

Jacob Returns Home

Genesis 33

Level A | Lesson 7 | Teacher Overview



Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men.... Then Jacob crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Genesis 33:1,3,4

For Teachers

This lesson has several activity options. You may wish to choose 2-3. Reading through the options will help you identify the activities best suited to your group's size, student mix, available supplies, and the time you have to prepare. You may also want to mix and match activities from other age levels.

Activity Options

1. Talk About It
2. Illustration: Jacob Meeting Esau
3. Memory Verse
4. Act It Out: Jacob and Esau Meet Again
5. Make: The Lord's Face
6. Coloring Picture: Jacob Bows Before Esau

Talk About It

Reading: Genesis 33

Jacob comes towards Esau, humbling himself by bowing to the ground seven times as he approaches. The brothers joyfully embrace. Esau refuses Jacob's gifts, saying that he has plenty, and he blesses Jacob. Esau proposes that they journey together but Jacob chooses not to go with him because his group needs to rest after their long journey. Esau leaves and Jacob travels to Shechem where he buys land and builds a house and sets up an altar.

1. Have you ever seen a baby smile with a smile so big that the baby's face looked like one huge smile? It makes you want to smile too, doesn't it! Why do you think babies make us feel like this? (We feel happy because the Lord and His angels are with little babies.)
2. At the beginning of our story today Jacob was very worried about meeting his brother Esau. He bowed down seven times as he came close to Esau. Do you ever bow down? (We do not usually bow to other people, but we do bow down when we pray.) Why do we bow down? (We do it to show that we are the Lord's humble servants—and that He is our Lord.)
3. Was Esau still angry with Jacob when they met? (No—Esau ran to meet him. He was really happy to see Jacob and they greeted each other like good friends.)
4. Esau's face looked so beautiful that Jacob said, "I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me." (Genesis 33:10) What does the Lord's face look like?
5. When is the Lord pleased with us? (e.g. when we listen to the Word, play nicely with friends, help our parents, brothers or sisters, etc.)



Memory Verse:

Jacob Returns Home



Esau ran to meet Jacob,
and embraced him, and
fell on his neck and kissed
him, and they wept.

Genesis 33:4

Memory Verse:

Jacob Returns Home



Esau ran to meet Jacob,
and embraced him, and
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Genesis 33:4

Cut in quarters and give one to each student to take home.

Memory Verse:

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Genesis 33:4

Memory Verse:

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Genesis 33:4

Act It Out:

Jacob & Esau Meet Again

At a Glance:

Students act out the story of Jacob and Esau meeting again after many years.

Supplies Needed:

- play script for the teacher to read
- *optional*: simple costumes such as bathrobes or large t-shirts



Teacher Preparation:

- Read through the script so you are familiar with it.
- Collect costumes if you wish to use them.

Directions:

1. Tell children that you are going to act out the story of Jacob and Esau meeting again. Remind them that at the beginning of the story Jacob was very worried about meeting his brother. He was afraid that Esau would be angry. But Esau wasn't angry. He was happy to see Jacob!
2. Assign students to roles (see the list of characters at the top of the script). Position the students in their starting places. Have everyone sit down.
3. Say: I'm going to read the story. When I read about your part you will stand up and act it out!
4. Read the script, pausing to direct action.

Jacob and Esau Meet Again Script

Adapted from Genesis 33

Characters:

- **Jacob**
- **2 Maidservants (Bilhah and Zilpah)**
- **Maidservants' children (1-4 actors)**
- **Leah**
- **Leah's Children (1-7 actors)**
- **Rachel**
- **Joseph**
- **Esau**
- **Esau's Men (any number)**

As the play starts, Jacob is sitting on one side of the stage area.

His family is sitting behind him in 3 separate groups: the maidservants and their children; Leah and her children; Rachel and Joseph.

Esau and his men are at the other side of the stage.

Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men. *(Esau and his men stand up. Jacob stands up and looks at them. He is worried.)*

So he divided the children among Leah, Rachel, and the two maidservants. And he put the maidservants and their children in front, Leah and her children behind, and Rachel and Joseph last. *(Jacob walks to each group of his family, making sure they are in the right order.)*

Then he crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. *(Jacob walks part way toward Esau. He stops and bows low 7 times.)*

But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. *(Esau goes to Jacob and hugs him, smiling. Jacob smiles back. Esau's men can sit down again.)*

And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and children, and said, "Who are these with you?" *(Esau looks over at Jacob's family.)*

So he said, "The children whom God has graciously given your servant." *(Jacob motions for the first group to come nearer.)*

Then the maidservants came near, they and their children, and bowed down. *(The maidservants and their children stand up and come and bow to Esau. Then they move back and sit down again.)*

And Leah also came near with her children, and they bowed down. *(Leah and her children stand up and come and bow to Esau. Then they move back and sit down again.)*

Afterward Joseph and Rachel came near, and they bowed down. *(Joseph and Rachel stand up, come forward and bow to Esau. Then they move back and sit down again.)*

Then Esau said, “What do you mean by all this company which I met?” *(Esau gestures behind him. He is talking about all the animals that Jacob had sent ahead as gifts for Esau.)*

And Jacob said, “These are to find favor in the sight of my lord.” *(Jacob bows to Esau, smiling.)*

But Esau said, “I have enough, my brother; keep what you have for yourself.” *(Esau puts his hand on Jacob’s shoulder.)*

And Jacob said, “No, please, if I have now found favor in your sight, then receive my present from my hand, for I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me. Please, take my blessing that is brought to you, because God has dealt graciously with me, and because I have enough.” *(Jacob puts his hand up and touches Esau’s face.)*

So Jacob urged Esau, and he took it. *(Esau nods his head.)*

Then Esau said, “Let us take our journey; let us go, and I will go before you.” *(Esau takes Jacob’s arm and motions the way he had come, asking Jacob to go with him.)*

But Jacob said to him, “My lord knows that the children are weak, and the flocks and herds which are nursing are with me. And if the men should drive them hard one day, all the flock will die. Please let my lord go on ahead before his servant. I will lead on slowly at a pace which the livestock that go before me, and the children, are able to endure, until I come to my lord in Seir.” *(Jacob gestures to his family behind him and motions for Esau to go on ahead.)*

And Esau said, “Now let me leave with you some of the people who are with me.” *(Esau gestures to the men behind him. They stand up.)*

But Jacob said, “What need is there? Let me find favor in the sight of my lord.” *(Jacob smiles and shakes his head.)*

So Esau returned that day on his way to Seir. *(Jacob and Esau hug. Esau leaves the stage back in the direction he had come from. His men follow him.)*

And Jacob journeyed to Succoth. *(Jacob motions to his family to stand up. They stand up and then Jacob leads them all off stage in the direction that Esau had gone.)*

Make: The Lord's Face

At a Glance:

After Jacob and Esau meet again for the first time in more than 20 years, Jacob tells Esau, "I had seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me" (Genesis 33:10). In this project, children will create a decorative hanging of the Lord's face and the faces of some people who love them. You can decide whether you would prefer to have children draw their own pictures or use pre-printed images for the picture of the Lord.



Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- stiff paper circle or paper plate
- ribbon, yarn, or string (about 6-8 inches)
- crayons or markers
- glue
- printed picture of the Lord's face
- two text strips: "We can see the Lord's face / in the faces of good people around us."
- *optional:* glitter and other decorations such as sequins and glue



Teacher Preparation:

- If you are going to use paper circles, prepare these by cutting them out of stiff paper (plates or bowls make good templates to draw around). Make the circles as large as you can using standard paper.
- Punch a hole in each paper circle or paper plate for the ribbon or string to thread through.
- Cut out enough copies of the Lord's face for each child to have one.
- Cut your ribbon, yarn or string into 6-8 inch pieces, one for each child.
- Cut out the text strips.

Directions:

1. Remind students that Jacob had been worried about seeing his brother again. But Esau was very happy to see Jacob. He hugged him and even cried because he was so happy. Jacob says that seeing Esau pleased with him was like seeing the face of God.
2. "Can you imagine what it would be like to see the Lord's face smiling at you, loving you and pleased with you? How might that make you feel?"

Make: The Lord's Face continued

3. "When we see someone who loves us smiling at us, that is a little bit like seeing the face of the Lord. Think about seeing your parents faces when they are really happy to see you or especially pleased about something good you have done. That love is how the Lord looks on us too!"
4. "Today we are going to make a project to show how we can see the Lord's love in good people around us."
5. Hand out the paper circles or paper plates and the crayons or markers. Ask children to draw the faces of some people they love and who love them on one side. These could be parents, grandparents, teachers, etc. Encourage them to use the whole space. Remind them that the hole for the ribbon or yarn is at the top!
6. Hand out the pictures of the Lord's face and have children glue them in the center of the other side of the paper plate or circle. (Alternatively, have children draw their own pictures of the Lord's face.)
7. Ask children to draw rays of light around the Lord's face, right to the edge of the circle. *Optional:* have children glue glitter or other decorations around the Lord's face.
8. Hand out the two text slips and help the children to glue one on each side of their paper plates or circles.
9. Give each child a length of ribbon, yarn or string and help them thread it through the pre-punched holes and tie the ends together to create a loop.
10. When the circle is turned, people can see the face of the Lord and the faces the children drew and read the whole sentence: We can see the Lord's face in the faces of good people around us.



We can see the face of the Lord... ...in the faces of good people around us.

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