

LESSON 21

Jacob's Wrestling Match

GENESIS 32:1-32



BIBLE TRUTH

GOD PROTECTS, DISCIPLINES, AND BLESSES HIS CHOSEN ONES

LESSON SNAPSHOT

- 1. OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN**
Use last week’s lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.
- 2. BIBLE STORY 10 MIN**
Read Genesis 32:1–32 from the Scriptures or read story 21, “Jacob’s Wrestling Match,” from *The Gospel Story Bible*.
- 3. OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN**
What Are You Afraid Of?
SUPPLIES:
✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker
- 4. TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN**
- 5. OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN**
Tug of War
SUPPLIES:
✓ thick rope
✓ masking tape
- 6. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN**
- 7. ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN**
Coloring Activity
SUPPLIES:
✓ coloring page 21—one copy for each child
- 8. CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN**
- 9. BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN**
Just One Touch

TOTAL 75 MIN

PREPARING TO TEACH

TEACHING POINTS

Jacob is reminded of God's faithfulness—This is an important time in Jacob's life. He has just been through a difficult experience with Laban. He is now on his way back home where he will see his brother, Esau. That could be cause for even more fear, after all Jacob had left home because Esau had wanted to kill him. God promises to be with Jacob as he returns home (Genesis 31:3), and God keeps that promise by sending angels to Jacob as an encouragement and a reminder of his faithfulness.

Jacob fears man more than God—On his journey back to Canaan, Jacob meets the angels of God. This confirms God's promise that he will be with Jacob on the journey. Even though God sends angels to Jacob, he is still afraid of Esau. Jacob's fear of his brother is greater than his trust in God.

Jacob wrestles with God and learns the fear of the Lord—In the middle of the night, when Jacob is all by himself, a stranger appears and begins to wrestle with him! Jacob must have thought it was a robber or one of Esau's men. So he grabs hold of the stranger and the two wrestle all night.

Toward morning, Jacob's opponent, with one touch, puts Jacob's hip out of joint. Despite the pain, Jacob holds on to his opponent and refuses to let go until he receives a blessing for he realizes he is not wrestling with an ordinary man.

In Genesis 32:30, we discover that Jacob wasn't wrestling with a man but with God! God had appeared to him as a man—and one day God would do this again when he sends Jesus.

WHERE IS JESUS? _____

How does today's Bible story fit into God's greater plan of redemption?

Read John 12:13.

Can you imagine what Jacob must have thought when in the middle of the night a stranger appeared and began to wrestle with him? Jacob may have thought it was a robber or one of Esau's men. They wrestled all night, but Jacob did not give in. Then, toward morning, the man put Jacob's hip out of joint with one small touch. Suddenly Jacob realized he had been wrestling with God.

Despite the pain, Jacob held on and refused to let go until God blessed him. So God blessed Jacob and gave him a very special name: Israel. From that time on, God's people would be known as the people of Israel.

When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem just before going to the cross, the crowds waved palm branches and shouted, "Blessed is ... the King of Israel."

THE LESSON

OPENING REVIEW 5 MIN

Use last week's lesson outline to review with the children what they learned.

BIBLE STORY 10 MIN

Read Genesis 32:1–32 from the Scriptures or read story 21, "Jacob's Wrestling Match," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

OBJECT LESSON 1 10 MIN

What Are You Afraid Of?

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ whiteboard and dry-erase marker

Ask the class to think for a minute and consider what they are most afraid of. Don't have them shout out their answer, but instead just think of it.

■ LOWER ELEMENTARY LESSON 21

Then ask the children to give you their answers one by one. As they do, write their answers on the board. If more than one person mentions the same thing, strike a tally mark next to the answer already listed. Don't take silly answers; encourage the class to give real answers.

Ask the class to rate the items on the list from most fearful to least fearful. Come up with what the class thinks is the most fearful object or thing.

Then ask the class the following questions:

■ **What was Jacob afraid of?**

(Jacob was afraid that his brother Esau might try to take revenge for his having stolen his birthright.)

■ **What happens to our relationship with God when we fear?**

(Our fears cause us to take our focus off of God.)

■ **Is there such a thing as a good, healthy fear?**

(Yes, some fears make perfect sense; for example, a fear of heights protects us from falling. The healthiest fear is fearing the Lord. Fearing the Lord helps keep us from sin and produces faith as we consider his awesome power. When we understand how powerful God is, we become more careful about how we live.)

TEACHING/DISCUSSION 10 MIN

Using the teaching points, teach through the lesson for today.

OBJECT LESSON 2 10 MIN

Tug of War

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ thick rope
- ✓ masking tape

The object is to show how God allowed Jacob to wrestle with him for a while and then in the end overwhelmed him with a touch to his hip.

Place three masking tape lines on the floor parallel to each other and four feet apart. Wrap a piece of tape around the center of the rope to mark the exact middle. Ask for volunteers.

Explain to the volunteers that you are going to challenge them to a tug of war. (Depending on your own strength pick one to three volunteers. Remember, you need to win!)

Start with the center of the rope above the middle line; explain that the object of the game is to get the tape from the center line over your boundary line. The first team to pull the rope and their opponent four feet is the winner.

Have the students hold one end of the rope and you the other. Allow the tug to go back and forth for some time. When the student team seems to be tiring, allow them to begin to pull the rope in their direction. Just before they get to the place where they think they are going to win, use your full strength and pull them to a loss.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- **How was our tug-of-war like Jacob’s wrestling match with God?**
(Like God, the teacher was in control the whole time reserving their strength until they decided to win. With Jacob, God was totally in control; there was never a doubt as to who would be the winner.)

- **Why would God wrestle with Jacob and seem to allow him to win but at the end injure his hip?**
(Jacob needed to learn to depend on God and not in his own strength. Jacob was a self-confident man. After his match with God he was more aware of God’s power and control. Though Jacob had been introduced to God and obeyed God’s command to leave Laban and return home, Jacob began to fear his brother Esau and abandon trust in the Lord.)

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY 5 MIN

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

ACTIVITY TIME 10 MIN

Coloring Activity

SUPPLIES:

- ✓ coloring page 21—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

- Do all angels have wings?
(No, some look like ordinary men.)
- What did Jacob say to the angel?
(“I will not let you go unless you bless me” [Genesis 32:26].)
- Why did Jacob know the angel could bless him?
(Jacob thought that he must be powerful because he caused his hip to ache just by touching it.)

CLOSING PRAYER 5 MIN

Pick several children to pray prayers based on the day’s scripture passages.

BONUS OBJECT LESSON 10 MIN

Just One Touch

Have the children form a circle and tell them they are going to pretend to be wrestling with the angel. They will not be wrestling each other; rather they will mime wrestle the angel. Then explain that when you go around and touch a child on the hip they should fall to the ground but pretend to hold on to the angel.

This is just a fun exercise you can do in the middle of the lesson after you read the story. Here are a few questions you can ask:

- How do you think Jacob felt wrestling for hours in the middle of the night?
(Accept any answer.)
- Was Jacob really able to beat the Angel of the Lord?
(No, the Angel of the Lord was allowing the wrestling match to continue. If God wanted to, he could have crushed Jacob in the first second of the wrestling match.)
- When his hip was touched, what did Jacob learn about the Angel of the Lord?
(Jacob learned that the Angel of the Lord had great power. That is when he realized he was wrestling God not man.)

LESSON 21 - JACOB'S WRESTLING MATCH

