

Jonah

Reading

from Jonah 1, 3 & 4

The Lord spoke his word to Jonah son of Amittai: "Get up, go to the great city of Nineveh, and preach against it, because I see the evil things they do."

But Jonah got up to run away from the Lord by going to Tarshish. He went to the city of Joppa, where he found a ship that was going to the city of Tarshish. Jonah paid for the trip and went aboard, planning to go to Tarshish to run away from the Lord.

The Lord spoke his word to Jonah again and said, "Get up, go to the great city Nineveh, and preach to it what I tell you to say."

So Jonah obeyed the Lord and got up and went to Nineveh. The people of Nineveh believed God. They announced that they would fast for a while, and they put on rough cloth to show their sadness. All the people in the city did this, from the most important to the least important.

When God saw what the people did, that they stopped doing evil, he changed his mind and did not do what he had warned. He did not punish them.

But this made Jonah very unhappy, and he became angry. He prayed to the Lord, "When I was still in my own country this is what I said would happen, and that is why I quickly ran away to Tarshish. I knew that you are a God who is kind and shows mercy. You don't become angry quickly, and you have great love. I knew you would choose not to cause harm. So now I ask you, Lord, please kill me. It is better for me to die than to live."

Then the Lord said, "Do you think it is right for you to be angry?"

Jonah went out and sat down east of the city. There he made a shelter for himself and sat in the shade, waiting to see what would happen to the city. The Lord made a plant grow quickly up over Jonah, which gave him shade and helped him to be more comfortable. Jonah was very pleased to have the plant. But the next day when the sun rose, God sent a worm to attack the plant so that it died.

As the sun rose higher in the sky, God sent a very hot east wind to blow, and the sun became so hot on Jonah's head that he became very weak and wished he were dead. He said, "It is better for me to die than to live."

But God said to Jonah, "Do you think it is right for you to be angry about the plant?"

Jonah answered, "It is right for me to be angry! I am so angry I could die!"

And the Lord said, "You are so concerned for that plant even though you did nothing to make it grow. It appeared one day, and the next day it died. Then shouldn't I show concern for the great city Nineveh, which has more than one hundred twenty thousand people who do not know right from wrong, and many animals, too?"

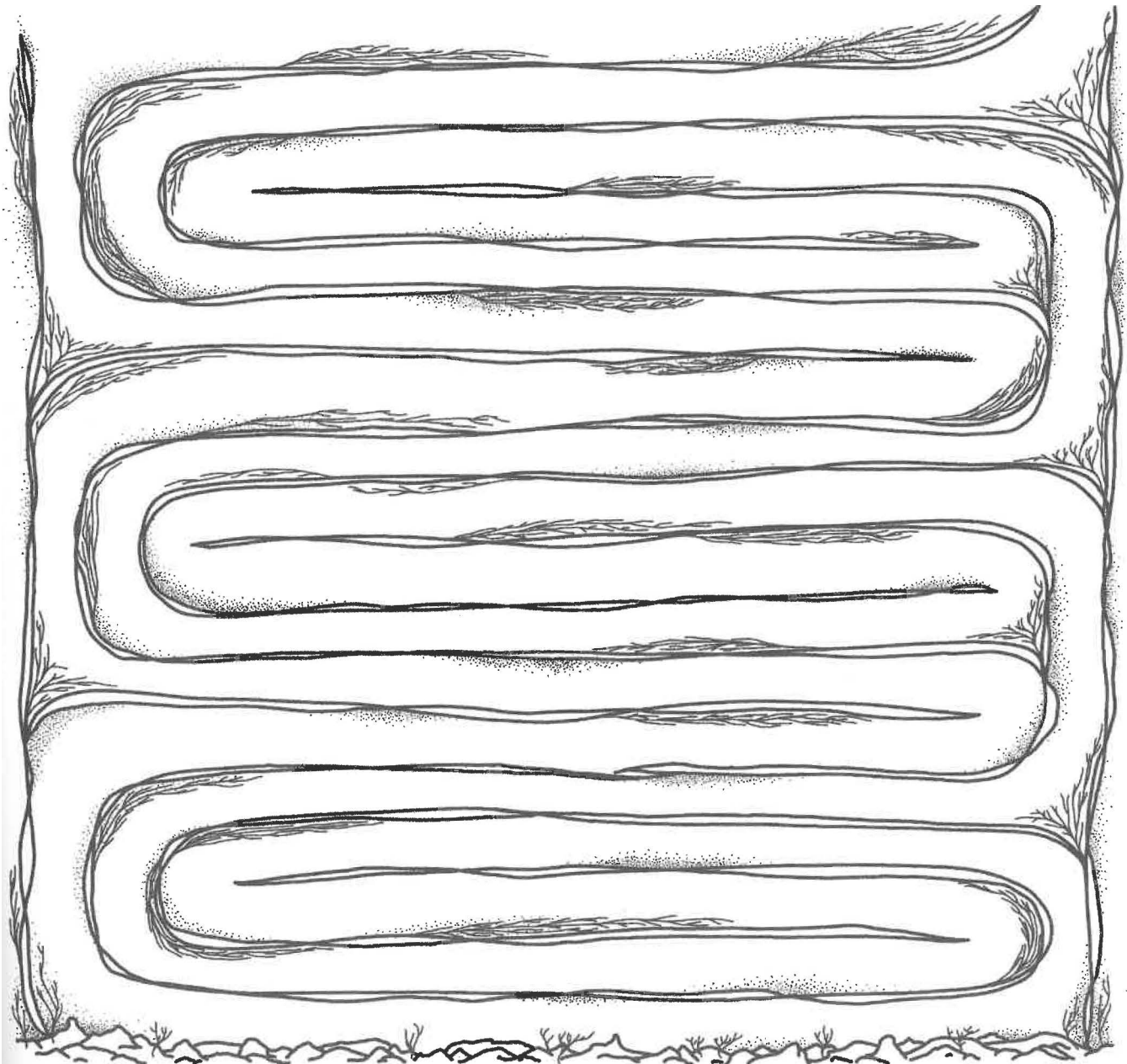
Labyrinth

Take your fingers for a walk through this watery labyrinth.

Jonah wrote a prayer about God rescuing him from the watery deep, where seaweed tangled round him. You can add more details to this labyrinth with blues and greens for the water and perhaps some brightly-coloured fish.

What would be your watery depths? What is tangling you?

Follow the path quickly down to the bottom, then slowly return to light and air.



Colouring

Praying with pencils. Give yourself a few minutes of peace in God's presence.

