

JACOB AND ESAU

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 25:20-34

*God directs all things from babies to birthrights.*

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God knew the older son would serve the younger son – Rebekah felt the children moving inside of her and was concerned. She prayed to the Lord and He told her that she would have twins who would grow up to be two nations and that the older would serve the younger. God has a plan for everything. Rebekah was full of faith. She knew that God had a plan and that her future sons were to be a part of that plan. Full of faith, she inquired of the Lord and God answered her prayers.

God blessed Isaac with twins – Just as God said, Rebekah had two boys. She would have known that they were going to be boys based on the description “two nations” and that “the older shall serve the younger” because only men could lead a nation. If the older one was going to serve the younger, Rebekah probably knew they would be very different. Clearly, these boys were going to grow up to father two different peoples.

Esau sells his birthright in fulfillment of the prophecy – Ancient law provided a special position for the firstborn. Jacob took advantage of his hungry brother by offering to trade him a meal for Esau’s birthright. This was not a random request. It was quite likely that Jacob was aware of God’s word and knew that his older brother would end up serving him. Sure enough, Esau did not have the wisdom to refuse the request and gave away his right as the oldest. By doing so, he essentially agreed that he would serve his younger brother.

JACOB AND ESAU

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 25:20-34

Where Is Jesus?

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the Gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Rebekah called out to the Lord about the babies in her womb and God told her she was going to have twins. He also said that the older will serve the younger.

All this happened with the birth of the twins. Before they are born, God chose Jacob, the younger brother, to be the child of promise. Esau hated his birthright (the firstborn son normally inherited his father's wealth) while Jacob desired it. God's plan of faith is demonstrated by the picture of these two sons.

God's election of Jacob highlights that God's salvation comes not with strength, but through faith in Jesus. Jesus came not in worldly strength, but in meekness. In the lives of these two sons God gives us a picture of the struggle between works and grace, unbelief and faith, and His choice over ours.

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAUS

Read the following Bible passage from the Old Testament. Use the following questions to help the children understand how this passage points to Christ in the New Testament.

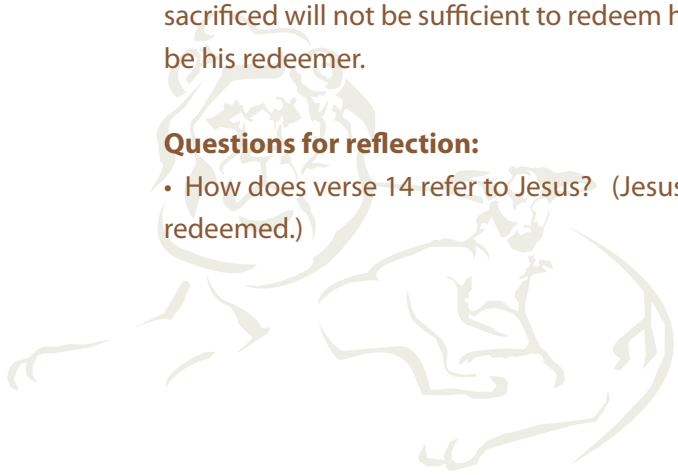
Bible Passage: Psalm 19:13-14

Connecting the passage to Christ:

David is aware that he sins both consciously and unconsciously. He is also aware that a mere lamb sacrificed will not be sufficient to redeem his sin. He calls out for God to be his redeemer. God alone can be his redeemer.

Questions for reflection:

- How does verse 14 refer to Jesus? (Jesus is the perfect lamb sacrificed in our place so that we can be redeemed.)



JACOB AND ESAU

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 25:20-34

SWORD BIBLE MEMORY

BE A DOER OF THE WORD

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.

ACTIVITIES & OBJECT LESSONS

Use the following activities for practical application and discovery of this lesson. For the younger children, review the preschool questions and use them to help the children relate to the passage. For older children, ask them why they think this passage is in the Bible for us today. How is it supposed to affect our lives?

DIRECTING AND PREDICTING

Supplies

- one quarter
- enough pennies for the entire class
- a sheet of colored paper

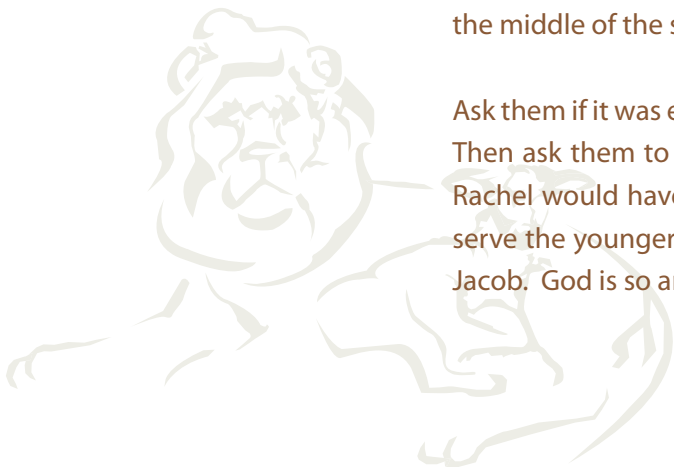
This activity will help the children to be amazed with the fact that God not only predicts what will happen, but He directs what will happen.

Ask the children what it means to make a prediction and explain to them that it is a guess of what is going to happen. Ask the class to predict heads or tails for the flip of a quarter (divide them equally and ask one group to call it). Keep doing this until you are down to two children, and then a final winner. Use the word predict rather than call for the children to make their choices.

Explain to the class that it is easy to predict a coin toss since there are only two options and you have a fifty-fifty chance of guessing correctly. Tell them that it is much harder to direct what will happen.

To illustrate this, place a sheet of colored paper on the floor and then line up the children tell them to flip their penny up in the air and direct it to land heads up in the middle of the sheet of paper. Give them each a try.

Ask them if it was easy to predict and if it was easy to direct the path of the pennies. Then ask them to tell you what God predicted and directed. God predicted that Rachel would have two children and she did. God directed that the older would serve the younger, and in selling his birthright, Esau ensured that he would serve Jacob. God is so amazing that His plan will come to pass!



JACOB AND ESAU

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 25:20-34

THE BIG TRADE

Supplies

- one die
- six boxes of different sizes
- chocolate candy
- a rock
- a pine cone
- other non-offensive gag items

Bring in six boxes of different sizes wrapped up. In some of them place candy and in others place gag prizes like a rock, pine cone or any other non-offensive gag item. Number the boxes from one to six. Have several pieces of wrapped chocolate candy available for use during the exercise.

Ask for a volunteer from the class. Give them a small wrapped piece of chocolate and explain to them that they can keep it or trade it for a wrapped gift. If they choose to keep it, let them sit down and start the process over again with another volunteer. If they choose to trade, let them roll the die to determine which box they will get. Continue this until all six prizes are taken. After each, announce that he or she "traded this wonderful chocolate for a (whatever is in the box)." When they get a more valuable prize, they will be excited and when they get a gag they will be disappointed.

Then use the following questions to connect this exercise with Esau's decision to trade his birthright for a bowl of stew.

- Do you think Esau made a wise trade? If not, why not?
- Why do you think Jacob thought to ask his brother for his birthright? (Perhaps his mother told him that God's plan was for his older brother to serve him.)

PRAYER

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

IN CLASS PROJECT

Supplies

- paper
- colored pencils

The first and second grade children can use the preschool coloring sheet and questions. Have the older children draw a picture of Esau, who was a hunter and a hairy man, next to Jacob, who was not hairy and not as strong.

JACOB AND ESAU

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 25:20-34

FOR OLDER GRADES

Read Romans 9:11-16. In this passage we get an inside glimpse at the choosing of God based on His mercy, not on works. The message is that salvation is by grace, not by our works. Have the children compare this New Testament passage with the Old Testament story of Jacob and Esau and answer the following questions:

- What do we learn about the story of Jacob and Esau from the book of Romans that we didn't learn from the text in Genesis? (We learn that God wanted to teach His sovereign control over election through the birth of these twins. The reason why it is said the older will serve the younger is simply the choice of God, not based on their behavior or even knowledge of their future behavior.)
- What does understanding God's sovereign choice have to do with us today? (God chooses us the same way he chose Jacob, not by our works, but by His love and mercy.)

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Chosen – To be chosen by God is a term theologians use to describe those whom God picks to be objects of His mercy. God does not have mercy equally on everyone. Everyone is equally guilty of sin and deserves to be eternally punished. But out of love, God chooses to extend mercy to some who He chooses. Some might see this choice of God as unjust, but Paul addresses this in Romans 9:11-16. Since all men are justly condemned and deserve death, any who God does not extend mercy to are simply receiving what they deserve. The scandal, if there is one to report, is that God chooses some and pours out grace upon them to believe and be saved. The penalty for their sin has been given to Christ.

