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.

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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.)*