

**WEEK TWO****JONAH: REPENTANCE****FAMILY ENCOUNTER**

Supplies:

- Bible
- Sacred Candle & Matches/Lighter
- Pens & Paper (or a Prayer Journal)

**WELCOMING GOD:**

Gather together, and welcome God into this time and space through the lighting of a candle. Take this moment to pause briefly and sit quietly in this light for a few moments allowing time for everyone to relax their body, mind, and spirit for this time. In these moments, the invitation is to become aware of God's presence with and amongst you as a family.

**SHARING WITH GOD AND ONE ANOTHER:**

Say: "If anything is on our minds that makes it difficult for us to focus, let's share it now and then let it go."

- Whoever leads this portion might share what is on his or her mind to model this. Give time for each person to respond. When everyone has responded that would like to, invite everyone to place their hands out and lift them up as we give these distractions to God.

OR you can invite the family to pray together as one person leads, saying the following:

"Dear Loving God, The One who knows our hearts, celebrates our victories, grieves with us during our losses, and gives us the strength to overcome our challenges. Please help us to let go of the distractions we name now, so that we can openly share with our family and may encounter you in a special way today. Our distractions are... (let there be silence here, so everyone has an opportunity to name aloud what is distracting them).

In the name of Jesus, we pray. Amen."

**ENCOUNTERING GOD:**

Read aloud: Jonah 1:4-12

- Take turns reading the Scripture or have a different family member read the Scripture each week.

"But the Lord hurled a great wind upon the sea, and such a mighty storm came upon the sea that the ship threatened to break up. Then the mariners were afraid, and each cried to his god. They threw the cargo that was in the ship into the sea, to lighten it for them. Jonah, meanwhile, had gone down into the hold of the ship and had lain down, and was fast asleep. The captain came and said to him, 'What are you doing sound asleep? Get up, call on your god! Perhaps the god will spare us a thought so that we do not perish.' The

sailors said to one another, 'Come, let us cast lots, so that we may know on whose account this calamity has come upon us.' So they cast lots, and the lot fell on Jonah. Then they said to him, 'Tell us why this calamity has come upon us. What is your occupation? Where do you come from? What is your country? And of what people are you?' 'I am a Hebrew,' he replied. 'I worship the Lord, the God of heaven, who made the sea and the dry land.' Then the men were even more afraid, and said to him, 'What is this that you have done!' For the men knew that he was fleeing from the presence of the Lord, because he had told them so. Then they said to him, 'What shall we do to you, that the sea may quieten down for us?' For the sea was growing more and more tempestuous. He said to them, 'Pick me up and throw me into the sea; then the sea will quieten down for you; for I know it is because of me that this great storm has come upon you.'"

## ENCOUNTERING EACH OTHER:

### Activity:

1. One person in the family names the highs and lows of the day.
  - a. When were you happy? Excited? What was beautiful?
  - b. When were you sad? Angry? Worried?
  - c. What did you do well today?
  - d. Where did you mess up?
2. Another person in the family says a prayer for that person, thanking God for the highs and asking God to help that person with the lows.
3. When everyone in the family has done this, pray together: "God, thank you for what made us happy today. Help me when I am upset. Forgive me when I fail. Help me live for you. Amen."

Say: Jonah knew what he did wrong, and he took action to turn away from it—to turn back to God. His ability to take action, though, started with his awareness of how his choices impacted others. The prayer above helps us to think about our day. It helps us be aware.

There is a word for what we see Jonah do in this story: repent. Jonah owns what he did (and didn't do) that caused the problems the sailors and he faced—namely, the storm. He also knew how to fix it: he needed to stop running. So, he told the sailors to toss him into the ocean. Remember, the ocean is where the waves were. It wasn't safe. Jonah caused the problem and then, went into the problem. He had to face what he caused. This is part of repentance. It's being aware of when we sin and mess things up. Then, it's facing that. And, once we face it, we return to God and trust God's grace to take care of us. We toss ourselves into the "ocean" and trust God with what happens next.

### Discussion Questions:

- How do we know when we mess up?
- What is your first response when you realize you mess up? Is it to defend yourself? To apologize? To deny it?
- How can praying like we did earlier—remembering what makes us happy, when we were mad, when we messed up—help us be aware of when we need to turn to God?

- How can it remind us of God's love?

Say: Let's try to make time each day this week to remember our highs and lows. What made us happy and when we mess up. And let's welcome God into all our days—good and bad. Remember: God was everywhere Jonah tried to go. And God is always with us!

## ENCOUNTERING GOD TOGETHER:

Say: "May we pray together as a family..."

Let us share our prayers for the world: for our country and leaders, for other countries and their leaders...

Let us share our prayers for the church, ministers, and spiritual leaders...

Let us share our prayers for our teachers, first responders, friends, and others in the community...

Let us share our prayers for our family and our own specific needs..."

If you would like to record the people for whom you pray, use the next few lines to do so:

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## ENCOUNTERING TRANSFORMATION TOGETHER:

Pray aloud together:

God, we welcomed you here and read Your Word,  
we prayed and we spent time with you,  
we rested in your love for us,  
and we did this all together.

Now, we promise to love one another and others as you love us.  
In the name of Christ. Amen.

## BLESSING ONE ANOTHER FOR OUR ENCOUNTERS WITH THE WORLD:

Invite family members to bless one another using any of the examples below or their own blessings.

Examples:

- "I love you. God loves you. I pray God blesses you."

- "God loves you exactly like you are—and so do I."

- "I love the gifts God has given you and how you bless the world with them."