

# Jacob and Esau

Genesis 25:20-34; 27:1-41

## Level A | Lesson 1 | Teacher Overview



Now Jacob cooked a stew; and Esau came in from the field, and he was weary.

And Esau said to Jacob, “Please feed me with that same red stew....”

But Jacob said, “Sell me your birthright....”

And Esau said, “Look, I am about to die; so what profit shall this birthright be to me?”

Genesis 25:29-32

### For Teachers

This lesson has several activity options. You may wish to choose 2-3. Reading through the options will help you identify the activities best suited to your group’s size, student mix, available supplies, and the time you have to prepare. You may also want to mix and match activities from other age levels.

### Activity Options

1. Talk About It
2. Illustration: Selling the Birthright
3. Illustration: Stealing the Blessing
4. Memory Verse
5. Act It Out: Selling the Birthright
6. Make: The Lord Loves Everyone
7. Coloring Picture: Jacob and Esau

# Talk About It

**Reading: Genesis 25:20-34, 27:1-41**

*This week's readings introduce us to twin brothers: Esau and Jacob. Their mother, Rebekah, feels the babies struggle even before they are born. Esau, the firstborn, is hairy, and red. He grows up to become a hunter. Jacob is born second—grabbing his brother's heel. He is mild, and lives in tents. Today's lesson includes three stories: Esau and Jacob's birth; Jacob buying Esau's birthright for bread and stew; and Jacob stealing Esau's blessing. The discussion reviews the characteristics of the brothers and the story of Jacob buying Esau's birthright.*

1. Today's lesson is about twin brothers: Esau and Jacob. Let's say their names together: Esau and Jacob.
2. Which of the babies was born first? (Esau)
3. What was Esau like? (red and hairy, grew up to become a hunter)
4. Jacob was born next. What did he do while he was being born? (grabbed Esau's heel)
5. What was Jacob like? (mild, smooth skin, lived in tents)
6. One day Esau came home feeling very hungry. What had Jacob cooked that smelled so good? (lentil stew)
7. As the oldest in the family, Esau would inherit twice as much land and twice as many animals and possessions as any other son. So after their father died, Esau might get ten sheep, and Jacob only five. But Jacob wanted Esau to give him the double share instead. (optional: you might demonstrate this for the children using stuffed animals or money) What did Jacob offer Esau in exchange for his birthright? (stew)
8. Esau promised that Jacob could have his birthright, because he was so hungry that he thought he might die. Have you ever wanted something so badly that you felt like this? Encourage the children to share a few experiences.
9. Which was more important: Jacob's stew or Esau's birthright? (Esau's birthright)
10. Was it a good idea for Esau to sell his birthright for stew? (no) Stories in the Word have a special meaning and can help us make wise choices. Sometimes we behave like Esau. We might want something so badly that we don't think about what we are doing. This story can help us learn to be patient.





**Memory Verse:  
Jacob and Esau**



Esau was a skillful  
hunter, a man of the  
field; but Jacob was a  
mild man, dwelling in  
tents.

Genesis 25:27

**Memory Verse:  
Jacob and Esau**



Esau was a skillful  
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Genesis 25:27

Cut in quarters and give one to each student to take home.

**Memory Verse:  
Jacob and Esau**



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Genesis 25:27

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Genesis 25:27

# 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. (A recipe is included with this lesson.) Bring spoons, napkins and bowls.



## 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.

# 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.*)

# Lentil Stew Recipe

## Ingredients

- 1 cup lentils
- 1 onion
- 5 cups water
- 1 bay leaf
- Parsley, thyme and salt to taste
- Mint leaves
- Optional: diced carrots, potatoes or stewed tomatoes

## Directions

1. Pick over and wash 1 cup of lentils.
2. Put the lentils in a saucepan and add 5 cups of water.
3. Add 1 onion, chopped, 1 bay leaf, 8 sprigs of fresh parsley and 1 sprig of thyme (or the dried equivalent of these), and salt to taste.
4. *Optional:* add chopped carrots, potatoes or stewed tomatoes.
5. Bring the soup to a boil. Reduce heat. Simmer for 1½ hours or until the lentils are tender.
6. About 4 or 5 minutes before serving, stir in 3 tablespoons of finely chopped parsley and 5 or 6 fresh mint leaves.
7. Serve.



# Make:

## The Lord Loves Everyone

### At a Glance:

In Genesis, we read that Isaac and Rebekah each preferred one of their sons over the other: “And Isaac loved Esau because he ate of his game, but Rebekah loved Jacob” (25:28). These preferences were based on certain qualities in Esau and Jacob, who were indeed very different. This project illustrates the idea that all human beings are different and that the Lord loves everyone. Each child will create a picture of the Lord, Esau and Jacob.

### Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- copy of picture of the Lord
- copy of Esau (facing right)
- copy of Jacob (facing left)
- text slip: “The Lord Loves Everyone”
- crayons, colored pencils or markers
- glue or tape
- *optional*: additional decorations such as glitter or sequins for the Lord (lay down newspaper or use trays of some kind to catch the glitter), scraps of paper or fabric for Esau and Jacob’s clothes, fake fur or yarn for Esau’s hair, etc.

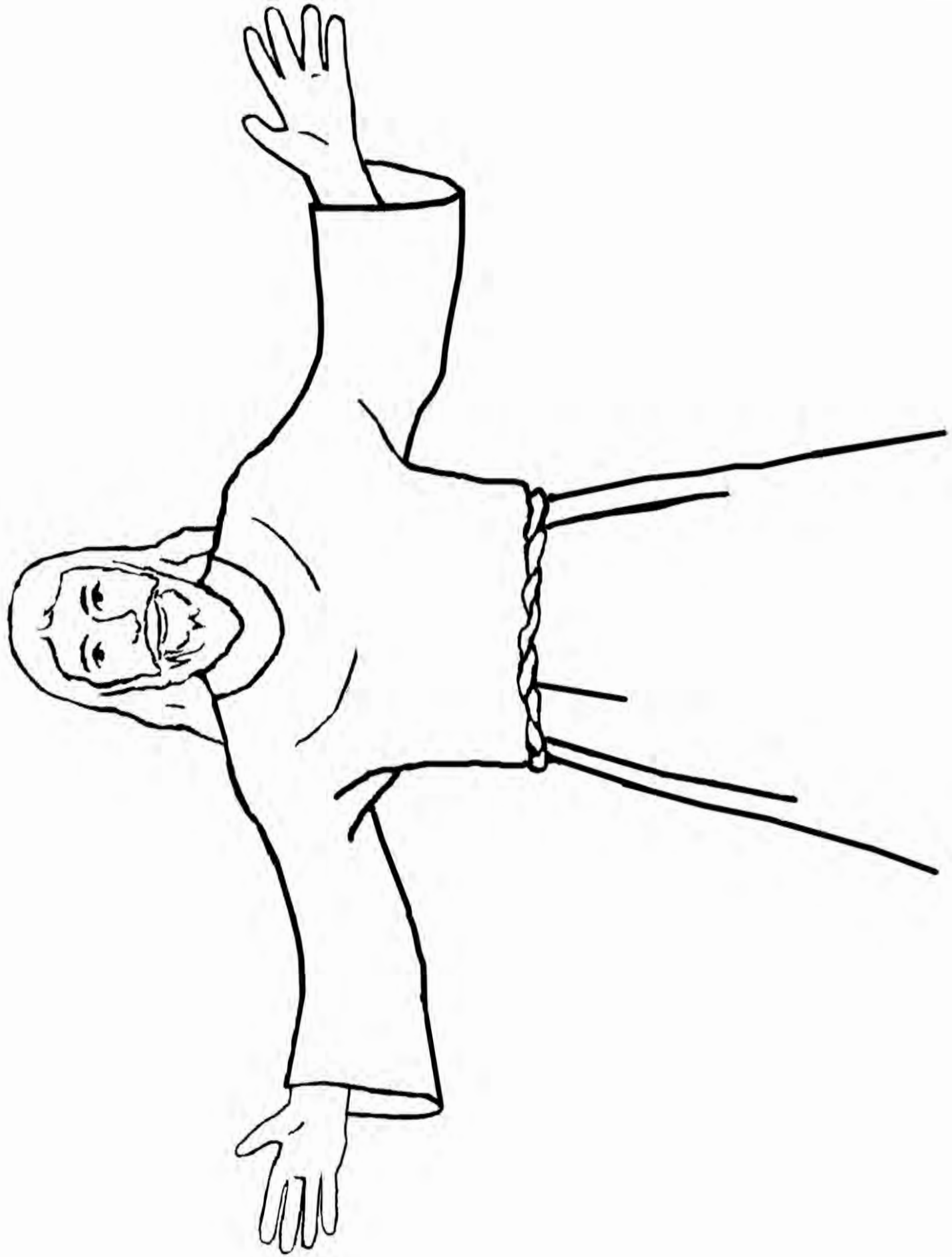


### Teacher Preparation:

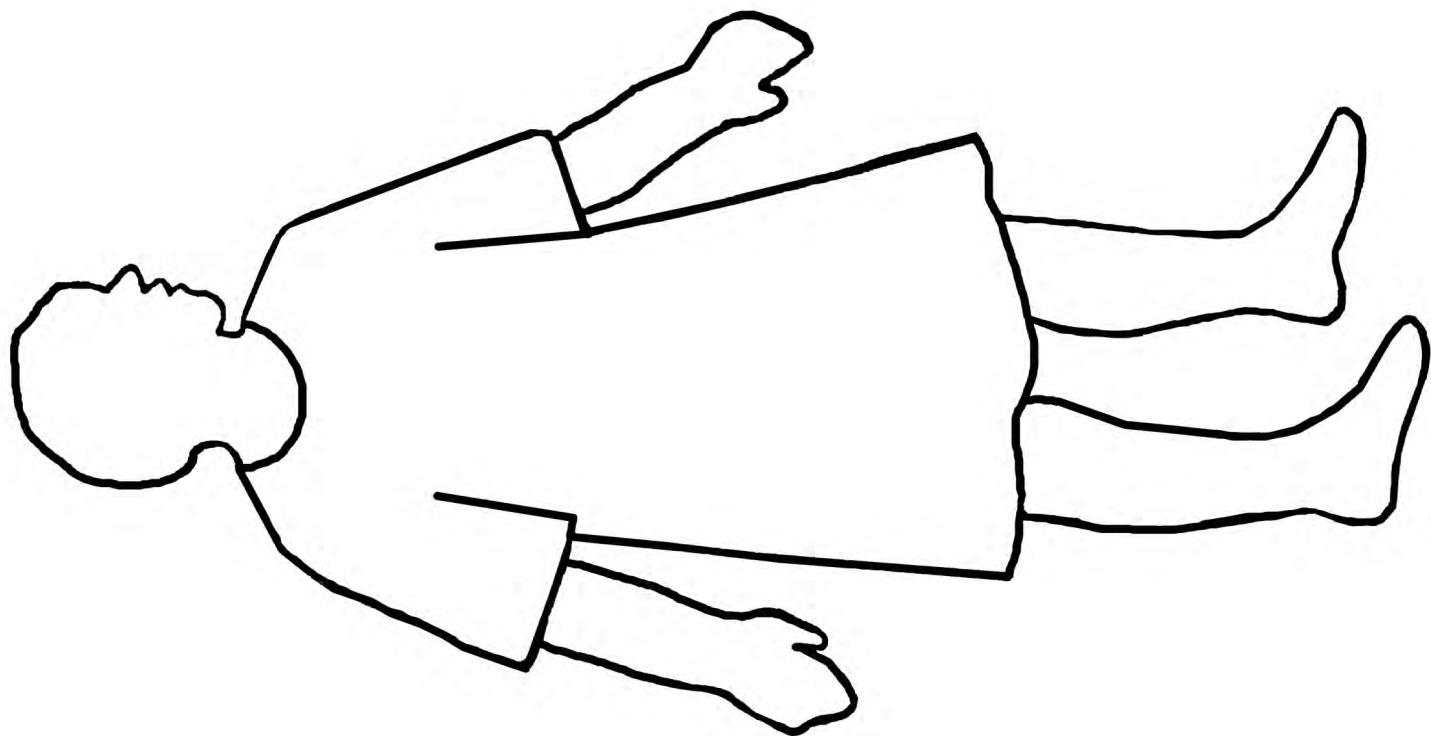
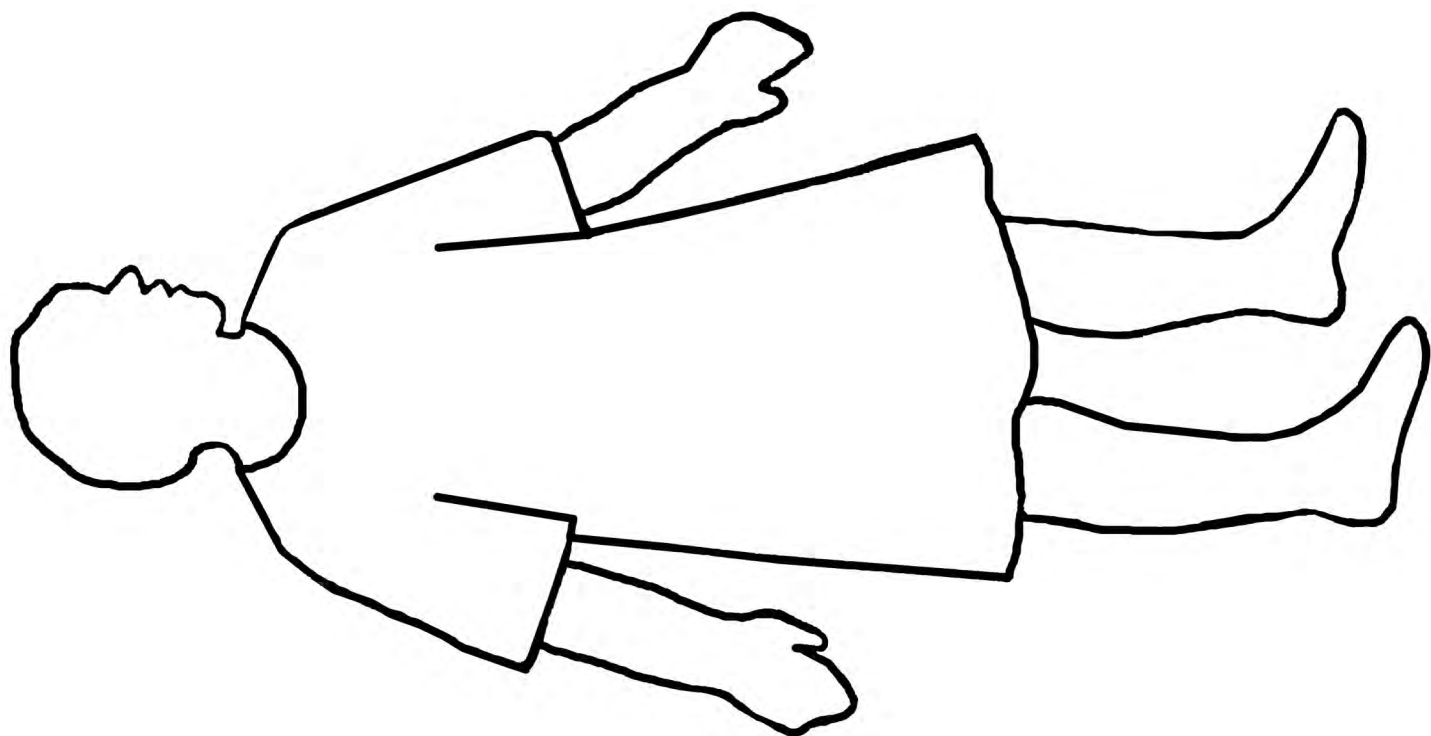
- Cut the pages with pictures of the brothers apart along the dotted lines.
- Cut apart the text slips.

### Directions:

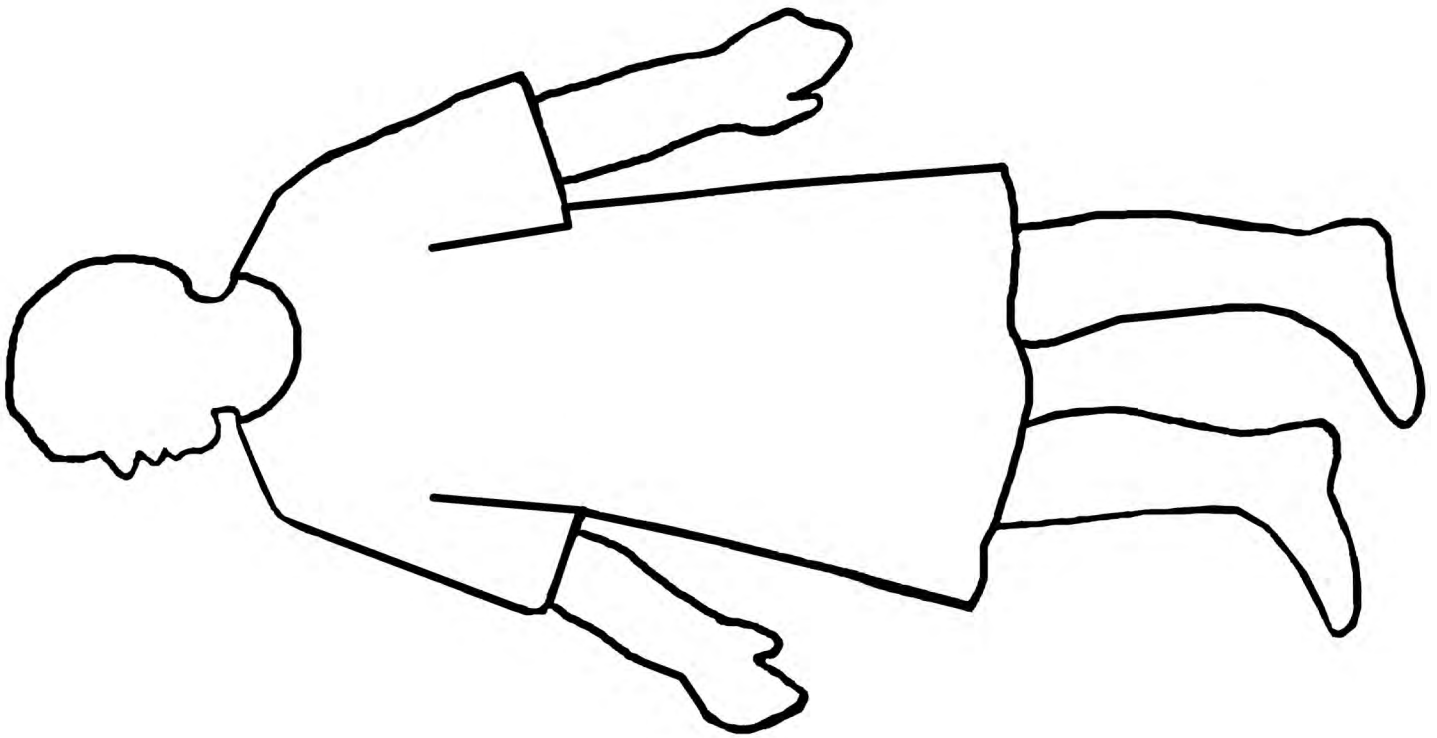
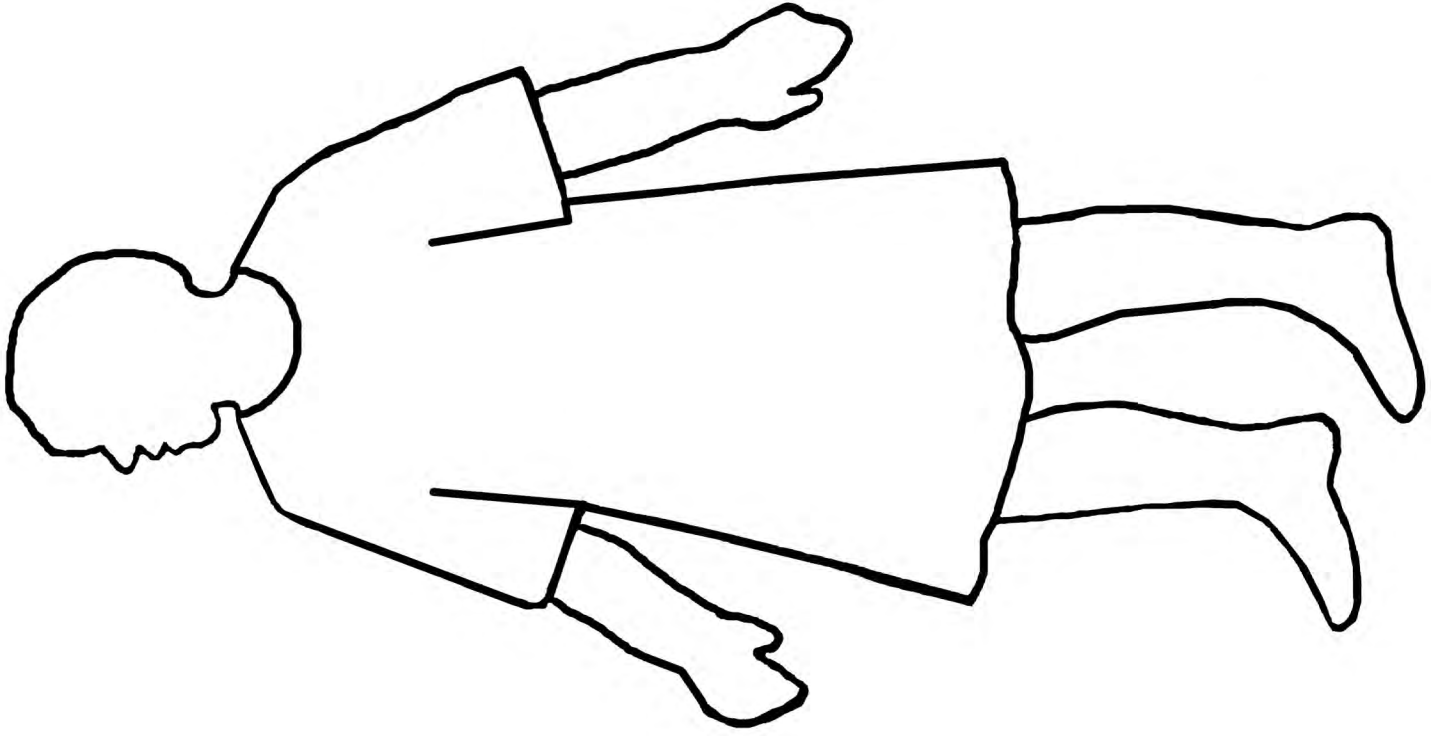
1. Introduce the activity by reminding the children that Esau and Jacob were twins. They were quite different from each other. The Lord loved both of them. We are all different, too, and the Lord loves all of us.
2. Hand out the pictures of the Lord and ask the children to color them. *Optional*: Add glitter or sequins.
3. Hand out the pictures of Esau (facing left) and have the children color him. He was a hairy man and had a red (ruddy) complexion. *Optional*: Glue on fake fur for hair and/or scraps for clothing. Esau was also a hunter. Draw a bow or a spear in his hand.
4. Hand out the pictures of Jacob (facing right) and have the children color him. Jacob was mild and smooth. Color just a little hair on his head and none on his body. *Optional*: Glue on scraps for clothing. Jacob lived in tents and perhaps grew crops such as lentils or tended flocks. Draw a tent or a field of crops or a goat beside Jacob.
5. Help children glue or tape the edges of the three pictures together as shown above.
6. Glue a text slip underneath each picture of the Lord: “The Lord Loves Everyone”.



**Esau** - Cut apart and give one to each child.



**Jacob** - Cut apart and give one to each child.



**The Lord Loves Everyone**

**The Lord Loves Everyone**

**The Lord Loves Everyone**

**The Lord Loves Everyone**

**The Lord Loves Everyone**

