

# Year 5, Rotation 2

## Jacob & Esau

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### Overall Objective

- The students will find the stories of Jacob in Genesis, in the Old Testament.
- The students will identify the following characters and place them correctly in the story: Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, Jacob, Laban, Rachel, Leah.
- The students will discover God's plan at work in the lives of these characters, despite their imperfections.
- The students will understand that a loving, forgiving God is at work in their lives.
- The students will realize that we need patience, persistence, and courage to wait for God's timing.
- The students will discover that the stories are timeless and continue to speak to us today.

### Biblical References

Genesis 25:19-34; 27:1-33:20

### Memory Verse

Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the Lord is in this place- and I did not know it!" Genesis 28:16

### Biblical Background

On the surface, the scriptural readings tell the story of the conflict (and its resolution) between Jacob and Esau, twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. At first glance, it appears to be a story of what we might now call one of the Bible's more dysfunctional families. Beyond this, however, it is a story about God, God's nature, and the awesome power that chooses even the lowliest of us to bless and use in the advancement of the Kingdom.

#### NOTES:

Upon reading what the theological literature refers to as "the Jacob narrative," one is immediately struck with the length of it. Upon studying it in more depth, one comes to appreciate the complexity of not only the storytelling, but the theological truths embedded within. This writing will attempt to do service to both. In order to do so, the preponderance of credit must be given to Walter Brueggemann's commentary as the framework for the presentation.

#### Theological Premises

Depending on where we are in our faith walk and relationship with God, the Jacob stories seek to either introduce us to, inform, or remind us of the following:

**“The God of Jacob is every bit as scandalous as Jacob.”** What is meant here is that God does things that catch us up short, because they seem improbable, if not downright “wrong” by the standards of the natural order of things. This God of Jacob is the same God who later made “the first to be last,” upending the traditional human power structure, inverting it on its ear. As Brueggemann writes, “To be faithful to such a God brings conflict because this God himself evokes and enters into conflict with the way the world is organized.”

**God chooses to appear and become known, even to a fugitive like Jacob; that experience is life transforming.** God means to come into our lives, no matter our circumstances, to transform the reality of our existence. The decision to encounter us is made not because we are “good enough,” but merely because God wishes it to be so. The world is a place where one can encounter God.

**Our relationship with God has a direct impact on our relationship with others.** Not only does God’s call on Jacob’s life place him in conflict with those around him, it is Jacob’s evolving relationship with God that brings about reconciliation with his brother, Esau.

**God’s plans may have no visible or necessary connection to the conventional order of life, but he is always steadfast and faithful.** Before he was born, Jacob had already been chosen by God. This greatly impacted the events in his life, and his relationships. The conflict he experienced caused him great strife and hardship. Through all of this, he was never alone and it was always for ultimate good. God’s promises to Jacob at Bethel are echoed much later through Jesus when he promises “Lo, I am with you always ...” (Matthew 28:20), his petition for our protection (John 17:11b, 15), and reconciliation (John 17:25).

### **Literary/Historical Considerations**

Brueggemann suggests that the progression of the Jacob narrative is arranged in a series of concentric circles. In the outer circles, we find the materials dealing with Jacob and Esau. The two encounters with God come within the next circle, with the material dealing with Jacob and Laban, falling in between these encounters. The center of the narrative is the birth of Jacob’s children. There is then a series of designations by/encounters with God and Jacob which cause conflict, ultimately leading to new life and reconciliation. If we understand Brueggemann’s intent, he is talking about concentric and overlapping circles, or themes, within the story.

The Jacob stories follow, and to some degree parallel, the Abraham stories; however they differ in two main ways. The Abraham stories focus on the promise, and how it can be passed from one generation to another. The Jacob stories shift attention to matters of blessing, and struggles within a single generation. Brueggemann writes: “The Abraham narrative is preoccupied with the issue of promise. It revolves around two questions: (1) Will God keep his promise of an heir? (2) Will Abraham and Sarah trust in and rely only on the promise? ... the

Jacob narrative ... is dominated by the motif of blessing." This then has the effect of shifting the focus from the "religious" to more earthly concerns.

In order to truly appreciate this, one must more deeply explore the meaning of blessing in this culture. In our culture, we typically equate blessing with approval. Parents might give their blessing/approval to the efforts of their children -- usually meaning their choice of career or spouse. Blessing can be given equally. It is seen as a rather old fashioned and "quaint" practice, that holds little real weight.

Brueggemann reminds us that this was not the case in Jacob's world. Here, for this family, blessing mattered more than anything in the tangible world. Here, "blessing combines all of the primitive power of a spoken word (which has a life of its own) with the high theological claim derived from it." Here, "symbolic actions have genuine and abiding power ... not empty gestures signifying nothing." Here, the execution of symbols through ritual cause something to happen. Here, words, symbols, and gestures are the source of power. Here, blessing ties the past to the present and provides hope for a future. It cannot be retracted. It cannot be reissued. This is not just about the distribution of property. God will go with the blessed. The other must fend for himself. And in this world, it is expected that Isaac's blessing will go to his oldest son. This is the custom. This is what is expected to happen in all "good families." It is into this world that Esau and Jacob are conceived and born. It is from forces beyond this world that complications first arise.

### **Narrative Progression, Character Development and Symbolism**

Jacob's story begins before his conception. His father is middle aged and his mother is "barren," much like Abraham and Sarah. In this case, though, the issue of barrenness is quickly dispatched through Isaac's intercession to God. Rebekah becomes pregnant.

To say this was not an easy pregnancy would be the epitome of understatement. Rebekah is beyond miserable. She becomes so desperate she "inquire(s) of the LORD" (25: 22) -- ie, she sought an oracle to help her understand her situation. She is told what is to be the destiny of her children: two nations will be born from her, with the older serving the younger (v. 23). This divine revelation may help us to understand Rebekah's later behavior to some degree ... perhaps she felt justified or even driven to initiate the deceptive way Jacob obtains his father's blessing.

The two boys born are obviously not identical twins. Esau, the first born, was larger, hairier, and "red." Jacob was birthed grabbing at Esau's heel. Esau grew to be a boisterous man, a skilled hunter, preferring life in the fields, while Jacob was quiet, preferring life in the tents.

A few words about these names ... Again, in Jacob's time, words carried meaning and weight. There is some debate about the sum total of meanings in Esau's name. Some attribute his name to his condition at birth (hairy), while others downplay this angle. Jacob is related to the Hebrew word for "heel," and

came to mean "deceiver" or "supplanter." Both men grow into alternative names before the narrative is done. Esau's is determined by the bargain made between the two brothers relayed in vv. 29-34.

This portion of the narrative shows us a famished Esau coming in from the fields to find Jacob over a pot of stew. Esau is portrayed as abrupt, even crass. He demands "some of that red stuff" from his brother. The scripture then tells us that Esau becomes known as Edom. In Hebrew, this word is related to the words "red" and "pottage" or stew. The implication here is that since Esau was more concerned with the momentary pleasure of instant gratification, with no regard for the future (he "despised his birthright"), this is what he became. His descendants, the Edomites, were then likewise destined for "red stuff" and not more.

The bargain, the trade between Esau's birthright and Jacob's stew, is the second bit of evidence that Jacob is meant to "have it over" his brother. Brueggemann fleshes out this notion with some discussion of the difference between deferred and immediate material blessing, and those that can be achieved vs. gifted. He states that what is implied in these passages is that while Jacob may well be a conniving scoundrel, he also evidences belief in a future and the sureness of God's promise, things to which Esau is totally indifferent. Lest we be tempted to take pity on Esau for being just a big, dumb oaf who didn't have any better sense, Williams reminds us that "According to the rabbis, Jacob was not the only tricky brother. Esau is described by them as a trapper as well as a hunter. He would trap people with leading questions ... so that any answer would ensnare the answerer."

With this and family divisions firmly in place (Esau is Isaac's favorite, Jacob is Rebekah's), we enter the bestowing of Isaac's blessing. Legally, Jacob can claim to be Isaac's heir. However, he still needs Isaac's blessing. Rebekah, convinced of Jacob's right to it (the oracle had decreed it, her older son's behavior -- in addition to "despising his birthright," Esau married Hittite women, who were apparently the bane of Isaac and Rebekah's existence and further evidence of his obvious disregard for the promise -- confirmed it), devises a plan to insure that he gets it. So sure of the correctness of her assessment, she is even willing to call curses upon herself to clinch Jacob's participation in the deception.

Brueggemann is quick to remind us "This is not a spiritual treatise on morality. It is, rather, a memory of how faith moves in the rawness of experience." He cautions us to refrain from getting too caught up in the obvious moral dilemma here. Instead, we are encouraged to continue to look for the hand of God at work.

Williams also more than hints at the possibility that Isaac was not a total fool. The interplay between Jacob (disguised as Esau) and Isaac suggests that not only did the patriarch have questions about with whom he was really dealing, his blessing implies he really knew! Williams points out that Isaac's blessing was one more fitting for a farmer than a hunter. This interpretation, along with the mirror image blessing Isaac later gives Esau, leaves this door open, and gives Isaac the freedom to be true in blessing the nature of each son.

Again, Brueggemann reminds us: "The way of God will not be explained. The narrative invites the listening community to marvel rather than explain. The reality of blessing is not simply the result of human ingenuity. Nor is it a matter of good luck. ... It is ironic that the bearer of the blessing becomes a fugitive ... That is the perilous, hopeful way of God."

Our memory verse comes from this "fugitive" section of the narrative. Jacob has been sent away by his parents, to escape the wrath of his brother. Isaac again blesses him, this time charging him to marry within the family. Jacob is to go to his uncle, Laban, and take one of his daughters as a wife. On his way, God comes to Jacob in a dream, and makes three promises: (1) "I am with you"; (2) "I will keep you"; (3) "I will bring you home." The unexpected nature of the encounter, and the power of the promises cause Jacob to exclaim "Surely the LORD is in this place and I was not aware of it." (28:16b, NIV). The encounter transforms Jacob. He makes a covenant with God. He promises to worship God, and to tithe. He leaves the place with hope for the future.

The inner narrative portion dealing with Jacob and Laban, Jacob's marriages and the birth of his children, all reflect and expand upon the themes already present in the earlier narrative. We again witness the conflict brought on by attempts to upend the conventional order of things, when Jacob seeks to marry the younger Rachel over Leah. Jacob meets his match in Laban, and has to learn how to work for what he wants. The natural order is again challenged when the beautiful and loved Rachel is barren. Unloved Leah is allowed the privilege of bearing Jacob's first children. Brueggemann points out that God is left out of this part of the narrative, for the most part. It is not until Rachel conceives and bears Joseph that God's name reenters the story. This also signals the time for the family to leave and return to Jacob's homeland.

It is on this return trip that Jacob's famous wrestling match at the Jabbok occurs. Jacob has sent messengers ahead to try to impress Esau with his accomplishments and wealth. It seems this attempt has failed when they return with the news that Esau is coming to meet Jacob and his family! Jacob is convinced he will be killed. He prays to God, reminding God of the promises made at Bethel. Then he sends Esau some extraordinary gifts, literally a fortune in livestock. He has now done all he can.

It is night. Jacob is alone. Suddenly, "a Man" comes out of the darkness and wrestles with Jacob all night! Apparently this one can only function at night. As the morning comes, he tries to get away by crippling Jacob. Jacob continues to hang on, refusing to let go "until you bless me." The Man's blessing is to change Jacob's name to Israel. Jacob believed he had been wrestling with God. Brueggemann reminds us that such activity comes with a price -- "Israel must ponder how it is blessings are given and at what cost."

Jacob's meeting with Esau does not occur as Jacob feared. The two meet and embrace. They are reconciled, but remain the same. Esau still wants to be brash and run the show (presumes to tell Jacob when it is time to leave and where they will go together); Jacob continues to be deceptive (leaves Esau with the

impression he will catch up with him, but settles in another area).

Brueggemann ends: "Love of God and love of brother belong together. It remains to ask about seeing and loving. What does it mean to be children and heirs of that man -- crippled and blessed, bowed down and forgiven? ... all the answers must pass through the prism of the Crucified One. He is the one who knows fully about limping and blessing, about bowing down and forgiving."

## **REFERENCES**

Brueggemann, Walter. *Interpretation: Genesis*.

*The Interpreter's Bible Dictionary vol. 1*

*The New Interpreter's Bible vol. 1*

Williams, Michael E. *The Storyteller's Companion to the Bible, vol. 1:*

# Workshop Overview

## Thou Art

### OVERVIEW

Students will learn about one of the clearest examples in the Bible of married love: Jacob, who married sisters Leah and Rachel, and had 12 children between them. Jacob had a large family and he loved them all very much. The children will make a “God Bless Our Home” frame for a family photo.

### MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (children will collect from the Bible bookshelf)Item (Listed and bulleted)
- Foam Frames (1 per student) (Workshop coordinator)
- Decorative foam stickers for each student (workshop coordinator)
- Black Sharpie markers

### ROOM SET-UP

Typical set-up of Thou Art with covered tables

## Garden of Eatin’

### OVERVIEW

The students will shake a zip-lock bag to make homemade ice cream symbolizing how Jacob might have felt as he worked and waited for 14 years in order to marry the girl he loved. Jacob showed the kind of love that “never gives up!”

### MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (children will collect from the Bible bookshelf)Item (Listed and bulleted)
- Strips of duct tape (workshop coordinator)
- 6 Tbsp Rock Salt per student (workshop coordinator)
- Crushed Ice (workshop coordinator)
- Gallon sized Heavy Duty Zip-Lock bags (1 per student) (workshop coordinator)
- Pint size Freezer zip-lock bags (1 per student) (Workshop Coordinator)
- Ice Cream Ingredients: (workshop coordinator)
  - ½ c half & half
  - 1 Tbsp Sugar
  - ½ tsp vanilla
- Plastic bowls (workshop coordinator)
- Plastic spoons (workshop coordinator)
- Napkins (workshop coordinator)

### ROOM SET-UP

Covered, clean tables.

## Fun and Godly Stuff

### OVERVIEW

The students will review the story of Jacob and Esau by playing a quiz show game.

### MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (students will collect from the Bible Bookshelf)
- Copies of Jacob and Esau story (one per child) (workshop coordinator)
- Buzzer game (workshop coordinator)
- Game questions (in curriculum)
- Prizes (candy, stickers, etc.) (workshop coordinator)

### ROOM SET-UP

Open space for children to sit.

## Tabernacle

### OVERVIEW

The students will look up bible verses to plot out the lineage from Abraham to Jesus to us. The children will create their own “leaf” to add to the family tree.

### MATERIAL LIST

- Bibles (students will collect from Bible bookshelf)
- Construction Paper- green, orange, yellow, red (teacher will collect)
- Markers ((teacher will collect)
- Tape (teacher will collect)
- Scissors (teacher will collect)
- Abraham’s Family Tree- Large, poster size “tree” template (workshop coordinator to provide)

### ROOM SET-UP

Traditional set-up of The Tabernacle with space left open either in the front or back of the room in order to do the activity.

## Pray-Per-View

### OVERVIEW

The children will observe three different film views of the life of Jacob and will learn that God chooses each one of us, imperfect as we are, to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

### MATERIAL LIST

- *Jacob* (on VHS) (workshop coordinator will provide)
- *In The Beginning* (on DVD) (workshop coordinator will provide)
- *The Story of Jacob and Joseph* (on VHS) (workshop coordinator will provide)

- VCR player (workshop coordinator will provide)
- DVD player (workshop coordinator will provide)
- Popcorn (teacher will make)
- Water/cups

## ROOM SET-UP

Traditional Pray-Per-View room set-up

# THOU ART

## Objective:

- The students will learn about one of the clearest examples in the Bible of married love: Jacob, who married sisters Leah and Rachel, and had 12 children between them. Jacob had a large family and he loved them all very much.
- The students will make a “God Bless Our Home” frame for a family photo.

## Materials:

- Bibles (children will collect from the Bible bookshelf)Item (Listed and bulleted)
- Foam Frames (1 per student) (Workshop coordinator)
- Decorative foam stickers for each student (workshop coordinator)
- Black Sharpie markers

## Lesson:

- Welcome the students warmly.
- Today we are going to be learning about a story that happened a long time before Jesus was born. We read about it in the very first book of the Bible called Genesis.
- Have students find the book of Genesis.
  - What other important stories are in the book of Genesis? (Creation; Adam & Eve, Noah)
  - Have students find Chapter 25.
  - Have students find verse 19. The story of Jacob is too long to read in the classroom- so you will summarize as below:
- I imagine Jesus studied this story when he was a little boy. It’s a story about how a man named Jacob fell “madly in love” with a girl named Rachel and what he had to go through to marry her. (Jacob was the son of Isaac and the grandson of Abraham. He also had a twin brother named Esau.)  
Jacob left his father’s home to visit his Uncle Laban, who lived quite a ways away, to find a wife. Just before he arrived there, he saw a woman watering sheep by a well. She was very beautiful and I think it was love at first sight. He wanted to marry her but her father, Laban, said that Jacob had to work for him for 7 years before he would let them marry. Her name was Rachel.  
When Jacob had worked the 7 years and was ready to marry Rachel, her father switched brides and he ended up marrying her older sister, Leah. Back in those days a younger sister could not marry before an older sister. He was able to fool Jacob because the bride always wore a heavy veil over her face. Jacob was very upset after the wedding so the father said that he could marry Rachel, too, but he had to work another 7 years! However, he got to marry Rachel a week after he married Leah. (Yes, that makes 2 wives, but that happened quite often in the Bible.) Between the 2 wives and their maidservants he had 13 children so that made quite a large family didn’t it? He had 12 sons and 1 daughter. One of those sons was named Joseph, do you remember him? (Yes, the one with the beautiful coat.)
- The Bible tells us that, “Love never gives up and its faith, hope, and patience never fail.” (1Cor. 13:7)

- We are celebrating love and families today. Family members can make the best of friends, too. We are going to make a frame magnet with the words that you often see hung in many Christian homes throughout the world: “God Bless Our Home.”
- Distribute art supplies. (You should have an example of a finished project). Have the children write “God Bless Our Home” in sharpie marker across the top or sides of the foam frame. Have the children decorate their frames with foam stickers.
- If there is time, have the children share with you the table prayer that they say with their family before eating. Other prayers that they say could also be shared.

Prayer: "Dearest Lord, Throughout today, guide my words and work and play. Bless my friends and family, too, and keep me safe in all I do. Amen."

# GARDEN OF EATIN'

## Objective:

- The students will shake a zip-lock bag to make homemade ice cream symbolizing how Jacob might have felt as he worked and waited for 14 years in order to marry the girl he loved. Jacob showed the kind of love that “never gives up!”

## Materials:

- Bibles (children will collect from the Bible bookshelf)Item (Listed and bulleted)
- Strips of duct tape (workshop coordinator)
- 6 Tbsp Rock Salt per student (workshop coordinator)
- Crushed Ice (workshop coordinator)
- Gallon sized Heavy Duty Zip-Lock bags (1 per student) (workshop coordinator)
- Pint size Freezer zip-lock bags (1 per student) (Workshop Coordinator)
- Ice Cream Ingredients: (workshop coordinator)
  - ½ c half & half
  - 1 Tbsp Sugar
  - ½ tsp vanilla
- Plastic bowls (workshop coordinator)
- Plastic spoons (workshop coordinator)
- Napkins (workshop coordinator)

## Lesson:

- Welcome the students warmly.
- Today we are going to be learning about a story that happened a long time before Jesus was born. We will read about it in the very first book of the Bible called Genesis. It's a story about how a man named Jacob fell “madly in love” with a girl named Rachel and what he had to go through to marry her. We are also going to work and wait for something that we all love- an ice cream treat!
- First, we are going to make ice cream. While we are shaking the ingredients, you will listen to Jacob's story.”
- Make the Ice Cream: (If the weather permits, the students can take their bags outside to shake or roll them.)
  - Fill the large bag 1/2 full of crushed ice, add 6 Tablespoons course salt.
  - Into the small bag put 1/2 c. half and half, 1 Tbsp. of sugar and 1/2 tsp. vanilla.
  - Seal the little bag with duct tape and put it into the larger bag.
  - Start shaking! If the students get tired, they can rest awhile, then shake some more.
  - After 10 to 25 minutes the ice cream should be ready to eat!
- While the students are shaking their bags, read this story to them:
  - Jacob left his father's home to visit his Uncle Laban, who lived quite a ways away, to find a wife. Just before he arrived there, he saw a woman

watering sheep by a well. She was very beautiful and I think it was love at first sight. He wanted to marry her but her father, Laban, said that Jacob had to work for him for 7 years before he would let them marry. Her name was Rachel. When Jacob had worked the 7 years and was ready to marry Rachel, her father switched brides and he ended up marrying her older sister, Leah. Back in those days a younger sister could not marry before an older sister. He was able to fool Jacob because the bride always wore a heavy veil over her face. Jacob was very upset after the wedding so the father said that he could marry Rachel, too, but he had to work another 7 years! However, he got to marry Rachel a week after he married Leah. (Yes, that makes 2 wives, but that happened quite often in the Bible.) Between the 2 wives and their maidservants he had 13 children.

- Read the Biblical account to the children: Genesis 29: 1-30.
  - Encourage the students to discuss the story and ask questions.
    - What are you thinking about while you are shaking your zip-lock bags?
    - What do you think would happen if you had get tired of this work and give up?
    - What do we expect will happen if we don't give up?
    - How is shaking these bags like what happened to Jacob in our story? (He worked hard and he waited for a promise.)
    - In what way might God ask us to show this kind of love in our own family?
    - How does God "never give up" in His love for you?
- Pass out bowls, spoons and napkins. Enjoy the ice cream!

Prayer:

Dear God, thank you for the fun we've had this morning with these good friends. Thank you especially for this delicious ice cream. Bless each of our families during the coming week. Amen.

## FUN AND GODLY STUFF

### Objective:

- The students will review the story of Jacob and Esau by playing a quiz show game.

### Materials:

- Bibles (students will collect from the Bible Bookshelf)
- Copies of Jacob and Esau story (one per child) (workshop coordinator)
- Buzzer game (workshop coordinator)
- Game questions (in curriculum)
- Prizes (candy, stickers, etc.) (workshop coordinator)

### Lesson:

- If this is the first or second week of the rotation, introduce the story of Jacob and Esau to the children. If this a later week in the rotation, ask the children what they already have learned about Jacob and his brother Esau.
- Does anyone know the story of Jacob and Esau? Where might we find it in the Bible? (Genesis 25: Help the children find this in their Bibles.)
- Today we are going to read the story of Jacob and Esau, and then play a quiz game to see how well you remember the story. If you are careful listeners, then you will help your team win a prize during game time! (Show prizes!)
- Read the following story together: (Call on children to take turns reading. Be sure to discuss the story and the children's feelings about the story while they are reading.)

*The story of Jacob is among the first told in the Bible; here it is in the book of Genesis. (Have the children find Genesis in their Bibles.)*

This is the story of two brothers who were fighting with each other even before they were born! It led to much trouble and unhappiness - but then, fighting always does.

There was once a couple named Isaac and Rebekah, as they were getting up in their years God told them that they would soon be having twins. But before they were even born, Rebekah could feel them kicking and fighting inside her. "Why is this happening?", she called out.

And God answered her, "The two children inside you will become the fathers of two nations.

Just like the two are fighting with each other now, the two nations will struggle with each other.

One will be stronger than the other.  
and the older will serve the younger."

Soon it came time for the children to be born.

The first baby born was a boy. He was all red and covered with hair, and so Isaac and Rebekah named him Esau, which sounded like their word for "red". The second baby was also a boy, and he came grabbing onto Esau's heel. So they named him Jacob, which sounded like their word for "heel".

The boys grew up.

Esau became a strong and skillful hunter who loved the outdoors.

Jacob was a quiet man, who preferred to stay home.

Isaac like Esau because he liked to eat the wild game Esau brought home from hunting. But Rebekah liked Jacob because he learned to cook and to do other things to help her around the home.

One day Esau went out for another one of his hunting trips. He must have been gone for a few days, and the hunting must not have been very good, because when he came back, he was starving for something good to eat. It just so happened that when Esau came home, Jacob had just made a great big pot of hot, steaming, stew. The mouth-watering smell filled the air.

"Give me some of that red stuff - I am starving!" Esau demanded.

Jacob was a schemer, and so he said, "Sure! I'll give you some stew - IF you will give me your Birthright."

The Birthright was a very important thing. It went to Esau because he was born first. When Isaac died, Esau's Birthright would make him the head of the household, and he would get twice as much of Isaac's wealth as Jacob would. But here is where Esau made his mistake.

He was hungry NOW.

He didn't care about tomorrow. All that Birthright stuff wouldn't happen for a long time.

But Jacob was wiser.

He knew one day tomorrow would come. If he had the Birthright, one day he would become the head of the household.

"Give me your Birthright, and I will give you some stew", Jacob said again, as he slurped on a steaming spoonful himself.

"All right! All right!" Esau said, "You can have my Birthright. What good will it be to me if I starve to death"! Not that he would have starved to death. He was just hungry.

"Do you promise", Jacob said?

"I promise!" Esau snapped.

"All right then," Jacob said, and he gave Esau what he wanted.

And so Esau gave away his Birthright for a bowl of soup and few pieces of bread.

That wasn't too smart.

After some time their father Isaac was getting very old. He was bent over. The hair he had left on his head had turned white. And he could no longer see. He knew he would die soon.

And so he called his son Esau.

"Here I am", Esau answered.

Isaac said, "My son, go hunting and cook the meat you have caught. Make one of your delicious meals, the kind I like so much, and bring it to me. And then I will bless you."

As soon as Esau left, Rebekah took Jacob by the arm and said to him, "Your father has sent Esau away to hunt. When Esau gets back, he is going to fix your father's favorite dinner, and your father is going to give him his blessing.

"Quick! Do what I say! Go out into the fields and bring me two young goats, and I will make your father's favorite dinner from them. Bring it to him, and

your father will think you are Esau, and he will bless you instead."  
But Jacob said, "Esau is all hairy, and I am not! If my father feels me, he will know I am trying to trick him, and he will curse me instead of blessing me!"  
"Let the curse be on me", Jacob's mother said, "Just do what I say."  
And so Jacob did.  
When Jacob had brought the two goats, Rebekah prepared a delicious meal. Then she took some of Esau's clothes and had Jacob put them on the skins from the goats and put them on Jacob's arms and the back of his neck so that he would be hairy like his brother.  
Wearing the disguise his mother had made, Jacob took the steaming hot meal in to his father.  
"Who is there?" his father asked.  
"It is your first born son Esau", Jacob said. "I have brought your favorite dinner, just like you asked."  
"How did you do it so quickly?" his father asked.  
"Your God was with me, and he gave me success," Jacob answered. "Eat, and then you can give me your blessing."  
"You don't sound like Esau", Isaac said. "You sound like your brother Jacob. Come here. Let me touch you."  
Isaac felt the fur on Jacob's neck and arms. And then he said, "The voice is Jacob's, but the arms are Esau's."  
He was about to give his blessing when he asked again, "Are you really my son Esau?"  
"Yes, I am," Jacob lied.  
And so Isaac ate the meal he thought Esau had brought him. When he was finished he said, "Come here, my son, and kiss me, and then I will give you my blessing." And so Isaac gave Jacob his blessing. But he thought it was Esau.  
Jacob had barely left when his brother Esau came in from his hunting. Esau fell to his knees when he found out what Jacob had done. "Is there nothing left for me?" he cried out.  
Then his father said to him, "You will not have the richness of the earth, The dew from heaven won't be given to you.  
You will have to live by taking,  
and you will serve your brother.  
But one day you will break free."  
From that day on Esau hated his brother Jacob and he threatened to kill him. Esau's words got back to Rebekah, and so she sent her son Jacob to run for his life. "I can't lose both my sons in one day," she said.

What a mess we make when we lie and cheat.  
Jacob did lie, and he cheated his brother. But, still, God didn't leave him. God knows our weakness, and he is forgiving. He accomplishes his good and wonderful plans through us, even when we mess things up.  
Jacob left his home and went off to many adventures. He dreamt about a ladder with angels that went up and down to heaven, he was tricked into marrying not one but two women, he was tricked into being a shepherd for 20 years, he got into a real wrestling match with God, and lastly, after many

years, he finally met back up again with Esau to tell him how sorry he was for stealing the birthright.

- Play the quiz show game.
  - Divide the class into teams.
  - Have the children “buzz” in when they know the correct answer to a Jacob and Esau game question.
  - Award 1 point for correct answers; 0 points for wrong answers.
  - The winning team gets to pick a small prize- (one sticker or candy per child.) All children can get a small candy prize for participating in the game.

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the story of Jacob and Esau. Thank you for staying with us, even when we make mistakes. Thank you for your forgiveness.  
Amen.

### **Game Questions:**

1. Where in the Bible can you find the story of Jacob? (Genesis)
2. What was Jacob's mother's name? (Rebekah)
3. What was Jacob's father's name? (Isaac)
4. What baby was born first, all red and covered with hair? (Esau)
5. What baby was born second, grabbing on his brother's heel? (Jacob)
6. Who became a skillful hunter who loved the outdoors? (Esau)
7. Who became a quiet man, who preferred to stay at home? (Jacob)
8. What son did Rebekah like best? (Jacob)
9. Why did Rebekah like Jacob best? (He could cook and help her around the home)
10. What son did Isaac like best? (Esau)
11. Why did Isaac like Esau best? (He liked to eat the wild game Esau brought back from hunting)
12. When Esau demanded some of Jacob's stew, what did Jacob say? (Sure, I will give you some stew if you give me your birthright)
13. What was a birthright? (It makes someone the head of the household and the keeper of the money)
14. What child usually got the birthright when their father died? (The first-born child)
15. Who was born first, making him the head of the household when Isaac died? (Esau)
16. Why did Esau agree to give up his birthright? (He was hungry! Jacob would only give him stew if Esau gave up his birthright)
17. What did Isaac tell Esau to do right before Isaac was about to die? (Go hunting, make a delicious meal, and then Isaac would bless Esau and make him the head of the household.)
18. How did Jacob try to trick his father? (He put skins from goats on Esau's clothes so he would look hairy like his brother. He took a steaming meal to his father and pretended to be Esau.)
19. Who told Jacob to pretend to be his brother? (His mother Rebekah told him to do it.)
20. Did the trick work? (Yes. Isaac ate the meal and blessed Jacob, who he thought was Esau!)
21. Did Esau forgive his brother Jacob? (No, he hated his brother and threatened to kill him)
22. Why did Jacob run away from home? (He was afraid for his life, and Rebekah told him to run)
23. Did Jacob ever apologize to Esau for stealing his birthright? (Yes, many years later Jacob met up with his brother and told him he was sorry)
24. Did God leave Jacob, since he lied and cheated his brother? (No, God is forgiving. He didn't leave Jacob, even though Jacob made a big mistake)

# TABERNACLE

## Objective:

- The students will look up bible verses to plot out the lineage from Abraham to Jesus to us.
- The children will create their own “leaf” to add to the family tree.

## Materials:

- Bibles (students will collect from Bible bookshelf)
- Construction Paper- green, orange, yellow, red (teacher will collect)
- Markers ((teacher will collect)
- Tape (teacher will collect)
- Scissors (teacher will collect)
- Abraham’s Family Tree- Large, poster size “tree” template (workshop coordinator to provide)

## Lesson:

- Welcome the students.
- Can anyone remember learning about a man named Abraham? Today we are going to look into history to see who came after Abraham (his sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, etc.)
- Can anyone tell me about what you’ve learned so far about the story of Jacob & Esau? (Prompts: Are they brothers? Who was born first? They’re twins? Etc.)
- Today we are going to look into history to see where these guys came from (who was their father, grandfather, etc.) and who came after (their sons, grandsons, great-grandsons, etc.) God made a covenant with Abraham - a promise. Can anyone tell me what it was? Review Genesis 17 with the kids.
- God promised Abraham that he would be the “father of many nations and “kings would come from him.” Do you think that God kept his promise? Let’s take a look in the Bible and see.
- Has anyone here ever put together a family tree? Do you know what it is? It’s a way to diagram/draw out the “branches” of your family to see who came from whom. It would list your parents, grandparents, brothers and sisters, spouse, children, grandchildren and on and on. A large family would have lots of branches and leaves on its family tree. If God said Abraham would be the “father of many nations” – would he have a large tree or a small sapling?
- Let’s start by putting Abraham at the top of the tree and let’s add his wife, Sarah. Now, who was their son? Let’s look it up in Genesis 21:1-3.

Isaac had an interesting journey with his father – remember the offering on the mountain? When he grew up it was time to for him to marry, Abraham’s servant went to find his wife. Read the story he told of how he found her in Genesis 24:42-49. What was her name?

Rebekah and Isaac did get married, with Abraham’s blessing, but they weren’t able to have kids right away. Let’s read about Isaac’s prayer in

Genesis 25:21-26.

What were the boys' names? Right - Jacob and Esau, the focus of our lessons this month. The bible verse says that "two nations" were in Rebekah's womb. Who was the oldest? (Esau). In Bible times, the oldest son was the favored one and received the better inheritance. But God had His own plans, which put Jacob before Esau. We're going to focus on Jacob's lineage next.

Jacob left his mother and father's land to his mother's brother, Laban, in Haran. Read Genesis 27:41-45 to find out/remember why.

Isaac passed Abraham's special blessing on to Jacob before Jacob left. Read Genesis 28:1-4. Remember this promise says that he will be "fruitful and increase in numbers." While in Haran, Jacob took two different wives – what were their names? We can find them in Genesis 29:16

Between these two wives, Leah and Rachel, Jacob had 12 sons. Can anyone name them? Let's take the easy route and read them from Genesis 35:23-26. That's a pretty big nation!

- In fact, one of those names sounds pretty familiar – have you ever heard the phrase, "The land of Judah?" Maybe around Christmas time? Let's jump up to the New Testament and read a different list of fathers and sons. Matthew 1:1-15.

There were 42 generations from Abraham to Jesus. That's a lot of branches! But what a special tree it is. Without each of those people, we would not have the salvation that comes from Jesus' birth, death and resurrection.

- Did God keep his promise to Abraham that he would be the father of many nations? Yes! But, the tree didn't stop there. Many generations and thousands of years later, each one of us joined the family tree. Let's add our names to the list.
- Have the children trace their hands on construction paper and cut out these "leaves" for the family tree. Write each name on a leaf and adhere it to the poster along the bottom. If time allows, have them decorate their leaf more elaborately than just their name. Perhaps they could include something on the leaf that represents them or their own "history".
- Now let's stop and look back at the middle of this tree. Jacob had to flee from Esau because he held a serious grudge against him. Remember Genesis 27:41? "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob."

What would have happened if Esau had killed Jacob? The line to Jesus would have been disrupted! But, God had a plan for our salvation. He knew that the brothers had to forgive each other. Let's read Genesis 33: 1-11. The chapter ends with Jacob building an altar to God and calling it "El Elohe Israel" which means "God, the God of Israel" or "Mighty is the God of Israel."

God truly is mighty. He has plans for each our lives, and nothing can get in His way. What a great tree to be a part of!

Prayer:

Dear Lord, Thank you so much for planting such a wonderful family tree for us. We are proud of the many branches that have grown from your son. Each individual is a special creation you have made. Most importantly, we thank you for your son Jesus, for sending him to us so that we can have forgiveness of our sins. Please be with us as we continue to grow in your name. Let us learn from those generations before us so we can teach the ones that come later. In your precious name, Amen.

## Pray-Per-View

### Objective:

- The children will observe three different film views of the life of Jacob and will learn that God chooses each one of us, imperfect as we are, to bring about the kingdom of God on earth.

### Materials:

- *Jacob* (on VHS) (workshop coordinator will provide) **Scenes 10:31-12:35**
- *In The Beginning* (on DVD) (workshop coordinator will provide) **Chapter 13 “Isaac’s Offspring” (stop at 6:47)**
- *The Story of Jacob and Joseph* (on VHS) (workshop coordinator will provide) **Scenes 29:42-31:10**
- VCR player (workshop coordinator will provide)
- DVD player (workshop coordinator will provide)
- Popcorn (teacher will make)
- Water/cups

### Lesson:

**PRIOR TO THE LESSON, SET THE THREE MOVIES AT THE CORRECT STARTING POINTS. THE TEACHER WILL ONLY SHOW SHORT CLIPS OF THREE DIFFERENT JACOB MOVIES.**

- Welcome children to class; briefly review the Jacob story if necessary
- Set up first scene from *The Story of Jacob and Joseph*: Scene will be Esau hunting and then giving his birthright to Jacob for a bowl of stew. **Show scene 10:31-12:35**
  - Questions for older children:
    - The birthright was very important to the first-born son in Hebrew families, why did Esau give his up?
    - Do you think Esau thought ahead very much when giving away his birthright?
    - Do you think Jacob was looking ahead when he bargained for the birthright?
    - Do you think God helped Jacob get the birthright?
  - Questions for younger children:
    - What does it feel like to be very hungry?
    - Have you ever been so hungry that you would give everything you own for a cup of stew?
    - Do you think Jacob was fair in how he got his brother’s birthright?
    - Do you think the brothers get along?
    - How did God help Jacob in this scene?
- Show 2nd clip: Scenes from *In the Beginning*: Scenes will include Jacob/Rebekah tricking old Isaac into giving the birthright and Esau finding out. **(Go to “Isaac’s Offspring,” Ch.13 on the main menu. Play until 6:47)**
  - Questions for older children:

- Why do you think Isaac liked Esau more than Jacob?
- Why do you think Rebekah liked Jacob more than Esau?
- Do you think Jacob played fair in getting the birthright?
- Questions for younger children:
  - How did Jacob trick his father?
  - Do you think Esau was mad that Jacob got the birthright?
- Preface 3rd clip from Jacob with scene setup: Jacob has a dream about a ladder going up to Heaven (this scene is right after Jacob leaves his childhood family) **Play 29:42-31:10 ONLY**
  - Questions:
    - What did God say to Jacob in a dream about a ladder?
    - Do you think God used Jacob to do good things?

How does God use us for good things?

Prayer:

Dear God, Thank you for the story of Jacob and Esau. Thank you for your forgiveness and love. Amen.