

POINT ➔ WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.

Have kids stand up. Open the Bible to Jonah 1, and show kids the words. SAY: **The Bible, God's special book, tells us about a man named Jonah who made a bad choice. I'm going to read a poem to you about Jonah. As I say the poem, follow my actions.**

God wanted to tell the Ninevites just how they could be good, *(cup hands around mouth)*

But Jonah didn't want to go, even though he understood. *(cup hands over ears, and shake head)*

Jonah didn't listen; he turned and ran away. *(move two fingers like walking)*

When God sent him to Nineveh, he ran that very day. *(run in place)*

He ran and bought a ticket, to Tarshish he would go, *(pull pretend money out of pocket)*

And jumped on board a great big boat. He ran from God—oh no! *(jump once)*

It never feels quite right, if we turn away from God; *(turn around)*

We can say yes to him and give him a big nod! *(nod your head)*

Listen to God's words; listen and obey; *(place hands behind ears)*

Read and know the Bible, each and every day. *(open hands like a book)*

ASK: **What's something you have to do that you don't want to do?**

Why do you sometimes have a hard time obeying God?

SAY: **Sometimes we disobey God, just like Jonah did. But then ➔ WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**



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SAY: Jonah disobeyed God. Sometimes we obey, and sometimes we disobey. Let's talk about that.

Lead kids in the following discussion, allowing plenty of time for kids to think of answers and share.

ASK: Tell about a time your parents asked you to help at home and you obeyed.

Tell about a time you didn't follow the rules.

God wanted Jonah to tell the Ninevites about God. Tell about a time you told someone about God.

SAY: Jonah didn't want to do what God told him to do, so he disobeyed. Sometimes we have a hard time obeying God, and sometimes we do a great job at obeying him. When we disobey, ➔ WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.

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Stand in a corner of the room with the kids. SAY: **God has wonderful plans for us, and he wants us to obey him. God told Jonah to do something very important, but Jonah disobeyed.**

We're going to pretend that corner of the room (point) is a city called Tarshish, that corner (point) is a city called Nineveh, and that corner (point) is a ticket booth and store.

(In a deep voice) **Jonah, I'm God, and I want you to go to the city of Nineveh (point) to give the people there an important message from me.**

Lead the kids in sneaking toward the ticket booth corner, and SAY: **We would like one boat ticket to the city of...Tarshish, please!**

Look at the kids, place your finger on your mouth, and SAY: **Jonah says, "Shhhh, God will never know we're not going to Nineveh!"**

Lead the kids to a pretend boat and step inside. Pretend to row the boat

toward the Tarshish corner. Halfway across the room, stop and SAY: **Wait! We need to obey God! Let's start over.**

Row the boat back to the ticket booth, and go back to your original corner. Start the activity again, but this time, buy walking sticks at the store and walk all the way to Nineveh with your walking sticks.

ASK: **What was it like to have a second chance to go to the right place in this game?**

Tell about a time you thought about doing something wrong.

Tell about a time you did the right thing.

SAY: **God wants us to obey. But when we make bad choices, ➔ WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US. And then we do the right thing.**

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Ask kids to sit in a large circle.

SAY: God asked Jonah to tell other people his message. We're going to pass the Bible around the circle as we listen to music. When the music stops, the person holding the Bible will open the Bible and tell something God says to do. I'll help by whispering ideas to you.

Play ● "Runaway Jonah" (track 13) on the CD. Pause it randomly. Each time the music stops, whisper one of the following phrases to the child with the Bible, and prompt that child to open the Bible and pretend to read that phrase.

- Be kind to others.
- Obey your parents.
- Pray for God to help you make good choices.
- Pray for God to help you forgive others.
- Tell the truth.
- Say nice things to others.
- Listen to God.

- Love everyone.
- Help others.
- Pray for others.

SAY: Now let's learn the song we just heard. Play "Runaway Jonah" again.

SING:

Jonah runs and hides from God.

(hands covering face)

Where is he? *(hand shading eyes)*

Can you see? *(hand shading eyes)*

Jonah runs and hides from God,

(hands covering face)

But God forgives him. *(hands over heart)*

In the belly of a fish, *(holding nose)*

Jonah prays, *(praying hands)*

Three whole days. *(praying hands)*

In the belly of a fish, *(holding nose)*

And God forgives him. *(hands over heart)*

ASK: What do you do when you have a hard choice to make, like Jonah did?

What makes it hard to do what God says?

SAY: Sometimes we act like Jonah and do the opposite of what God says. That's when ➔ WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.

POINT ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

SAY: We're going to pretend one side of the room is the city called Nineveh, where God wanted Jonah to go. The other side of the room is the city called Tarshish, where Jonah tried to run away to. I'm going to tell you some situations. You can choose to walk to either side of the room for each situation. If you go to Nineveh, talk about a good choice someone could make. If you go to Tarshish, think of a choice that would be bad to make.

Read the following scenarios, letting kids pick the side of the room to go to. Walk back and forth to facilitate the conversations as needed, or if you have two leaders, send one to each corner. Gather kids together in the center of the room between each situation.

- Someone fell down and is crying.
- Your mom tells you to clean your room.
- Your teacher says to keep your voices quiet in the classroom.

- Someone says something mean to you.
- You really want a toy in the store, but your mom says no.
- You made a big mess with your toys.
- You promised your brother you would help him with his chores, but now you don't want to.

ASK: Why do people, like Jonah, sometimes make bad choices?

What could you do when you have a hard time obeying?

SAY: One way you can obey God when it's hard is by praying the prayer that Jesus taught us. The last part of the prayer says, "Don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." Jesus' prayer means we can ask him to help us make good choices. That way we'll do the right thing the first time. But when we do the wrong thing, ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**