

POINT ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

Open the Bible to Jonah 2, and show kids the words. **SAY: The Bible, God's special book, tells us Jonah went through so much! First he disobeyed God, and then he got into big trouble and the sailors tossed him overboard into the ocean. There, a great big fish swallowed him. Jonah was in that fish's belly for three whole days! While inside the fish, Jonah was scared and sad and very, very sorry for running away. He prayed to God. Let's learn what Jonah prayed. Stand up so you can act it out with me.**

I shouted out to God for help; (*cup hands around mouth*)

And God heard my cries. (*cup hand to ear*)

I was thrown into the ocean. (*jump as if jumping into water*)

I sank down under the water (*wave arms as if sinking*)

And got wrapped up in seaweed. (*wrap arms around self and wiggle fingers*)

But God, you saved my life! (*point up*)

I remember you now. (*point to head*)
I love you, God, and I will listen to you. (*place hands on heart; then raise them to the sky*)

I want to sing praises to you. (*touch hand to mouth; then lift hand up*)

And I'm going to keep my promise and go to Nineveh (*point forward*)

Because you have saved and forgiven me! (*stretch out arms*)

SAY: God heard Jonah, even from the fish's belly in the deep ocean. God hears all our prayers, wherever we are! Jonah remembered that ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US. And God forgave Jonah and made the fish spit him out to safety on a beach.** Lead kids in jumping forward as if they're being spit up by a fish.

ASK: Being in the fish helped Jonah realize how much he needed God's forgiveness. Tell about a time something helped you realize you needed to say you're sorry.

What do you say to God when you're sorry?

SAY: It took a while for Jonah to remember that ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US. But when he did, he said he was sorry and promised to do the right thing. That's how we can ask for forgiveness, too!**



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Sing ● “Jonah Tried to Hide” (track 14) on the CD to the tune of “Ten Little Indians” while leading kids in the actions. Sing the song twice.

SING:

Jonah tried to hide, but God still saw him. (cover head with arms and crouch down; then pop up)

Jonah tried to hide, but God still saw him. (cover head with arms and crouch down; then pop up)

Jonah tried to hide, but God still saw him. (cover head with arms and crouch down; then pop up)

He sees us all the time. (cup hands around eyes like binoculars)

The fish swallowed Jonah, but God still saw him. (stretch arms, one above head and one below; then clap hands together)

The fish swallowed Jonah, but God still saw him. (stretch arms, one above head and one below; then clap hands together)

The fish swallowed Jonah, but God still saw him. (stretch arms, one above head and one below; then clap hands together)

He sees us all the time. (cup hands around eyes like binoculars)

Jonah prayed to God, and then God answered. (fold hands; then lift them up)

Jonah prayed to God, and then God answered. (fold hands; then lift them up)

Jonah prayed to God, and then God answered. (fold hands; then lift them up)

The fish spit Jonah out. (hop forward once)

Ptui!

ASK: **Tell about a time you felt as if you wanted to hide from God.**

Why is it important to tell God when we're sorry about something?

SAY: ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US** because he promises he will! **He forgave Jonah even though Jonah hadn't obeyed, and he'll do the same for us.**

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TO FORGIVE US.**

SAY: It's so comforting to know God always hears us when we pray. God hears us when we thank him, when we ask him for something, and when we tell him we're sorry. That's why ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

Let's pray the Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught us. I'll pray the words Jesus said, and then I'll ask you to pray something.

PRAY: "Our Father in heaven, may your name be kept holy." Kids, say something nice to God. Pause.

"May your Kingdom come soon. May your will be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Kids, pray that God will help you and your friends obey. Pause.

"Give us today the food we need." Kids, ask God for something you need. Pause.

"And forgive us our sins, as we have forgiven those who sin against us." Kids, tell God you're sorry for something wrong you did. Pause.

"And don't let us yield to temptation, but rescue us from the evil one." Kids, pray that when you have a choice to make, God will help you do the right thing. Pause. In Jesus' name, amen!

ASK: Tell about a time you knew God heard your prayer.

Why is prayer important?

SAY: Jonah's prayer had a lot of the same things as Jesus' prayer. He said something nice when he thanked God for saving him. He prayed about obeying when he said he'd listen to God. He prayed about being sorry, and he asked God to help him do the right thing and go to Nineveh. Just like Jesus and Jonah, one thing we do when we pray is ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

POINT ➡ **WE ASK GOD
TO FORGIVE US.**

SAY: Sometimes we feel so alone when we do something wrong. We might not know what to do! Jonah tried to hide from God by going the wrong way. But even when Jonah was all by himself in the belly of the big fish, he wasn't alone. God was still with him! Instead of hiding, ➡ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

We're going to pretend *Squiggles* the worm did something wrong and he's trying to hide from God like Jonah. Let kids take turns hiding *Squiggles* so the rest of the group can search for him. Each time he's found, lead the kids in shouting, "God forgives you, *Squiggles*!" Allow enough time for everyone to get a chance to hide *Squiggles*.

ASK: How do you think God can hear us pray even if we're hiding?

Instead of trying to hide from God when we do something wrong, what can we do?

SAY: A lot of people feel like hiding when they've done something wrong. But the best thing to do is say you're sorry right away. You can say you're sorry to God and to the person you hurt. That's how ➡ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.**

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SAY: Even though it was dark and Jonah felt alone, God was there with him when he was in the fish. We're going to pretend to be Jonah. Let's pretend this room is the belly of the fish. Dim the lights if possible, making sure kids can see enough to be safe.

When I say, "Amen!" find a place to hide in our fish. Then spend some time talking to God about things you're sorry for. I'll come around and whisper in your ear what Jonah learned while he was in the belly of the fish.

Say, "Amen!" and encourage kids to hide and pray. After a few moments, approach each child and say, "God forgives you." Afterward, gather the children together in a large circle.

ASK: What did you think about what Jonah learned when he was in the fish's belly?

What's it like when someone forgives you?

SAY: No matter where we are or what we've done wrong, God hears us when ➔ **WE ASK GOD TO FORGIVE US.** He could even hear Jonah ask for forgiveness from inside a fish belly!