



(10) Jacob Wrestles with God & Reunites with Esau

Genesis 32-33

Kindergarten & 1st Grade

WARM-UP: (10 minutes)

As kids are arriving, some just before class starts and some right after, have thumb wrestling contests. When several kids arrive, you can even set them up in brackets. My class loved this because there was a thumb war champion.

PRAYER: (5 minutes)

Help kids learn the value in talking to God. Ask for prayer requests. Write on the white board “Thank You” and “Please Help” – then, let the kids share their “thank you” and “please help” requests. Write them on the white board.

ASK KIDS:

- How God talks to us? (Through the bible and answering our prayers)
- How do we talk to God? (Prayer)

Remind them that *we can't have a relationship with anyone, our friends or even parents, if we don't talk to them. It's important that we talk to God. He made us and no one can do the things he can, not even our moms and dads.*

Lead kids in prayer.

BIBLE LESSON & ACTIVITY: (25 minutes)

PASS OUT HANDS ON ITEM (Play-doh, Silly Putty, White Erase Boards)

1. **Make wedding flowers.** Last week, we learned that Jacob worked 7 years to marry Rachel but Uncle Laban tricked him and Jacob married Leah, Rachel's sister instead. Jacob loved Rachel so he agreed to work another 7 years so he could marry Rachel.
2. **Form the number of years Jacob worked for his uncle.** Uncle Laban saw that God blessed Jacob so he didn't want him to go back to his homeland. He wanted Jacob to stay with him. But, when God continued to bless Jacob, Laban's sons were jealous and didn't like this. Laban changed towards Jacob too, so Jacob took his family and fled. By this time, Jacob had 11 sons. Laban chased him down but they agreed to part peacefully. This is where our story begins today.
3. Who remembers what happened between Jacob and his brother Esau? Remember, Jacob and his mother tricked Isaac into giving Jacob Esau's blessing. What did Esau want to do? Esau was so mad he said he'd kill his brother. **Make a mad face for Esau.** That's when Jacob hid out at his Uncle Laban's. Now Jacob is going back home. Do you think Jacob is afraid? (Allow answers) **Now make what Jacob's face probably looked like.** (afraid)
4. Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau he where he had been and that he was coming back. They were supposed to tell him that Jacob had cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats and servants. He hoped this would please Esau. **Make an animal Jacob had.**
5. ⁶The messengers came back to Jacob. They said, “We went to your brother Esau. He's coming now to meet you. He has 400 men with him.” Uh-oh. His brother

was on his way with 400 men. What do you think Jacob was thinking? **Make 400 because Esau had 400 men coming with him.**

6. Well, the bible tells us he was worried! He was so worried that he divided the people and flocks with him into two groups. This way, if Esau attacked one group, maybe the other could escape. Then, he prayed. **Make a praying hand.**
7. Jacob chose a gift for his brother. He got goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. He had them in groups with servants to take care of them and he told them to go ahead of him. **Make a present.** When Esau comes to them, they are supposed to tell him the animals are a gift to him from his brother and that Jacob was coming. So Esau would see sheep coming and the servant would tell them they were a gift. Then he'd come to cows and the servant would tell him they were a gift. Then he'd come to camels... you get the idea. He'd keep coming to more animals that were gifts.
8. **Now it was nighttime so make a moon or star.** Jacob thought for sure that by the time Esau got to him he'd welcome him. So Jacob sent all of these gifts ahead of him and he spent the night alone. This is when something very interesting happens.
9. **Make a man so you can where his hip is.** A man wrestled with him until morning! The man saw he couldn't win so he touched the inside of Jacob's hip. As Jacob wrestled with the man, Jacob's hip was twisted. Ouch!
10. **Now it's morning so make the sunshine.** The man said, "Let me go. It's morning." But Jacob wouldn't let him go until the man blessed him. The man asked him his name so Jacob told him. The man said, "Your name will not be Jacob anymore. Instead you will be Israel. You have wrestled with God and with people. And you have won."
11. **Make the letter "I" for Jacob's new name.** Jacob wanted to know the man's name but he didn't tell him. He blessed Jacob. Jacob said, "I saw God face to face. But I'm still alive!" Jacob believed the man was God. The man had touch Jacob's hip so he was limping. This is when Jacob got his new name, Israel.
12. Jacob looked up and saw his brother coming with 400 men. He quickly put his family behind him. He went towards Esau and bowed down 7 times. Esau ran to him and hugged him. He didn't kill him! **Make two smiley faces for Jacob and Esau and a big heart because** Esau had forgiven his brother and we see that God blessed Esau too.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE & SONGS: (5 minutes)

Have everyone stand in a circle and hold hands. Sing the Old Testament books song while everyone moves one direction. Then, change directions and sing the New Testament songs. Now, the teacher stands in the middle and calls out a book. If it's in the Old Testament they all go one way and the other if it's in the New. This gets crazy fun!



(10) Jacob Wrestles with God & Reunites with Esau

Genesis 32-33
2nd & 3rd Grade

WARM-UP: (10 minutes)

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PRAYER: (5 minutes)

Help kids learn the value in talking to God. Ask for prayer requests. Write on the white board “Thank You” and “Please Help” – then, let the kids share their “thank you” and “please help” requests. Write them on the white board.

ASK KIDS:

- How God talks to us? (Through the bible and answering our prayers)
- How do we talk to God? (Prayer)

Remind them that *we can't have a relationship with anyone, our friends or even parents, if we don't talk to them. It's important that we talk to God. He made us and no one can do the things he can, not even our moms and dads.*

Lead kids in prayer.

BIBLE LESSON & ACTIVITY: (25 minutes)

PASS OUT HANDS ON ITEM (Play-doh, Silly Putty, White Erase Boards)

13. **Make wedding flowers.** Last week, we learned that Jacob worked 7 years to marry Rachel but Uncle Laban tricked him and Jacob married Leah, Rachel's sister instead. Jacob loved Rachel so he agreed to work another 7 years so he could marry Rachel.
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15. Who remembers what happened between Jacob and his brother Esau?
Remember, Jacob and his mother tricked Isaac into giving Jacob Esau's blessing. What did Esau want to do? Esau was so mad he said he'd kill his brother. **Make a mad face for Esau.** That's when Jacob hid out at his Uncle Laban's. Now Jacob is going back home. Do you think Jacob is afraid? (Allow answers) **Now make what Jacob's face probably looked like.** (afraid)
16. Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau he where he had been and that he was coming back. They were supposed to tell him that Jacob had cattle, donkeys, sheep and goats and servants. He hoped this would please Esau. **Make an animal Jacob had.**
17. ⁶The messengers came back to Jacob. They said, “We went to your brother Esau. He's coming now to meet you. He has 400 men with him.” Uh-oh. His brother

was on his way with 400 men. What do you think Jacob was thinking? **Make 400 because Esau had 400 men coming with him.**

18. Well, the bible tells us he was worried! He was so worried that he divided the people and flocks with him into two groups. This way, if Esau attacked one group, maybe the other could escape. Then, he prayed. **Make a praying hand.**
19. Jacob chose a gift for his brother. He got goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. He had them in groups with servants to take care of them and he told them to go ahead of him. **Make a present.** When Esau comes to them, they are supposed to tell him the animals are a gift to him from his brother and that Jacob was coming. So Esau would see sheep coming and the servant would tell them they were a gift. Then he'd come to cows and the servant would tell him they were a gift. Then he'd come to camels... you get the idea. He'd keep coming to more animals that were gifts.
20. **Now it was nighttime so make a moon or star.** Jacob thought for sure that by the time Esau got to him he'd welcome him. So Jacob sent all of these gifts ahead of him and he spent the night alone. This is when something very interesting happens.
21. **Make a man so you can where his hip is.** A man wrestled with him until morning! The man saw he couldn't win so he touched the inside of Jacob's hip. As Jacob wrestled with the man, Jacob's hip was twisted. Ouch!
22. **Now it's morning so make the sunshine.** The man said, "Let me go. It's morning." But Jacob wouldn't let him go until the man blessed him. The man asked him his name so Jacob told him. The man said, "Your name will not be Jacob anymore. Instead you will be Israel. You have wrestled with God and with people. And you have won."
23. **Make the letter "I" for Jacob's new name.** Jacob wanted to know the man's name but he didn't tell him. He blessed Jacob. Jacob said, "I saw God face to face. But I'm still alive!" Jacob believed the man was God. The man had touch Jacob's hip so he was limping. This is when Jacob got his new name, Israel.
24. Jacob looked up and saw his brother coming with 400 men. He quickly put his family behind him. He went towards Esau and bowed down 7 times. Esau ran to him and hugged him. He didn't kill him! **Make two smiley faces for Jacob and Esau and a big heart because** Esau had forgiven his brother and we see that God blessed Esau too.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE & SONGS: (5 minutes)

Have everyone stand in a circle and hold hands. Sing the Old Testament books song while everyone moves one direction. Then, change directions and sing the New Testament songs. Now, the teacher stands in the middle and calls out a book. If it's in the Old Testament they all go one way and the other if it's in the New. This gets crazy fun!



(10) Jacob Wrestles with God & Reunites with Esau

Genesis 32-33

4th & 5th Grade

WARM-UP: (10 minutes)

As kids are arriving, some just before class starts and some right after, have thumb wrestling contests. When several kids arrive, you can even set them up in brackets. My class loved this because there was a thumb war champion.

PRAYER: (5 minutes)

Help kids learn the value in talking to God. Ask for prayer requests. Write on the white board "Praise" – "Petition" – "Thanksgiving" – "Confession."

- Have kids give suggestions for **Praise** (ex: God is holy, amazing, awesome, our rock).
- Have kids give **Petitions** (needs/please help)
- Have kids give **Thanksgiving** (what are they thankful for)
- Remind them that in a public prayer, we typically pray that God forgives us, but we don't get specific in our **confessions**.
- Lead kids in prayer.

BOOKS OF THE BIBLE: (5 minutes)

Game: Bible Darts. Let one person at a time toss a dart at the bible books card. When it lands on a book, ask them if that book is in the Old or New Testament. Then, race to find it in the bible. Next person's turn...

BIBLE LESSON: (25 minutes)

Pass out White Erase Boards or Hang Butcher Paper on the wall letting them stand and draw on this. You will read from the bible and they will draw as you go to help reinforce.

1. **Draw wedding flowers.** Last week, we learned that Jacob worked 7 years to marry Rachel but Uncle Laban tricked him and Jacob married Leah, Rachel's sister instead. Jacob loved Rachel so he agreed to work another 7 years so he could marry Rachel.
2. **Write how many years Jacob worked for his uncle.** Uncle Laban saw that God blessed Jacob so he didn't want him to go back to his homeland. He wanted Jacob to stay with him. But, when God continued to bless Jacob, Laban's sons were jealous and didn't like this. Laban changed towards Jacob too, so Jacob took his family and fled. By this time, Jacob had 11 sons. Laban chased him down but they agreed to part peacefully. This is where our story begins today.
3. Who remembers what happened between Jacob and his brother Esau? Remember, Jacob and his mother tricked Isaac into giving Jacob Esau's blessing. What did Esau want to do? Esau was so mad he said he'd kill his brother. **Draw a mad face for Esau.** That's when Jacob hid out at his Uncle Laban's. Now Jacob is going back home. Do you think Jacob is afraid? (Allow answers) **Now draw what Jacob's face probably looked like.** (afraid)

4. **Now, I'll read from Genesis 32 & 33. What does Genesis mean? Beginning. While I read, you draw a message. Maybe on a scroll.** ³*Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau. Esau lived in the country of Edom.* ⁴*Jacob told the messengers what to do. He said, "Here's what you must tell my master Esau. 'Your servant Jacob says, "I've been staying with Laban. I've remained there until now. I have cattle and donkeys and sheep and goats. I also have male and female servants. Now I'm sending this message to you. I hope I can please you." ' "* ⁶*The messengers came back to Jacob. They said, "We went to your brother Esau. He's coming now to meet you. He has 400 men with him."*
5. **What do you think Jacob is thinking? Draw his face. He has just received word that his brother is coming for him with 400 men. Well, the bible is going to tell us his state of mind.** ⁷*Jacob was very worried and afraid. So he separated the people with him into two groups. He also separated the flocks and herds and camels.* ⁸*He thought, "Esau might come and attack one group. If he does, the group that's left can escape."*
6. **Jacob had a plan. If his brother attacked, at least half of his wealth might survive.** ⁹*Then Jacob prayed, (You see this. Jacob prayed! He was afraid and he prayed. Let's keep reading while you draw a praying hand. You can even trace your hand) "You are the God of my grandfather Abraham. You are the God of my father Isaac. LORD, you are the one who said to me, 'Go back to your country and your relatives. Then I will give you success.' (Jacob is reminding God, God was the one that told him to go back home and told him he'd have success but now his brother is after him.)*
7. ¹⁰*You have been very kind and faithful to me. But I'm not worthy of any of this. When I crossed this Jordan River, all I had was my walking stick. But now I've become two camps. (Jacob acknowledges that God is the one who has blessed him.) Draw two tents to represent two camps.* ¹¹*Please save me from the hand of my brother Esau. I'm afraid he'll come and attack me and the mothers with their children.* ¹²*But you have said, 'I will surely give you success. I will make your children as many as the grains of sand on the seashore. People will not be able to count them.'* **(Jacob asks for help.)**
8. **As I read this next set of verses, write the number and what it was each time you hear.** ¹³*Jacob chose a gift for his brother Esau from what he had with him.* ¹⁴*He chose 200 female goats and 20 male goats. He chose 200 female sheep and 20 male sheep.* ¹⁵*He chose 30 female camels with their little ones. He chose 40 cows and ten bulls. And he chose 20 female donkeys and ten male donkeys. Review the gift for Esau. Why do you think he was giving him this?*
9. **Draw some herds while I read the next part.** ¹⁶*He put each herd by itself. Then he put his servants in charge of them. He said to his servants, "Go on ahead of me. Keep some space between the herds."* **Now imagine this. You are walking and come across a herd of sheep. You keep walking and pass a herd of cows. You walk more and pass a herd of camels. You walk more and pass a herd of goats. You walk more and pass a herd of donkeys. And then further you pass camels. What might you be thinking? This was Jacob's plan.**
10. ¹⁷*Jacob spoke to his servant who was leading the way. He said, "My brother Esau will meet you. He'll ask, 'Who is your master? Where are you going? And who owns all these animals in front of you?' "* ¹⁸*Then say to Esau, 'They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift to you from him. And Jacob is coming behind us.'* ¹⁹*He also spoke to the second and third servants. He told them and all the others who followed the herds what to do. He said, "Say the same thing to Esau when you meet him.* ²¹*So*

Jacob's gifts went on ahead of him. But he himself spent the night in the camp.

Draw a moon for night. This is where things get really strange.

11. *4So Jacob was left alone. A man wrestled with him until morning. 25The man saw that he couldn't win. So he touched the inside of Jacob's hip. As Jacob wrestled with the man, Jacob's hip was twisted. Draw a stick man Jacob with an arrow pointing to his twisted hip.*
12. *26Then the man said, "Let me go. It is morning." But Jacob replied, "I won't let you go unless you bless me." 27The man asked him, "What is your name?" "Jacob," he answered. 28Then the man said, "Your name will not be Jacob anymore. Instead, it will be Israel. You have wrestled with God and with people. And you have won."*
Write Jacob's new name- Israel. Remember, Jacob has 11 sons so far, and he'll have a 12th. His name is now Israel. Later we'll talk about the Israelites and the 12 tribes of Israel. Now you know where this comes from.
13. *29Jacob said, "Please tell me your name." But he replied, "Why do you want to know my name?" Then he blessed Jacob there. 30So Jacob named the place Peniel. He said, "I saw God face to face. But I'm still alive!" Whoa! Did he just say he saw God face to face? He saw God in human form, long before Jesus came to earth. Draw a sun. 31The sun rose above Jacob as he passed by Peniel. He was limping because of his hip.*
14. *1Jacob looked and saw Esau coming with his 400 men! So Jacob separated the children. He put them with Leah, Rachel and the two female servants. 2He put the servants and their children in front. He put Leah and her children next. And he put Rachel and Joseph last. 3He himself went on ahead. As he came near his brother, he bowed down to the ground seven times. So he's put his family behind him to try to keep them safe.*
15. *4But Esau ran to meet Jacob. He hugged him and threw his arms around his neck. He kissed him, and they cried for joy. Draw something to show this reunion. Maybe a stick man Jacob and Esau with a heart. Esau had forgiven Jacob. He was happy to see his brother! And Jacob had been so afraid*
Esau asked, "Why did you send all those herds I saw?"
"I hoped I could do something to please you," Jacob replied.
5But Esau said, "I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself." Wow! The gifts were not the reason for his brother's forgiveness. He didn't even need them.
16. *10"No, please!" said Jacob. "If I've pleased you, accept this gift from me. Seeing your face is like seeing the face of God. You have welcomed me so kindly. 11Please accept the present that was brought to you. God has given me so much. I have everything I need." Jacob wouldn't give in. So Esau accepted it.*

Jacob trusted God. He was afraid, but he still obeyed God. He went back home. When he was afraid and had his doubts, it was all right. He prayed to God. Did God punish him for doubting? No, God was with him. Jacob remained obedient and took his troubles to God.

When we doubt and wonder if God going to do what He promised, we need to remember this lesson. We need to remember to take our doubts and fears to God in prayer and know that God will guide us and help us through everything.