

Bible background

Jonah 3

Aim of lesson

To show that God forgives everything we do wrong if we are sorry and show it.

Preparation required

You will need the sock puppet and figure of Jonah from last week, felt pens, scissors, glue and tape. Prepare the houses and people from half of all your activity sheets.

Suggested outline of lesson

1. You may like to remind the class of Jonah and last week's lesson by singing the song 'Jonah and the Whale', encouraging them to join in.
2. Bring out the sock puppet and remind them of Jonah being swallowed by the whale. Allow the children to take turns at making the sock puppet vomit Jonah onto the beach.
3. Tell how God told Jonah again to go to Nineveh and warn them that unless they stopped being cruel and wicked, God would destroy them all in forty days.
4. Describe the city of Nineveh. Tell them a lot of people lived there. Bring out onto a board or table the house and people made from the activity sheets. Ask them to help you make more people and houses for the big city. Give out either a house or a figure for each child to make. Talk about the city and the people there and how God was sorry to see them being cruel and unkind to each other, and how God cared about how each of the people in that vast city behaved; each person mattered to him.
5. Tell them how the people were very sorry when they heard what Jonah said. They stopped being cruel and wicked and asked God to forgive them. So God did. He did not destroy the city. He was pleased that they had changed and asked to be forgiven.
6. Ask the children to draw smiles on the faces of the people.
7. Teach the song 'God our Father'.

Alternative activities

1. Build the city of Nineveh from boxes, blocks, Lego or Plasticine and add some Plasticine people or play figures.
2. Make a collage picture of the city or print house shapes with squared pieces of sponge. Let the house prints dry a little first before trying to add doors, windows, steps etc. The children could print, paint or draw some people or trees while they are waiting.
3. Ask the children to draw a picture of some things they do that might make God sad. You can scribe a suitable sentence for each picture beginning, 'I'm sorry.....'. You may find it helpful to get the children to share their ideas verbally first. Sit in a circle and pass a toy around, explaining that when someone is holding the toy it is his or her turn to talk and everyone else should listen. Be ready to prompt the children with some familiar scenarios they will have encountered at home/nursery/school e.g. 'You and your friend both want to play with the same toy. What would make God sad?'

Relevance to the children's lives

Ask the children what kind of things they do that might make God sad and how they can show that they are sorry.

Prayer

Ask who wants to say sorry to God for something he or she has done.

Verse

'The Lord forgives all my sins.' Psalm 103:3.

Song

God Our Father (Tune: Rock-a-bye Baby)

Musical notation for the song, showing the melody and chords. The key signature is D major (two sharps) and the time signature is 3/4. The melody consists of four lines of music. Chords are indicated above the notes: D, A7, D, D, A7, D, D, Bm, Em, A7, D.

- v.1 God our Father loves to forgive
God our Father loves to forgive
When we are sorry and turn to him
God our Father loves to forgive
- v.2 He welcomes us with open arms
He welcomes us with open arms
When we are sorry and turn to him
He welcomes us with open arms

Music: Traditional.