

General Church Education



Stealing the Blessing

Genesis 27:1-40

Lesson 10

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

Stealing the Blessing

Genesis 27:1-40

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

Stories in the Word often include two brothers, like Cain and Abel and now Jacob and Esau. As we go through life, the character that is born in each of us has two parts. There is always will and understanding or love and truth. The internal sense of this story points out that, although our will or intention is always the force that leads us (Esau is the firstborn), we need to consult our understanding and think before we act. This is why Jacob takes the lead for a while. Our eternal happiness depends on first learning and then keeping the commandments. The more we read and reflect on the Lord's Word, the more truth we will have in our understanding to guide our intentions or desires.

Children will understand another point made in this story: that evil punishes itself. The Lord does not want anyone to be punished. He would rather show us our evils and have us turn away from them.

Ideas for Children

- Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons who were quite different.
- Even though Esau was born first, Jacob received the birthright and the blessing.
- Lying is wrong because it is against the Lord's commandments and brings unhappiness.

From the Writings

Believing in the Lord includes keeping His commandments. Merely to acknowledge Him only demands thought on the part of the understanding, but to keep His commandments requires acknowledgment too on the part of the will. The human mind is made up of the understanding and the will. It is the function of the understanding to think, of the will to act. So as long as a person's acknowledgment is merely in thought on the part of the understanding, they approach the Lord with no more than half their mind; but when they act, they do so with their whole mind, and that is what believing is. Otherwise a person can split their heart in two, and force its surface to soar aloft, while its flesh sinks downwards; and so they fly like an eagle between heaven and hell. See *True Christian Religion* 151

In the natural sense, "You shall not steal" means not stealing in general, and not depriving anyone of his goods secretly or on any pretext. It also extends to being an impostor and to unlawful gain, as well as fraud in payment of taxes and in repaying debts. In the spiritual sense stealing means depriving others of the truths they get from their faith; that is the effect of falsities and heretical beliefs. Priests, whose ministry is conducted solely for the sake of profit or to seek honors, and who teach the sort of things which they see, or could see, from the Word to be true, are spiritual thieves, since they take away from people their means of salvation, the truths of faith. In the celestial sense thieves mean those who strip the Lord of His Divine power, and those who claim for themselves His merit and righteousness. Although these people worship God, yet it is not in Him they trust, but in themselves; and they do not believe in God, but in themselves. *True Christian Religion* 317-319

Stealing the Blessing

In our last story Abraham wanted to find a wife for his son Isaac. Do you remember what was most important in finding a wife for Isaac? (That the woman worship the Lord God Jehovah as Abraham's family did.)

When Abraham's servant returned home with Rebekah, Isaac went out to meet her. They fell in love with each other and were married. They were very happy together.

Isaac was a gentle, peaceful man who lived with his flocks and herds of animals in the land of Canaan. He also dug many wells to get water for his family and all of the animals. Later Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons. Do you know what twins are? (Two babies born at the same time.)

Esau and Jacob

Twins have the same parents, and we say they are born at the same time, but one of the twins always comes out first. Esau was the "firstborn," so he would inherit or get all of Isaac's possessions when his father died. This inheritance was the "birthright" of the firstborn son for the Hebrew people of this time. It was very important because Isaac had great wealth. The firstborn son also had the right to follow his father and become the head of the family. Esau was his father's favorite son. Esau grew into a strong, hairy man who liked to hunt with his bow and

arrows. He often traveled far from home to hunt.

Jacob was born second. Jacob was a smooth-skinned man and loved to stay at home. He took care of his father's sheep, goats, cattle and camels. Jacob was his mother's favorite son. So, you see these two sons of Isaac and Rebekah were very different in appearance and in personality.

One day Esau came in from hunting. He was very tired and hungry. He found Jacob making some stew over the fire. Esau sold his birthright to Jacob in return for some of the stew. Does this seem like a good trade to you? Was Jacob generous or did he take advantage of his brother? Does Esau seem wise or foolish to trade away all his future wealth for some stew?



In today's story Jacob also gets the blessing of the firstborn from Isaac. A father's blessing was very important. It was sacred or holy because the words the father spoke in this blessing were not his own but were from the Lord. Read now to find out what old Isaac asked his firstborn son Esau to do before he gave the blessing.

Read Genesis 27:1-4. Could Isaac see? (No, he was very old and blind.) What did Isaac ask Esau to bring him? (He sent Esau to the fields to hunt an animal to make food for him.) Let's read on to find out who overheard this conversation.

Read Genesis 27:5-10. Which son was Rebekah's favorite? (Jacob.)

What was her plan? (To cook food for Isaac and send Jacob to get the blessing while Esau was still out hunting.) Do you think Jacob will go along with this plan? Let's read on and find out.

Read Genesis 27:11-14. Why was Jacob worried about this plan? (He had smooth skin and Esau was hairy, so he worried that Isaac could tell which son he was and Jacob would bring a curse on himself.)

Do you know what a curse is? (When something bad is supposed to happen to you.)

Rebekah helped Jacob lie and trick Isaac by giving him Esau's clothes to wear and by putting goat skins on Jacob's hands and neck. Isaac could not see. So when Jacob went in to his father, he smelled like his brother. He felt hairy when Isaac touched him, making him think it was Esau. The trick worked and Isaac gave Jacob the blessing that was meant for the first son.

Read Genesis 27:21-29. Can you tell something that was included in this blessing? (Jacob was blessed with plenty of food, grain and wine, and made master over his brother.) How do you think Esau will feel about this? (Cheated.)

Read Genesis 17:30-35. Could Isaac change the blessing after it was given? (No. The words were from the Lord and could not be changed.) How did Isaac and Esau feel about the trick? (They were both very sad.)

Esau begged his father to bless him also. Let's find out what Esau's blessing was.



Read Genesis 27:38-40. Isaac gave Esau a blessing that said he would serve his brother for a while, but later he would “break his yoke.” This means that Esau would not always serve Jacob, that he would one day be free. So Esau had some hope.

Results of Dishonesty

Does it seem strange that Jacob would be allowed to get away with this trick? He lied to his father and stole the blessing of the firstborn son. It was wrong of him to do this and Rebekah should not have helped her son. Jacob would indeed inherit all his father’s possessions and become the leader of his family, but these things did not bring him the happiness he may have expected. He loved to be at home and now he had to leave home because of what he had done.

Esau was so angry with Jacob that he wanted to kill him. When Rebekah realized this, she asked Isaac to send Jacob away to her old home in Haran to find a wife from her family. This was a good excuse to get Jacob away from Esau so that Jacob would not be killed. Jacob left on the lonely journey to find his Uncle Laban in Haran. He would be there for many long years. When he returned home, he would have to ask for his brother’s forgiveness.

Whenever we are tempted to tell a lie, it is good to remember that the Lord tells us, “You shall not bear false witness.” That means you shall not tell a lie. We need to be honest with ourselves and with others.



Discussion Questions

- How were Esau and Jacob different from each other? (Esau was born first. He had hairy skin and loved to hunt. Jacob was born second. He had smooth skin and loved to stay at home and take care of animals.)
- Have you ever pretended to be someone else? Did you do it for fun or to deceive someone? Why was it easy for Jacob to deceive his father? (Rebekah made good tasting stew and put Esau’s clothes and animal skins on Jacob in order to fool Isaac into believing that he was Esau.)
- Why couldn’t Isaac change the blessing after he gave it to Jacob? (The words were from the Lord and could not be changed.)
- What could you do if you are tempted to tell a lie? (Think about the Lord and what He tells us to do, remember this story and the sadness it brought to Jacob.)

Activity Overview | Stealing the Blessing

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Trust in the Lord, and do good;
Dwell in the land, and feed on His faithfulness.
Delight yourself also in the Lord,
And He shall give you the desires of your heart.
Commit your way to the Lord,
Trust also in Him,
And He shall bring it to pass. Psalm 37:3-5

Songs

Dona Nobis Pacem

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-dona-nobis-pacem/>

Humbly Lord We Ask Thy Blessing

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-humbly-lord-we-ask-thy-blessing/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Make Lentil Stew
- Activity 2 | Esau or Jacob?
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Collect small familiar objects and put them in a paper bag. Put your hand in the bag and see if you can identify each object by feeling it with your fingers. Play as a game and see if you can guess them all.
- Eat commercially made lentil stew. Talk about the vegetables in the soup and where they grew.

Activity 1 | Lentil Stew

Make and eat a simple lentil stew.

Ingredients

- ¼ cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 medium yellow or white onion, chopped
- 2 carrots, peeled and chopped
- 4 garlic cloves, pressed or minced
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 1 teaspoon curry powder
- ½ teaspoon dried thyme
- 1 28-ounce can of diced tomatoes, drained
- 1 cup brown or green lentils, picked over and rinsed
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- 2 cups water
- 1 teaspoon salt, more to taste
- Pinch red pepper flakes
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1 cup chopped fresh collard greens or kale, tough ribs removed

Directions

1. Warm the olive oil in a large Dutch oven or pot over medium heat. Add the chopped onion and carrot and cook about 5 minutes.
2. Add the garlic, cumin, curry powder and thyme. Cook until fragrant while stirring constantly, about 30 seconds. Pour in the drained diced tomatoes and cook for a few more minutes.
3. Pour in the lentils, broth and the water. Add 1 teaspoon salt and a pinch of red pepper flakes. Season with freshly ground black pepper. Bring the mixture to a boil, then partially cover the pot and reduce heat to a gentle simmer. Cook for 30 minutes, or until the lentils are tender but still hold their shape.
4. Transfer 2 cups of the soup to a blender and purée until smooth. Pour the puréed soup back into the pot and add the chopped greens. Cook for 5 more minutes, or until the greens have softened.
5. Remove the pot from heat. Taste and season with more salt, pepper if desired. Serve.

Activity 2 | Esau or Jacob?

Cut out the words below. Decide whether each word describes Jacob or Esau. When you have finished, glue the words in the correct column on the next page.

red	smooth	hairy
Hunter	dweller in tents	man of the field
loved by Isaac	loved by Rebekah	mild
born first	born holding his brother's heel	born second

Esau	Jacob

