

## LESSON 3

## JACOB AND ESAU

## LESSON AT A GLANCE

**WONDER TRUTH:** No Matter What, God Keeps His Promises

**SCRIPTURE:** [Genesis 25–27](#)

**GOD'S BIG STORY:** When Jacob tricks his father Isaac into giving him the family blessing, God still continues His covenant promises through Jacob, for no matter what, God keeps His promises.

**WORD OF WONDER:** Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. —[Psalm 90:2 \(NIV\)](#)

## FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

## WHO?

Jacob and Esau were the twin sons of Isaac. They were in conflict with each other from the womb. Jacob, although the youngest, deceived his brother and father and gained both the birthright and blessing that should have belonged to Esau.

## WHAT?

A birthright and a blessing were generally reserved for the oldest son. The birthright gave the recipient a double portion of the inheritance, among other privileges, and the blessing gave the recipient blessing, favor, and family headship.

## WHERE?

Esau preferred the open country. He was a skilled hunter and was often outdoors. His descendants were the nation of Edom. Jacob was a quiet man who spent most of his time closer to home. Jacob's descendants were the nation of Israel.

## WHEN?

After Isaac's mother Sarah died when he was 40 years old, Isaac married Rebekah. When he was close to his own death, Isaac blessed Jacob.

## CONNECTING TO GOD'S BIG STORY

God made a covenant with Abraham and kept His promise through Abraham's grandson Jacob. Despite Jacob's deception and trickery, God still worked through Jacob to keep His promise to Abraham's family, making them a great nation and blessing the world through Jacob's descendant, Jesus.

# Curiosity

Spark curiosity and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

## Welcome Question

### At your start time ...

Warmly welcome kids by name. Encourage them to talk with their neighbors about a promise they made and to whom they made the promise.

Invite several kids to share answers to the Welcome Question:

**What is a promise you made?**

Today we will learn how God kept His promise to Abraham's family even when it seemed like their choices would mess up that promise. But first, it's time to be curious!

## Curiosity Questions

### I'm curious ...

- Why do you think brothers and sisters sometimes argue or don't get along?
- Do you think God ever breaks His promises? Why or why not?

## Elementary Interactive Game: Who's That?

Ahead of time, write today's Wonder Truth in large letters on a whiteboard: No Matter What, God Keeps His Promises.

For this game, kids will take turns saying the Wonder Truth from somewhere out of sight of other kids. Decide on a spot that will work well in your setting, such as behind a partially opened door or room partition, or plan on holding up a dark-colored bed sheet for the speaker to stand behind.

**Today we're going to play a game called Who's That? For this game, we will take turns standing where no one can see us and saying today's Wonder Truth nice and loud: No Matter What, God Keeps His Promises.**

Point to the Wonder Truth on the whiteboard. **Everyone else will listen carefully and ask, "Who's that?" while they try to guess who the mystery speaker is. First, let's all practice by saying the Wonder Truth together.** Say the Wonder Truth together: **No Matter What, God Keeps His Promises.**

Invite all the kids to close their eyes while you tap one person on the shoulder. Remind kids that it's very important to keep their eyes closed until you tell them to open them! Whoever gets tapped will be the first mystery speaker.

Lead the mystery speaker to the designated out-of-sight place. Have everyone keep their eyes closed. Ask the mystery speaker to say the Wonder Truth nice and loud. Encourage them to say it in a silly voice to make it more challenging for the group to guess their identity. For example, they might use a robot voice, squeaky voice, or fake accent. If you have a voice-changing toy, let the mystery speaker talk into it.

Then ask, "Who's that?" and invite the group to guess who the mystery speaker is. Once they correctly guess the speaker's identity, the speaker can step out into the open.

**Make It Inclusive!** If any kids in your group are hard of hearing or deaf, modify the game by giving kids visual clues to help them guess the identity of the mystery speaker. Have kids open their eyes so they can have physical clues too. Hold a dark-colored bed sheet in front of the speaker and lift it just high enough to reveal her shoes. Each time she says the Wonder Truth, lift the sheet a little higher. This way kids can use the speaker's voice and clothing as clues.

Play several rounds, choosing a different mystery speaker each time.

**Great job guessing "who's that"! Even when our mystery speakers did their best to disguise their voices, you still figured out who they were! In God's big story today, we'll hear about Abraham's grandson, Jacob. Jacob disguised himself by pretending to be someone else to get what he wanted. Yet even though Jacob lied and made wrong choices, God still kept His promises to Abraham's family!**

Because, as today's Wonder Truth states, **NO MATTER WHAT, GOD KEEPS HIS PROMISES.**

## Declaring God's Wonder

**Thank You, God, that You are good!** (Kids repeat.)

**You made me on purpose, for a purpose.** (Kids repeat.)

**And when I follow Jesus, I am Your kid!** (Kids repeat.)

**You know me, love me, and lead me.** (Kids repeat.)

**God, You are faithful,** (Kids repeat.)

**And You always keep Your promises.** (Kids repeat.)

**My life can tell of Your wonder!** (Kids repeat.)

## Faith

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

### Word of Wonder Activity

#### WORD OF WONDER

**Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world,  
from everlasting to everlasting you are God.**

—Psalm 90:2 (NIV)

**Today we learned that nothing will stop God from keeping His promises! Let's praise God by saying our Word of Wonder together.**

Open your Bible to [Psalm 90:2](#). If possible, display the Word of Wonder Slide [NIV](#)

Then read [Psalm 90:2](#) several times together.

**Now let's practice our Word of Wonder by creating verse motions or a verse dance.**

Help kids form teams of two to six kids. Invite teams to make up motions to the words of the verse. They can be body movements or a dance. To make it fun, kids may want to come up with silly motions—anything they choose to help in memorizing the verse. Once the teams have created their motions or dance, invite them to perform for one another.

**Leader Tip:** : *For Younger Kids.* Assign a leader or older kid to help each team of younger kids read the verse and come up with motions.

## Elementary Questions

- What were the names of Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons? (*Esau and Jacob*)
- What did Jacob do to get Esau's birthright? (*Jacob traded a bowl of stew to Esau for his birthright.*)
- What did Jacob do to get the blessing Isaac meant to give Esau? (*Jacob tricked his father, Isaac, into thinking he was Esau by putting on goatskins and Esau's clothes and pretending to be Esau.*)
- How would you feel if you lost a game and found out the winner broke the rules? How do you think Esau felt when Jacob tricked their father?
- What did God promise Abraham and his family? (to make them a big family, give them a special land, and bless the whole world through them)
- Even though Jacob did wrong things, God still kept His promise to Abraham's family. How does it make you feel to know God will keep His promises no matter what?

No matter what we're feeling or experiencing, we can tell God about it. Even when we do wrong things, we can talk to God, and He will hear us and love us. Let's spend some time talking with God in prayer!

## Preteen Questions

- Can you remember the names of people in Abraham's family—his wife, son, son's wife, grandsons? (*Abraham's wife: Sarah, Abraham and Sarah's son: Isaac, Isaac's wife: Rebekah, Isaac and Rebekah's twin sons/Abraham's grandsons: Esau and Jacob*)
- What was a birthright in Old Testament times? What did Jacob do to get Esau's birthright? (*The oldest son usually received the birthright, which means he was given more of his father's property and became leader of the family when the father died. Jacob traded a bowl of stew to Esau for his birthright.*)
- What did Jacob do to get the blessing Isaac meant to give Esau? (*Jacob tricked his father, Isaac, into thinking he was Esau by putting on goatskins and Esau's clothes and pretending to be Esau.*)
- Has anyone ever tricked you or cheated to beat you at a game or competition? How did that make you feel?
- What did God promise Abraham and his family? (to make them a big family, give them a special land, and bless the whole world through them)
- Even though Jacob tricked his father, God still kept His promise to Abraham's family. How does it make you feel to know God will keep His promises no matter what?

No matter what we're feeling or experiencing, we can tell God about it. Even when we do wrong things, we can talk to God, and He will hear us and love us. Let's spend some time talking with God in prayer!

## Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share their prayer requests and praises, and to pray for each other.

Some kids may not be comfortable praying out loud. That's OK. Encourage kids to pray silently, thanking God that we can trust Him to help us when we are feeling sad or angry.

Tell kids that even though people may disappoint us, God is faithful and always keeps His promises, no matter what!

# Identity

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

## Elementary Responding in Worship: Dear God Letters

Ahead of time, print a [Dear God Letter Sheet](#) for each kid.

**Today in God's big story, Jacob tricked his brother and father to get his family's birthright and blessing. Jacob made wrong choices to get what he wanted instead of trusting God. But still, God loved Jacob and was faithful to Jacob and his whole family. God loves the world and had a plan to send Jesus through Abraham's family so that we can all have a relationship with Him! Nothing can stop God from keeping His promises!**

Hand out a Dear God Letter Sheet to each kid and set out coloring utensils. Let's spend some time writing a letter or drawing a picture to God. **Is there a situation you are worried about? Tell Him about it, and trust Him with it!**

Invite them to write or draw at the top of their letter about a situation they're having a hard time with. Then they can draw an emoji in the circle that shows how they feel about it, write their name at the bottom, and talk with God, asking Him for help and telling Him that they trust Him.

Play music from the [God's Family Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as kids work.

Gather kids together as they finish their letters. Give those who would like to share their letters a chance to hold them up for everyone to see.

Then invite everyone to open their hands in front of them with their palms up. This motion represents letting go of the difficult thing they're facing and trusting God with it. Then with hands still open, invite them to say this simple prayer together: God, I trust You.

## Preteen Responding in Worship: My Conversation with God

Ahead of time, print a copy of the [My Conversation with God Sheet](#) for each kid.

**Today in God's big story, Jacob tricked his brother and father to get his family's birthright and blessing. Jacob made wrong choices to get what he wanted instead of trusting God. But still, God loved Jacob and was faithful to Jacob and his whole family. God loves the world and had a plan to send Jesus through Abraham's family so that we can all have a relationship with Him! Nothing can stop God from keeping His promises!**

Hand out a My Conversation with God Sheet to each kid and set out writing and coloring utensils.

**When we pray, we are having a conversation with the God of the universe! We are talking to Him, and He is talking to us! Let's spend some time having a conversation with God.** Hold up a My Conversation with God Sheet.

**As we talk with God, let's record our thoughts and ideas as though we're texting. We will hear truth from God and get to respond back to Him.**

**Take a look at the first message in the conversation.** Point to the first text bubble from God. **God says, "I see you and know you."** One way we can respond to God's true words is by **repeating them back to God: "God, You see me and know me."** I encourage you to fill in the blank bubbles in this conversation. Read God's words to you, and respond by repeating those truths back to Him or by telling Him anything else that is on your heart.

Give kids time to write or draw on their sheets as they talk with God in prayer. Quietly play music from the [God's Family Elementary Spotify playlist](#) as they work. After a few minutes, encourage kids to close this time by thanking God for keeping His promises no matter what.

## Blessing Your Kids

**Blessing:** May you always remember that God knows you and loves you. May you trust Him in all things, for He is faithful and always keeps His promises no matter what.

## GAME 3: UP AND DOWN

**Make It Inclusive:** If kids have physical restrictions that prevent them from standing and sitting quickly, invite them to point up above their heads when they see a “down” arrow and point down to the floor when they see an “up” arrow.

In this game, kids will do the opposite of the directions by sitting when they see an arrow pointing up and standing when they see an arrow pointing down.

Open the Up and Down Slides and have them ready to use, or alternatively, draw a large arrow on a sheet of paper.

**Is anyone here great at following directions?** Allow the kids to respond. **Then you won’t be good at this game! The goal of this game is to not follow the directions! When you see an arrow pointing up, you will sit down** (kids can also squat or sit in a chair if they have one). **And when you see the arrow pointing down, you will stand up. We’ll start slowly at first but get faster as we go! If you mess up and stand up when the arrow is up or down when the arrow is down (instead of doing the opposite), you’re out and can remain seated.**

**Leader Tip:** For Younger Kids. Rather than be eliminated when kids sit or stand at the wrong time, invite them to try their best and simply continue playing if they make a mistake.

Begin the game by displaying the first of the Up and Down Slides. Or if using a paper arrow instead of the slides, hold it up with the arrow pointing up. After a couple seconds, advance to the next slide (or lower the arrow sign and then hold it up again). Start the transitions slowly so kids can get the hang of it, and then pick up the pace. Play until you’ve advanced through all the slides or kids are tired and ready for a break.

**It was hard to do the opposite of what the arrows showed, wasn’t it? Today in God’s big story, we’re learning about a man named Jacob who didn’t always do what was right but who God was still faithful to. No matter what, God keeps His promises!**