

Jacob's Flocks

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

Level A | Lesson 5 | Teacher Overview



Laban said, “What shall I give you?” And Jacob said... “If you will do this thing for me, I will again feed and keep your flocks: Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there all the speckled and spotted sheep, and all the brown ones among the lambs, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and these shall be my wages.

Genesis 30:31-32

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: Jacob and His Flocks
3. Memory Verse
4. Make & Game: Separating the Flocks
5. Take Action: Going on a Journey
6. Coloring Picture: Jacob Peeling the Rods

Talk About It

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

Jacob wanted to leave Laban after Joseph was born but Laban asked him to stay and agreed to give him the speckled, spotted and streaked livestock as wages. Jacob became a wealthy man by placing rods in the drinking troughs in front of the strong animals. They gave birth to speckled, spotted and streaked babies, which belonged to Jacob. Laban's sons became upset. The Lord came to Jacob in a dream, telling him to go home. Jacob and his family left while Laban was away. Laban chased after Jacob and caught up with him. Laban and Jacob set up a boundary pillar as a witness between them.

Note: Several stories are included in this week's readings. Select discussion questions that talk about what you plan to focus on with the children.

1. What does it mean to be rich? Do you know anyone who is rich?
2. Jacob became very rich. What kinds of riches did he have? (lots of sheep and goats)
3. What did Jacob's sheep and goats look like? (streaked, spotted and speckled) Have you ever seen an animal that has spots or stripes? (perhaps some of them have a dog, cat or other animal like this)
4. Whose animals were stronger—Jacob's streaked and spotted animals, or Laban's animals? (Jacob's)
5. How did this happen? (Jacob put special striped wooden rods into the drinking troughs when the strongest animals came to drink and they had strong streaked and spotted babies)
6. The Lord came to Jacob in a dream at night. What did He tell Jacob to do? (to leave Laban and go home)
7. Did Jacob tell Laban he was leaving? (no—Jacob went away secretly when Laban was busy)
8. Who went with Jacob? (his wives, Leah and Rachel, and all of his children, and his animals)
9. What happened when Laban found out Jacob had gone? (he went after Jacob and caught up with him)
10. Have you ever made a promise? What kind of promise have you made? Jacob and Laban made a promise (a covenant) to stay far away from each other. What did Jacob build to remind them about their promise? (a heap of stones or pillar)



**Memory Verse:
Jacob's Flocks**



Then the Lord said to
Jacob, "Return to the
land of your fathers
and to your kindred,
and I will be with you.

Genesis 31:3

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

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Genesis 31:3

Make & Game: Separating the Flocks

At a Glance:

Jacob and Laban had an agreement that all the speckled, spotted, and streaked animals would be his. All the plain ones belonged to Laban. Children may remember that there were lots of speckled animals for Jacob, which he separated out from the rest of the herds that belonged to Laban. In this activity, children will make paper “beanbags” or “pillows” with pictures of sheep and goats, some speckled or streaked and some plain. These are tossed together and then the children work to separate the speckled and spotted animals from the plain ones, as Jacob did.



Supplies Needed:

- copy of a speckled, spotted or dark animal to make a sample
- copies of the animals—enough for every child to have at least 3 different pages
- 3 extra sets of the plain animals
- stapler
- crayons or markers
- scrap paper, newspaper or tissue paper for stuffing the “pillows”
- open floor space for playing the sorting game
- *optional*: paper bags/sacks for children to take their finished pillows home



Teacher Preparation:

- Make one sample pillow.
- Prepare the animal pages for the students by folding them in half and stapling the sides shut. Do not staple the bottom of the pages yet!
- Make sure there will be more speckled, spotted or dark animals than plain after the children have colored their sets

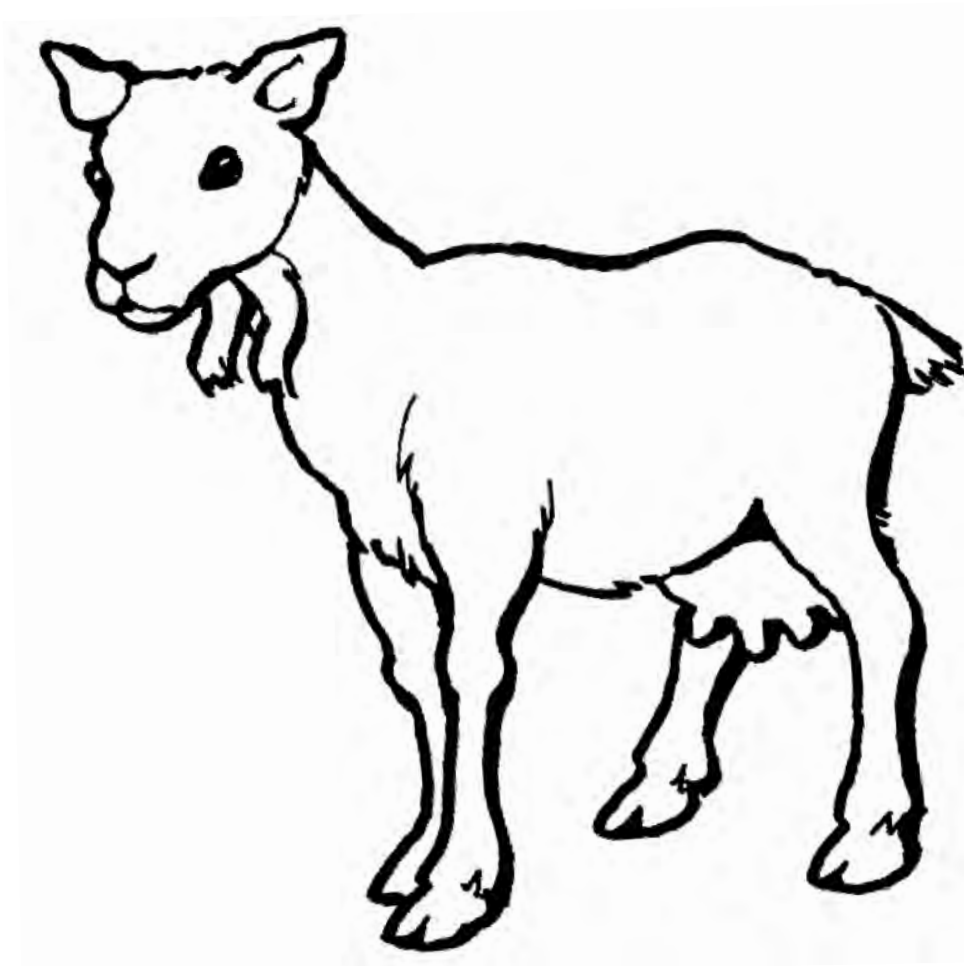
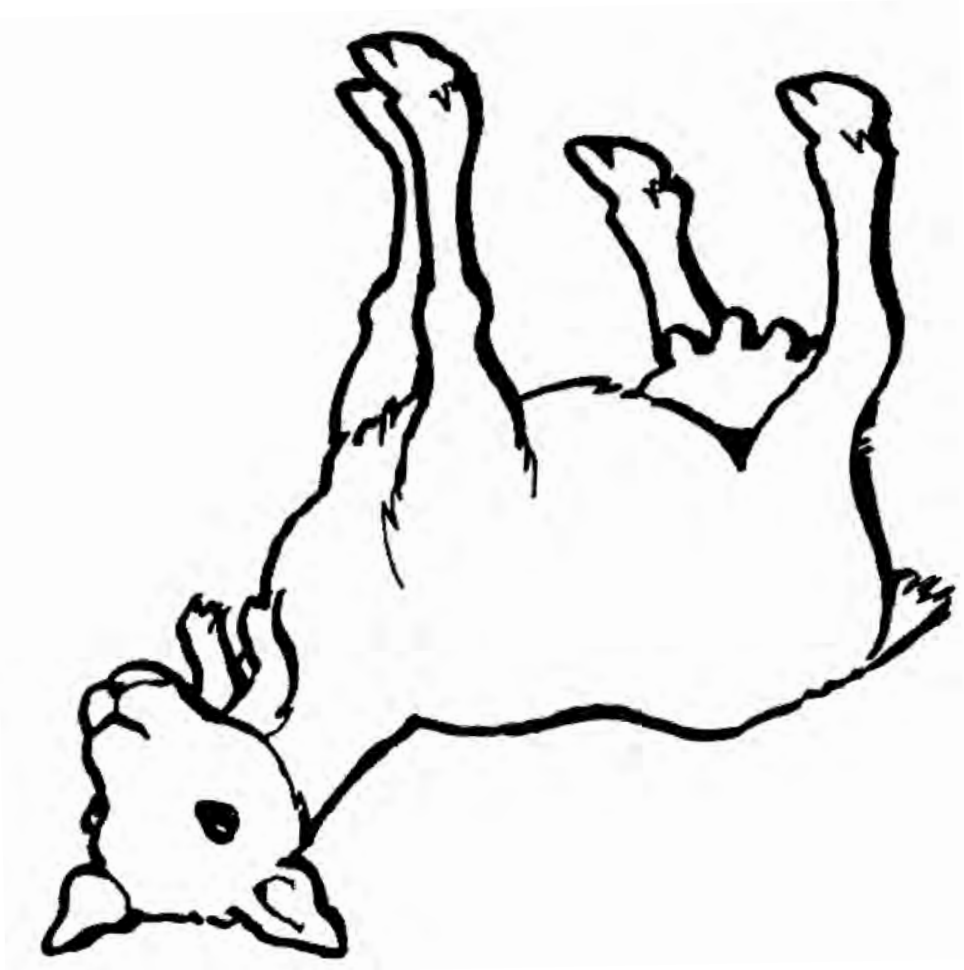
Make & Game: Separating the Flocks continued

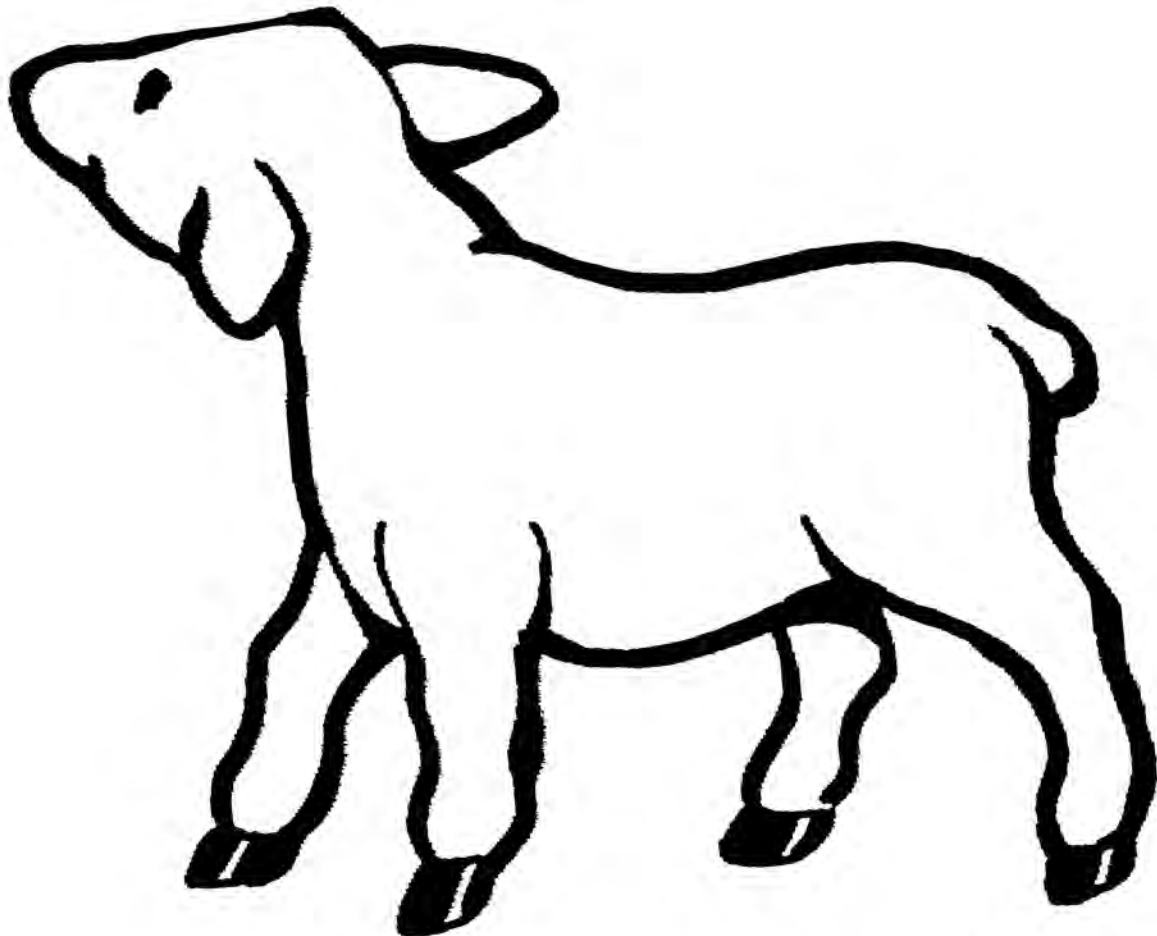
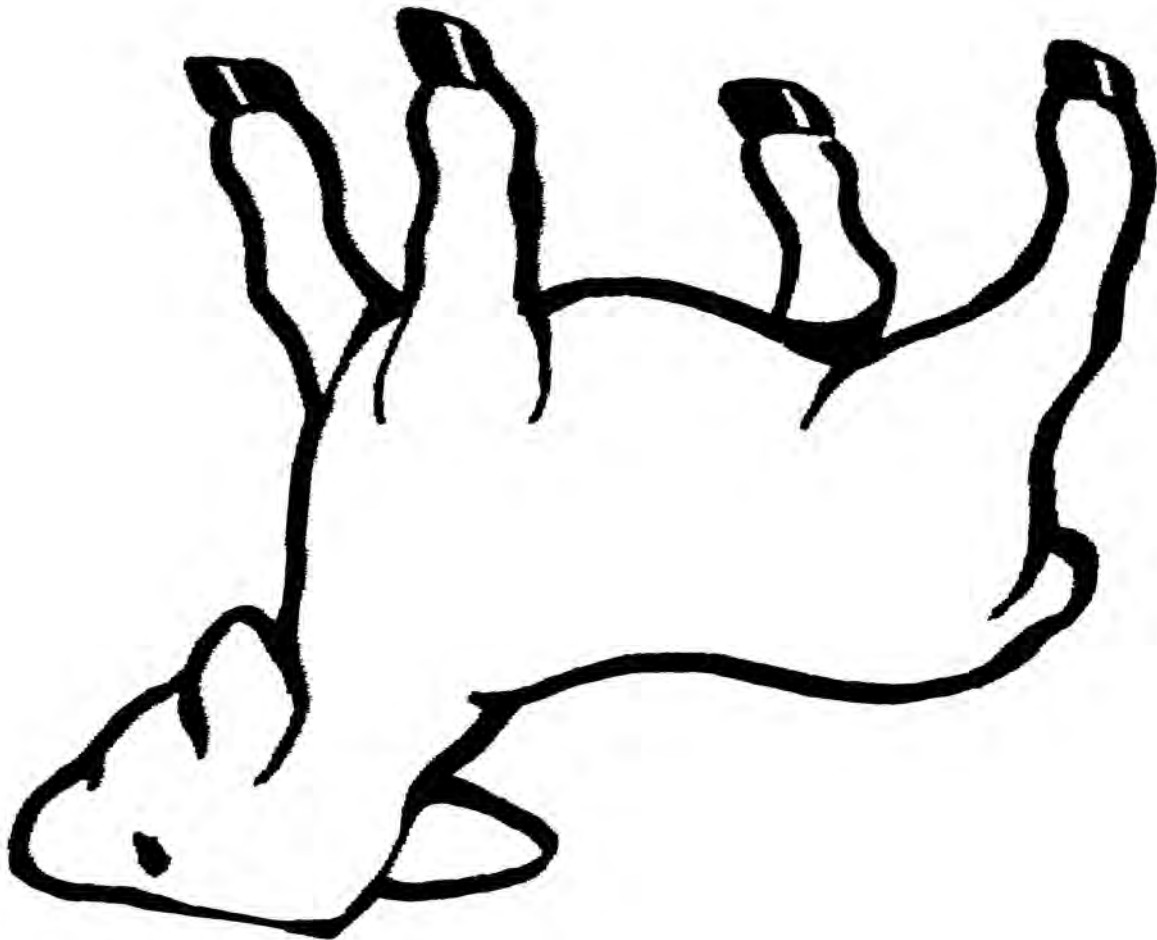
Directions for Project:

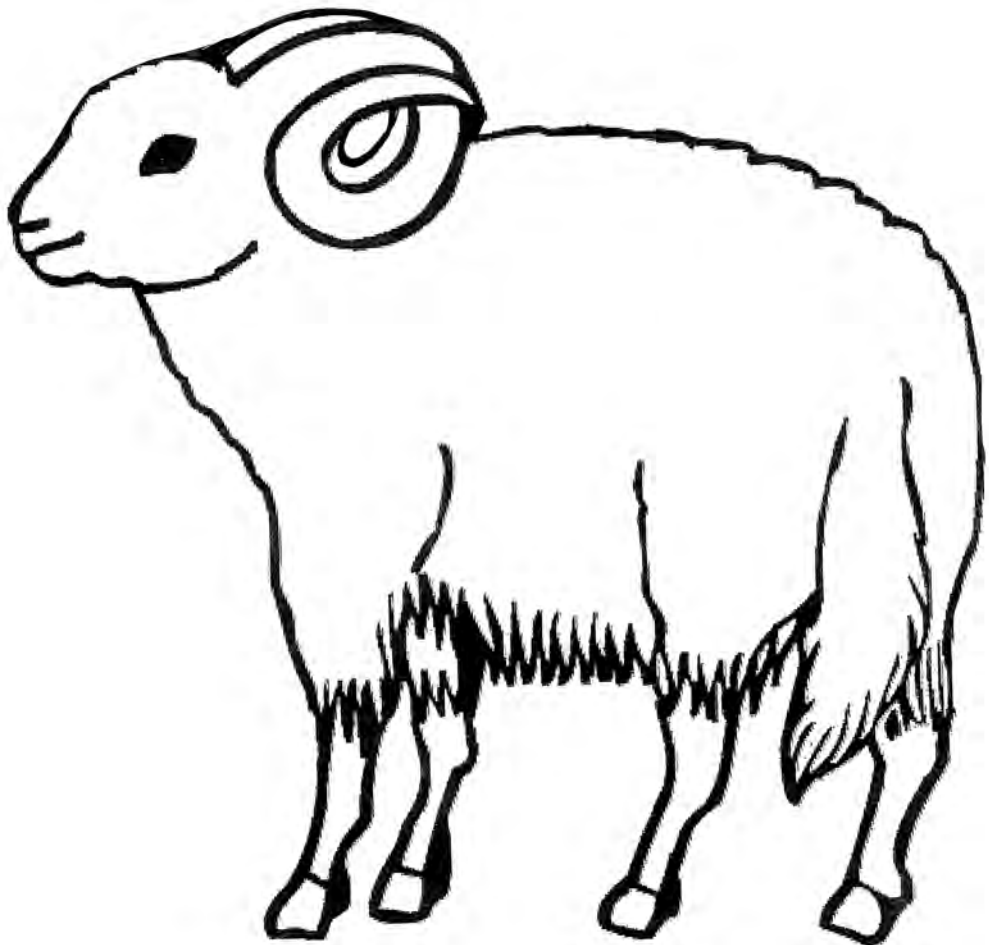
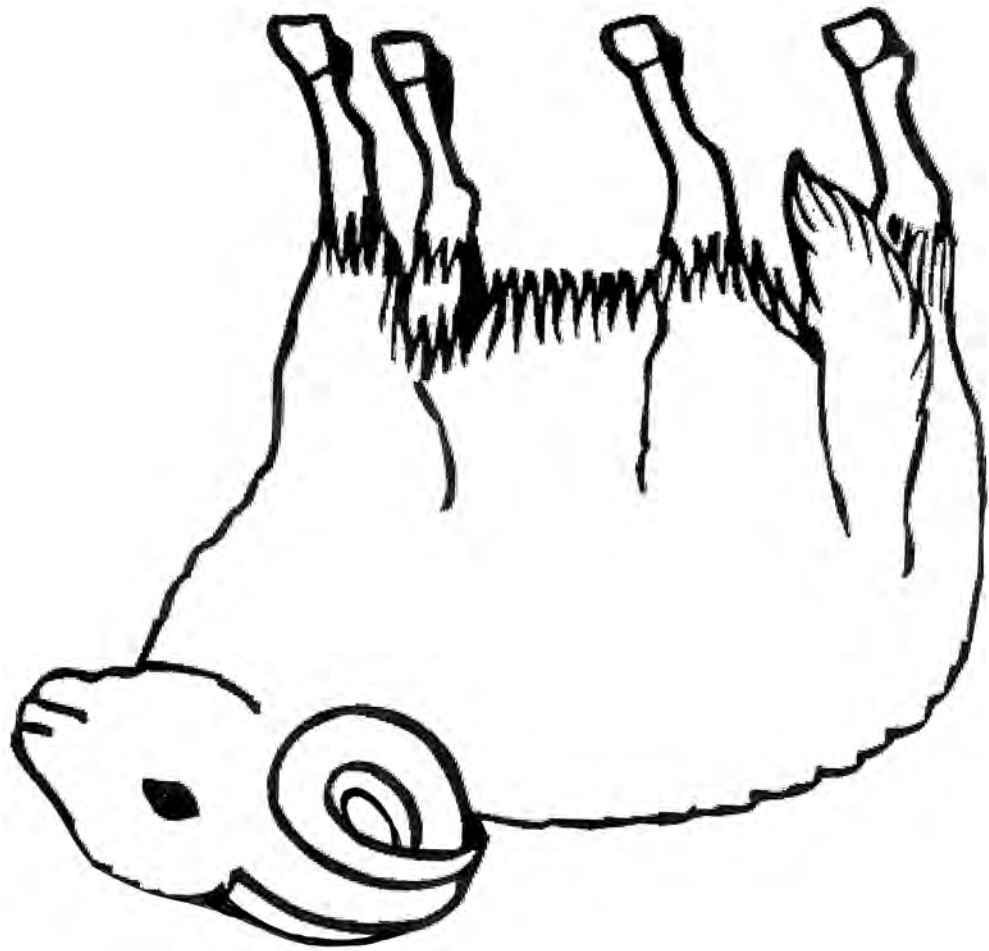
1. Introduce the activity by reminding children of the story of Jacob and the speckled and spotted flocks. Tell them that they are going to make a herd of speckled and spotted goats and sheep.
2. Show the children the sample.
3. Distribute the project pages and crayons or markers. Show the children the speckled and spotted and the plain animal pictures. Encourage the children to color the animals, making them spotted or dark or streaked.
4. Show the children how to crumple up pieces of scrap paper and stuff their pillows.
5. Staple the remaining edge shut to form little “pillows”.
6. Stuff the three sets of the plain white animals with crumpled up paper and staple the bottom edges shut to form little “pillows”. (These will stay plain and uncolored.)

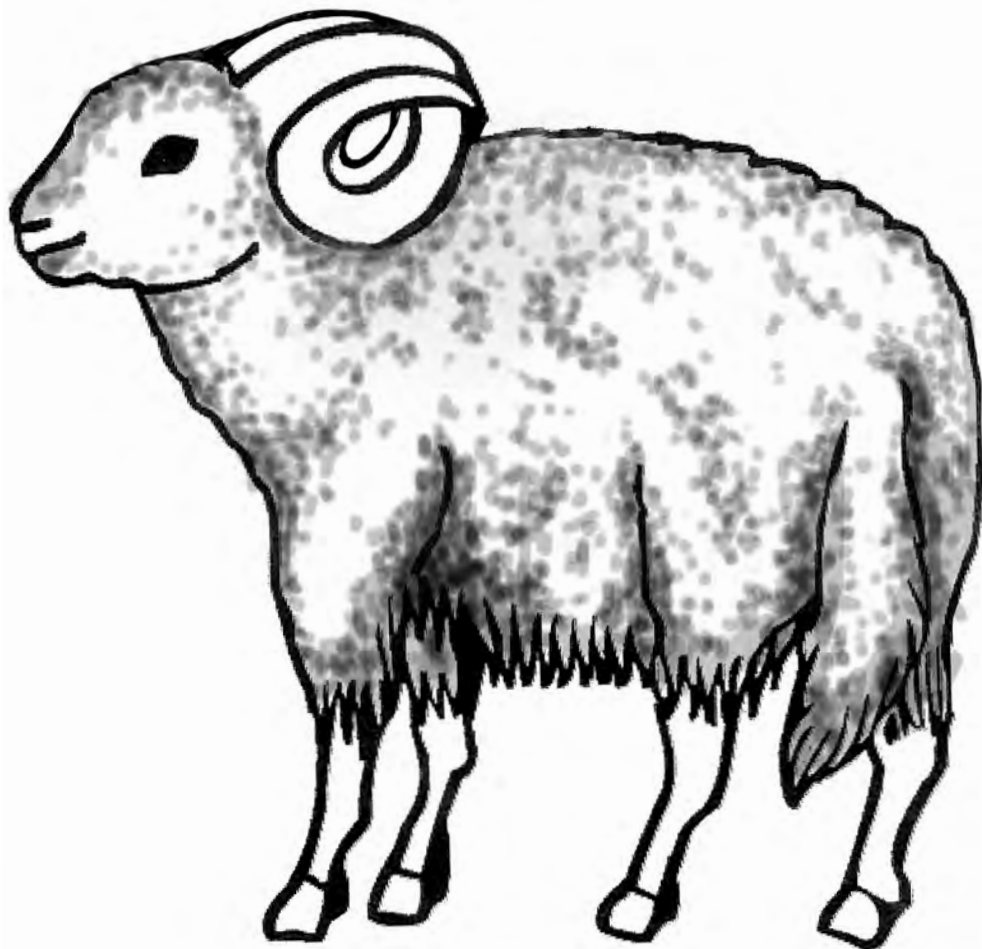
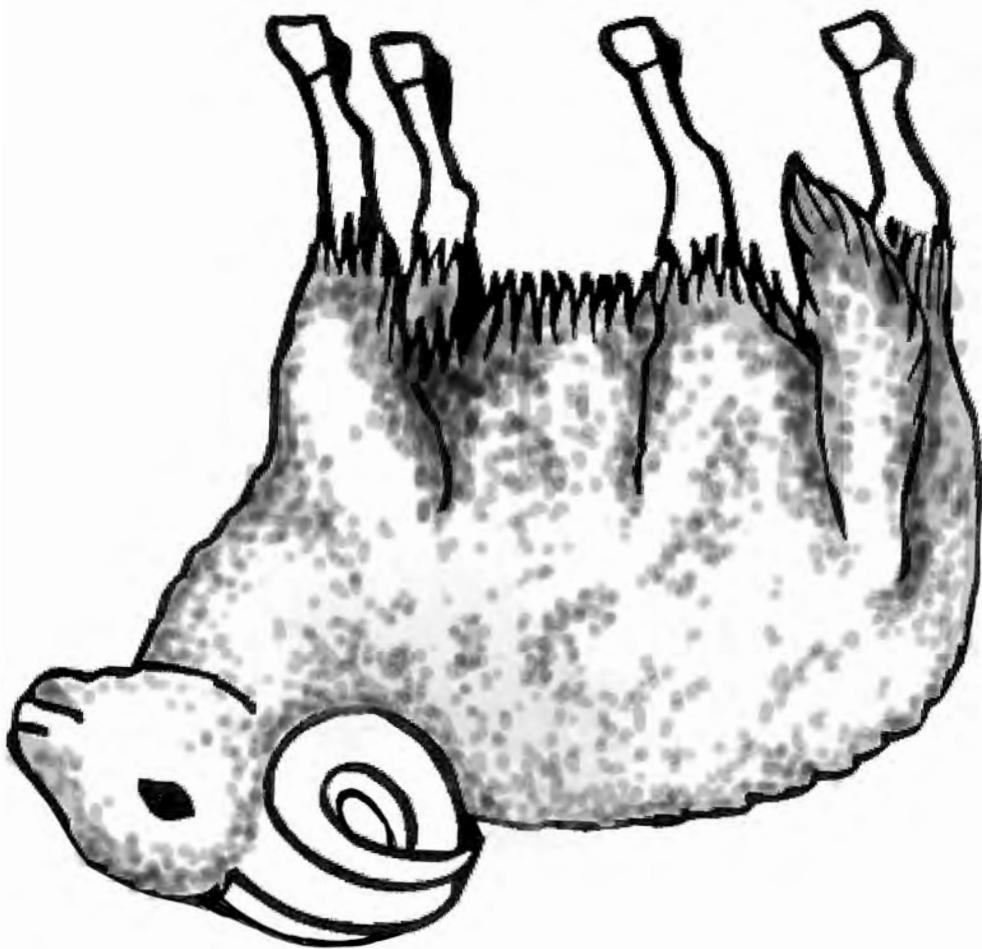
Directions for Game:

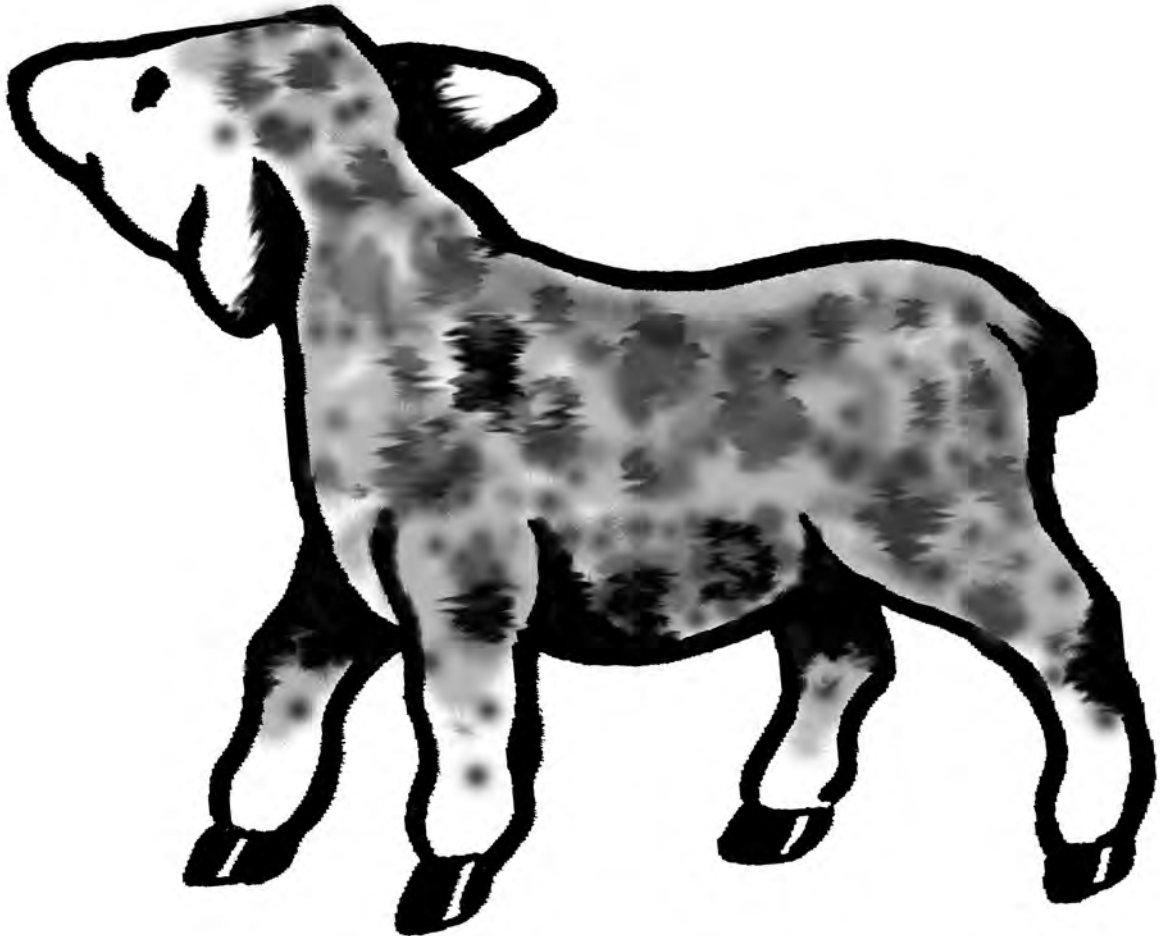
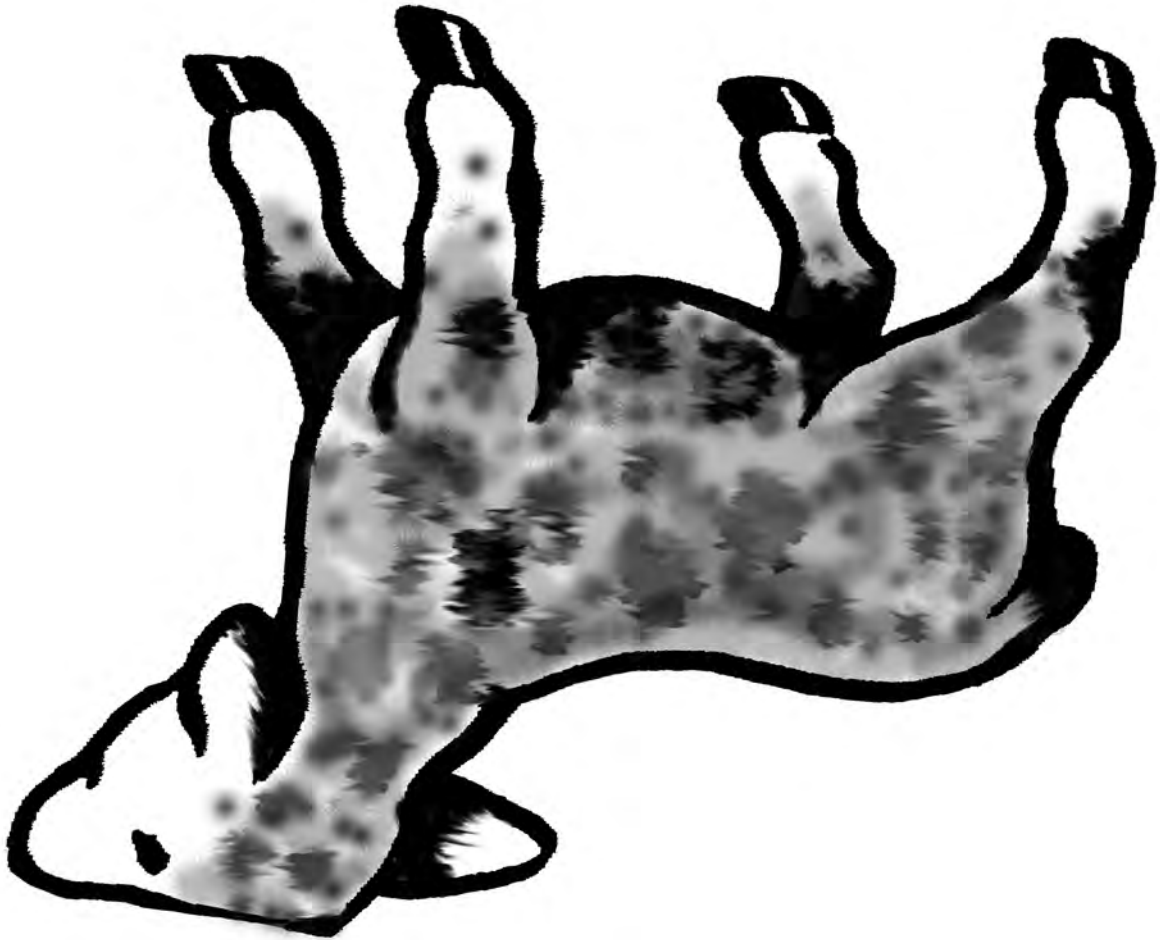
1. Have all the children gently toss their animals into a pile on the floor all together.
2. Designate one corner of the space for the plain animals and have one child pick up a plain animal pillow and place it in that area.
3. Designate another corner for the speckled/spotted animals. Have another child pick up a speckled/spotted animal and place it in this area.
4. The children take turns sorting out the animals one by one.
5. When all the animals have been sorted, ask the children, “Are there more plain animals or speckled and spotted animals?” (There should be more spotted animals.) The Lord blessed Jacob by having lots of speckled and spotted animals be born.
6. The game can be repeated as often you wish.

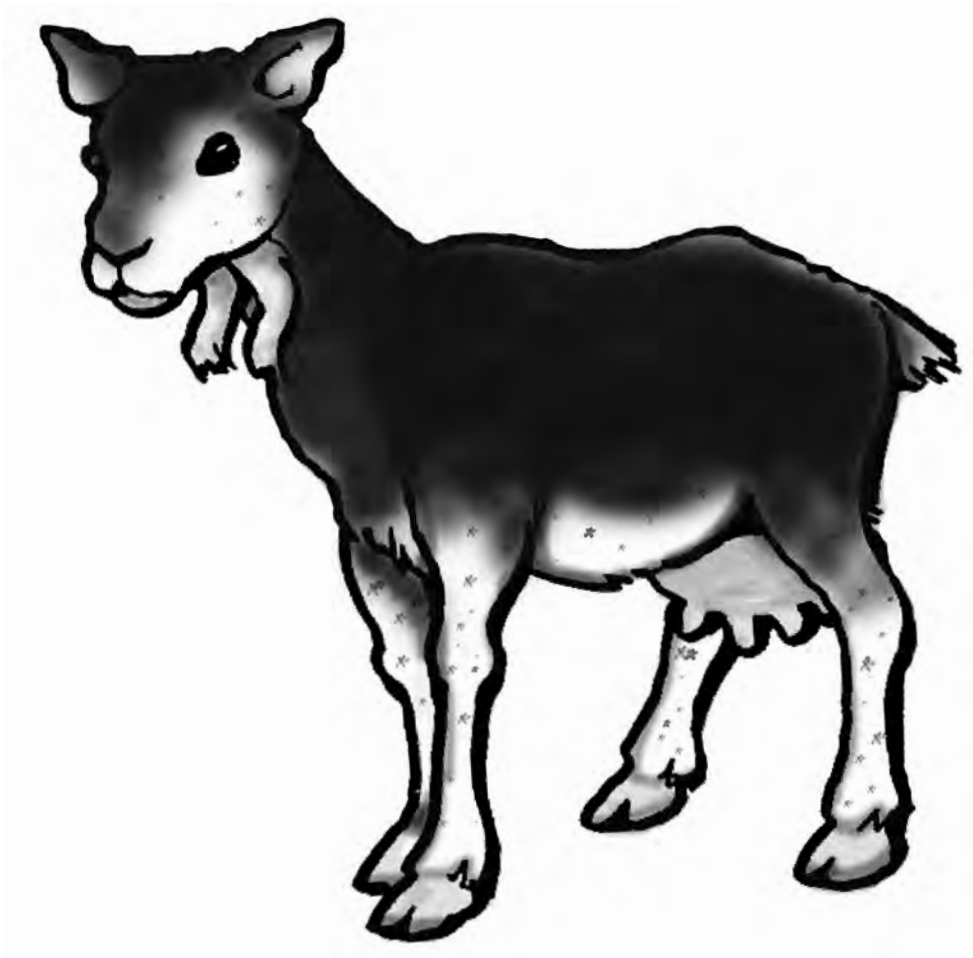












Take Action: Going on a Journey

At a Glance:

Today's story marks a turning point in Jacob's life. After running away from Esau and living far away for many years, the Lord comes to him in a dream, telling him to return home. Jacob sneaks away from Laban, his father-in-law, while Laban is away shearing sheep, taking with him his wives, children and animals. When Laban hears that Jacob has gone he chases Jacob and catches up with him. Laban and Jacob promise to stay away from each other and set up a pillar of stones to remind them of their promise. The children will act this journey home, and end with a feast together.



Supplies Needed:

- space to go on a journey; this activity can be done outside, in a classroom, or throughout a building
- food to be taken on the journey and eaten as a feast. e.g. fruit, dried fruit, vegetables, crackers, water, etc. (Keep in mind special dietary needs.)
- stuffed animals to represent Jacob's flocks and herds, especially lambs and goats; other animals will work too if you need more animals
- bags or containers to carry supplies on the journey
- stones or blocks to build a heap
- *optional*: create a more real feel with a few minimal costume pieces and props

Teacher Preparation:

- Prepare food and gather animals and props for the journey.
- Plan your journey route.
- Place animals, food and bags for carrying where you will begin.
- Place rocks or blocks where you plan to stop at the end to build a pillar and have a feast.

Directions:

1. Have you ever been on a journey with your family? What did your family do to get ready for the trip? (encourage children to think about what they might need on a journey: clothing, food, etc. Ask questions about where they expect to eat, sleep, or clothing they might need.)

Take Action: Going on a Journey continued

2. Jacob left his mother and father and traveled to a land that was far away. There he married and had children. One night the Lord came to Jacob in a dream and told him to go home. So Jacob told his wives and they agreed that they should go as the Lord had told them to.
3. Today we are going to take a journey like Jacob. First we are going to gather up the things we will need. What should we take? (food for the journey, clothes) Gather food etc. into bags.
4. What else are we going to bring with us? (our animals) Encourage each child to pick up one or two animals.
5. Lead the children on the journey (see Journey Home Ideas).
6. Conclude the activity with a “feast” (snack).

Take Action: Journey Home Ideas

Use the following ideas to create an imaginary journey. Shorten or lengthen the journey and modify the actions to suit your group. The teacher can lead the group just as Jacob led his family.

| What is happening... | What to say... | Actions... |
|--|--|--|
| The angel of God came to Jacob in a dream and told him to go home to his family. | The Lord came to Jacob in a dream and said, “Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.” | Let’s all say together, “Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.” |
| Jacob prepares to leave. | We are going on a long journey. Jacob’s home is far away. Let’s get ready to go! Let’s get some food, some water, and all of our animals. | Pick up snacks and drinks and put them into bags to bring along. Each child should pick up several animals too. |
| Jacob sneaks away from Laban. | Let’s be very quiet so that nobody hears us go. Quietly pick up your food and belongings. Pick up your animals. We must be sure to leave nothing behind! | Look to the right and left to make sure nobody is watching! Put your hand on your mouth to remember to be very quiet. Tiptoe away quietly so nobody hears you! |
| Jacob’s family walks along a level path. | This is a nice firm path. Look at the trees over our heads. Be sure to stay together. We don’t want anyone to be left behind. | Count the children to be sure everyone is with you. |
| Walking uphill. | We have come to a hill. Let’s lift our knees high as we climb. | Lift knees up to indicate going up hill. |
| View at the top. | Oh look—what a nice view! Let’s see if Laban is coming after us.... No, I can’t see him. Can you? Let’s keep going. | Put hand over eyes and scan the horizon. |
| Going down in a valley | Look at the nice grasses. Let’s walk through them. Listen to the grass swishing on our legs! | Move hands as if going through long grass and push it aside. Say: swish, swash, swish, swash. |
| Walking through mud | Oh, we’re coming to some mud. Pick up your feet so you don’t get stuck! | Pull clothing up and lift feet high. |
| Remembering the Lord | This journey is getting hard! Why did Jacob take this journey? Because the Lord told him to. Let’s repeat what the Lord told Jacob. | “Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family.” |
| Approaching a river | Listen—can you hear a river. | Cup hands over ears and listen. |
| Arriving at the river | Oh look—I can see the river now. I’m so thirsty, I can’t wait to get a drink! | Run to the river. Bend down and take a drink. |
| Giving the animals a drink | What about our animals—do you think they are thirsty too? Let’s give our animals a drink. | Put all the animals where they can drink from the river. |

| What is happening... | What to say... | Actions... |
|--|---|--|
| Resting | I think this is a good place to take a rest. Let's all lie down and sleep. | Lie down to sleep. |
| Moving on | Time to wake up. The sun is coming up. We better move again so Laban doesn't catch up to us! | Stretch and yawn. Put your hand above your eyes and look for Laban. Laban is not there! Pick up food, animals, etc. to move forward. |
| Crossing the river | We will have to cross the river. | Splash through the shallow water. As it gets deeper, start to swim. Splash as the water becomes shallow again. |
| Coming out of the water | It's so nice to be on the other side! | Grab a branch and pull up on to the river bank. |
| Remembering the Lord | This journey is hard! Why did Jacob go on his journey? Because the Lord told Jacob to go home. Let's remember what the Lord said: | "Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family." |
| Walking up hill | Let's climb this hill and see if Laban is coming. | Lift knees high as if going up hill. |
| Looking for Laban <i>*Place rocks or blocks here for building the pillar</i> | Here we are at the top. Let's see if Laban is following us! | Shade eyes with one hand and look for Laban. |
| Laban is coming | Oh, I think I see Laban far off in the distance. Can you see him? | Extend arms and point to where Laban is coming from. |
| Laban catches up | Laban wants to know why we left so quickly without telling him. We were afraid he might take Leah and Rachel away from us. | Act as if you are afraid. |
| Laban and Jacob promise that the Lord will be a witness between them, watching over everything they do | We will make a pillar here to remind us that the Lord is watching over us. He sees whatever we do. | Gather rocks or blocks and pile them in a heap. |
| Jacob thanks the Lord | Thank you Lord for protecting us. | Kneel and pray. |
| Jacob remembers why he is taking this journey. | We are doing what the Lord has asked us to do. The Lord said.... | "Get out of this land, and return to the land of your family." |
| Prepare for evening | It's getting late. Let's light a fire so we can cook dinner. | Put hands out to feel the warmth of the fire, then rub hands together. |
| Experiencing hunger | I feel hungry. We have walked so far since we ate. | Rub tummy. |
| Eat a feast | Let's get our food ready, and eat! | Sit down and share food. |

