

JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22



Jacob's true birthright is given by God who draws near.

The STORY

Pray with children to start class.

Teaching Points for Class Discussion:

God reached out to Jacob in a dream and confirmed His covenant with Jacob – It was by God's initiative that He appeared to Jacob. Jacob was not calling for God, nor was he searching for God on his journey.

Jacob committed his life to serving God – God's call ministered to Jacob and was effective in capturing Jacob's heart. As a result, Jacob pledged to serve the God of his father.

Jesus is the stairway – Jesus is revealed to be the bridge between heaven and earth depicted in Jacob's dream in John 1:50-51.

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.

Before his dream, Jacob received the promised blessing only through his father Isaac. But in Genesis 28, the Lord appeared to Jacob and repeated to him the promise originally given to Abraham. From Jacob's seed would come a blessing to all people. This blessing was and still is salvation through Jesus Christ. The dream of a stairway to heaven was God's initiative toward Jacob just as the life and gospel of Christ is God's initiative to us. We would not know God if He first did not reveal Himself to us first.

John records these words of Jesus:

And he said to him, "Truly, truly, I say to you, you will see heaven opened, and the angels of God ascending and descending on the Son of Man." (John 1:51, ESV)

Here Jesus lets us in on a little secret: He is the stairway. There is a bridge from earth to heaven and Jesus is that stairway of Jacob's dream. Jesus made it possible for man to be forgiven and go to heaven to dwell with the Lord. He is the one who made the way for us.

JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

ON THE ROAD TO EMMAMAUS

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: Isaiah 11:1

Connecting the passage to Christ:

Isaiah predicts that one will come from the lineage of Jesse. Specifically, Isaiah mentions that this branch will bear fruit. In John 15:4-5, Jesus tells us that He is the vine and if we remain in Him, we will bear much fruit. Jesus' ministry bore much fruit as He healed and raised the dead. But no act of our Savior bore more fruit than His death on the cross. That allowed all of us lesser branches to be grafted into the vine and bear fruit. All of this is only possible because of the finished work of our Savior, Jesus Christ. The fruit we bear is ultimately His.

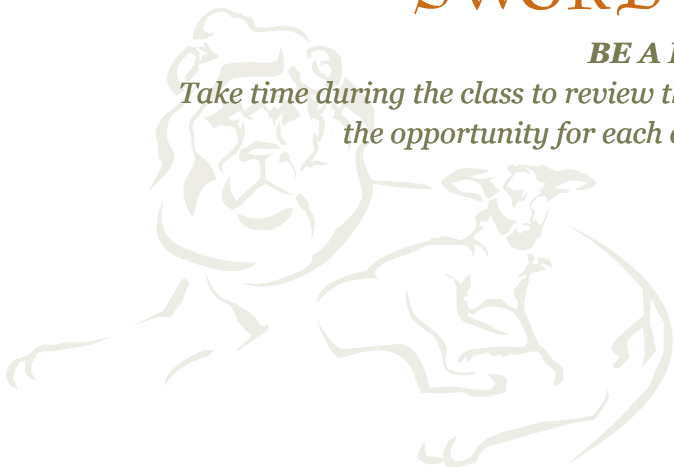
Questions for reflection:

- What does it mean to bear fruit? (Fruit is the successful result of labor. Fruit is the product of our efforts. Good fruit is the good product of good efforts; bad fruit is the bad result of failed efforts. Just as a successful plant produces fruit, so a successful Christian produces good fruit.)
- What is some of the good fruit that Jesus produced in His life? (Everything that Jesus did was excellent. The most noteworthy of Jesus' good fruit is the fruit of the Gospel, Colossians 1:6. We are the fruit of the Gospel. Salvation has come to those who would believe in Jesus. Our lives, changed by the power of the Holy Spirit, are a grand harvest of fruit. Jesus, forecasting this abundance of fruit said, "I tell you open your eyes, look at the fields. They are ripe for harvest." John 4:35b)

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.



JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

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?

COUNTING THE DUST

Supplies

magnifying glass, a spoonful of fine dust from a vacuum cleaner bag or a spoonful of cement mix, a piece of paper

Cover a piece of paper with a light dust. Have the children observe and try to guess how many individual particles there are on the paper. Count a 1/8" square at random then multiply by the size of the paper (1,452 if it is an 8.5 x 11 sheet of paper) to come up with a rough estimate as to how many particles of dust are on the paper. If there are 100 in a 1/8" square then there would be 145,200 particles of dust on the paper.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- If God was going to bless Jacob with descendants as numerous as the dust of the entire earth, how many would that be? (It would be a number too large to count. And that is the point. Not that we would know the exact number, but that it would be an unbelievable amount.)
- What is the ultimate blessing that would come through Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob? (The blessing is Jesus and His salvation.)
- What do we learn about the mercy and kindness of God from the picture of the dust? (God is very merciful and that He is going to save so many.)



JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

COUNTING THE DUST

Supplies

a bag of 1" decorative rocks (enough to give each child one rock to take home)

Pass a rock to each of the children. Read to them the story about how Jacob took the stone he used for a pillow the night before and set it up to mark the spot where the Lord met with him. He also vowed to serve the Lord at that place.

Then ask the class the following question:

- God blessed Jacob by appearing to him in a dream, encouraging him, promising him many children and that he would be a blessing to many. How has God blessed you? (The children might need some help in articulating the blessings they have been given by God. Also make sure to include the cross and the death of Christ as a blessing.)

Tell them to take their rock home and place it somewhere they will see it so when they notice it day to day they should remember God's blessing to them and thank the Lord in a prayer.

GIVING A TENTH

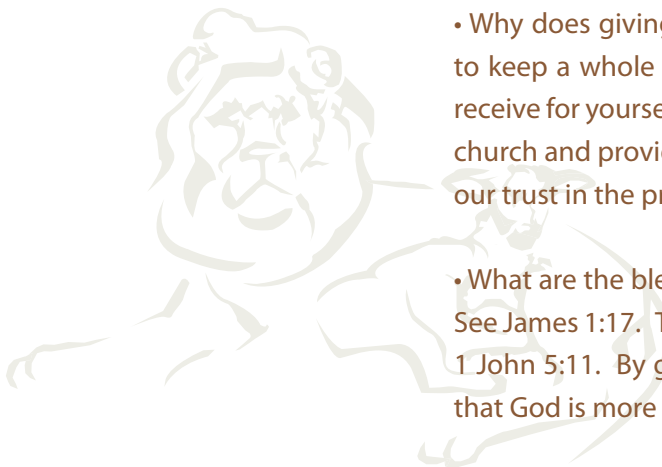
Supplies

a box of Fruit Loops™ cereal

Give a handful of cereal to each of the children in your class. Ask them to put it into piles of ten. Read Genesis 28:22 about the story of Jacob's oath to God after the dream of the stairway to heaven. Explain to the children that the tithe is simply giving back to God one out of ten and it demonstrates our gratefulness that all we have comes from God. Have them pick one piece of cereal out of each pile of ten.

Then ask the class the following questions:

- Did one out of ten seem like taking away a lot of your cereal? (Steer them toward the reality that they still have most of their cereal left.)
- Why does giving a tenth to God demonstrate gratefulness? (Just like it is selfish to keep a whole bag of candy for yourself, so it is selfish to keep everything you receive for yourself. Through history God has used the giving of a tenth to build His church and provide for the work of ministry. Giving back a small portion speaks of our trust in the provider to give us everything we need.)
- What are the blessings the Lord gives us? (Everything we have is a gift from God. See James 1:17. The greatest gift He has given us is eternal life through His Son, see 1 John 5:11. By giving away some of the material blessings to God we are saying that God is more important than what He gives.)



JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

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 each draw and color an angel then glue them onto a long strip of paper which reaches from the ceiling down to the floor. Ask the children what the ladder represents; refer to the On the Road to Emmaus section.



JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

FOR OLDER GRADES

Use the following activity for practical application and discovery of this lesson.

Jacob fled to Haran to avoid his brother who wanted to kill him (Genesis 27:41) Rebekah arranged for Isaac to send Jacob away to look for a wife but the real reason motivating Rebekah was Jacob's safety. Have the children look at the story and come up with a list of Jacob's challenges and how God's promise would have ministered to him.

Challenge to Jacob:

Jacob obtained the birthright deceitfully and he had to flee the very inheritance the birthright provided.

The Lord's care:

The Lord blessed Jacob and gave him a promise of inheriting the land, thereby giving Jacob a true birthright.

Challenge to Jacob:

Jacob was all alone, having fled his home and everything that was familiar.

The Lord's care:

God tells Jacob that He is with him and will watch over him wherever he goes. (Genesis 28:15).

Challenge to Jacob:

Though Jacob was rich he had to leave his riches behind. When he finally reached Haran he had only his manual labor with which to purchase a bride.

The Lord's care:

The Lord promises to give Jacob the land and prosper him.

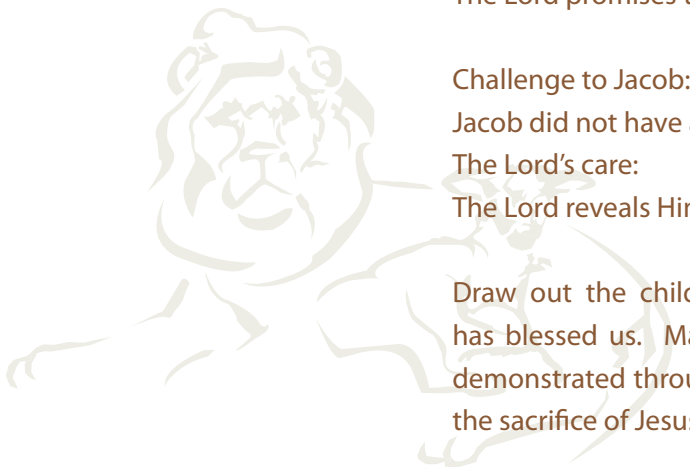
Challenge to Jacob:

Jacob did not have a relationship with God like his father did.

The Lord's care:

The Lord reveals Himself to Jacob and gives him a vision of heaven.

Draw out the children and ask them what our challenges are and how God has blessed us. Make sure to add to the list our fallen condition and the care demonstrated through the life and death of Christ. Refer to John 3:16 to connect the sacrifice of Jesus to God's love.



JACOB'S DREAM

SCRIPTURE REFERENCE: GENESIS 28:10-22

A LITTLE BIT MORE

Dreams – God has used dreams as a way to communicate with individuals He is calling on a mission. In the book of Numbers, God says: “Hear my words: If there is a prophet among you, I the Lord make myself known to him in a vision; I speak with him in a dream (Numbers 12:6 ESV).

God will also give men interpretations of dreams such as were given to Joseph to interpret the dreams of the cup bearer and baker. In fact, when Peter addresses the multitude in Acts 2:17, he affirms to the people that in the last days when God pours out His Spirit the young men will see visions and the old men will dream dreams.

Though God still uses dreams as a means of communication, we don't have to wait until we dream or search to have an odd dream interpreted to discover the will of God. Everything we need to live our Christian lives and find direction can be found in God's written Word.

