

Willa Whale

Puppet Script for Vacation Bible Club

Tuesday, July 20, 2004

by Marilyn Alexander

Willa: Hello, there, kids! My name is Willa Whale. I'm really just a puppet, but I'm pretending to be a toothed whale.

Mrs. T.: Hi there, Willa Whale! What do you mean—you're a "toothed" whale?

Willa: That means, Mrs. T., that, unlike my sister baleen whales, I have teeth. Sperm, beluga, and narwhal are all toothed whales. We [make biting motion] swallow our food whole.

Mrs. T.: Do you have any fish stories for us today?

Willa: If the story is about me, it has to be a *mammal* story: I'm not a fish, you know.

Mrs. T.: Really!?! You look like a fish.

Willa: But I'm not! I am different from a fish.

Mrs. T.: How is that?

Willa: Notice my tail fin. It's not up and down like a fish's but sideways.

Mrs. T.: Sure enough.

Willa: Fish breathe through gills, which absorb dissolved oxygen from water. I have lungs to breathe.

Mrs. T.: You do? How can you breathe oxygen under water?

Willa: Oh, I can't. I have to come to the surface from time to time to breathe. But I can hold my breath for a long time. Usually, I come up to breathe every 5 to 15 minutes, but I can go about 40 minutes without breathing. Actually, we sperm whales can hold our breath for 75 minutes.

Mrs. T.: 75 minutes! Wow! That's over an hour! Let's see how long these kids can hold their breath. Kids, when I say, "Go," take a deep breath and hold it as long as you can. I'll time you. "Go!" [wait; check time] Did anyone hold his breath for over a minute, Willa?

Willa: No [yes]. Too bad you're not whales, kids.

Mrs. T.: I hear that whales are the biggest animals on earth. Is that right?

Willa: Right, Mrs. T. I am a sperm whale, and I can grow to be 60 feet long. That's from the bottom step here to the back pew against the back wall!

Mrs. T.: Wow! If God decided you should swallow a man, there would be plenty of room for him in your stomach, wouldn't there?

Willa: Well, my stomach holds 2200 pounds. I've never heard of a man being that big. But I hear that whales *have* swallowed people before. The white whale of the Mediterranean Sea has swallowed men and once even a reindeer. Some men have lived to tell about it.

Mrs. T.: Wait a minute! Are you telling me fish stories now?

Willa: No, but if you believe the Bible you know that God *prepared* a great fish to swallow one of His prophets. Maybe it was a whale; maybe it wasn't. It doesn't matter. God can make anything He wants to make, large or small, to accomplish His purposes.

Mrs. T.: That is the absolute truth! I hope all our clubbers know and believe that!

Willa: If they were a whale and could think like a person, they would believe it. Jesus, the Creator of all life, made us whales pretty special. He can do anything.

Mrs. T.: Like make you a super-fast swimmer.

Willa: Right! Engineers have tried for years to learn how we whales can move as fast as their 10,000-horsepower submarines. It takes *us* only about 1,000 horsepower to move that fast. Why, going that fast, we can even heave our 40-ton bodies completely out of the water.

Mrs. T.: How did Christ the Creator make you such a good swimmer?

Willa: He made my body *superbly* streamlined, put tiny ridges in my skin, and made my skin super slippery. [pause] Would you like to know about my blubber?

Mrs. T.: Do you blubber too? [Pretend to cry.] Sometimes I just blubber and blubber.

Willa: No, no, no! I'm talking about my fat.

Mrs. T.: I can identify with fat too.

Willa: My blubber is very special. Heat can hardly flow across it, even when I'm in ice-cold water. Remember, I'm a mammal—a warm-blooded animal like you.

Mrs. T.: So you don't get cold, even in icy water. [Pause.] Being a mammal, you take good care of your babies, not like Sam Seahorse, who just lets them be after they're born.

Willa: Oh, yes! My calf is born tail-first under water. I must be very careful to get it to the surface before it drowns. Sometimes another whale will help as I gently nudge my baby until it is confident with its swimming. This sometimes takes about 30 minutes.

Mrs. T.: How big is your calf?

Willa: About 23 feet long.

Mrs. T.: That's some baby! Then you feed it fish, right?

Willa: No, Mrs. T. Don't you know mammals feed their babies mother's milk?

Mrs. T.: Oh, that's right. I keep thinking you're a fish.

Willa: I squirt the milk right into my baby's mouth—up to 130 gallons a day.

Mrs. T.: 130 gallons! That would be enough to fill 2½ of the city trash cans like the one at home.

Willa: Every day! So you can see that my baby grows extremely fast—2 inches a day and about seven pounds per hour. That's about 200 pounds a day.

Mrs. T.: Seven pounds per hour?! 200 pounds a day! Wow! *Now* I'm glad that I'm not a whale.

Willa: Oh, but Christ the Creator made whales to grow like that. Whale calves nurse from 7 to 12 months. I stay close to my calf and protect it for at least a year.

Mrs. T.: What a good mother! Tell me one more thing about yourself, Willa Whale.

Willa: Oh, you'll like this, Mrs. T. We whales like to sing.

Mrs. T.: Sing!? Oh, Willa, I knew there was a reason why I like you so much. I like to sing too.

Willa: Do you? Well, listen to some of our whale songs. [pause; watch a 2.5-minute video of humpback whales' singing found on [BBC One - The Life of Mammals, Return to the Water, Singing whales](#)]

Mrs. T.: That's mighty pretty music, Willa.

Willa: Thank you. Thank you. Scientists think we sing to talk to each other, but maybe we sing just because we like to sing.

Mrs. T.: That's a good enough reason for me. The Bible says, "Sing unto the LORD a new song, and his praise from the end of the earth, ye that go down to the sea, and all that is therein" (Isa 42:10). I guess that includes you, Willa Whale.

Willa: Yes, it does. "I will praise God; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made" (Ps 139:14).

Sources: *World Book Ency.* "Whale." 1980.
Vietmeyer, Noel. "Whales: Gentle Giants of the Deep." *Reader's Digest*. May 1989, p.55-60.
Internet: cetaceanresearch.com/sounds.html