

FALL TERM

Week 5: JACOB

Story: BEULAH LAND Set 3A, “Jacob”

Scriptural source: Genesis 25:24-27; 27:1-41; 28:10-22; 32:1 – 33:20

God blesses Jacob repeatedly, though Jacob insists on believing that he has to connive and bargain and cheat in order to make the blessing happen. Yet God goes on blessing him. And when he meets Esau, he finds that Esau too has been blessed, and Esau has forgiven him.

Competition is basic to human nature, as the stories of Scripture show. Since our first alienation from God, the hardest thing for us to believe is that there is enough to go around: that one can have without taking from the other. The stories in Genesis are full of

reversals—blessings to the undeserving, faithfulness and forgiveness on the part of those who are wronged. In these reversals we find hints of the Good News that will be proclaimed loud and clear in the New Testament.

Some suggested wondering questions

- I wonder if Jacob was glad he had stolen his brother’s blessing?
- I wonder if his dream was a good dream or a scary dream?
- I wonder why the angel gave Jacob a new name?
- I wonder why Esau forgave Jacob?

Hymn: “We Are Climbing Jacob’s Ladder” (LEVAS 2, #220)

Alternative hymn: “Amazing Grace” (Hymnal 1982 #671)

Use stanzas 1 and 2 of “Amazing Grace” (more if you are able). When you sing “Amazing Grace” with children, it’s a good idea to explain that a “wretch” is a person who is sad, lonely and in trouble.

Structured Art Activity: Jacob’s Ladder

Materials needed:

- **Posterboard**, 9x12 inches in a variety of colors
- **Craft sticks** (plain or colored)
- **Small torn scraps of tissue paper** in bright colors
- **Cotton balls or batting**
- **Stickers** of hearts, stars, or angels (optional)
- **Markers, white glue**

The materials listed above are only suggestions.

Invite the children to create a ladder on the posterboard, using the craft sticks, and to surround it with “heaven,” “angels,” “the sky,” or whatever appeals to them. Remind them that Jacob saw his ladder in a dream. How would you draw something that you saw in a dream?

Open-Ended Art Activity: Dream Stones

This activity is most suitable for children 8 and up.

Materials needed:

- A selection of smooth, clean **rocks**, about the size of potatoes: enough for each child to choose one
- **Acrylic paint** (*not* poster paint) poured into separate small cups such as clean ice cube trays or 3-oz paper cups (cut the cups down with scissors so that they are about 1 inch high); 1 set of colors for each 4 children)
- **Brushes** in a variety of sizes, including fine brushes for detail
- 1 cup of **rinse water** for each two children
- **Paper towels**
- **Wax paper, foil** or some other non-porous surface for drying the painted rocks
- **Permanent markers**
- **Newspaper** to cover the table top, and **smocks** for the children, if you feel they are necessary

Remind the children always to clean their brushes before changing colors, by

- (1) wiping the brush on the paper towel;
- (2) rinsing the brush in the water;
- (3) wiping the brush again.

Begin by inviting each child to choose a dream stone. Spend some time getting to know your stones. Have the children hold them in their hands, and turn them over and over. Feel them get warmer with the warmth of your hands. Imagine how it would feel to be all alone and scared, and sleeping under the sky with a dream stone under your head as a pillow.

Return all the stones to the center of the table. Can each child now find his or her own stone?

Look at the stone again. What dreams might it give you? What color or design are those dreams? Do they include words? When you are ready, paint your stones.

Exploration Activity: Tricking Blind Isaac

Play a game. Remind the children that Jacob tricked his father Isaac because his father was old and almost blind. Jacob put on Esau's clothes, and covered his hands and arms with the hairy skins of animals, so that his father would think he was Esau.

For this game, you will need a **blindfold** and a **bag** containing **small objects with different shapes and textures**, such as an eraser, a nightlight bulb, a doll shoe, a Lego block, a piece of sidewalk chalk, a carrot stick, etc. The bag should be opaque so that the children cannot see the small objects. Make sure that these objects are familiar enough so that any child would recognize them on sight.

- Blindfold one child to be Isaac.
- Choose a child to be Jacob. Let that child fish in the bag for a small object for "Isaac" to feel and try to identify.

- If Isaac identifies the object correctly, the other child becomes "Isaac." If Isaac gives up, the leader chooses a new Isaac, and Jacob picks another object to be identified.

To make sure the blindfolded child does not peek under the blindfold, you might seat "Isaac" at a table with hands under the table, and hand him/her the object under the table.

Make sure everybody has a turn to be both Isaac and Jacob.

When everyone has had a turn and there are no more objects to identify, invite the children to lie down and dream. Give them each a blessing (a small treat such as a **heart candy** or **chocolate kiss**).