

# DAN THE GREAT FISH



Written by Joshua & Jessica White  
Produced by Kids Bible Stories

Illustrated by Katie Martin

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Once upon a time, there was a fish. He was no ordinary fish. He had fins like a normal fish, and swam like a normal fish, but this fish had one big difference. He was big...HUGE, extra large. His name was Dan; Dan the great fish.

On this day, Dan was tired. He worked all day swimming to and fro, feeding his plankton, practicing his backstroke and so, he decided to take a nap. He snuggled up in his bed of seaweed and drifted off to sleep.



“Dan. Danny. Daniel!”

“What are you doing Steve?” said Dan.

“I have been looking for you all day. Guess what I have been doing? No, don’t guess. Okay guess! No, no, no, no, no. I’ll just tell you. I’ve been shooting spitballs with some squid down by the reef. Oh man, and they can shoot them so far! They gave me this new shooter and I think with a few adjustments that I can uh.... Dan, Dan are you listening?”

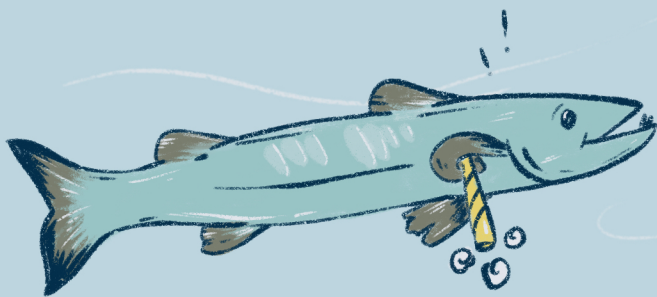
“What?,” said Dan.

“What has gotten into you? I mean, that must’ve been some nap.”

“Yeah, yeah. Um, Steve?”

“You want to shoot some spitballs?”

“That sounds like fun but..”





Dan was nervous. He had something to say but wasn't sure if Steve was going to think he was weird for saying it. So, he gathered his courage. He took a deep breath and said "Steve, while I was sleeping, I uh, I um, I had a dream."

You see Dan was a fish. A great, BIG fish. Not a blue whale or a giant jelly, but a fish and because of his enormous size, he didn't quite get along with a lot of other fish and he wasn't a whale so he didn't really fit in there either. Dan was a little worried.

He wasn't sure if telling Steve about his dream would, would make Steve want to find a new friend to play with.

"Did you dream about spitball shooters? I usually dream about that or spitballs themselves. It will be just me, swimming through the reef fast and stealthy. Spitball here. Spitball there."

"No. This dream was different," said Dan.



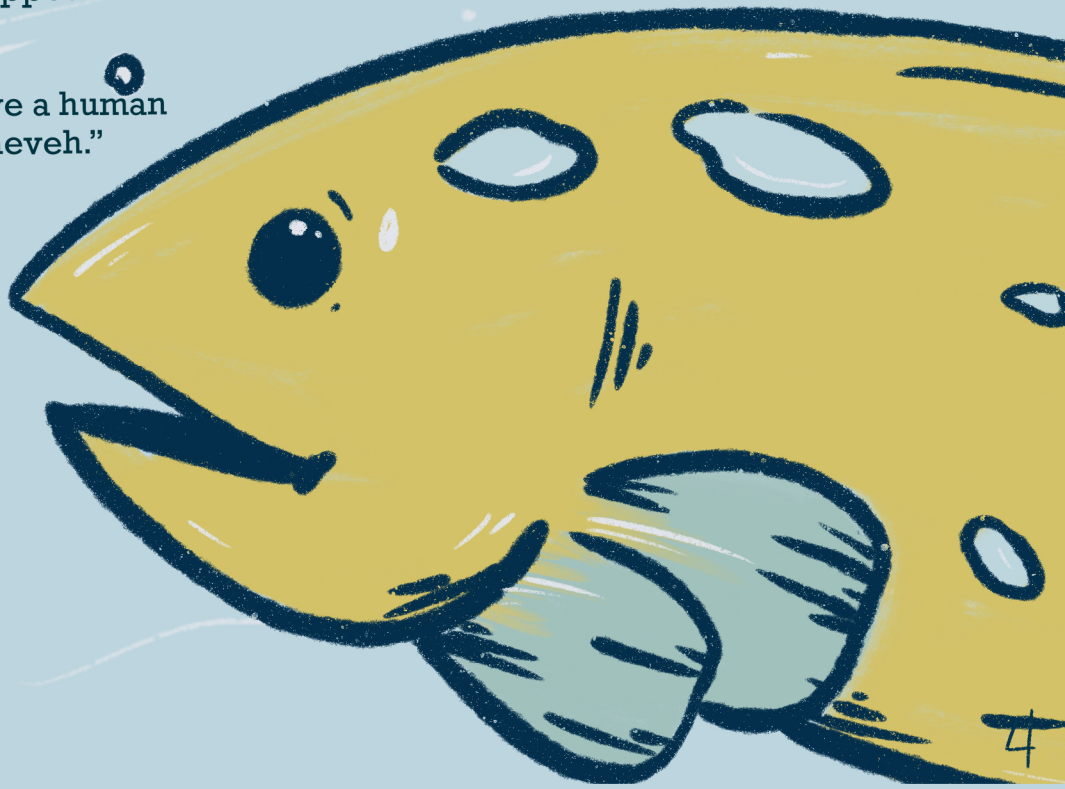
Then he gulped and said, "In my dream, someone, someone told me I was, I was supposed to swim near Tarshish."

"Is that so?"

"Yeah, and then ummm," Dan stopped.

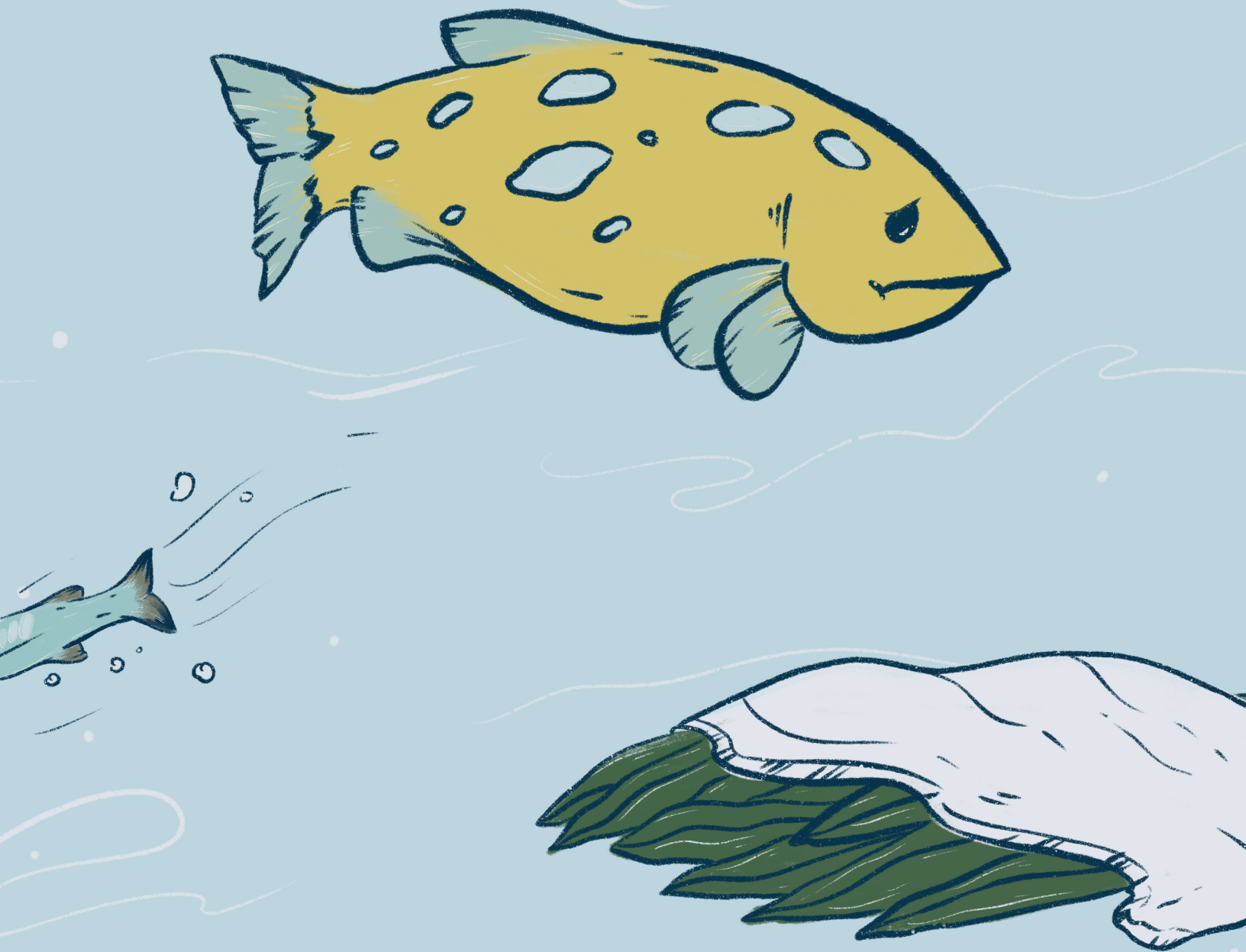
"Then what?" said Steve.

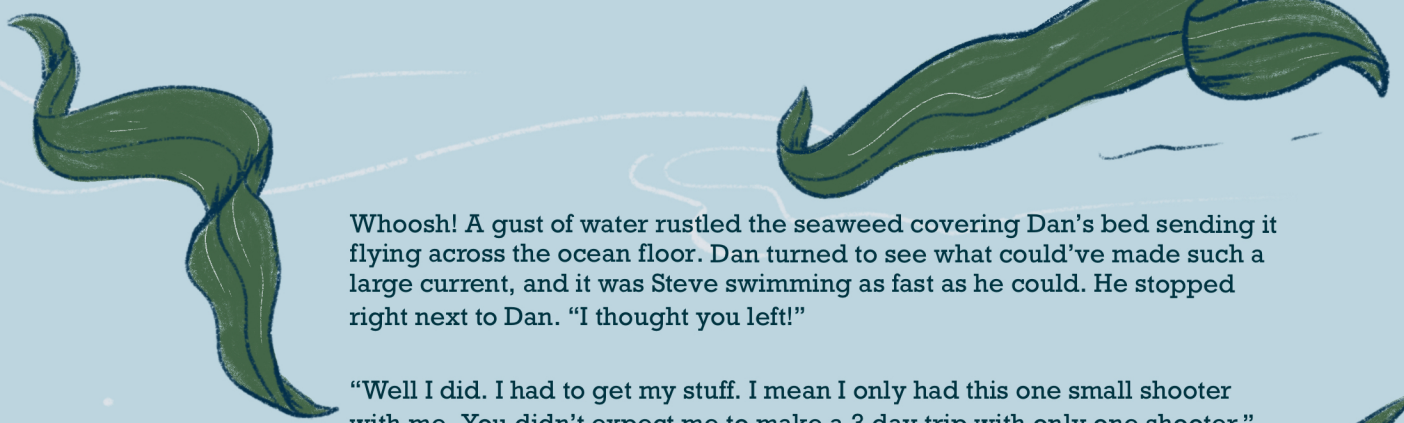
"Then I have to um, I have to save a human named Jonah and take him to Nineveh."



“What! Why would you ever do that? And how would you do that? And do you know that Nineveh is a 3 day swim?” Steve huffed and he swam away.

Dan was afraid of that. He turned and looked back at his bed wondering if he did the right thing. Maybe he should’ve kept the dream to himself but it felt so important. He needed to share it. He just knew the dream was special and big, just like him.

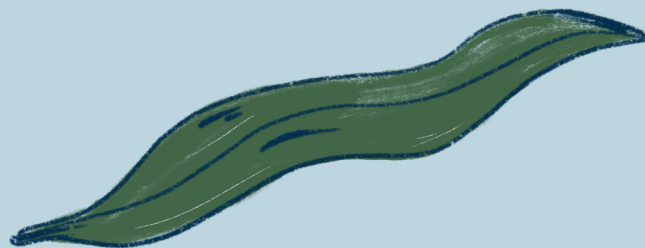
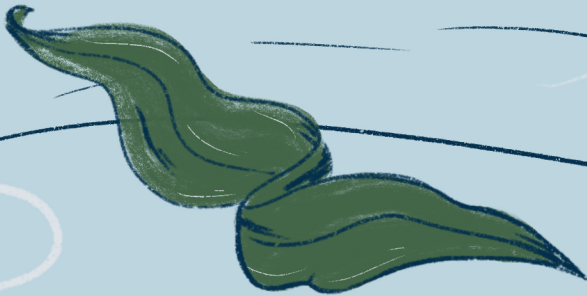


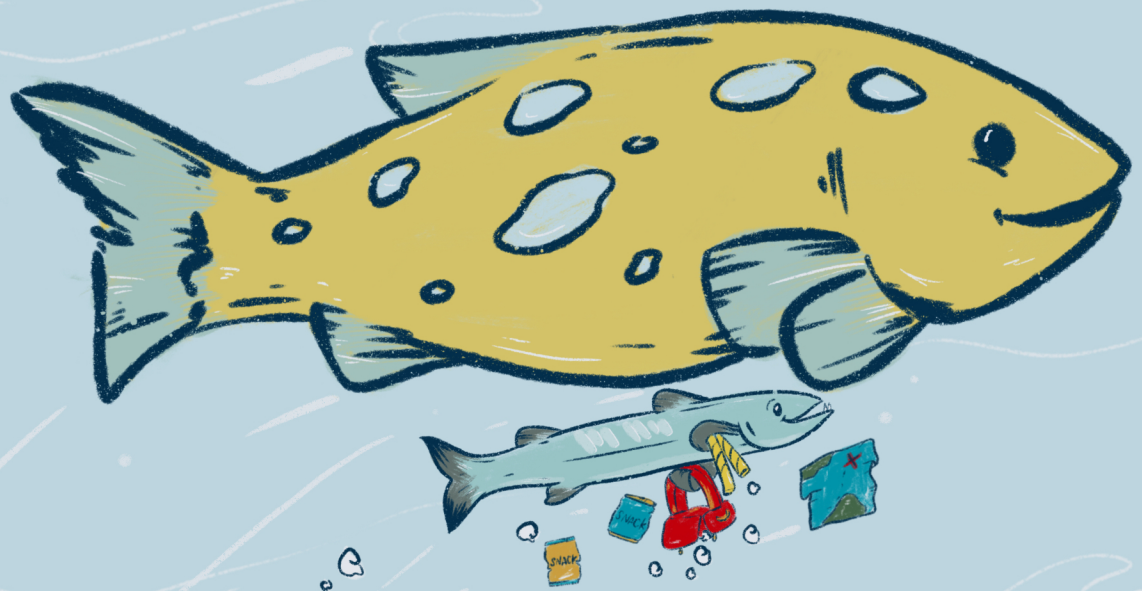


Whoosh! A gust of water rustled the seaweed covering Dan's bed sending it flying across the ocean floor. Dan turned to see what could've made such a large current, and it was Steve swimming as fast as he could. He stopped right next to Dan. "I thought you left!"

"Well I did. I had to get my stuff. I mean I only had this one small shooter with me. You didn't expect me to make a 3 day trip with only one shooter."

Steve had extra spitballs and shooters, maps, and snacks, and enough supplies to get the two of them almost anywhere. "Did you have all this ready to go?" said Dan. "I'm always prepared," said Steve.





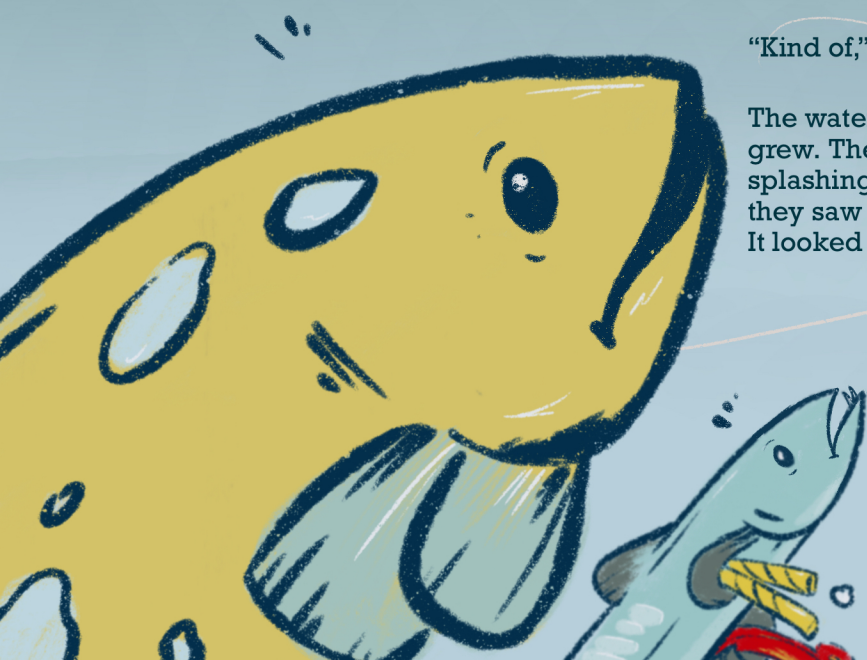
And the great big fish and his friend, the slightly smaller than average, but equally special fish, set off for Tarshish. The two were swimming; not really sure where near Tarshish they needed to go, but knowing they had a special task to do.



Then the water started to splash and splosh, and pick up in strength. They could see that a storm was brewing above the waves. They kept swimming. "Are you sure about this Dan?"

"Kind of," Dan replied.

The water got darker and darker as the storm above grew and grew. They could see the wind was whipping and the waves splashing and crashing down on themselves. And out of the dark, they saw a small boat being pushed back and forth, up and down. It looked as if it might sink.



As they swam by this boat, they heard a splash. The fish turned. Dan squinted his eyes and Steve readied his spitballs. They saw a man sinking in the water.

"I hope that guy can swim," said Steve.

"I bet that's Jonah," said Dan.





And he started swimming as fast as he could towards the sinking man. Against the waves he pushed. Faster and faster! He was almost there. "What are you gonna do Dan?"  
"I don't know," he replied as he neared the helpless Jonah.



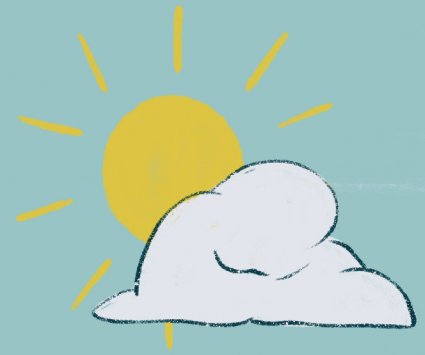
He was closer now, almost there. Just feet away... now inches. Then, gulp.

"You ate him! You're not supposed to eat people Dan!"

"I didn't eat him. He's in my mouth."

"WHAT?!"

"Well, I didn't know what else to do."



And suddenly, the waves slowed, the storm settled, and the sun started to peek through the clouds above. The two fish floated there, staring at each other. "That was weird," said Steve. "What should we do now?"

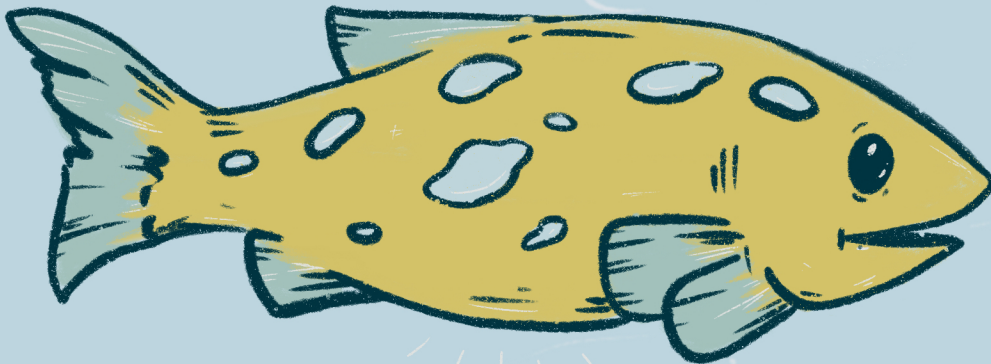
"Ummmm swim to Nineveh," said Dan.

"I suppose so but, before we do, you got to tell me one thing Dan."

"What's that?"

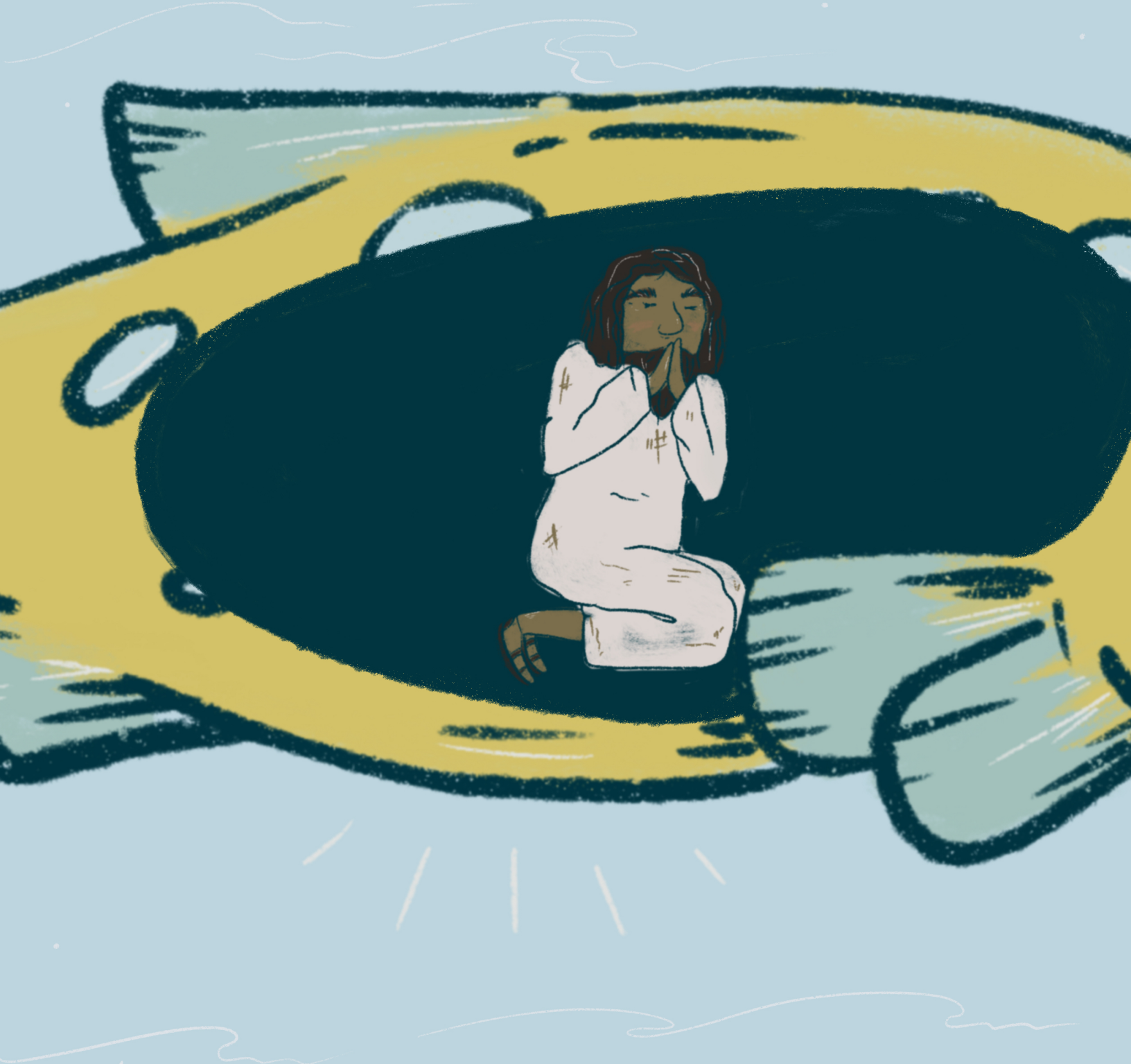
"How does he taste?"

And so, the two swam off through the water high and low, day and night they swam and swam, and after that, they swam some more.



At times when they wanted to know if Jonah was okay they got real quiet and just listened. While they weren't sure, they thought they could hear him praying.

Well, 3 days had passed and they were close to Nineveh. Their journey was nearing its end. The water was calm, bright blue and green.



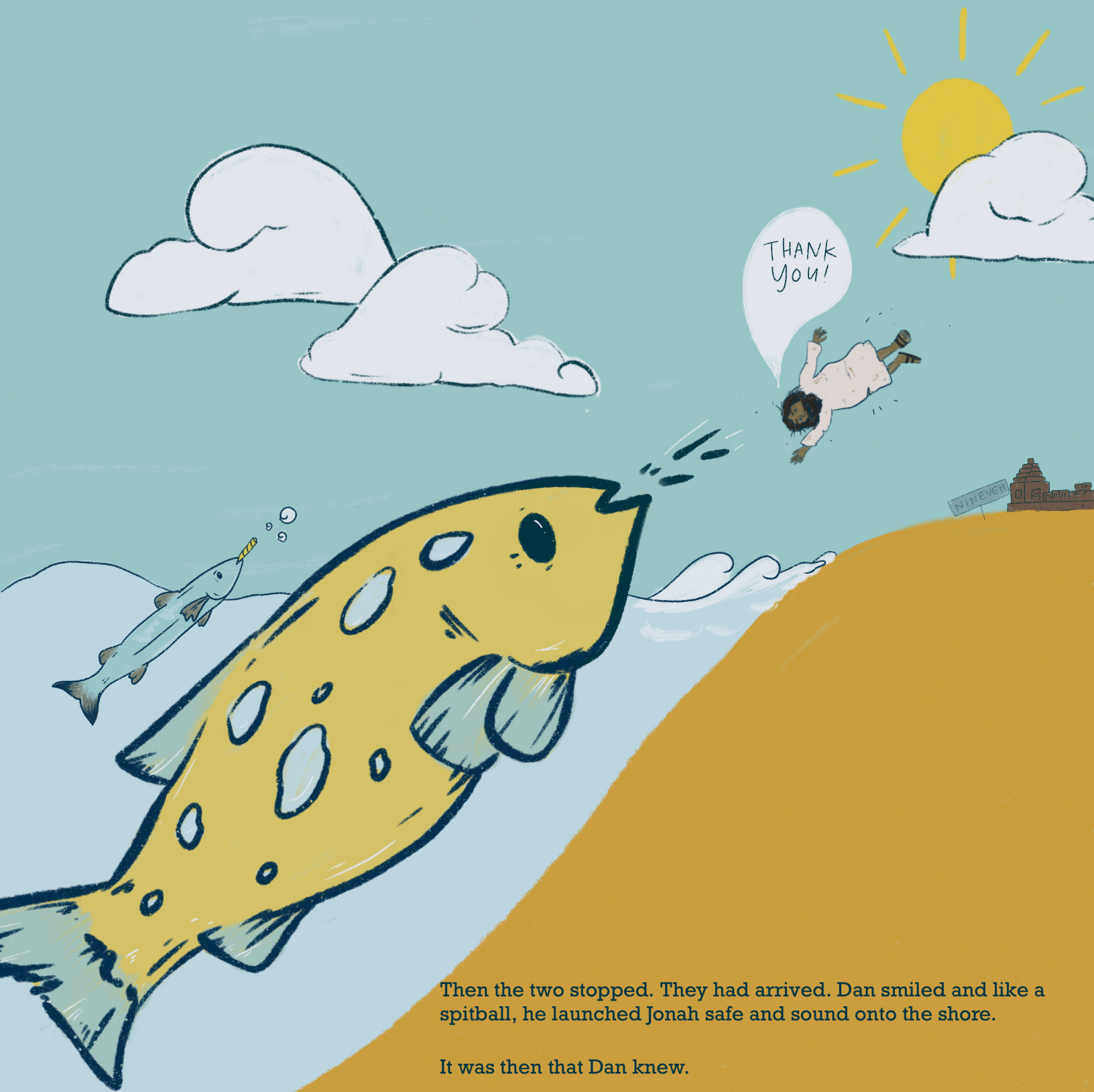


They could see the shore. Passing turtles and starfish, they thought all about their trip. The storm and the small boat, the calm weather after Dan swallowed Jonah, and the dream that started it all.

As they coasted next to the beach, Steve looked at his friend and said "You have a BIG belly."

Dan was puzzled and a little hurt. He was big but, he didn't think it bothered Steve.

"I know," said Dan. "Oh no! It's, it's not a bad thing. It's just fine. In fact, I was just thinking that if you weren't so BIG, you would never have had enough room for Jonah, and what would he have done then? He could've sunk to the bottom of the ocean. That's all I meant."



Then the two stopped. They had arrived. Dan smiled and like a spitball, he launched Jonah safe and sound onto the shore.

It was then that Dan knew.

He wasn't just big, he was GREAT. Purposefully and wonderfully made, exactly the way God wanted him to be.

Well, that's it for our story today but, before we go, let's think about what we just learned. Did God make everybody the same?

Do we all look the same, talk the same, do the same things, or have the same talents?

Shout it out! Yes or no? Did God make us all the exact same?

No! Of course not! In our story today, Dan the great BIG fish did not always feel like he fit in. He was kind of different. But, you know what? God used that exact, special thing about Dan. Dan had to be just the right size and be at the right place at the right time.

We can remember that God made all of us different and special. We each have a special purpose. Never, ever forget that.

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