Take Action: Going on a Journey

At a Glance:

Today's story marks a turning point in Jacob's life. After running away from Esau and living far away for many years, the Lord comes to him in a dream, telling him to return home. Jacob sneaks away from Laban, his father-in-law, while Laban is away shearing sheep, taking with him his wives, children and animals. When Laban hears that Jacob has gone he chases Jacob and catches up with him. Laban and Jacob promise to stay away from each other and set up a pillar of stones to remind them of their promise. The children will act this journey home, and end with a feast together.



Supplies Needed:

- space to go on a journey; this activity can be done outside, in a classroom, or throughout a building
- food to be taken on the journey and eaten as a feast. e.g. fruit, dried fruit, vegetables, crackers, water, etc. (Keep in mind special dietary needs.)
- stuffed animals to represent Jacob's flocks and herds, especially lambs and goats; other animals will work too if you need more animals
- bags or containers to carry supplies on the journey
- stones or blocks to build a heap
- *optional:* create a more real feel with a few minimal costume pieces and props

Teacher Preparation:

- Prepare food and gather animals and props for the journey.
- Plan your journey route.
- Place animals, food and bags for carrying where you will begin.
- Place rocks or blocks where you plan to stop at the end to build a pillar and have a feast.

Directions:

1. Have you ever been on a journey with your family? What did your family do to get ready for the trip? (encourage children to think about what they might need on a journey: clothing, food, etc. Ask questions about where they expect to eat, sleep, or clothing they might need.)

© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

Take Action: Going on a Journey
continued

2. Jacob left his mother and father and traveled to a land that was far away. There he married and had children. One night the Lord came to Jacob in a dream and told him to go home. So Jacob told his wives and they agreed that they should go as the Lord had told them to.
3. Today we are going to take a journey like Jacob. First we are going to gather up the things we will need. What should we take? (food for the journey, clothes) Gather food etc. into bags.
4. What else are we going to bring with us? (our animals) Encourage each child to pick up one or two animals.
5. Lead the children on the journey (see Journey Home Ideas).
6. Conclude the activity with a "feast" (snack).

© 2020 General Church of the New Jerusalem

Take Action: Journey Home Ideas

Use the following ideas to create an imaginary journey. Shorten or lengthen the journey and modify the actions to suit your group. The teacher can lead the group just as Jacob led his family.

What is happening…	What to say…	Actions…
The angel of God came to Jacob in a dream and told him to go home to his family.	The Lord came to Jacob in a dream and said, "Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."	Let's all say together, "Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."
Jacob prepares to leave.	We are going on a long journey. Jacob's home is far away. Let's get ready to go! Let's get some food, some water, and all of our animals.	Pick up snacks and drinks and put them into bags to bring along. Each child should pick up several animals too.
Jacob sneaks away from Laban.	Let's be very quiet so that nobody hears us go. Quietly pick up your food and belongings. Pick up your animals. We must be sure to leave nothing behind!	Look to the right and left to make sure nobody is watching! Put your hand on your mouth to remember to be very quiet. Tiptoe away quietly so nobody hears you!
Jacob's family walks along a level path.	This is a nice firm path. Look at the trees over our heads. Be sure to stay together. We don't want anyone to be left behind.	Count the children to be sure everyone is with you.
Walking uphill.	We have come to a hill. Let's lift our knees high as we climb.	Lift knees up to indicate going up hill.
View at the top.	Oh look—what a nice view! Let's see if Laban is coming after us…. No, I can't see him. Can you? Let's keep going.	Put hand over eyes and scan the horizon.
Going down in a valley	Look at the nice grasses. Let's walk through them. Listen to the grass swishing on our legs!	Move hands as if going through long grass and push it aside. Say: swish, swash, swish, swash.
Walking through mud	Oh, we're coming to some mud. Pick up your feet so you don't get stuck!	Pull clothing up and lift feet high.
Remembering the Lord	This journey is getting hard! Why did Jacob take this journey? Because the Lord told him to. Let's repeat what the Lord told Jacob.	"Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."
Approaching a river	Listen—can you hear a river.	Cup hands over ears and listen.
Arriving at the river	Oh look—I can see the river now. I'm so thirsty, I can't wait to get a drink!	Run to the river. Bend down and take a drink.
Giving the animals a drink	What about our animals—do you think they are thirsty too? Let's give our animals a drink.	Put all the animals where they can drink from the river.

What is happening…	What to say…	Actions…
Resting	I think this is a good place to take a rest. Let's all lie down and sleep.	Lie down to sleep.
Moving on	Time to wake up. The sun is coming up. We better move again so Laban doesn't catch up to us!	Stretch and yawn. Put your hand above your eyes and look for Laban. Laban is not there! Pick up food, animals, etc. to move forward.
Crossing the river	We will have to cross the river.	Splash through the shallow water. As it gets deeper, start to swim. Splash as the water becomes shallow again.
Coming out of the water	It's so nice to be on the other side!	Grab a branch and pull up on to the river bank.
Remembering the Lord	This journey is hard! Why did Jacob go on his journey? Because the Lord told Jacob to go home. Let's remember what the Lord said:	"Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."
Walking up hill	Let's climb this hill and see if Laban is coming.	Lift knees high as if going up hill.
Looking for Laban **Place rocks or blocks here for building the pillar*	Here we are at the top. Let's see if Laban is following us!	Shade eyes with one hand and look for Laban.
Laban is coming	Oh, I think I see Laban far off in the distance. Can you see him?	Extend arms and point to where Laban is coming from.
Laban catches up	Laban wants to know why we left so quickly without telling him. We were afraid he might take Leah and Rachel away from us.	Act as if you are afraid.
Laban and Jacob promise that the Lord will be a witness between them, watching over everything they do	We will make a pillar here to remind us that the Lord is watching over us. He sees whatever we do.	Gather rocks or blocks and pile them in a heap.
Jacob thanks the Lord	Thank you Lord for protecting us.	Kneel and pray.
Jacob remembers why he is taking this journey.	We are doing what the Lord has asked us to do. The Lord said….	"Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family."
Prepare for evening	It's getting late. Let's light a fire so we can cook dinner.	Put hands out to feel the warmth of the fire, then rub hands together.
Experiencing hunger	I feel hungry. We have walked so far since we ate.	Rub tummy.
Eat a feast	Let's get our food ready, and eat!	Sit down and share food.