

Grade 1—Unit 13

A Tale of Two Brothers

Jacob and Esau were brothers who shared feelings common to siblings. They fought, argued, and forgave. Students will follow Jacob's life as he takes the birthright and blessing reserved for the oldest son, flees to his uncle Laban's home, and returns home to be forgiven by Esau.

LESSONS

1. Everyone is Special
2. A Trick is Planned
3. The Trick Continues
4. Jacob Has a Dream
5. Another Tricky Situation
6. Esau Forgives Jacob

Unit 13: A Tale of Two Brothers

Unit Information

SUMMARY

Family stories continue, with stories of the sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Jacob tricked Esau, and later, Jacob was tricked by his father-in-law, Laban. Eventually, the two brothers were reconciled.

KEY BIBLE TEXTS

Genesis 25:19-34*

Genesis 27-33*

Genesis 28:15 (memory verse)

Isaiah 41:10 (main memory verse)

Ephesians 4:25-27 (memory verse)

**texts used in lessons*

BIBLICAL BACKGROUND

Growing Up

Like Abraham and Sarah, Isaac and Rebekah waited many years before they had children. Isaac was assured twice that he would have children to carry forward God's covenant. He and Rebekah waited 20 years for the birth of their twin sons.

During pregnancy, Rebekah felt the children struggling within her. She talked to the Lord about it. God told her that two nations were in her womb—two separate peoples. God explained that one would be stronger than the other. The older would serve the younger (Genesis 25:23). Jacob was designated as the one who would carry forward God's covenant.

Jacob tricked Esau, to ensure that he would be the favored one. Even though he was second born, Jacob traded food for the birthright that by law belonged to the firstborn son. But that did not satisfy Jacob. He wanted the blessing designated for the firstborn, as well. With Rebekah's help, Jacob deceived his father to get the blessing belonging to Esau.

Esau, understandably, was furious with Jacob for usurping his place in the family. Jacob ran away. While sleeping one night, Jacob dreamed of angels climbing up and down a stairway that connected heaven and earth. God spoke to him and renewed the covenant made with Abraham and Isaac. God promised Jacob land and a safe return to his homeland. In spite of his impetuosity and brashness, Jacob recognized God's voice and built an altar to worship God.

To understand the dynamics in this family, we need to grasp the importance of the birthright and the blessing. The birthright referred to the rights of the oldest son. It gave him leadership of the family and a double share of the inheritance. The power of the spoken word was seen in the blessing. Blessings shaped the character and destiny of the recipient. Once given, they could not be retracted. Even today, we recognize the power of expectations; we rise to meet them.

This tale of two brothers can be viewed in different ways. For some, the story illustrates that Jacob should be the one to continue God's promises. After all, Jacob was aggressive, assertive, and knew how to get what he wanted. Esau could be viewed as not taking his birthright seriously. He was willing to trade it for a bowl of red lentil stew.

Others see Jacob as one who took advantage of his brother's hunger and later used outright deception to get what he wanted. These actions could be viewed as the reasons Jacob's life was difficult. He paid the consequences for his actions.

The story can also be viewed as a realistic rendition of life. Jacob, Esau, Isaac, and Rebekah were human beings. Like the rest of us who are human, they had strengths and weaknesses in their personalities. The amazing thing is that God chose to work with them and through them, in spite of the weaknesses they showed.

Life with Laban

Jacob arrived at Laban's home empty-handed. He hoped that the hospitality his mother showed towards his father's servant many years before would be shown to him. It was not an auspicious beginning for one looking for a bride.

After a time of welcome, Laban gave Jacob a job herding sheep. Jacob worked to earn the right to marry Laban's younger daughter, Rachel. After Jacob had fulfilled seven years of service, the wedding began. Laban tricked Jacob. He dressed his older daughter, Leah, in the traditional wedding clothes, and Jacob married her instead of Rachel. Laban got seven more years of work from Jacob for the right to marry Rachel.

There are signs that the alliance between Jacob and Laban was strained from time to time. Jacob was building his own flocks while tending Laban's. If he fully trusted Laban, would he have felt the need to watch out for himself? Perhaps Laban was unsure of this nephew who came out of the desert without so much as a servant with him. Most likely, Laban remembered the visit of Abraham's trusted servant many years ago. Why hadn't Jacob brought lavish gifts?

Jacob lived with Laban for 20 years. During this time, he married two wives and had eleven sons and one daughter. (Rachel's youngest son, Benjamin, was born after they left Laban's household.) Jacob also accumulated large flocks of his own. He had become quite wealthy. Jacob's welcome was wearing thin. "Jacob heard that Laban's sons were saying, 'Jacob has taken everything our father owned and has gained all this wealth from what belonged to our father.' And Jacob noticed that Laban's attitude toward him was not what it had been" (Genesis 31:1-2). It was time to return home.

Going Home

The Lord spoke to Jacob in a dream. God repeated the promises made earlier. "Go back to the land of your fathers and to your relatives, and I will be with you" (Genesis 31:3). Jacob consulted his wives, Leah and Rachel. They agreed that it was time to leave.

Jacob tried to run away. He waited until Laban was shearing sheep and left without warning. But leaving Paddan Aram in secret was impossible. Jacob's caravan consisted of his wives, children, servants, and all his livestock. It was huge and very visible.

Laban pursued Jacob's caravan. He caught up with them on the third day.

Laban accused Jacob of taking away his daughters and grandchildren without giving him opportunity to say good-bye. Jacob expressed his frustration to Laban and gave a clear rationale for returning to his homeland. Laban, having heard the voice of God, allowed Jacob to leave. They made a covenant with one another, before God and all the people gathered there.

On the way home, Jacob experienced another encounter with God. Jacob had sent his servants and family across the river so he could be alone. He was accosted by a “man” and wrestled with him throughout the night. During the struggle, Jacob injured his hip. Yet he continued to hang onto the man until he received a blessing. Jacob was told, “You have struggled with God and with men and have overcome” (Genesis 32:28).

Jacob’s group traveled until they met Esau. Jacob sent presents ahead to his brother, but was still prepared for an angry confrontation. Esau’s last words to Jacob had threatened murder. So when Esau approached with 400 men, a nervous Jacob went to meet him. An exemplary act of forgiveness followed. Esau hugged his brother. They cried and caught up on the news of the last 20 years.

ESSENTIAL UNDERSTANDINGS

- God created everyone different, and everyone is special.
- Sometimes people make wrong choices, but God is still with them.
- We should treat others the way we want to be treated.
- Forgiveness is important for relationships.

WORSHIP

1. Lesson 4 suggests placing a stone inside the classroom as a way to remember that God is always with us. If possible, take a walk outside to look for other stones. At each stone, stop and thank God for always being with us.
2. Lesson 6 asks students to think about a time when they made a wrong choice and needed forgiveness. It also asks if they can think of a time when someone did something wrong to them and they needed to forgive. Extend this idea by having the students write one of these scenarios on a piece of paper. Collect them (do not look at them), and place them in an envelope. Place the envelope under the stone (Lesson 4), symbolically showing that God is with us when others forgive us or when we forgive others.

BULLETIN BOARD IDEAS

1. Create a paper ladder to hang on the bulletin board. Between the rungs, write reminders that God is with us and will not leave us. Take photos of the students and arrange them around the ladder.
2. Focus on the Golden Rule (Lesson 5). Use “Do unto others as you would have them do to you” as a bulletin board heading. Have students create pictures of stories (or cut out photos from magazines) that show people treating others the way they would want to be treated.

MEMORY PASSAGES

This unit offers the following verses for students to memorize. You may copy and clip the following verses for students to take home.

I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you.

Genesis 28:15

So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.

Isaiah 41:10

Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to his neighbor, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and so not give the devil a foothold.

Ephesians 4:25-27

MEMORY VERSE CONNECTIONS

Make this memory verse connection during Worship #1:

Read Isaiah 41:10, "Do not fear, for I am with you, do not be afraid, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my victorious right hand." As stones are collected to remind students that God is always with them, add that because God is always present, we do not need to be afraid. God will provide strength and help.

ASSESSING TEACHING / LEARNING

Observing students and their interactions is one of the best ways to discover if students are practicing the lessons. Look to see if they cooperate with each other, if they use caring words, and if they practice peacemaking skills.

A quiz is also included, at the end of the unit.

A Tale of Two Brothers

LESSON 1: EVERYONE IS SPECIAL

Objective

Students will recognize that everyone is special and unique.

Key Concepts

- Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Jacob and Esau.
- Jacob and Esau were different from each other.
- We are all different from each other, and everyone is special.

Text: Genesis 25:19-28

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- Chart paper and marker
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: posterboard, marker
- For Extend the Lesson, option three: “My Family Is Special” activity sheet (p. 304)

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 25:19-28 in your own words, or use the paragraphs in lesson step 2.
- If using Extend the Lesson, option two, make copies of the activity sheet, one per student.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Play a simple game that illustrates how each of the students is unique and special. Have the children go to different areas of the room if a certain statement applies. For example, say, “If you like the color red, go to the left side of the room” or “If you prefer the color blue, go to the right side of the room.” Continue with several statements like this, so that the students are constantly changing their companions. Use statements that apply to your specific classroom. Some possibilities are:

- If you like music, go to the right side of the room. If you like art, go to the left side of the room.
- If you like pizza, go to the right. If you like tacos, go to the left.
- If you like to play soccer, go to the left. If you like dodgeball, go to the right.

LESSON STEPS

1. Talk about the game. Gather the students together and talk about the differences they noticed. Some of them liked pizza, some liked tacos, some like dodgeball, etc. Each person is unique, because they enjoy different things and are good at doing different things.

2. Tell the Bible story. Opening the Bible to Genesis 25:19-28, tell the story in

your own words, or use the following paragraphs. Emphasize that though they were twins, Jacob and Esau were quite different from each other (verses 27-28).

Isaac and Rebekah were expecting a baby, and after a while they found out that they were going to have twins! The Lord had a message for Rebekah about her babies. The Lord said, “Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples born of you shall be divided; the one shall be stronger than the other, the elder shall serve the younger” (Genesis 25:23).

When the twins were born, the first one had lots of hair. Isaac and Rebekah named him Esau. Then Esau’s twin brother came out right behind, holding on to Esau’s foot! They named the second boy Jacob.

As the boys grew up, people noticed that Esau was a good hunter. He liked to be outside. Jacob was quiet and liked to stay at home. Esau was Isaac’s favorite, and Jacob was Rebekah’s favorite.

3. Think about the story. The following statements and questions may be used for discussion or silent reflection.

- I wonder what God meant when God said that there were two nations inside Rebekah.
- What did God mean when God said that one would be stronger than the other?
- How would the older serve the younger? In Bible times, didn’t the younger person usually serve the oldest person?
- I wonder why the Bible tells us that Jacob was gripping Esau’s foot. What might that mean?

4. Differences in families. Have the students think about their own families. How are they like their brothers, sisters, and cousins? How are they different? Pair the students and give them time to respond to these questions with each other. For children who do not have siblings or cousins, ask them to think about a close friend.

5. Begin a chart that illustrates the differences between Jacob and Esau. You will add to it in Lessons 3 and 4. The chart could look something like this:

<u>JACOB</u>	<u>ESAU</u>
quiet	hunter
liked to be inside	liked to be outside

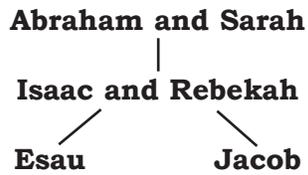
Note that just as Jacob and Esau were different from each other, each student is different from the others, and from their sibling, cousins, and friends. We are all special, just the way we are.

Think about what the world would be like if everyone were the same. (Responses will vary, but will probably reflect that sameness would be boring.) Add that we are all different from each other, and everyone is special. That is what makes the world an exciting place.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Make a family tree**, beginning with Abraham and Sarah. It might be helpful to write it on posterboard, so that additions can be made in Lesson 5.



- **You are special.** As the students are working on other projects, go around the room and ask children individually to say one special thing about several of their classmates. Make sure that in the end, each student has the same number of comments. Later, read these aloud to the class.
- **“My Family Is Special.”** Hand out the activity sheet from page 304. Children may draw a place setting on the table for each member of their family, then write or draw on each plate something that is special about that person.

My Family Is Special

Draw a place setting where each member of your family sits. Write or draw something special about them on their plate.



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LESSON 2: A TRICK IS PLANNED

Objective

Students will recognize that Esau sold his birthright.

Key Concepts

- Birthrights were very important.
- Esau sold his birthright for a bowl of stew.
- Jacob made Esau sell him the birthright.

Text: Genesis 25:19-28

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes (plus additional time to cook soup)

Materials

- Bible
- Ingredients needed to make lentil soup (see p. 306)
- Pots and utensils for making soup
- For Extend the Lesson: *A Bargain for Frances* by Russell Hoban

Teacher Preparation

- Choose one of the lentil soup recipes on p. 306, and gather ingredients and utensils needed. Bring a hotplate, if necessary.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

When you really want something . . . Ask the students if they ever wanted something very badly. Ask, “What would you do to get something you really, really wanted? Would you trade anything for it?”

LESSON STEPS

1. Explain the birthright. A birthright was a special honor given to the firstborn son, assuring him that one day he would be the leader of his family. He would also get more inheritance than the other children. A firstborn son could give away the birthright if he chose, but if he did, he lost his leadership position and the material goods that went along with the birthright.

Tell the students that we do not have birthrights in our culture. But birthrights were important when Jacob and Esau were born. And because he was the oldest of the twins, Esau was the one who would get the birthright.

2. Read the Bible story. Introduce the story by asking the students how they would feel if they were Jacob, the younger twin. What might they think about Esau getting the birthright? What things might Jacob do to get the birthright?

Read the story from Genesis 25:29-34.

3. Review the story. Ask the students what Jacob gave Esau to “buy” his birthright (*a bowl of stew*). Would any of them sell their birthright for a bowl of

stew? Remind the children that in the last lesson, the Lord told Rebekah that the elder brother will serve the younger one. Did the birthright have anything to do with this? (*Yes, because now Jacob, the younger brother, would be the leader of the family.*)

4. Cook lentil stew, so the students can taste something similar to what Jacob made and sold to Esau for his birthright. Choose one of the following recipes from the *More-with-Less Cookbook*.

Basic Lentil Soup (serves 6)

Combine in kettle:

½ lb lentils
6 cups water

Cook for 30 minutes, or until lentils are tender. Then add:

2 carrots, chopped or sliced
½ cup sliced green onions
1 clove garlic, crushed
1½ cups tomato juice
½ cup minced parsley
1 tablespoon margarine
1½ teaspoons salt
dash pepper
½ teaspoon dried oregano

Bring to boil, reduce heat, and simmer just until carrots are tender. Check seasonings and serve.

Middle Eastern Lentil Soup (serves 4-6)

Combine in kettle:

1 cup lentils
4 cups water
½ teaspoon cumin

Cook until lentils are soft (30-45 minutes), adding water if necessary for good soup consistency.

Heat in skillet:

1 tablespoon olive oil

Add and sauté just until yellow:

1 onion, chopped
1 clove garlic, minced

Blend in:

1 tablespoon flour

Cook a few minutes. Then add sautéed ingredients to lentils and bring soup to boiling point, stirring occasionally. After soup boils, remove from heat and stir in:

2 tablespoons lemon juice
salt and pepper to taste

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Read the book**, *A Bargain for Frances*. Discuss how the friends tricked each other. Were they good tricks? How would students feel if they had been the ones tricked?

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LESSON 3: THE TRICK CONTINUES

Objective

Students will recognize that Jacob tricked Isaac.

Key Concepts

- Jacob tricked Isaac into giving him the blessing intended for Esau.
- A blessing was very important.

Text: Genesis 27:1-40

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Paper bags, each holding an object to feel and guess: cotton balls, sandpaper, stuffed animal, piece of fruit, etc. (Use your imagination!)
- Bible
- Jacob/Esau comparison chart (begun in Lesson 1)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: *Mmm, Cookies!* by Robert Munsch

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 27:1-40 in your own words, or using the paragraphs from lesson step 3.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Getting along with a trickster. Review the story from the last lesson and ask, “How do you think Esau and Jacob got along after Esau gave Jacob his birthright?” What kind of relationship might the students have with a person who has tricked them? Would they still be friends? Would they eat together and talk together? (*Answers will vary according to students’ experiences.*) Some students might have a difficult time thinking about tricking someone or being tricked by someone. You might have to think about hypothetical situations.

LESSON STEPS

1. Guess the objects. Have the children take turns feeling an object in a bag, without looking. Can they describe the object? Can anyone guess what it is? Do this several times, with different objects. After the children guess, show them what’s in the bag, to see if they were right.

2. Introduce today’s story. Explain that several years passed since the last story, when Esau gave away his birthright. By now, Isaac was really old. In fact, he couldn’t see very well and had to touch objects to know what they were. Jacob took advantage of Isaac’s poor eyesight to steal Esau’s blessing.

A blessing was important and was almost always given to the oldest son, the

one who had the birthright. Once a blessing was spoken, it could not be taken back. Even though Esau had given Jacob the birthright, Jacob wanted to have the blessing, too. And so Jacob made a plan.

3. Tell the Bible story. Opening the Bible to Genesis 27:1-40, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

Isaac called Esau to his side. "I am old," he said, "and might soon die." Isaac said he wanted to enjoy some good food and give Esau his blessing before he died. "Get your bow and arrow," he told Esau, "and go out into the fields to hunt for something that would be good to eat."

Rebekah overheard Isaac speaking to Esau. After Esau left for the fields, Rebekah called Jacob and told him what his father had said. "Go and kill one of our goats," she said, "and I will make a stew that your father will like. Then he will give the blessing to you, instead of to Esau."

But Jacob had some questions for Rebekah. He reminded his mother that he wasn't as hairy as Esau. If his father touched his skin, he would know that he was not Esau. What should he do?

Rebekah had a plan. After the food was prepared, Rebekah gave Jacob some of Esau's clothes to wear. Then she put goat skins on Jacob's arms and neck, so that if Isaac felt him, Jacob would smell and feel like Esau.

And so Jacob went to Isaac. "I am Esau, your firstborn son," he lied. But Isaac could hear Jacob's voice. "You don't sound like Esau," he said. Isaac asked Jacob to come closer, so he could feel his skin. Isaac felt the hairy hands and arms. "You sound like Jacob, but you feel like Esau," he said.

Isaac wanted to be sure this was really Esau, so he asked Jacob if he was Esau. Jacob lied to his father and answered that he was Esau. And so Isaac gave Jacob the blessing that was meant for Esau. The blessing said that Jacob would always have plenty of food and that people would serve him, including his own brother.

When Isaac found out that he had been tricked, he was very angry. When Esau found out that Jacob received his father's blessing, he was very angry, too.

Ask the students to show on their faces how they would feel if they were Jacob, Esau, Isaac, and Rebekah.

4. Look at the chart that compares Jacob and Esau. What things can you add to the chart?

JACOB

quiet
likes to be inside
trickster/deceiver
loved by Rebekah

ESAU

hunter
likes to be outside
tricked/deceived
loved by Isaac

Tell the students that in the next lesson we will hear about some of the consequences of what Jacob did.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Read and discuss the book**, *Mmm, Cookies!* How did the people feel when they were tricked? How would the children feel if they were tricked this way?
- **Act it out.** Students might want to process this story by acting it out. Jacob's two tricks could be worked into a class drama.

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LESSON 4: JACOB HAS A DREAM

Objective

Students will recognize that God is with people even when they make wrong choices.

Key Concepts

- Jacob experienced consequences for his actions.
- God continued to be with Jacob.
- God spoke to Jacob in a dream.
- God loved Jacob.

Text: Genesis 27:41-46; Genesis 28:10-22

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Comparison chart of Jacob and Esau
- Bible
- Flat stone for “pillow”
- Stepladder
- For Extend the Lesson: *On Morning Wings* by Reeve Lindbergh

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 27:41-46 and Genesis 28:10-22 in your own words, or use the paragraphs from lesson step 2.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Look at the comparison chart about Jacob and Esau, to review the story so far. Ask questions about the listed words: How do we know that Jacob was a trickster? How do we know that Esau loved to be outside? Remind the students that at the end of the last story, Isaac and Esau were angry with Jacob.

LESSON STEPS

1. Consequences for Jacob. Jacob had deceived (tricked) his father and brother, and now they were angry at him. Explain that their anger was one *consequence* of Jacob’s actions. And because Esau was angry, Jacob knew he had to leave his family and go far away, because he was afraid of what Esau would do to him. That was another consequence of Jacob’s actions.

2. Tell the Bible story. Opening your Bible to Genesis 27 and 28, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

One night, Jacob was sleeping outside, because he was far away from home and couldn’t go back. He was all alone. He tried to get comfortable, but the

only thing he could find for a pillow was a stone. *(Place the flat stone on the floor and ask a student to lie there, head on the stone, pretending to sleep.)*

While asleep, Jacob had a dream. *(Place stepladder next to the student on the floor. Have another student sit on the bottom rung.)* In Jacob's dream, he saw a ladder reaching all the way up to heaven. Angels were on the ladder, walking up and down the steps. And at the very top of the ladder was God. God spoke to Jacob and said, "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham your father and the God of Isaac; the land on which you lie I will give to you and to your offspring; and your offspring shall be like the dust of the earth, and you shall spread abroad to the west and to the east and to the north and to the south; and all the families of the earth shall be blessed in you and in your offspring. Know that I am with you and will keep you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land; for I will not leave you until I have done what I have promised you" (Genesis 28:13-15).

Jacob woke up. "The Lord is with me!" he said. Jacob believed that this place was the gateway to heaven.

3. Discuss the story. You may need to explain a bit of the dream, particularly terms such as offspring, spread abroad to the west, etc. Add that God gave a blessing to Jacob in the dream. Reread the last phrases: "Know that I am with you and will keep you . . . for I will not leave you . . ."

Review Jacob's actions in the stories you have read. Review the consequences of his actions. Are the children surprised that God gave Jacob a blessing? No matter what Jacob did, God was still with him and loved him. And no matter what we do, even when we make wrong choices or trick people, God is still with us and still loves us.

4. Respond to the story. Allow time for students to use the stone for a pillow or to sit on the ladder. Some may want to retell the story to each other as they act it out.

5. Set up a reminder. Put the flat stone in a prominent place in the classroom. Whenever the students see this stone, or a stone outside the classroom, they can remember that God is with them and loves them.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Read the book**, *On Morning Wings*, a picture-book adaptation of Psalm 139, which illustrates that God is always with us.
- **Learn a poem** as a reminder of God's steadfast love.

God Loves Me

God loves me when I'm happy or sad,
God loves me when I'm good or bad,
God wants me to walk in his way,
God's love helps me get through each day!
I love God when I'm happy and sad,
I love God even when I've been bad,
I'll try, God, to do just what you say,
And show love to others every day!

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LESSON 5: ANOTHER TRICKY SITUATION

Objective

Students will recognize that people are happy if everyone treats each other fairly.

Key Concepts

- Jacob is tricked by Laban.
- We should treat others the way we want others to treat us.

Text: Genesis 29–31

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Bible
- “Steps to Solving Conflicts” chart from Unit 1 (p.77)
- For Extend the Lesson, option one: family tree started in lesson one
- For Extend the Lesson, option two: Memory Verse Activity Sheet (p. 316), scissors, glue, crayons, markers

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 29–31 in your own words, or using the paragraphs in lesson step 1.
- Make copies of the Memory Verse activity sheet, one per child.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Jacob’s tricks. Review with the class the ways in which Jacob tricked his brother and his father (*bought Esau’s birthright with a bowl of soup, put on animal skins to get Isaac’s blessing*). Ask what were the consequences of Jacob’s actions (*his brother and father got angry, and so Jacob had to leave home*).

LESSON STEPS

1. Tell the Bible story. Introduce the story by repeating that leaving home was one big consequence of Jacob’s tricks. Then add that when Jacob settled in a new place, he also was tricked.

Opening the Bible to Genesis 29–31, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

After Jacob had the dream about a ladder to heaven, he continued on his way to the land of his Uncle Laban. He met some men at a well, who turned out to know Laban. In fact, Uncle Laban’s daughter, Rachel, was also at the well.

Jacob was happy to see Rachel, because they were family. Laban heard that Jacob was at the well, and he ran out to meet Jacob. He hugged and kissed him, and invited Jacob to stay at his house.

Jacob lived and worked with Laban. One day, Laban asked Jacob if there was anything he wanted. Jacob had met both of Laban's daughters. The older was named Leah, and the younger, Rachel, he had already met at the well. When Laban asked Jacob if he wanted anything, Jacob replied that he loved Rachel and would like to marry her! In fact, Jacob said he would work for Laban for seven years, after which he would marry Rachel.

Seven years later, Laban prepared a big feast for his daughter's marriage to Jacob. The bride was covered in a veil, and after the wedding, Jacob discovered that he had not married Rachel, but Leah! Leah was the bride. Laban had tricked Jacob! Laban told Jacob that in their land it was not proper for the younger girl to be married before the older girl. And so Leah had to marry Jacob first.

Laban made a bargain with Jacob. He told Jacob that if he worked another seven years for him, that Rachel could also be Jacob's wife. And so Jacob worked another seven years for Laban and married Rachel.

Jacob's family grew. He had 12 sons and one daughter. One of Rachel's sons was named Joseph, who we will learn about in other stories. Jacob's family grew larger, and so did his flocks and his wealth. Jacob needed lots of servants to help him take care of things.

Laban and his family noticed how wealthy Jacob was getting. They began to feel jealous and unhappy! Jacob knew it was time to leave this land. He spoke with Leah and Rachel, and they made plans to leave. Jacob remembered God's promise that one day he would return to his homeland and that God would be with him. And so Jacob and his family and all of their herds and flocks set off to Jacob's homeland.

3. Discuss the story. Look at the "Steps to Solving Conflicts" chart. Did Laban and Jacob follow the six steps when they had a conflict? Did they define the problem? Did they brainstorm a solution? *(Answers will vary, because it depends on the perspective of the story. For example, Jacob thought about a solution when Laban was jealous of his wealth. The solution was to leave. Would there have been other solutions as well?)*

4. Introduce the Golden Rule. Jacob, who had tricked his family, was himself tricked. Jacob had been tricked the way he tricked others. What if, instead, Jacob and Laban had treated others the way they wanted to be treated?

Explain the Golden Rule: Do unto others as you would have them do to you. Everyone is happier and gets along better, when people observe the Golden Rule and treat each other fairly. Have the students think about ways they can be fair to each other throughout the day.

Role-play simple situations in which students can practice the Golden Rule:

- A student is struggling to carry lots of papers and books. How can the Golden Rule be practiced?
- A student can't find her red crayon, but needs one to color the apple. How can the Golden Rule be practiced?
- A student falls while playing dodgeball at recess. How can the Golden Rule be practiced?

Allow time for students to think up additional situations and act them out.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(These activities will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

- **Add to the family tree** that was started in Lesson 1. Talk about the people in the family tree. How might they feel about going to Jacob's home? How would they feel to leave the only land they have ever lived in? What might they be thinking?
- **Complete the Memory Verse Activity Sheet.** Children may cut out the phrases of the memory verse, Genesis 28:15 and glue them in correct order on another sheet of paper. Encourage them to add a picture of a time when God was with them.

Memory Verse Activity Sheet

Cut out the phrases of the memory verse and glue them in correct order on another sheet of paper. Add a picture of a time when God was with you.

and I will bring you back to this land.

I am with you

I will not leave you until I have done

and will watch over you wherever you go,

what I have promised you.

(Genesis 28:15)

A Tale of Two Brothers

LESSON 6: ESAU FORGIVES JACOB

Objective

Students will recognize the importance of forgiveness.

Key Concepts

- Jacob wanted to meet Esau.
- Esau forgave Jacob.

Text: Genesis 32-33

Estimated Lesson Time: 30 minutes

Materials

- Story review items: bowl, goat (picture or plastic), animal skin (or furry material), stone “pillow,” ladder, wedding picture
- Bible
- White drawing paper
- Crayons, markers, etc.

Teacher Preparation

- Practice telling the story from Genesis 32-33 in your own words, or using the paragraphs in lesson step 2.

INTRODUCING THE LESSON

Review the story of Jacob by displaying symbols of the different events in his life. Ask the students to tell the significance of each item.

Bowl—Esau gave his birthright for a bowl of stew.

Goat—Jacob killed a goat to prepare a meal for Isaac.

Animal skin—Jacob put this on to trick Isaac into giving him his blessing.

Stone—Jacob used a stone for a pillow when he slept outside.

Ladder—Jacob dreamed he saw angels going up and down a ladder, and God spoke to him with a promise to never leave him

Wedding picture—After working hard for his uncle, Jacob was married.

You may want to add other items to the review. Invite the students to use the items to retell parts of the story.

LESSON STEPS

1. Jacob returns. Remind the students that the story in the last lesson ended with Jacob deciding to return to his homeland. Can they imagine what Jacob was thinking as he traveled? Was he thinking about the promise that God would be with him? About meeting up with Esau again? About tricking Isaac into giving Jacob the blessing? Give students time to respond.

2. Tell the Bible story. Opening the Bible to Genesis 32-33, tell the story in your own words, or use the following:

Jacob and his family, his servants and flocks and herds, traveled to his homeland. As they got near, Jacob sent several messengers ahead, to let Esau know he was on his way. He instructed the messengers to say, “Humble greetings from your servant Jacob! I have been living with Uncle Laban until recently. Now I own oxen, donkeys, sheep, goats, and many servants, both men and women. I have sent these messengers to inform you of my coming, hoping that you will be friendly to us.” *(Ask the students how they would feel if they were Esau and had just received this message. Would they want to see Jacob, who had taken their birthright and blessing?)*

The messengers returned to Jacob and told him that Esau was coming to meet him with 400 men. Jacob was terrified! He prayed to God and reminded God of the promise that Jacob would return to his homeland. Jacob prayed, “God, I know that you are loving and faithful.” He added that he was afraid of what Esau and his 400 men might do to him!

When Jacob was finished praying, he got a present ready for Esau, hoping that the present would make Esau friendly toward him. It was a huge gift—220 goats, 220 sheep, 30 camels, 40 cows, 10 bulls, and 20 donkeys! Jacob’s servants took the gifts to Esau and told him that Jacob was right behind them. *(Ask the children how they would feel if they were Jacob at this point. Would they be afraid? Would they trust God? Would they be ready to see Esau and his 400 men?)*

Jacob saw Esau and his men coming toward him, and told his family to stay behind him. He went alone to meet Esau. When he got close, Jacob bowed seven times. Bowing was a sign of respect given toward a king. But Esau ran to meet Jacob. He hugged his brother and welcomed him home! Esau forgave Jacob! They continued the rest of the journey together. *(How would the children feel right now if they were Jacob? If they were Esau?)*

3. Forgiving others. Explain that forgiveness means not holding something against another person. Esau forgave Jacob, which meant that he would no longer be angry about the way Jacob tricked him. Even though Jacob did a bad thing and Esau could have held a grudge, he decided that it was more important to get along with his brother. Encourage the children to share about times that they forgave their brother or sister (or a close friend), or were forgiven.

4. Illustrate the story. Hand out paper and crayons/markers and invite the students to illustrate their favorite part of the story of Jacob. They may write a sentence or two of explanation. Have the children share their illustrations with the class, telling why it was their favorite part of the story. Hang the illustrations around the room. They will be used in the next lesson, Unit 14, Lesson 1.

EXTEND THE LESSON

(This activity will extend the lesson to longer than 30 minutes.)

• **Do a skit.** Divide the class into small groups to prepare a skit about certain parts of the story of Jacob and Esau. Groups may be divided as follows:

- Esau selling his birthright
- Jacob tricking Isaac into receiving a blessing
- Jacob and his dream about the ladder into heaven
- Jacob and his family moving to Jacob’s homeland
- Esau forgiving Jacob

Unit 13 Quiz

Name _____

Circle the best answer:

1. Who were Jacob and Esau's parents?

- a. Adam and Eve
- b. Abraham and Sarah
- c. Isaac and Rebekah
- d. George and Martha

2. Esau sold his birthright for

- a. Concert tickets
- b. A bowl of stew
- c. Four sheep
- d. A new shirt

3. Who helped Jacob receive Isaac's blessing?

- a. Eve
- b. Sarah
- c. Rebekah
- d. Rachel

4. What message was in Jacob's dream of the ladder going to heaven?

- a. That God would never leave him
- b. That Jacob would soon die
- c. That Jacob should go home
- d. That Jacob would never have friends

5. Laban was Jacob's

- a. Brother
- b. Cousin
- c. Uncle
- d. Grandfather

(OVER)

6. Jacob worked for Laban so that he could

- a. Inherit Laban's land
- b. Marry Laban's daughters
- c. Buy a house
- d. Plant a garden

7. When Jacob returned home, Esau

- a. Made Jacob go away again
- b. Took all of Jacob's sheep
- c. Forgave Jacob
- d. Made Jacob's children work for him

8. Write about a difference between Jacob and Esau:

Answers to Unit 13 Quiz:

1. c. Isaac and Rebekah
2. b. A bowl of stew
3. c. Rebekah
4. a. That God would never leave him
5. c. Uncle
6. b. Marry Laban's daughters
7. c. Forgave him
8. Note things listed on the chart (Lesson 3) for differences between Jacob and Esau. Jacob—quiet, likes to be inside, trickster/deceiver, loved by Rebekah; Esau—hunter, likes to be outside, tricked/deceived, loved by Isaac.