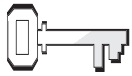


Something Smells Fishy



References

Jonah 1:10-17; 2;
Prophets and Kings,
pp. 268, 269



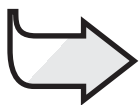
Memory Verse

"If we confess our sins,
he . . . will forgive
us" (1 John 1:9, NIV).



Objectives

The children will:
Know that living
in community with
others involves
admitting when we are
wrong and being willing
to make things right.
Feel willing to admit wrong,
and make things right.
Respond by acknowledg-
ing wrong, trusting God for help
to bear the consequences.



The Message

God helps me to
admit my mistakes
and make them right.

Monthly Theme

God teaches us how to treat others.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Jonah, on a ship headed for Tarshish, has just told the sailors that he is responsible for the terrible storm because he ran away instead of doing God's will. He tells the sailors to throw him overboard and the storm will end. The sailors are afraid, but they still try to reach shore. Only when Jonah persuades them to throw him overboard are the ship and people aboard saved. God prepares a large fish that swallows Jonah, then spits him out on dry land three days later.

This is a lesson about community.

In responding to the sailors, Jonah identified Jehovah as the true God who controls the elements. As a result, the sailors acknowledged Jehovah and worshiped Him. Jonah was ready to admit his mistakes and if necessary give his life so the sailors could survive. God requires us to be willing to admit our mistakes and make them right, too. When we are willing to do this, we can be confident that God will be with us and forgive us. He has solutions that we cannot imagine.

Teacher Enrichment

"The record does not state whether the fish was created for the occasion or whether the Lord employed an existing variety capable of swallowing a man. . . . The variety of fish is not identified. The Hebrew uses the generic term for 'fish'" (*The SDA Bible Commentary*, vol. 4, pp. 999, 1000).

"It was the custom of ancient seagoing vessels to travel along the coast line; hence the ship was not far from land. . . . The calm came suddenly; therefore the sailors recognized it as an act of divine intervention" (*ibid.*, p. 999).

"The prayer describes the experience of Jonah while in the body of the fish. It acknowledges deliverance as an accomplished fact. The passages that speak of answered prayer and of deliverance are probably expressions of Jonah's strong faith in deliverance and of the divine assurance that may have been given him that his life was to be spared" (*ibid.* p. 1003).

"Whenever they are in need the children of God have the precious privilege of appealing to Him for help. It matters not how unsuitable the place may be, God's ear of mercy is open to their cry. However desolate and dark the place may be, it can be turned

into a veritable temple by the praying child of God" (*ibid.*, p. 1003).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section	Minutes	Activities	Materials Needed
Welcome	ongoing	Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled	none
1 Readiness Options	up to 10	A. <i>Follow the Leader</i> B. "Feelie" Box C. <i>I'm Really Sorry</i>	none cardboard box, plastic bags (opaque), toy fish, gelatin, toy boat, seaweed or cooked spinach, running shoe, coin paper, markers, wastebasket, Bible
Any Time Prayer and Praise*	up to 10	Fellowship Songbook Mission Offering Prayer	<i>Sing for Joy</i> <i>Children's Mission</i> shell, boat, plastic fish, etc. (item associated with the sea) none
2 Bible Lesson	up to 20	Experiencing the Story Memory Verse Bible Study	none paper, scissors, marker or pen, fishbowl, string or fishing line, clothespins or paper clips Bibles
3 Applying the Lesson	up to 15	A. <i>Creating Community</i> B. <i>I'm Sorry</i>	colored paper, poster board, mark- ers, glue Bible, paper, pencil or pen, fishbowl
4 Sharing the Lesson	up to 15	<i>Heart-to-Heart</i>	pink or red construction paper, scissors, markers, heart pattern on p. 144

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome children at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they're pleased/troubled about. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. Follow the Leader

Sit in a circle with the children and say: **I am going to begin with an action** [clap hands]. **The person to my right repeats my action and adds one to it. We will continue around the circle with each person repeating all the actions in the right order and adding one. If you make a mistake, you are out of the game.**

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How easy was it to remember all the actions? How do you feel when you make a mistake? Is it easy to tell someone else you made a mistake, that you were wrong? That brings me to our message for today:**



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

Say that with me.

B. "Feelie" Box

Place the objects in plastic bags inside the larger box. Say: **In my box I have some clues about our story today. Who would like to feel and guess them first?**

Allow time for several children to come forward and identify the item they feel.

Debriefing

In today's story we will learn about someone who made a big mistake. Each of the things you touched are clues to tell us about him and his mistake.

How do you feel when you make a mistake? What do you do about it? Is it easy to tell others about it? That leads us to today's message:



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

Say that with me.

C. I'm Really Sorry

Distribute the papers and markers, then say: **Draw a symbol or write words that will describe or identify something you did wrong recently. Do not show your paper to anyone.** Adults assist as needed. Allow time.

Place the wastebasket in the center of the room. Invite the children to tear up their paper, and drop it in the wastebasket as they say, "I'm sorry. I'll try not to do that again."

You Need:

- cardboard box
- plastic bags children can't see through, containing the following:
 - toy fish
 - gelatin
 - toy boat
 - running shoe or sneaker
 - bus or boat ticket
 - seaweed or cooked spinach
 - coin

You Need:

- paper
- markers
- wastebasket
- Bible

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you feel about admitting your mistakes? Are you glad no one else has to know? Is it easy to acknowledge we have done something wrong?** Read aloud 1 John 1:9. **When we do something that hurts someone, our relationship with that person usually changes. But our relationship with God never changes. When we ask Him to help us, He takes the hurt away. And He will not remember our sins. Our message today is:**



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

Say that with me.

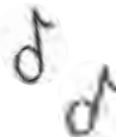
Prayer and Praise

Any
Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Review the memory verse and allow time for sharing experiences from last week's lesson study. Acknowledge birthdays, special events, or achievements. Greet all visitors.



Suggested Songs

- "Come and Praise the Lord Our King" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 5)
- "Psalm 66" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 11)
- "Praise Him, Praise Him" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 12)
- "In His Time" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 42)



Mission

Say: **In today's mission story we will hear how [insert name] shared the good news about Jesus.** Use *Children's Mission*.



Offering

For an offering container, use an item associated with the sea.

You Need:

- object associated with the sea



Prayer

Ask the children to think of something they want to make right with another person. Say: **With God's help we can admit our mistakes. And when we are truly sorry, He is always ready to forgive us.** Allow time for silent prayer, then pray aloud, asking God to help us admit our mistakes and make them right.

2

Bible Lesson

Experiencing the Story

Divide the students into four groups. Allocate one of the following words to each group. Every time their word is said, they do the following:

Word:	Do:
Jonah	Shake head in a negative way.
Nineveh	Brush your hands together as if you are shaking dirt off.
wind/waves	Blow, making a wind sound, and make waves with your hands.
sailors	Sway from side to side.

Read and tell the story.

One day God talked to His servant, the prophet **Jonah**. [*Shake head no.*]

“**Jonah**, [*Shake head no.*] I have a special job for you. I want you to go to the city of **Nineveh** [*Brush hands together.*] and tell them to repent of their sins.” And that led to a frightening experience.

Jonah [*Shake head no.*] sat and thought. *It isn't like God to get things wrong, but if I go to **Nineveh** [*Brush hands together.*] the people will kill me. No, it's time to go as far way from there as possible.*

So **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] went to the port of Joppa and looked for a ship. He boarded the first ship sailing away from the direction of **Nineveh** [*Brush hands together.*]. He was exhausted and soon found a quiet place to sleep. As soon as the ship got out to sea, the **winds** [*wind sounds*] blew and the **waves** [*wind sounds*] grew higher and higher. The **sailors** [*sway*] were afraid. They had never seen a storm like this. No matter

what they did, the **wind** [*wind sounds*] blew and the **waves** [*wind sounds*] got higher and higher. (*Have an assistant with a spray bottle lightly spray the students with water.*)

The **sailors** [*sway*] began to throw everything overboard. Then the captain found **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] fast asleep in the bottom of the boat. “Wake up and pray!” he cried over the **wind** [*wind sounds*]. **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] woke up. He saw the terrible storm, and knew that God had sent it. He knew the storm came because he had tried to run away from God.

Jonah [*Shake head no.*] told the **sailors** [*sway*] that he was running away from God, and that the only way the storm would end was for them to throw him over the side, into the sea.

The **sailors** [*sway*] said, “Never! We can't do that! You would die!” So they worked even harder to get the boat to shore. But the **wind** [*wind sounds*] blew harder and the **waves** [*wind sounds*] got higher. Finally the **sailors** [*sway*] gave up and agreed to throw **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] overboard.

Jonah [*Shake head no.*] was a very unwilling witness, but as the sea calmed, the **sailors** [*sway*] recognized that his God was the true God. And they worshiped Him as the Creator. But what about **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*]?

Jonah [*Shake head no.*] went down, down, down in the water. It got darker and darker. Suddenly he felt something nudging his foot. Next, everything felt warm and clammy. And it smelled terrible.

It took **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] some time to realize just where he was. God had sent a big fish to swallow him. **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*] was inside the fish for three days. During that time he had plenty of time to think. He realized his mistake

and prayed to God, asking for forgiveness. God forgave **Jonah** [*Shake head no.*], and after three days the fish spat Jonah out onto dry land. What would happen to him? Where would he go?

Memory Verse

Before Sabbath, cut from colored paper ten large fish shapes. Write one word of the memory verse on each. (Don't forget the reference.) "**If we confess our sins, he . . . will forgive us**" (1 John 1:9).

Put the "fish" papers in a fishbowl. On Sabbath hang a length of string or nylon fishing line somewhere in the room at a height the children can easily reach.

Invite ten children to come, one at a time, and take a "fish" from the bowl and "hook" it to the fishline (with a clothespin or paper clip) in the right order. Repeat the activity until everyone has had a turn and all know the verse.

Bible Study

Say: **Jonah's prayer tells us more details of the story.**

Let's take our Bibles and turn to Jonah 2. We will study each verse and then tell what it means in our own words.

Assign the texts as you go. Have non-readers work with readers or an adult. Texts and their main ideas are noted here.

You Need:

- colored paper
- scissors
- marker or pen
- fishbowl
- string or fishing line
- clothespins or paper clips
- Bible

Text

- Verse 1 Jonah was inside the whale when he prayed.
- Verse 2 God heard and answered his prayer. (Jonah thought he might die.)
- Verse 3 Jonah describes how it felt to go down into the sea.
- Verse 4 Jonah still believed in God and His power.
- Verse 5 More description of sinking into the sea.
- Verse 6 He sank to the bottom of the sea, but God brought him up.
- Verse 7 Jonah prayed to God when he was in trouble.
- Verse 8 People who worship idols instead of God will not be saved. Or, God will turn away from those who worship idols.
- Verse 9 Jonah will do as God has asked. He will obey.
- Verse 10 The fish spat Jonah out on shore.

Main Idea

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **Did Jonah ask God to forgive him? How do you know? What promise did Jonah make?** Read aloud 1 John 1:9. Ask a volunteer to tell what it means. Say: **Yes, If we are truly sorry God will forgive us when we do wrong. And He will ask us to do right, just as Jonah promised to stop running and do what God wanted him to do. Remember our message:**



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- petal-shaped pieces of colored paper
- markers
- poster board with flower stem(s) drawn on it
- glue

A. Creating Community

Give each child a petal-shaped piece of paper. Ask them to write or draw something that describes a situation they want to make right. Stick the petals on the poster board to make a flower shape. Display the flower where all can see.

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think of our flower? Is it as beautiful as you would like it to be? Why? Why should we try to make these things right?**

With God's help we can admit our mistakes. He does not take away the consequences of what we have done, but He forgives us and helps us find something good or learn something from the experience.

This flower is a bit like our life. Sometimes we do wrong things. But our life can be beautiful if we make things right and ask God to forgive us when we have done something wrong. He is always ready to do that. And He will help us to do what is right. Let's ask Him to help us right now.

Allow time for silent prayer, then pray aloud, asking God to help us admit our mistakes and make them right. After prayer, say: **Let's say our memory verse together.** Refer to 1 John 1:9 and help the children say the verse. **And let's remember our message . . .**



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

B. I'm Sorry

Before Sabbath, write on strips of paper the following short scenarios and place them in a fishbowl. Have the children take turns

pulling a paper from the fishbowl and acting out the incident, then showing how they would make things right.

You Need:

- strips of paper
- pen or pencil
- fishbowl
- Bible

1. You accidentally broke one of your mother's good dishes.
2. You lost your sister's ball.
3. You and your father argued about where you should park your bicycle.
4. Your brother left something on your bed. You threw it on the floor. It broke.
5. You said unkind words about one neighbor to another neighbor.
6. You took all the cookies from the cookie jar and ate them.
7. Someone pushed you down on the playground at school. You pushed them back.

Debriefing

Allow response time as you ask: **How do you feel when you make mistakes? Is it easy to admit that you are wrong? Why? Who can help you make things right?** Read 1 John 1:9 aloud. **What does "faithful and just" mean? What does "unrighteousness" mean? Will God forgive every mistake we make? Even if they are made on purpose?** Emphasize that God will forgive every sin if we are really sorry for the sin (not sorry we got caught!).

Say the message with me:



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

4

Sharing the Lesson

Heart-to-Heart

Distribute the supplies, giving each child enough paper to cut out a large heart shape. (Children may make more hearts, if desired.) If you wish, photocopy onto pink or red construction paper the heart pattern on page 144 or make individual patterns for children to trace around.

Where all can see, write the following and have the children copy it onto their hearts, then cut out the hearts.

Mistake Reminder!

When you make a mistake, remember:
Jesus loves you!

Ask Him to remind you how much!

Repeat 1 John 1:9.

Tell the children to give their hearts to someone they see in church today. If there is time, children may make more hearts.

Debriefing

Ask: **What is the message on your paper heart?** Be sure the children understand what they have copied. **Is this a message you want to share with others? Why?**

Think of someone you want to share your paper heart with. Who will it be? What will you say? Share it with someone in your family, or give it to someone in church today. Tell them about Jonah as you share it. Encourage the children to smile and be brief when they give their heart away.

Say: **Let's say our memory verse together again.** Repeat 1 John 1:9 together. **And let's remember today's message ...**



GOD HELPS ME TO ADMIT MY MISTAKES AND MAKE THEM RIGHT.

Closing

Sing "Into My Heart" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 125) and offer a short prayer asking God to help the children admit their mistakes. Thank God for His love and forgiveness.

You Need:

- pink or red construction paper
- scissors
- markers
- heart pattern on p. 144

Something Smells Fishy

References

Jonah 1:10-17; 2; *Prophets and Kings*, pp. 268, 269

Memory Verse

"If we confess our sins, he . . . will forgive us" (1 John 1:9, NIV).

The Message

God helps me to admit my mistakes and make them right.

Have you ever been asked to do something you really did not want to do? You kept putting it off. But you finally had to do it. Then you know just how one of God's friends felt.

Jonah had run away from God. He did not care where he went, just as long as it was far away from Nineveh. Now he was on a boat going to Tarshish, which was about as far away from Nineveh as he could get.

How wrong Jonah was! God knew exactly where he was and what he was doing. God sent a terrible storm to rock that boat. The sailors were terrified. They had never seen such a storm. They cast lots and learned that Jonah's God had sent the storm. He admitted it. They asked, "What have you done? Why is your God so angry with you?"

"I'm running away from what He wants me to do," Jonah answered. "He wanted me to go to Nineveh, but it is such a dreadful place. I didn't want to go there. So I ran away from the Creator of the land and sea. The only way to calm the storm is to throw me overboard."

"Never! We can't do that," said the sailors. "We won't throw you overboard. You would die!"

But the waves got higher. The wind blew harder. The lightning flashed and the thunder roared. The sailors tried even harder to row the boat to shore, but they got nowhere. "Are you sure that throwing you overboard is going to end this terrible storm?" the sailors asked Jonah.

"Yes," answered Jonah. "You must

throw me overboard."

The men believed Jonah, and they pleaded with God. "Do not hold us guilty of killing this man," they prayed. Then they threw Jonah over the side. As he disappeared under the waves, the wind immediately stopped blowing. The thunder and lightning stopped. The sea became calm. The sailors could hardly believe it. Immediately they offered a sacrifice and prayed to Jonah's God, promising to serve Him.

Jonah sank deeper and deeper in the water. It was cold and wet and dark. Suddenly it felt different. He was not sinking anymore. He was inside something damp, warm, and clammy. And it smelled terrible! God had prepared a big fish to swallow Jonah!



Jonah began to think about what he had done. He knew God still loved him, even though he had run away. So from inside the fish he prayed: "Thank You for hearing my prayer. As I sank beneath the waves I was sure that I was going to die. I could feel the seaweed around my legs, and it was getting hard to breathe. Thank You for saving me. You have given me back my life. I know that You are the most wonderful God. You are the God of power, unlike the gods of wood and stone. I will do whatever You want me to do. My life belongs to You."

After three days the big fish spat Jonah out on dry land.

The sailors suffered because of Jonah. But they also learned about the true God, the God who created the land and sea.

God still loved Jonah. And Jonah was still part of God's family. God still had work for him to do. God loves us in just the same way. We belong to Him even when we make mistakes.

Daily Activities

Sabbath

- With your family, visit a place where fish can be found (lake, aquarium, etc.). Find a quiet spot and read your lesson together. What was Jonah's big mistake?
- Talk about the fish that swallowed Jonah. Who sent the fish? Read Jonah 1:17. Read Matthew 12:40. What did Jesus say about Jonah and the big fish? About Himself?
- Teach your memory verse to your family. Thank God for His forgiveness.

Sunday

- For worship today, read Jonah 1. Try to imagine the size of the fish. The largest sea animal known today is the blue whale, which can be 100 feet long. Ask your family to help you measure 100 feet. How does that compare to your house? Your church? Your school?
- Read to learn more about whales. How do they breathe? How do *you* breathe? Why didn't Jonah drown?

Monday

- During worship read Jonah's prayer in Jonah 2:1-9. Describe Jonah's feelings as he sank down into the sea. Is God with you when you are in dark, scary places? Read verse 4 again. What does it say about Jonah's faith in God? Read verse 8. What can we learn from it? Did God forgive Jonah? Will He forgive you?
- Say your memory verse together, then thank God for His forgiving, loving grace.

Tuesday

- Ask your family to use paper and pencil (not pen) to write 1 John 1:8. When they are done, say, "Oh, I meant verse 9." Have them erase and write verse 9. Read Romans 3:23 aloud. Who makes mistakes? Who sins? Now read verse 24. Who saves us from our sins? How? Read Proverbs 3:11, 12. Who helps us erase and cor-

rect our mistakes? How? Why?

- For fun, tell a circle story about Jonah from the fish's point of view. One person begins with a sentence. Each person around the circle adds a sentence until the story ends.

Wednesday

- Before worship today, put some slippery stuff in a sealable plastic bag. During worship read Jonah 1:17 together. Then have someone close their eyes and put their hand into the plastic bag. Have them describe what it could have been like inside the big fish. What did Jonah feel? Smell?
- Talk about your feelings in scary or dark places. Read Isaiah 41:10. What has God promised you?

Thursday

- For worship, read Jonah's prayer again (Jonah 2:2-9). Listen for the parts that describe Jonah falling into the sea. Now read Micah 7:19 and Hebrews 8:12. Where does God cast our forgiven sins? What promise does He make?
- Give each person a strip of paper and a pen. Have them write or draw something for which they want to be forgiven. Drop the papers in a bowl of water. What happens? How is that like the way God forgives us? Thank Him for His forgiving love.

Friday

- For worship, read Jonah 1 together. Assign reading parts: narrator, God's voice, ship's captain, Jonah, sailors. Then act out the story.
- Say the memory verse together. Sing "God Is So Good" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 13) before you pray. Thank God that He casts your sins deep in the sea and will not remember them.
- For a special family treat, make banana boats. Slice a banana the long way, spread peanut butter on each half, and put the pieces back together. Cover with chocolate sauce and enjoy. (A scoop of ice cream makes it even better!)