Act It Out:
Selling the Birthright

At a Glance:
Invite students to feel hidden rough and smooth objects, associating roughness with Esau (hairy hunter) and smoothness with Jacob (mild). Students act out the story of Esau selling his birthright in pairs as the teacher reads the script. *Optional:* Serve lentil stew.

Supplies Needed:

- paper bag containing something smooth, e.g. spoon, marble, block, etc.
- paper bag containing something rough, e.g. hairy stuffed animal, knitted clothing, sand paper, etc.
- play script
- *optional*: Prepare OR purchase lentil stew to serve. Bring spoons, napkins and bowls.

  -A recipe can be found here: https://newchurchvineyard.org/file/activity-lentil-stew-recipe-genesis-25.pdf



Directions:

1. This activity teaches children that Esau was rough and hairy, and that Jacob was smooth.

2. Seat children in a circle and show them the bags containing the rough or smooth objects.

3. Say: I wonder what is inside! What do you think it might be? (Encourage brainstorming.) Everyone is going to get a turn to feel what is inside. When it's your turn, close your eyes, put your hand into the bag and tell everyone how it feels.

4. Bring first one and then the other bag around to each child. As the children feel the objects ask them questions such as: Is it smoother than ____? Which of the brothers in our story felt like this? Do you think Esau or Jacob felt like this? etc.

5. We will now act out the story of Esau selling his birthright to Jacob for some lentil stew.

6. Divide the children into pairs, and tell them if they will be Esau or Jacob. Spread the pairs out in the room and have each pair sit down.

7. Say: I'm going to read the story. When I read about Esau, all of the Esaus will stand up and do the actions. When I read about Jacob, all of the Jacobs will stand up and do the actions. Listen carefully for when I talk about Esau and Jacob.

8. Read the script.

9. If there is time and interest, switch roles and repeat.

10. Optional: serve lentil stew.

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Selling the Birthright Script

Genesis 25:27-34

Read the play pausing for actions where indicated. Encourage the children to do the actions suggested.

Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field *(Esau pretends to use a bow and arrow.)*

But Jacob was a mild man, dwelling in tents. *(Jacob uses his arms to make a "tent" above his head.)*

And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Now Jacob cooked a stew; *(Jacob pretends to stir a pot.)*

And Esau came in from the field, and he was weary. *(Esau brings a hand across his forehead.)*

And Esau said to Jacob, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary." *(Esau gestures for some of Jacob's stew.)*

But Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright as of this day." *(Jacob stops stirring and shakes a finger at Esau, trying to bargain.)*

And Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" *(Esau pretends that he is dying.)*

Then Jacob said, "Swear to me as of this day." *(Jacob shakes a finger at Esau again.)*

So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. *(Esau nods his head in agreement.)*

And Jacob gave Esau bread and stew of lentils; *(Jacob gives Esau the stew.)*

Then he ate and drank, arose, and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright. *(Esau pretends to eat and go away.)*

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