please pray with us and give yourself fully to the following preparations.

General Preparation
Read the book of Jonah at least four times. From your reading alone (do not consult commentaries or other Bible-study aids), answer the following questions. Be sure to write down verse references. Throughout your study, we encourage you to pray, asking God for the help and illumination of His Spirit to understand His Word.

- Who are the main characters in the book of Jonah?
- What words or concepts are repeated throughout the book?
- What important comparisons and contrasts do you find in the book of Jonah?
- What questions do you have about the text? Write down at least fifteen.
- Where do the major shifts or transitions occur in the book?
- What is the main problem or conflict in the story?
- Where is the climax of the book? How do you know?
- What is the main idea or overarching message of the book? Try to state it in a sentence.
- How does the book of Jonah fit into the larger story of the Bible?

Also read the following passages outside of the book of Jonah:
- 1 Kings 11:41–12:33
- 2 Kings 14:23-27
- Exodus 34:4-8

Pre-Assignment Notes
Pre-Assignment Notes
Charting the Course

Overview
This very first session gives a broad overview of what TNT is all about. It also introduces us to what's ahead in this workshop as we study the book of Jonah together.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- understand basically the “what” and “how” of TNT – what the training is about and how it works
- understand especially the “why” of TNT – the convictions behind the training, specifically by being introduced to the principles of “Staying on the Line” and “Text and Framework”
- be oriented in our study of the book of Jonah through an explanation of the structure of the book
- begin to have our thoughts stirred by being introduced to issues or questions that arise out of the book of Jonah that affect our own hearts and approach to ministry
What is TNT?

TNT is pastoral training designed to last over a two- to four-year period. It seeks to address one of the most important and pressing needs you have in pastoral ministry – shepherding and strengthening God's people by ministering to them the Word of God.

As we do this training together, we hope to see the following effects, building on each other in stages:

- **Transformation**: As we study God's Word together, we pray that God will transform our hearts and our ministries through the message of His Word by the power of His Spirit.
- **Multiplication**: We hope to see you multiply this training by passing on what you've learned to others – those in your church as well as to other pastors and church leaders (2 Timothy 2:2).
- **A Movement**: Through our partnership together, we hope to be able to assist you in launching a movement of pastoral training across your region.

TNT involves a commitment to

- meet twice a year for a one-week workshop
- give yourself to the study by preparing beforehand
- multiply what you've learned in these workshops by training others

**What We Will Learn**

- **Principles**: We will learn several principles, or tools, that help us read, study, and understand what the Bible says so we can teach it to others.
- **The Word of God**: We will practice using the principles by studying through different books of the Bible. The purpose, though, is not just to master using the principles. Our goal is also to understand these books for themselves – to discover the message of God's Word and be transformed by it.
- **The Heart of God**: As we study through different books, we'll encounter issues about pastoral ministry we need to consider. We'll examine the model of ministry the Bible sets out for us, and we'll consider how we can reflect the heart of God in our ministry to others.
Each workshop is designed around, and flows out of, a study of a book of the Bible. Everything we learn will come through the study of that book, especially the principles and skills for studying and preaching God's Word, and the lessons about cultivating the heart of God in ministry.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Workshop</th>
<th>God's Heart through God's Word</th>
<th>Possible issues explored:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Developing skills to study, teach, and preach God's Word</td>
<td>Sharing God's Heart of Compassion for the Lost</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Principles covered throughout:</strong></td>
<td>The Path of the Cross in Gospel Ministry</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonah</td>
<td>- Staying on the Line</td>
<td>Developing a Biblical Worldview</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Text and Framework</td>
<td>- Followership and Leadership</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Genre</td>
<td>- Discipleship</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Asking Good Questions</td>
<td>- The Role of Exposition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Traveling Instructions</td>
<td>- Trusting God in Hard Circumstances</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Finding the Main Idea and Intended Response</td>
<td>- Marriage and Family</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>- Biblical Theology</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 Timothy</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Genesis 1–12</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1 &amp; 2 Samuel</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mark</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Habakkuk</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psalms</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ephesians</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Why Study Hermeneutical Principles?**

- We teach hermeneutical principles so that you will be able to study God's Word for yourself. Instead of telling you what the Bible says, we want to give you the tools to understand for yourself what it says and what it means.
- We'll practice using the same principles in a variety of books containing different types of Biblical literature. Then, you'll be able to use the principles to study other books of the same kind of literature and discover the message God has communicated in those books.

**Why Study through Books of the Bible?**

Our workshops are centered around studying through a book of the Bible so that
- we can practice using the principles and skills we are learning
- we can discover the message of God's Word and allow it to transform our hearts
- we can glean a Biblical view of ministry directly from what the Bible says
How We Will Do It

It is not only important what we learn, but how we learn. In TNT, we want our training to be interactive, giving everyone the opportunity to practice and to learn from each other.

The Three-Legged Stool

Our approach to the training in each workshop is like a three-legged stool. Each leg is necessary for the stool to be of any use. Similarly, each part of the workshop is necessary for it to be useful and effective.

The workshop has three kinds of sessions.

- **Demonstrate** – The purpose of these sessions is to model expository preaching and teaching. Expository preaching and teaching seeks to answer two fundamental questions: (1) What did this passage mean to the original audience, and, in the light of that, (2) what does this passage mean for us today?

- **Dig and Discover** – The purpose of these sessions is to learn hermeneutical principles and practice using them so we can be better equipped to discover the Bible's message and clearly explain it to others.

- **Do** – The purpose of these sessions is to help us become better expository preachers and teachers of the Word of God by providing an opportunity to preach short sermons and receive feedback from our peers.

Why We Will Take This Approach

The Importance of the Word of God

Our approach comes back to our conviction that the primary need of the pastor centers around the Word of God – the need to understand it, be transformed by it, and proclaim it to others. That is why in TNT we focus on God's Word. We believe that if we address this primary need of pastors, then we will have the foundation to address many other secondary needs.

The Importance of the Heart of God

It is not enough to understand the Bible and explain it to others. We need God to transform our hearts through it. In the Bible, we discover the heart of God and God's view of the ministry He has called us to. We know that we must have His heart in order to do the work He has called us to do in the way He has called us to do it.

All of this leads to our first two "conviction principles"...
Staying On the Line*

What Does It Mean to “Stay On the Line”?  
- Staying on the line illustrates the task of the teacher or preacher to discover what God's Word says and to be faithful to it.  
- The line itself represents what God actually says in His Word:

- To go above the line means to add something that is not really there – to say more than what God said in His Word. It leads to error, often in the form of legalism.  
- To go below the line means to leave something out that is there – to not be wholly true and faithful to the truth of what God's Word is saying. It often leads to liberalism and license.  
- Staying on the line may be compared to the promise witnesses in some courts of law must make: “I promise to tell the truth, the whole truth [not to go below the line], and nothing but the truth [not to go above the line].”

How Important Is This to God?  
- Since the time of Moses, God has made it clear that His spokesmen are to say what He has said – nothing more and nothing less (Exodus 4:10-16; Deuteronomy 4:1-2; 1 Samuel 3:1-4:1; Proverbs 30:5-6; Ezekiel 3:1-11; Jeremiah 1:4-19; 23:9-40; John 7:16ff; 8:28-29; 12:29-50; Revelation 22:18-19).

How Important Is This to Our Preaching?  
- God's words are beyond compare. Throughout the Bible, we see His words are powerful, certain, and good; only His words can give life. We want people to hear God's voice rather than ours – His truth rather than man's opinions and ideas. We need to experience the transforming power that comes only through His words.

What Does Staying on the Line Require?  
- Submitting to God's written Word  
- Carefully discerning and understanding what God's Word actually says  
- Communicating it faithfully in our teaching, preaching, and living

* Based on original material © The Proclamation Trust with kind permission www.proctrust.org.uk
The Principle: We must let the Bible shape our frameworks rather than letting our frameworks shape our interpretations of the Bible.  

What Do We Mean by “Text” and “Framework”?  
- The text is any passage from the Bible that we might study and preach or teach.  
- A framework is our basic way of understanding things. It affects how we read and understand the text.

More on “What Is a Framework?”  
- A framework is a person’s basic way of understanding what he knows. It is the underlying thought structure that shapes our understanding about everything. Our framework organizes all of our thoughts and ideas and holds them all together in a way that makes sense for us.  
- Everyone has a framework. It develops over time by our parents’ teaching, our education, culture, personal experience, and our place in history – even our reading of the Bible.  
- During our lives we encounter new information. We have to figure out how it fits in with our previous understanding of things. In the end, we either decide to ignore or reject new information, or we accept it and allow it to reshape our framework.

Frameworks Affect How We Read the Bible.  
- When we sit down to study the Bible, we bring our framework with us – including the way we see and understand God, man, sin, Christ, suffering, redemption, and many other important things.  
- Frameworks, in and of themselves, are not necessarily bad. They are necessary in the process of reading, understanding, and communicating the Bible. However, they can wrongly influence the way we understand the text.

The Text Should Rule Over and Shape Our Framework.  
- We believe that the Bible is from God (2 Peter 1:21), inspired by God (2 Timothy 3:16a), true and reliable (Matthew 5:17-18), and sufficient for our faith and practice (2 Timothy 3:16b).  
  Yet we often do not recognize it when our framework overpowers the way we understand the text, and sometimes, even when we are aware of it, we are unwilling to let go of our framework.  
- In order to rightly understand God’s Word and preach it faithfully, we must let the text rule over and shape our framework.  
- Where there is a difference between the text and our framework, we must ask God to help us recognize it and allow the text to shape our understanding.

What often happens:  
Our framework influences and shapes our understanding of the text.

What should happen:  
The text rules over and shapes our framework.

* Based on original material © The Proclamation Trust with kind permission. www.proctrust.org.uk
Questions to Consider

- From what you see in the story of Jonah, how would you describe Jonah's framework about God's mercy toward the Ninevites?
- From the passages you have read in preparation, do you think Jonah's framework is a biblical framework? Why or why not?
Overview of the Workshop on Jonah

Structure and Direction of the Book

- How does the story of Jonah begin? How does it end?
- What are the major sections of the book?
- Where is the author leading us with his thoughts?
SESSION 2

Dig and Discover

Asking Good Questions

Overview
The best observers of God’s Word have trained themselves in the art of asking questions. In fact, asking good questions may very well be the most important thing to remember and put into practice when studying God’s Word. It is the way we learn the mind and heart of God, and it is key to the change God brings about in our lives, change that is for our good and His glory.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- think about why we want to ask good questions when we study the Bible
- understand what makes a good question
- think about how to ask questions – first, questions of observation, and then, questions that go deeper
- explore the first chapter of Jonah by practicing the skill of asking good questions
- reflect on Jonah chapter 1 and think about how the message speaks to our own lives and ministries
The Principle

The Importance of Asking Good Questions
Asking good questions helps us, first, to observe and understand what the Bible is actually saying. Then, good questions help us dig deeper to discover the heart of the message of God's Word so that we may be faithful to it and transformed by it.

What Is a Good Question?
- A good question asks about something that may not be obvious in the text but is essential for understanding the author's intended meaning.
- A good question is one that leads us down the path the author wants to take us.

How Do We Ask Good Questions?
Begin by asking the basic questions of observation. Then, go deeper with questions that help us understand the intention and meaning of the author's message.

Basic Questions of Observation
Begin by asking questions that open our eyes to what the text actually says:
- What does the text say? (Keep asking this most basic observation question.)
- When did this happen? Who are the characters involved? What places are mentioned?
- What are the important connecting or transition words?
- Are there any comparisons or contrasts?
- Are there repeated words or ideas?

Essential Questions that Go Deeper
Go beyond the basic questions to ask good questions that help us understand why the author wrote what he did.
- What does the author say?
- How does the author say it?
- What is the tone?
- Why does he say it here? Why in this way?
- What is surprising about it?
- How does it point to or speak about Christ?
- What is it saying as a whole?
- Why did the author say this? What response did he hope to see from his readers?
- What is the response God is looking for in our hearts and lives today?

The Attitude of the Heart in Asking Questions
Three attitudes of the heart are essential in our pursuit to know what God's Word is saying and in helping us develop the skill of asking good questions.
- Curiosity. Ask questions with the curiosity of a child.
- Discernment. Learn to ask questions that go beyond obvious answers.
- Perseverance. Keep working and asking questions in order to understand.
Practice

Jonah 1:1-17

Begin to practice the skill of asking good questions by writing down 20 questions about the passages.
Which of your questions above qualify as good questions, and why?
SESSION 3

Demonstrate

An Example Sermon from Jonah 1

Overview
Expository preaching and teaching seeks to answer two fundamental questions:

- What was the passage saying to the original audience?
- In light of that, what is the passage saying to us today?

Someone once observed that expositional preaching tends to be caught as much as taught. For this reason, the teacher will use this session to demonstrate preaching an expositional message from God’s Word.

Goals
Through this session, we want to

- observe how the exposition of God’s Word is delivered through the unique giftedness and personality of the preacher
- consider what elements and skills are involved in preaching expositionally
- consider what God is saying to our own hearts through His Word
SESSION 4

Dig and Discover

Understanding Genre

Overview
The Bible is made up of many books and, because of that, it contains many different kinds of literature – or different literary genres. The preacher or teacher of God's Word must recognize the different kinds of literature and understand how they shape the way a text communicates its message. This session introduces us to the subject of genre and looks more closely at the kind of literature we find in the book of Jonah.

Goals
Through this session we want to
- understand what genre is
- think about why it is important to be aware of genre as we study the Bible
- look more in depth at the genre of Jonah and of chapter 2 in particular
- discuss how the literary features of chapter 2 help us understand what is being expressed from Jonah's heart
- consider what we might learn for our own lives and ministry after studying Jonah's prayer
The Principle

What Is Genre?
“Genre” is a word that refers to the type, or kind, of literature, or written material, that we find in the Bible. We know the different kinds of genres by differences in literary features like the style of writing, the form, the content, and the purpose of what is written.

How Does Understanding Genre Help Us?
- Recognizing the genre helps us know the characteristics of the kind of literature we’re reading. And understanding the characteristics of the literature helps us read and interpret it correctly – to understand what the author’s purpose was in writing and what he wanted to convey.

Why Is Genre Important?
- “Genre is the key to understanding what sort of information a Biblical author is trying to convey.”
- “Until you know the purpose and kind of a text, what it intends to say or convey, you don’t know how to read it properly” (C. S. Lewis).
- Recognizing the genre and characteristics of a text gives us certain clues, even understood rules, for how to read and interpret the meaning of a text.

Different Genres in the Bible
There are many different literary genres found in the Bible. Below are some of the major genres generally recognized in the Bible. Although whole books of the Bible are usually associated with certain genres, each book of the Bible can contain within itself different genres or even subgenres – more specific classifications of literary genres.

Distinctive Use of Language
One important difference we see among the genres is the way each one uses language to express its message. Below is a spectrum that compares different genres and general characteristics of the kind of language each one uses.

---

Genre and Jonah
What kind of literary genres do we find in the book of Jonah?

Historical Narrative
Characteristics:
- Complex characters, whom we learn about especially through what they say
- Different scenes, flowing from one to the next, forming a whole, coherent story
- The essential elements of a story:
  - A problem or conflict that arises
  - A climax, or high point in the action
  - A resolution that explains how things unfold after the climax. The resolution (or, at least, partial resolution) may also bring about a new problem or conflict.
- A narrator who frames the story from an intended perspective. There is always a purpose that shapes the way the story is told.

Suggestions:
- Ask: What is the larger story, and how does this scene connect to it?
- Ask: What is the author’s reason for telling us this part of the story?
- Look for the climax of the story – the high point where the conflict is dealt with. But then also look at the resolution – what happens or is said after the climax. The resolution often helps us see the significance of the climax and the entire story. Sometimes the significance is stated explicitly, but more often it is implicit, and we have to dig and think carefully to understand the significance of the story.
- Remember that narrative is ultimately teaching us about God, since He is the ultimate character.

Hebrew Poetry
Characteristics:
- Concise, concentrated expression of thought
- Emotional language, speaking from and to the heart
- Visual language, using creative imagery and vivid metaphors
- Poetic forms, including Hebrew parallelism

Suggestions:
- Pay careful attention to Hebrew parallelism – the movement of thought between two (or sometimes three) connected lines of poetry. Notice how the thought develops from one line to the next – how the thought of the first line is restated, expanded, or perhaps contrasted by the next line.
- Understand that poetry uses imagery and emotion to communicate reality.
- Listen to the tone of the passage. What emotion is the author expressing? What does the tone help us understand about what’s going on in the author’s heart?
Practice

The major genre in Jonah
What elements of historical narrative can you find and where do you see it?

Who are the main characters in this story? How are they introduced? Who would be considered the background players?

How does the story develop? What is the problem or struggle? How is it brought to light?

How does the tension unfold? What are the major turning points? Where is the climax of the story? What is the resolution?
Chapter 2: Poetry

What imagery do you find in this song?

What emotions do the images express?

Where do you see the Hebrew parallelisms? How do these parallelisms convey the emotion Jonah is communicating?
What is the tone of the song at the beginning? What is the tone at the end?

How does the song carry the story along? What does the writer expect us to conclude about Jonah’s struggle as we listen to this song? What should we anticipate as we turn the page and begin to read the next chapter?

Why the switch from narrative to poetry?
Dig and Discover

Traveling Instructions*

Overview
How do we apply the words of the Bible to our lives? Often, we think the most direct route is the best route. We think the best way is to go straight from the words of the Bible to our own lives. But before we can understand the message of God’s Word for us, we must first understand what the message was to the original readers. After seeing how God intended for them to respond, we can better know how to respond to God’s truth in our own lives today. This approach will help us understand the text as it was meant to be understood and apply it as it was meant to be applied.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- understand the principle of Traveling Instructions
- think about why Travelling Instructions is important
- explore other passages in the Bible that help us understand the context of the book of Jonah
- think about how the context helps us understand the author’s message and intended response for the original readers
- consider how to apply the message of the book of Jonah to our lives today and how we might preach a message of judgment against the world and its sin while still sharing God’s heart of mercy for it

* Based on original material © The Proclamation Trust with kind permission. www.proctrust.org.uk
The Principle:
- In order for us to understand how to apply God's Word to our lives today, we first need to travel back to understand the message expressed through the author in the original context.

How Does Traveling Instructions Work?
- (1) **Not Taking the Direct Route.** We are often tempted to read God's Word and try to apply what is said directly to our lives. But God first spoke through the heart of an author to readers in a different time and place. And so, instead of taking a direct route from God's Word to our lives today, we first need to travel back to consider what that author was saying to the original readers, and why.
- (2) **Hearing the Intent of the Author.** We must travel back to listen to what God was saying through an author in the original context – the literary context of the message of the book, the historical context of the background situation, and even the biblical context of the overall story and message of the Bible. And while there are many aspects of context which we could explore, we want to focus our attention on those aspects which help us understand what the author was saying, why he said this to these people, and what response he desired from his message.
- (3) **Applying the Message to Us Today.** The end goal of Traveling Instructions is application. After we have discovered the author's intended response to the message he gave, we can then travel to our day and ask how that response would be seen in our lives and in the lives of the people where we live and minister.

Why Is Traveling Instructions Important?
- If we take the shortcut and try to immediately apply God's Word to our lives, we risk misinterpreting what God was saying through His Word, missing the way God intends for us to respond, and misleading the people to whom we minister.
- However, when we do take the time to travel correctly, we discover the wonder of God's heart expressed in the original context, and the transforming power of His Word for our lives today.
Practice

Travel back to the original context to understand the message of the book of Jonah.

Read the following passages:
- 1 Kings 11:41–12:33
- 2 Kings 14:23-27
- Exodus 34:4-8 (for context, read 32:1–34:9)

How do these passages help us understand what was happening in the book of Jonah and what response the author desired from the readers?

Travel to where we live to apply the message of Jonah to us today.

What would the author’s intended response look like in your context?

Modern-day place names in brackets
SESSION 6

Dig and Discover

Structure

Overview
Seeing the structure of a passage of Scripture (or of a larger section, even of the entire book) helps us get beyond seeing just words and sentences individually. It helps us to see how things are connected together – to see larger ideas, to see the parts of the whole, and to see the purpose and design in how the ideas of the Bible fit together. Understanding structure will help us to better understand the message of God's Word and to be more faithful to it in our preaching and teaching.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- understand what structure is
- think about why structure is important
- realize how structure influences our preaching or teaching of God's Word
- learn the basic steps of finding the structure of a passage
- identify the structure of an individual chapter in Jonah
- consider how the major ideas we encounter help us understand more of who God is
The Principle

What Is Structure?
- The structure of a passage (or a book) involves:
  1. the parts of a passage - the units of thought that contain the major ideas of the passage
  2. the connections of thought that hold the sections and major ideas of the passage together

Why Is Structure Important?
- Seeing the structure helps us identify the major ideas of the passage as well as how an author has designed the development of thought between them. Seeing the structure helps us see the direction the author's thoughts are taking us.
- Structure is important for our preaching and teaching because we want to make sure that the way we arrange the ideas in our teaching reflects the way the author arranged his thoughts in the passage. An awareness and understanding of structure in the Bible brings a clarifying power to our preaching.

How Do You Find the Structure of a Passage?
1. Look for patterns and shifts in thought. As you read the passage, what kind of patterns do you see that point to the major ideas the author is trying to convey? Also as you read, look for shifts in thought or a change in direction. These can be detected by a change in patterns.
   - Look especially for:
     - Repetitions
     - Progressions
     - Contrasts and comparisons
     - How a passage begins and ends
     - Key transitions or summary statements
   - Also look for:
     - Commands
     - A story's climax and resolution
     - Questions asked and answered

2. Divide the passage. After seeing the patterns and transitions in thought, divide the passage into sections that contain the major ideas. Write down the verse numbers for each section.

3. Describe the major ideas. State the major idea of each section of the passage in one complete sentence.

4. Find the connections of thought between the major ideas. How does one major idea connect or lead to the next? How do all of them connect together and reveal the direction of the author's thoughts?

(Seeing the structure leads naturally to discovering the main idea. In light of what you find about the structure, ask, “What is the main idea of this passage?”)
Practice finding the structure and direction of the author’s thoughts in the following passage:

Jonah 3
And, if time permits...

Jonah 4
SESSION 7

Do

Jonah 3

Overview
This session will give us the opportunity to study a passage in preparation to preach it. We will practice the principles we are learning and, as a group, study through the five essential aspects that should be a part of every expository sermon that explains the message of God’s Word.

Goals
In this session, we want to, as a group, study and think through each of the following essential aspects of the passage:
- Context
- Structure
- Main idea and intended response
- Biblical theology (including how it points to Christ)
- Application
SESSION 8

Dig and Discover

Biblical Theology

Overview
Biblical theology helps us see the big picture of the story of the Bible with its focus and fulfillment in Christ. It teaches us to ask:

- Where are we in the overarching story of the Bible? What is happening in this smaller story?
- How does this reveal the way God is at work in the world?
- How does it reveal the way God is working out His purposes through His Son, Jesus?

Through this exercise, we will see how Biblical theology should shape the way we teach and preach the Bible.

Goals
Through this session we want to

- understand what Biblical theology is
- see an overview of the unified story and message of the Bible
- recognize how the focus and fulfillment of the story and message of the Bible is found in Christ
- discover the themes emphasized in the book of Jonah and how they connect with the rest of the Bible
- discuss how the book of Jonah points to Christ
- reflect on how God's purposes and plan, which we see in the overall picture of the Bible, affects our view of ministry
The Principle

What Is Biblical Theology?

- Biblical theology is a way of looking at the Bible that helps us see …
  1. the big picture of the overarching story of the Bible and how each smaller piece (the individual passage or book we are studying) fits into that overall story
  2. how each part of the story points to Christ, since the overarching story about God and His purposes and plan is fulfilled in Christ

1) The Overarching Story

- First, Biblical theology helps us see the connection between each smaller part (the passage or book we are studying) and the whole.

   A Rope
   
   The Bible is like a rope. A rope has many strands, but there is one rope. The Bible has many themes, and Biblical theology helps us to see how each of those themes is woven together into one story with one message.

- Biblical theology helps us also see the development of the story and message of the Bible, until all is fulfilled in and through Christ.

2) Fulfillment in Christ

- Biblical theology also helps us to see how every part of the Bible – not just the New Testament, but the Old Testament as well – is focused on its fulfillment in Christ.

   The Old Testament Points to Christ

- In Luke 24, Jesus explained that “everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled” (24:44). So when we preach from the Old Testament, we can preach Christ because all of the Old Testament as a whole is pointing forward to Christ.

   Main Highways on a Map
   
   We may think about the Bible as a map, and on that map we see that all roads in the Old Testament lead to Christ. Not all roads are the main highways. The main highways are those passages from which a direct connection to Christ can be clearly seen. But there are many boulevards, avenues, side streets, and alleys that are not on the main highway, though they eventually connect to it.

   We may be studying a passage that is on a side road off of the main highway. The important question to ask is: How does this passage get me to the main highway? Or, How does this passage connect with a main theme that points me towards Christ? How does this passage aid my understanding of Christ and what He has done? Questions like these will help us know how the Scriptures point to Christ.

   The New Testament Explains Christ

- While the Old Testament prepares the way for and points to Christ, the New Testament reveals and explains who He is.
- Ask: Is the New Testament author looking back at an Old Testament promise about Christ? If so, how does the author understand it? How does the author see the implications of Christ’s coming and ministry on this side of the cross and resurrection? Is the author pointing us forward to the promise of Christ’s return and the future of His kingdom? If so, what does he say about it?
Practice

Think through the principle of Biblical theology to discover how the message of Jonah connects with the rest of the Bible and how it points to Christ.

Where does Jonah fit within the overarching story of the Bible?

What are the major themes in the book of Jonah, and how do they connect to the unfolding story and message of the Bible?
How does the book of Jonah point us to Christ?
SESSION 9

Do

Jonah 4

Overview
This session will give us the opportunity to study a passage in preparation to preach it. We will practice the principles we are learning and, as a group, study through the five essential aspects that should be a part of every expository sermon that explains the message of God's Word.

Goals
In this session, we want to, as a group, study and think through each of the following essential aspects of the passage:

- Context
- Structure
- Main idea and intended response
- Biblical theology (including how it points to Christ)
- Application
SESSION 10

Dig and Discover

Finding the Main Idea and Intended Response of a Book of the Bible

Overview
When we study the Bible, we often look long and hard at the Bible's details and miss the larger picture. In this session, we'll learn that every part of a book of the Bible contributes to its overall message. In this session we'll learn how to discover that overall message – the main idea of the book – as well as discern the response the author intended us to make to that message.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- understand what the main idea of a book is, understand what the intended response is, and understand the connection between them
- think about the importance of identifying the main idea and intended response of the book
- learn helpful suggestions for discovering the main idea and intended response of the book
- know how to state the main idea and intended response of a book of the Bible
- discover the main idea and intended response of the book of Jonah
- examine our own hearts and consider how we should respond to the message of Jonah
The Principle

What Is the Main Idea?
- The main idea is the main point or the central message of the book (or a passage).

Why Is Finding the Main Idea Important?
In Scripture:
- It helps us clearly discern the message God intends us to hear through a book of the Bible.
- It helps us see the focal point around which other ideas in the book are organized.

In preaching and teaching:
- It helps us remain faithful to what God is saying in His Word.
- It becomes the focal point around which everything in a sermon or lesson is organized.

Finding the Main Idea Involves...
- Observing clues in the text. Look for:
  - Connections between the way the book begins and ends
  - The repetition of important words or ideas
  - A summary verse
  - Conclusions or purpose statements (that begin with words like “therefore” or “so that”)
- Finding the structure of the book.
  - Consider how the development of thought points to the main idea.
- Asking two summary questions about the book:
  1. What general idea is the author talking about?
  2. What specifically is he saying about that idea?

Finding the Intended Response
- Looking for the main idea causes us to ask, “What did the author say?” Looking for the intended response leads us to ask, “Why did the author say it?”
- Simply ask: In light of the message of this book, what response did the author desire to see in the lives of his audience? In other words: What transformation was God seeking to accomplish through the words of this book in the life of the listener? … What was the intended response?

How Do We State the Main Idea?
The main idea can be stated in two different ways:
- A “descriptive” main idea – in terms of what is described in the book
- A “teaching” main idea – in terms of a timeless principle which reflects the specific message of the book but also incorporates the transformational thrust of the Intended Response for our lives today

The statement of the main idea should be:
- Complete – not a title, but a complete sentence (with a subject and verb)
- Concise – short enough that listeners can remember it
- Specific – including some of the distinctive ideas of the passage
Practice

Practice using the principle by finding the main idea and intended response of the book of Jonah.

An Initial Attempt

Further Discovery

Look at the end and the beginning.
Identify major ideas.

**Sharpen Your Work**
Demonstrate

An Example Sermon on the Main Idea and Intended Response of the Book of Jonah

Overview
Expository preaching and teaching seeks to answer two fundamental questions:

- What was the passage saying to the original audience?
- In light of that, what is the passage saying to us today?

Someone once observed that expositional preaching tends to be caught as much as taught. For this reason, the teacher will use this session to demonstrate preaching an expositional message from God’s Word.

Goals
Through this session we want to

- observe how the exposition of God’s Word is delivered through the unique giftedness and personality of the preacher
- consider what elements and skills are involved in preaching expositionally
- consider what God is saying to our own hearts through His Word
SESSION 12

Reflecting on the Journey

Overview
This session is an important opportunity to reflect on the journey we've been on through this workshop – what's been taught, what's been learned, and how we might improve and sharpen the training next time. It's also a time to reflect on what God has done in each of our lives through studying and listening to His Word in fellowship with one other.

Goals
Through this session, we want to
- reflect on what God has done in our hearts
- evaluate the workshop – both what was good and what could be improved
- think about next steps for the future
Reflect on What God Has Done
Think about what God has done in your heart and life this week through His Word. Pray about what changes He may be calling you to make.

Discuss and Evaluate
Take this time to discuss what was good about the training and think about how to make the workshop better.

Next Steps
What do we need to do to pass on this training to others and further what we have learned? What do we need to do to prepare if we are to meet together again?
OPTIONAL SESSION

Dig and Discover

Finding the Main Idea and Intended Response of a Passage

Overview
When we study the Bible, we often look long and hard at the Bible's details and miss the larger picture. In this session, we'll learn how the smaller details of a passage contribute to its overall message. In this session we'll learn how to discover that overall message – the main idea of the passage – as well as discern the response the author intended his readers to make to that message.

Goals
Through this session, we want to

- understand what the main idea of a passage is, understand what the intended response is, and understand the connection between them
- think about the importance of identifying the main idea and intended response of a passage
- learn helpful suggestions for discovering the main idea and intended response
- know how to state the main idea and intended response of a passage
- discover the main idea and intended response of a passage in Jonah
- examine our own hearts to see how we should respond to the message we discover
The Principle

What Is the Main Idea?
- The main idea is the main point or the central message of a passage (or a book).

Why Is Finding the Main Idea Important?
In Scripture:
- It helps us clearly discern the message God intends us to hear through a passage of Scripture.
- It helps us see the focal point around which other ideas in the passage are organized.

In preaching and teaching:
- It helps us remain faithful to what God is saying in His Word.
- It becomes the focal point around which everything in a sermon or lesson is organized.

Finding the Main Idea Involves...
- Observing clues in the text. Look for:
  - Connections between the way a passage begins and ends
  - The repetition of important words or ideas
  - A summary verse
  - Conclusions or purpose statements (that begin with words like “therefore” or “so that”)
- Finding the structure of the passage.
  - Consider how the development of thought points to the main idea.
- Asking two summary questions about the passage:
  1. What general idea is the author talking about?
  2. What specifically is he saying about that idea?

Finding the Intended Response
- Looking for the main idea causes us to ask, “What did the author say?” Looking for the intended response leads us to ask, “Why did the author say it?”
- Simply ask: In light of the message of this passage, what response did the author desire to see in the lives of his audience? In other words: What transformation was God seeking to accomplish through the words of the passage in the life of the listener? … What was the intended response?

How Do We State the Main Idea?
The main idea can be stated in two different ways:
- A “descriptive” main idea – in terms of what is described in the passage
- A “teaching” main idea – in terms of a timeless principle which reflects the specific message of the passage but also incorporates the transformational thrust of the Intended Response for our lives today

The statement of the main idea should be:
- Complete – not a title, but a complete sentence (with a subject and verb)
- Concise – short enough that listeners can remember it
- Specific – including some of the distinctive ideas of the passage
Practice

Practice using the principle by finding the main idea and intended response of a passage in the book of Jonah.