

General Church Education



Jacob's Flocks Increase

Genesis 30:25-43; 31:1-55

Lesson 12

Jacob's Ladder Religion Lessons

Level 2: The Lord Is Our Shepherd

For ages 7-8 years

Jacob's Flocks Increase

Genesis 30:25-43; 31:1-55

Ideas for Parents & Teachers

The Lord made a covenant with three Hebrew patriarchs. Each patriarch represents a stage of our life. Abraham represents infancy and early childhood, when we are governed by our affections or desires. Isaac pictures youth, when we are gaining intelligence. Jacob pictures early adult life when we are beginning to work and when we bring our spiritual convictions to use in practical ways each day.

The internal sense of this story sheds light on the story's significance to our lives. In the beginning we, too, may promise to serve the Lord with our life in the world, as Jacob did when he had the dream of the ladder that reached to heaven. We find that it takes hard work. Sometimes we make compromises. Things do not always turn out the way we expect. But spiritual as well as natural riches are gained as we keep trying. The wealth is represented by the speckled sheep and goats. These useful, gentle creatures represent innocent affections. The spotted and speckled ones suggest a mixture of good and evil. Choosing the spotted and speckled is acknowledging that the truth we gain is not pure and that the innocence we have is not our own but a gift from the Lord. Jacob's sons represent successive developments in adult life. Joseph's birth marks a turning point, when we enter a higher, more spiritual level of life. It is the realization that we must use our abilities in the service of the Lord, not just for our own success.

Children can learn from this story about the power of Divine Providence in their lives. The Lord takes care of each of us and provides all that we really need. For our part, we need to be willing to work hard, do our best and obey the Lord's commandments.

Ideas for Children

- If people are willing to work hard in an effort to be useful, the Lord rewards them.
- The Lord made Jacob prosperous.
- The Lord takes care of us and provides all that we really need.

From the Writings

When the Lord makes a person new, He first supplies the person with the truths of faith, for without the truths of faith a person does not know who the Lord is, what heaven is, or what hell is; he does not even know of their existence, let alone of the countless things which have to do with the Lord, His kingdom in heaven, and His kingdom on earth, which is the church. Nor does he know the identity or nature of the opposite of these, namely the things of hell.

Until a person knows these things no one can know what good is. "Good" is used to mean spiritual good, which in the Word is called charity, and this good in general implies willing and doing to another that which is good not for any selfish reason but out of delight and affection for doing it. This good is spiritual good, which no one can possibly arrive at except through the truths of faith, which are taught by the Lord through the Word and preaching of the Word. See *Arcana Coelestia* 1893

Jacob's Flocks Increase

Jacob loved his wife Rachel so much that he was willing to work for seven years without any other reward than to have her for his wife. You remember that Laban tricked Jacob and gave him the older sister Leah for his wife. After one week, Laban also gave Rachel to Jacob and then Jacob worked another seven years.

What was Jacob's work? (To take care of the herds and flocks of animals for Laban.)

Jacob's Family Grows

Many children were born to Jacob over time, but his beloved wife, Rachel, was not able to have a child for a long while, though she wished for one. Finally the Lord granted her wish and she had a son named Joseph. Eleven sons and one daughter were born to Jacob while he lived in Haran. You will hear their names often. The sons were Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulon and Joseph. Are these names familiar to you? The daughter's name was Dinah. Joseph was the last child born in Haran, but he is not the youngest

son. Another son was born later. Joseph was Jacob's favorite because he was the son of Rachel whom he loved so dearly. Let's read and find out what Jacob wanted to do after Joseph was born.

Read Genesis 30:25-27.

What did Jacob want to do? (Take his family and go home.) Why didn't Laban want him to go? (Because the Lord had blessed Laban while Jacob was working for him.)

Laban liked Jacob's work and didn't want him to leave. Laban's flocks had increased, and He had become a rich man. He saw that the Lord was with Jacob so whatever he did turned out well.

Laban asked Jacob to stay, saying he would pay whatever Jacob asked. The next part of the story tells what Jacob asked for.



Read Genesis 30:28-32. Which animals did Jacob ask for? (The speckled and spotted sheep and goats and the brown lambs.)

Laban was eager for this bargain because there were not many speckled and spotted animals born each year. But right away nearly all the calves, the lambs and the kids were born speckled with the Lord's help. So Jacob grew rich. Laban did not like this. He changed the agreement so that Jacob could only have the striped animals instead. Then the Lord caused many striped animals to be born. Jacob worked for Laban for six more years. No matter how Laban changed Jacob's wages, the Lord made Jacob's flocks and herds grow larger.



Now the sons of Laban became jealous of Jacob. Laban was no longer happy with him either. Let's read on and find out what the Lord wanted Jacob to do.

Read Genesis 31:1-9. Jacob told Leah and Rachel that he planned to leave, and they agreed to go with him. They left secretly while Laban had gone to shear his sheep. They gathered their flocks and herds and everything that belonged to Jacob, got on their camels and started for the mountains across the river. Three days later when Laban found out that they had left, he and his men went after them.

The Lord appeared to Laban in a dream and told him not to harm Jacob. So when they met, they did not fight but sat down in peace to talk to each other. They made a table of stones and ate together. Then they gathered stones into a great heap or pillar and made promises to each other. Do you think they will part as friends? Let's read on and see.

Read Genesis 31:51-55. What did they promise each other? (Not to pass beyond that pillar to harm each other. Then they made other promises to each other. The great heap or pillar of stones was a reminder of their promises.)

The Lord's Tender Care for Us

This story tells about the wonderful way the Lord took care of Jacob. The Lord gives people what they need. He does not give us everything we *want* because the things we want are not

necessarily the things that would make us truly happy. In fact some things we want might cause us harm. For example, if small children want to play with matches, could that make them sad in the end? Yes, the flame is lovely but it can start big fires if the children are not old enough to know what they are doing. The Lord wants everyone to be safe and happy.

The Lord was able to bless Jacob because Jacob worshiped the Lord. Jacob promised this at Bethel when he dreamed of the ladder reaching up to heaven. Then Jacob worked hard and faithfully for Laban for twenty years in all. He did so willingly, so the Lord was pleased with Jacob and blessed him.

The Lord will be pleased with each of us and be able to bless us if we try our very best. That means obeying His commandments and learning to do our work well, even if it is hard. Everyone is born into this world to be useful. When we are useful, we shall have blessings from the Lord and be truly happy.



Discussion Questions

- What did you learn about Jacob's life in Haran? (Jacob took care of Laban's flocks and herds. The herds increased and Laban became rich. Jacob asked to keep the speckled animals for his wages and he became rich. Laban came after Jacob when he left. They met and made promises so that they could part as friends.)
- What can you try to do so that the Lord can bless you? (Try to obey His commandments and do your work as well as you can.)
- When you think of growing up, how would you like to be useful? What job would you like to do?
- What are some of the jobs the adults in your life do?

Activity Overview | Jacob's Flocks Increase

Recitation

Learn the recitation by heart.

Surely the Lord is in this place and I did not know it.... This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven! Genesis 28:16-17

Songs

The Twelve Sons of Israel

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-the-twelve-sons-of-israel/>

Jesus, Tender Shepherd, Hear Me

Listen or download at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/song-jesus-tender-shepherd-hear-me/>

Activities

Choose one or two.

- Activity 1 | Sons of Jacob Chain of Paper Dolls
- Activity 2 | Rods in the Feeding Troughs
- Picture to color

Additional Activity Ideas

- Try to memorize the twelve tribes of Israel by watching *The Twelve Sons of Jacob* video and singing along. Watch at <https://www.newchurchvineyard.org/resource/video-the-twelve-sons-of-jacob-song/>

Activity 1 | Sons of Jacob Chain of Paper Dolls

Make a chain of paper dolls and label the figures with the names of the twelve tribes of Israel.

Materials

- 1 large piece white paper (approx. 11”x17”; 28cm x 48cm), cut in half lengthwise
- tape
- scissors
- markers or pencil for naming the sons
- name list of the sons of Jacob (see next page)
- People Pattern* (supplied)

Instructions

1. Fold the paper back and forth like a fan (see diagram on *People Pattern* page). Take care to fold the edges accurately so the figures work out well.
2. Cut out the figure on the *People Pattern* page to use as a template.
3. Place the figure on the folded paper and trace around carefully with a pencil. Make sure the hands come at the edges of the paper. If they do not quite reach, extend the lines of the arms to the folded edges.
4. Carefully cut the folded brothers out.
5. The chain will come out with six brothers attached at a time. Use both pieces of paper to make two chains, and tape the hands together to make a chain of twelve brothers.
6. Write the name of each brother on one of the dolls. The names are given in birth order. Try to keep this order when writing names.

Lesson 12 | Sons of Jacob Chain of Paper Dolls

Names of the twelve sons of Jacob for copying on to the paper dolls.

Reuben

Dan

Issachar

Simeon

Naphtali

Zebulun

Levi

Gad

Joseph

Judah

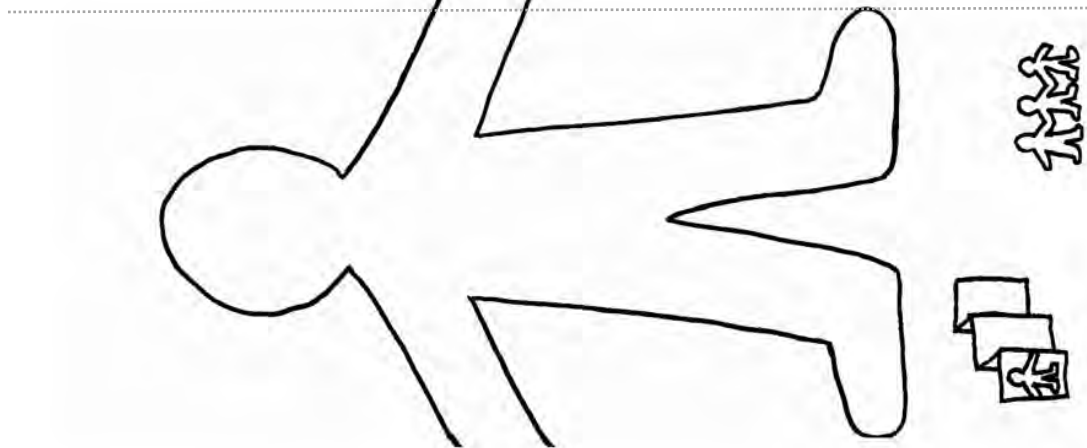
Asher

Benjamin

People Pattern



Do not cut ends of arms



Activity 2 | Rods in the Feeding Troughs

Laban agreed that Jacob could have the spotted and speckled animals the flock produced. Soon the flocks produced many spotted and speckled young because Jacob put “rods” in the troughs when the animals came to feed. He had specially prepared these sticks by peeling off the bark. You will make rods like Jacob’s rods in this activity.

Materials

- an adult should cut sizeable twigs or sticks from a bush or tree
- an adult can score each end of the stick with a sharp knife so the sticks can be peeled in a striped pattern
- ease of peeling will depend on the freshness of the stick and the type of tree you choose

Instructions

1. Carefully peel away *some* of the bark to make the rod “striped” with white stripes.
2. Show the rod to a friend or family member and tell him or her the story of how Jacob used the rods to make his flocks increase.



