Jacob Comes Home

Wrestling with God and Meeting Esau

Ages about 7-11 | Video 10:11 | Group lesson about 25-35 minutes

Central truth God is faithful. We can bring him our fears, take responsibility for wrong choices, and seek peace.

Learning goals Recall Jacob's prayer, new name, and reunion with Esau; name a way to make amends; recognize God's faithful care.

Gather Video access, one handout per child, pencils or crayons, and a Bible.

Watch online Open this video on Servus Dei

Before watching | 2 minutes

Recall that Jacob deceived his father and hurt Esau. Years later, Jacob is afraid to meet him. Invite children to notice prayer and choices that seek peace. Use pretend examples.

Watch and notice

Notice Jacob praying, sending gifts, receiving the name Israel, meeting Esau, and returning to Bethel to worship God.

Talk together | 6-8 minutes

1. What did Jacob do when he was afraid?
He prayed to God, remembered God's kindness, and asked for help.

2. What new name did Jacob receive?
Israel. His mysterious encounter with God brought a blessing and a new name.

3. How did Esau welcome Jacob?
He ran to him and embraced him. Both brothers wept.

4. How did Jacob remember God at Bethel?
He built an altar, set up a stone pillar, and worshiped the God who had kept his promise.

Then respond and pray Allow 6-8 minutes for a handout or the activity on page 2; finish with the closing prayer.

Lead the response

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Short family lesson Watch the video, choose one recall question and one application question, then pray. About 12-18 minutes; the handout is optional.

Choose a handout

Draw & Tell Draw Esau welcoming Jacob and a kind action in a pretend situation. An adult may write the child's words.

Read & Write Recall the story, think about making amends, and write a short prayer for courage.

Adapt by readiness

Emerging readers: read aloud and invite pointing, drawing, or spoken answers.

Confident readers: distinguish asking forgiveness, making amends, and rebuilding trust.

Practice a peaceful next step | Optional 4 minutes

Pretend one child has broken another's pencil. Practice telling the truth, saying sorry, and offering to repair or replace it. Ask an adult for help.

Look for understanding A child recalls Esau's welcome, names Israel, and suggests one honest way to make amends.

Closing prayer Faithful God, you know our fears. Help us tell the truth, make amends, and welcome others with kindness. Teach us to trust you and seek peace. Amen.

At home Thank God for one way he has cared for your family. Choose a small act of kindness together.

Handout answer notes Jacob prays; he receives the name Israel; Esau embraces him; Jacob worships at Bethel. Amends and prayer answers vary.

Teach with care

Children may pass on personal sharing. Forgiveness never requires staying in danger; ask a trusted adult for help. The night encounter is a mystery, not a lesson in forcing God to give rewards. Jacob's limp is not a measure of his worth or faith. Gifts cannot buy forgiveness, and trust may take time.

Words to explain Amends: an action to help repair harm. Blessing: a gift of God's care. Bethel: house of God.

Sources for the leader

Scripture: Genesis 32: Jacob prays and receives a new name
Scripture: Genesis 33: Jacob and Esau meet
Scripture: Genesis 35:1-15: return to Bethel