

Use Week of:

Unit 3 • Session 3 Jacob's New Name

BIBLE PASSAGE:

Genesis 32–33

STORY POINT: God changed Jacob's name to Israel.

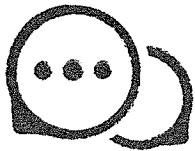
KEY PASSAGE:

Genesis 28:15a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.

INTRODUCE THE STORY
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TEACH THE STORY
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EXPERIENCE THE STORY
(20–25 MINUTES)
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Additional resources are available at gospelproject.com. For free training and session-by-session help, visit www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject.

LEADER Bible Study

Jacob found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. After stealing his older brother's blessing, he fled his home to escape Esau's anger. He spent time with his uncle Laban, got married, and fathered many children. Overall, Jacob prospered. God blessed him, but Jacob's time with his uncle Laban did not end well. Laban's sons accused Jacob of taking their father's wealth.

God was with Jacob and when He told Jacob to leave, Jacob did not hesitate. He gathered his family and all of his possessions and headed home to Canaan with Laban in pursuit. But uncertainty awaited Jacob in his homeland. His brother Esau was there. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau wanted to kill him.

God had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac, and He had promised to be with Jacob. But with Laban behind him and Esau before him, how could Jacob possibly survive?

Jacob tried to prepare for his meeting with Esau. He strategically divided his family into separate groups. He sent gifts ahead of them to appease Esau. That night, Jacob anxiously awaited word from Esau, and that is when he encountered the Lord.

Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? The victory was ironic; Jacob did not win by strength (God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch) but by confessing his dependence on God's blessing.

Jacob had nowhere else to turn. He could not succeed by his own strength. Jacob held onto God and would not let go. God poured out His grace on Jacob. He blessed Jacob and gave him a new name, Israel. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would bring into the world His Son, Jesus.

The BIBLE Story

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32–33

Jacob took his family and everything he had, and he headed home to Canaan. Jacob was afraid to see his brother Esau again. What if Esau was still angry? Jacob sent messengers ahead to tell Esau that he was coming. The messengers came back. "Esau is coming to meet you!" they said. "He has a big group of people with him!"

Jacob was very afraid! Was Esau coming to hurt him? Would all those people hurt Jacob and his family? **Jacob made a plan to stay safe. He told part of his family to go one way, and the other part to go another way. If Esau fought one group, maybe the other group could get away.**

Then Jacob prayed. He asked God to keep His promise. "Please rescue me from my brother," he prayed.

Then Jacob sent gifts to Esau—many animals like goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys. Jacob hoped Esau would be happy with the gifts. Maybe then Esau would forgive him.

That night, a man appeared to Jacob. (The man was God!) The man wrestled with Jacob all night. Jacob would not give up, so the man hurt Jacob's hip.

"Let Me go. The sun is coming up," the man said.

But Jacob did not let Him go. "I will not let You go unless You bless me," Jacob said.

"Your name was Jacob," said the man, "but now your name will be Israel. You wrestled with God and with men, and you have won."

The man blessed Jacob. The sun came up, and Jacob limped because his hip was hurt.

Now Jacob saw Esau and the big group of people coming toward him. Jacob went to meet Esau. He bowed down to show respect. **Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. Esau was not angry anymore!**

Esau went back to his home, and Jacob traveled a little farther. **Jacob bought land for his family to live on. He was finally home in the land God had promised to give him.**

Christ Connection: God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus made the way for us to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into God's family, we get a new name, too—children of God. (John 1:12)

Bible Storytelling Tips

• **Move with the story:** Act out the story as you tell it. Walk around like you're traveling, pray, pretend to wrestle someone, walk with a hurt hip, run to hug someone, and travel to your land.

• **Change the atmosphere:** Dim the lights during the night part of the story. Turn on the lights when "the sun comes up."

INTRODUCE the Story



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KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 28:15a

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.

Welcome time

- "You Are God" song
- offering basket
- Allergy Alert download
- favorite toys related to the Bible story theme

Play a theme song in the background as you greet preschoolers and follow your church's security procedures. Set an offering basket near the door to collect at an appropriate time. Post an allergy alert, if necessary. Set out a few favorite theme-related toys, such as puzzles and blocks.

Activity page

- "Find the Brothers" activity page, 1 per child
- markers or crayons

Guide preschoolers to use the key to find and circle Jacob and Esau in the crowd.

SAY • Do you remember when we heard the story of how Jacob stole his brother Esau's blessing? Esau was so angry, he wanted to hurt Jacob; so Jacob went to his uncle Laban's. Jacob had been gone for many years. Now God told him to go home. Jacob was afraid to see his brother again. Let's find out what happened when they saw each other.

Play four colors

LOW PREP

- construction paper, 4 colors
- tape

Tape four different colored sheets of construction paper spaced out around the room. Tell preschoolers to choose a color to stand beside. Explain that you will close your eyes and count to 10. Children must move to another color

while you count. When you finish counting, you will call out a color and then open your eyes. The children standing by the color you called out will cheer. Be sure another leader is monitoring the children as you count. Consider allowing older preschoolers to take turns counting and calling out colors.

SAY • That was fun! The colors separated our one class into four groups. In today's Bible story, Jacob separated his one big family into two groups. We will find out why when we hear the Bible story.

Play an animal matching game

Print two copies of the "Animal Matching Cards" and cut out the cards. Mix up the cards and lay them on the table faceup in a grid pattern for preschoolers to observe. Then flip over the cards. Guide preschoolers to take turns turning over two cards at a time to find a match. Consider leaving the cards faceup for younger preschoolers.

- "Animal Matching Cards" printable
- scissors (adult use)

SAY • What would you say if someone gave you one of these animals as a gift? Many years before, Jacob stole his brother Esau's birthright. Now Jacob was about to see his brother again for the first time in 20 years. Jacob sent animals like these as gifts to his brother. He was hoping Esau would be happy with the gifts and would forgive him. Let's find out if Esau forgave Jacob in our Bible story.

Transition to tell the story

To gain the attention of all the preschoolers to move them to Bible study, show the countdown video, flip off the lights, or clap a simple rhythm for the children to copy. Call each child by name to invite her to Bible study.

- countdown video (optional)

TEACH the Story



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BIG PICTURE QUESTION: Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.

Introduce the Bible story

Place a bookmark at Genesis 32–33 in your Bible. Invite a preschooler to open it. Reverently display the open Bible.

SAY • The Bible is a true book. The stories we hear from the Bible are not pretend. They really happened! God talks to us through the Bible. Today's Bible story is from Genesis, the first book of the Bible.

Point to the Bible story picture on the giant timeline. Remind children that all the stories in the Bible fit together to tell an even bigger story. The Bible tells us the big story of how God rescues sinners through His Son, Jesus.

Watch or tell the Bible story

Show the video or tell the Bible story using the provided storytelling tips. Use the bolded version of the Bible story for young preschoolers.

SAY • How wonderful that Esau was not angry with Jacob anymore! But even more wonderful that God appeared to Jacob! Jacob would not let God go until He blessed him. **God changed Jacob's name to Israel.** By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus made the way for us to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into God's family, we get a new name, too—children of God.

Practice the key passage

Cut out the "Key Passage Marker" and place it at Genesis 28:15a. Invite a volunteer to come up and open your Bible to the key passage. Read the key passage aloud. Practice the motions you created for the verse. Allow preschoolers to take turns saying the key passage from memory.

SAY • God promised Jacob that He would be with Jacob and would watch over Jacob wherever he went. God was with Jacob as he returned to Canaan and watched over him just like He promised.

Sing the key passage song, "Wherever, Wherever You Go," and the theme song, "You Are God."

Learn the big picture question

SAY • Our big picture question is, *Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.* God kept His promises to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God always does what He says He will do. We can trust Him!



Missions moment

Form a circle. Toss a beach ball into the air and challenge preschoolers to keep it aloft without moving their feet. When the ball falls to the floor, prompt preschoolers to suggest one specific way to pray for missionaries like DJ's family. Share "DJ's Family Prayer Card" and remind preschoolers that we can partner with DJ's family through prayer.

Pray and transition to experience the story

- "Key Passage Marker" printable
- Key Passage Poster
- "Wherever, Wherever You Go" song
- "You Are God" song

- Big Picture Question Poster

- beach ball
- "DJ's Family Prayer Card" printable

EXPERIENCE the Story



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LOW PREP

Sing a name song

Lead preschoolers in singing and clapping the name of each child in class. Use the following lyrics to the tune of "London Bridge."

"Clap a friend's name with me, name with me,
name with me.

Clap a friend's name with me. Let's clap (*child's name*)!"

Sing again changing the motion from clapping to stomping to patting knees.

SAY • God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name.

God changed Jacob's name to Israel. By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus made the way for us to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into God's family, we get a new name, too—children of God.

Dot your name

Write *Jacob* and *Israel* on separate sheets of paper. Display the signs for preschoolers. Ask children to tell you what is different about the two signs.

Use a pencil to neatly write each child's name on a sheet of heavyweight paper. Invite a preschooler to use paint daubers to make dots to cover the letters of his name.

SAY • **God changed Jacob's name to Israel.** Did you know

- paper
- marker
- heavyweight paper
- paint daubers
- pencil

that when we turn from our sin and trust in Jesus, we get a new name, too? Children of God! Jesus died on the cross and rose from the dead to make us part of God's family.

Make an autograph book

Cut paper into fourths to create an autograph book for each child. Determine the number of pages each book needs based on the number of preschoolers in the class.

Show a preschooler how to stack the papers and line up the edges. Staple along one side. Guide him to cover the staples with colorful tape. Write *Children of God* on the front of his book. Invite children to take turns letting each other sign a page in their book. Preschoolers may write their name, write their initials, or draw a picture of themselves.

SAY • We all have special names that our parents gave us.

Jacob had a special name too, but God gave Jacob a new name that showed God would bless him and his family. **God changed Jacob's name to Israel.** When we trust in Jesus and are adopted into God's family, God gives us a new name—children of God!

- paper
- scissors (adult use)
- stapler
- staples
- colorful tape
- markers or crayons

Move your body

Print, cut out, and assemble the "Movement Cubes." Invite preschoolers to take turns tossing the cubes. Read the movement and the body part on the top of the cubes to children. Lead preschoolers in performing the action. Each time the cube lands on *hips*, remind children of how God hurt Jacob's hip when they wrestled.

SAY • God hurt Jacob's hip when they wrestled. God told Jacob that he wrestled with God and won. Was Jacob stronger than God? No way! God is most powerful.

- "Movement Cubes" printable
- scissors (adult use)
- tape

God said Jacob won because he would not let go of God. Jacob learned that he needed God most of all. God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name. **God changed Jacob's name to Israel.** God was going to bless the whole world through Jacob's family.



Play gutte

Invite preschoolers to play the traditional Indian game of *gutte* that uses small stones. *Gutte* is similar to the game of jacks. Make "stones" by wadding five small pieces of paper into balls. Form groups if you have many children.

Demonstrate how to play by placing the paper stones close to you. Lightly toss one "stone" in the air while picking up another stone from the ground. Keep the stone if you are able to collect it without dropping the stone in the air. Try to collect all of the stones. Allow each preschooler a turn.

SAY • India is the largest country in South Asia. Many people from India have moved to Canada where DJ and his family live. DJ and his brothers probably play games like this with their Indian friends so they can also tell them about Jesus. DJ and his family want the Indian people in Canada to know that Jesus made the way for them to be adopted into God's family. God wants the Indian people to be His children, too.

Snack and review

Play the countdown video to signal the end of activities. Wash hands and gather preschoolers for snack time. Pray, thanking God for the snack.

Serve animal crackers for snack. Remind preschoolers that Jacob sent animals as gifts to Esau. Jacob hoped Esau would be happy with the gifts. Maybe then Esau would forgive him. Display the Bible story picture as you ask the following review questions. Retell portions of the Bible story as needed:

1. Why was Jacob afraid to see his brother Esau? (*Jacob had stolen his father's blessing from Esau.*)
2. Why did Jacob tell part of his family to go one way and the other part to go another? (*If Esau fought one group, maybe the other group could get away.*)
3. Whom did Jacob wrestle with all night? (*God*)
4. What did God change Jacob's name to? (*Israel*)
5. Was Esau happy or angry to see Jacob? (*happy*)
6. ***Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.***

Transition

When children finish their snack, preschoolers may color the Bible story coloring page, play a simple game to practice the key passage or big picture question, or sing along to the key passage or unit theme song.

If parents are picking up their children at this time, tell them something that their child enjoyed doing or did well during the session. Distribute the preschool big picture cards for families.

- countdown video (optional)
- Allergy Alert download
- paper cups and napkins
- snack food
- animal crackers (optional)
- Bible Story Picture Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster

- Bible Story Coloring Page
- crayons
- Key Passage Poster
- Big Picture Question Poster
- "You Are God" song
- "Wherever, Wherever You Go" song
- Big Picture Cards for Families: Babies, Toddlers, and Preschoolers

paper