

Jacob Returns Home

Genesis 33

Level B | Lesson 7 | Teacher Overview



Now Jacob lifted his eyes and looked, and there, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men.... Then Jacob crossed over before them and bowed himself to the ground seven times, until he came near to his brother. But Esau ran to meet him, and embraced him, and fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept.

Genesis 33:1,3,4

For Teachers

This lesson has several activity options. You may wish to choose 2-3. Reading through all of the options will help you identify the activities that are 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 Meeting Esau
3. Memory Verse
4. Act It Out: Jacob and Esau Meet Again
5. Make: Reunion Diorama
6. Coloring Picture: Jacob Bows Before Esau

Talk About It

Reading: Genesis 33

Jacob comes towards Esau, humbling himself by bowing to the ground seven times as he approaches. The brothers joyfully embrace. Esau refuses Jacob's gifts, saying that he has plenty, and he blesses Jacob. Esau proposes that they journey together but Jacob chooses not to go with him because his group needs to rest after their long journey. Esau leaves and Jacob travels to Shechem where he buys land and builds a house and sets up an altar.

1. Have you ever seen a baby smile with a smile so big that the baby's face looked like one huge smile? It makes you want to smile too, doesn't it! Why do you think we feel this way when we see a baby smile? (We feel the innocence of the Lord and His angels with little babies.)
2. At the beginning of our story today Jacob was worried about meeting his brother Esau. He bowed down seven times as he came close to Esau. Why did he do this? Is there anyone you would bow down to? (In some cultures people bow to another person to show their respect: we bow to the Lord to humble ourselves when we pray.)
3. Describe what happened when Esau and Jacob met. (Esau ran to Jacob, fell on his neck, hugged him, and they both cried for joy)
4. Esau's face looked so beautiful that Jacob said, "I have seen your face as though I had seen the face of God, and you were pleased with me." (Genesis 33:10) What does the Lord's face look like? (smiling, gentle, kind, etc.)
5. When is the Lord pleased with us? (when we do what He teaches in His Word, e.g. help others, speak kindly, stop ourselves from saying unkind things, etc.)
6. Esau invited Jacob to travel on with him to Seir—but Jacob told him to go ahead without him. What reason did Jacob give? (the people and animals with him were tired and could not move so fast)
7. Have you ever let someone go ahead of you—for example when you are going through a door, choosing a good seat or taking a dessert? What are we showing when we treat others this way? (that we love them more than ourselves)
8. Jacob went south and eventually bought land for his family to live on. What was the first thing that he built? (an altar to the Lord)
9. How can we put the Lord first in our lives?



**Memory Verse:
Jacob Returns Home**



Esau ran to meet Jacob,
and embraced him, and
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Genesis 33:4

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

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Genesis 33:4

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.

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.)*

Make: Reunion Diorama

At a Glance:

In this activity, students will create a set of diorama figures to depict the reunion of Jacob and Esau. The set includes 8 figural pieces, along with bases to make them stand up. Some additional bases are provided so children can make additional figures if they wish.

The figures provided here are highly stylized in the manner of Byzantine art from the 500 and 600s AD. It was deliberately abstract, non-naturalistic and symbolic, primarily religiously themed. Hallmark large distinctive eyes.



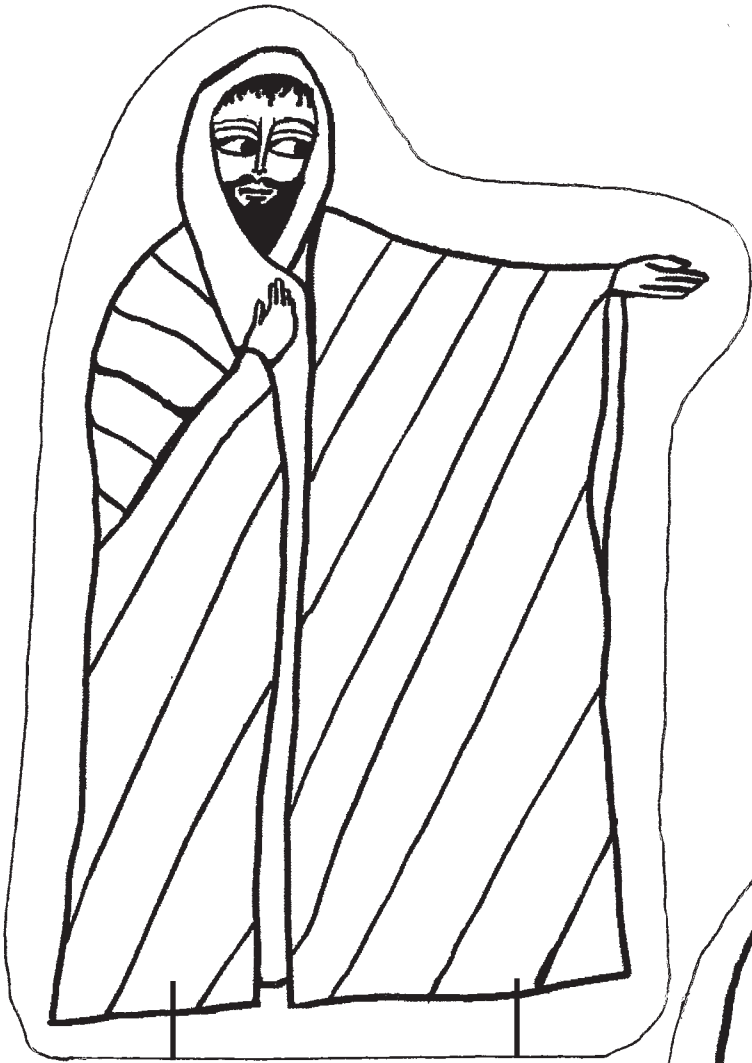
Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- 4 page set of diorama figures printed on heavy paper
- colored pencils, crayons, or markers
- scissors
- sequence of events list
- *optional*: bag to take figures home in

Directions:

1. Tell students that they will be making a set of figures for a diorama of Jacob and Esau's meeting.
2. Hand out the sets of figures, coloring implements and the scissors.
3. Have students color the figures first, then cut them out using the thin line around each figure.
4. The slits on the bases and at the bottom of the figures should also be cut.
5. The thin line along one of Esau's arms can be cut. This will allow the two brothers to embrace.
6. Have children bend each of the bases in half, then slide the slits together with those on the figures.
7. Children can use the figures to set up a scene and enact the reunion of Jacob and Esau, using the sequence of events list.
8. If time allows, children could create extra figures for their dioramas, such as some of Esau's men or more animals.

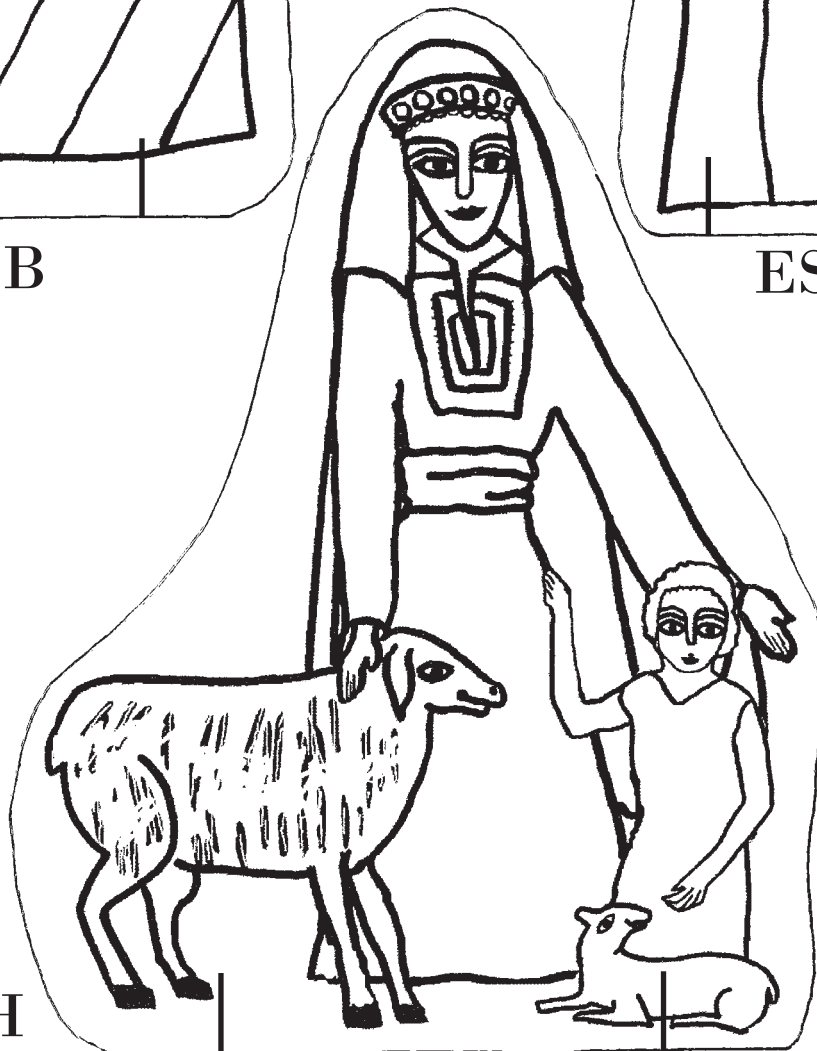




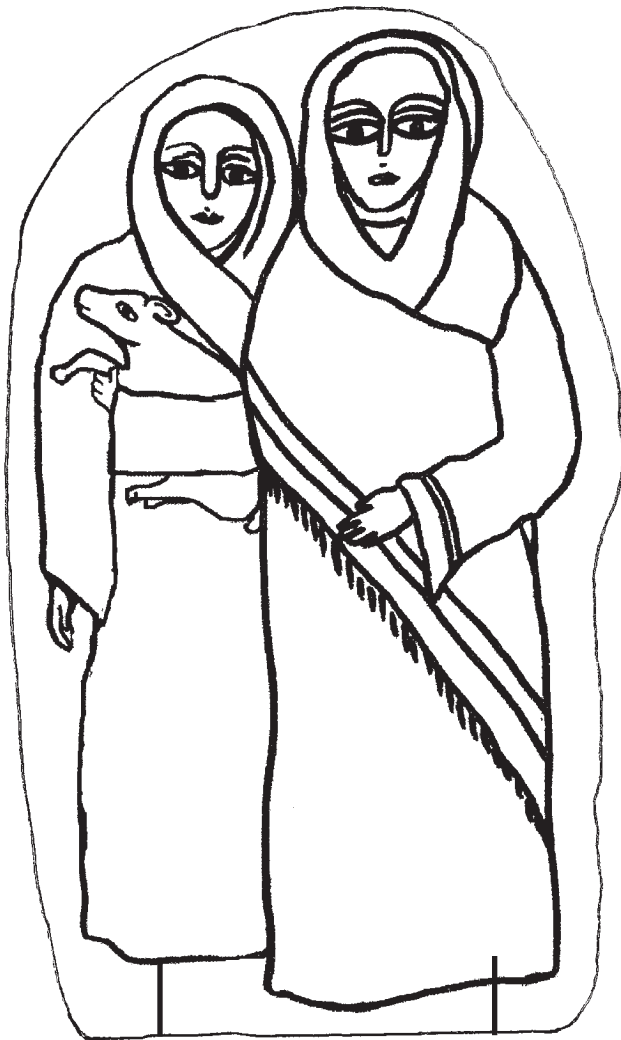
JACOB



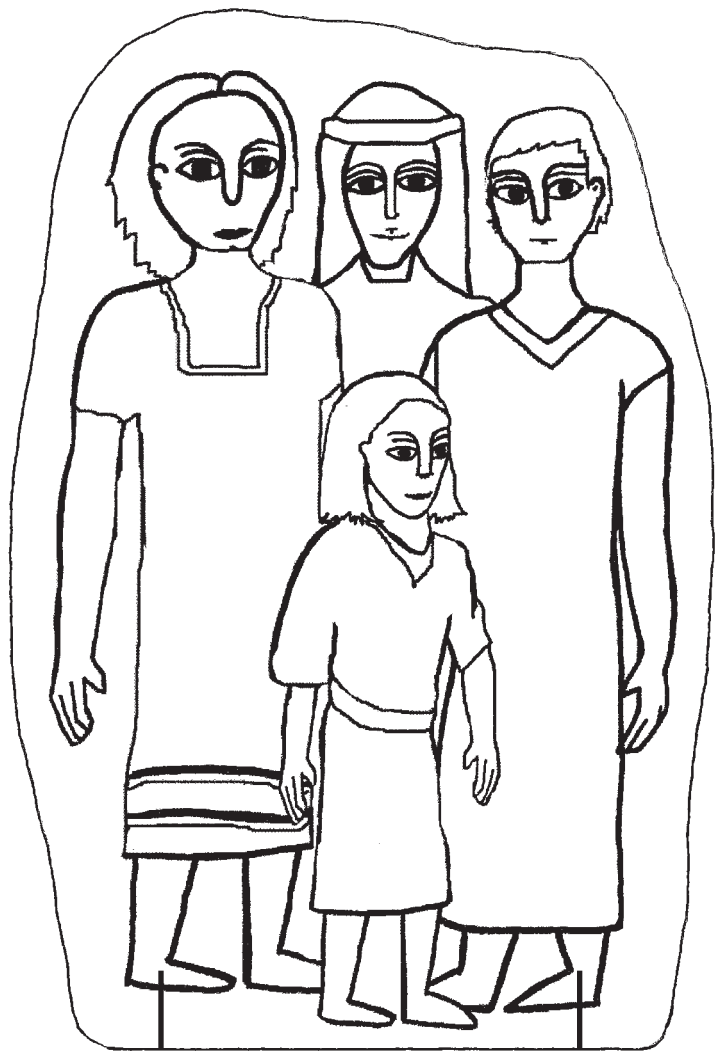
ESAU



RACHEL
AND JOSEPH



MAIDSERVANTS



MAIDSERVANTS' SONS

	MAIDSERVANTS	
	MAIDSERVANTS' SONS	
	ESAU	
	JACOB	
	RACHEL AND JOSEPH	



LEAH



LEAH'S CHILDREN

	LEAH	
	LEAH'S CHILDREN	

ANIMALS



ANIMALS

Jacob and Esau Reunite Sequence of Events

1. Jacob sees Esau coming. He is afraid.
2. Jacob puts the maidservants and their sons directly behind him. Next is Leah and her children. Rachel and Joseph are at the back so they will be the most protected if Esau is angry.
3. As they come close to each other, Jacob bows before Esau seven times.
4. But Esau runs to meet Jacob, hugs and kisses him. They both cry.
5. Esau asks about the people who are with Jacob.
6. Then the maidservants and their sons come and bow down to Esau.
7. Then Leah and her children come and bow down to Esau.
8. Finally, Rachel and Joseph come and bow down to Esau.
9. Jacob asks Esau to accept the gifts of animals that he had sent. Esau finally agrees.
10. Esau and his animals and men leave and go ahead of Jacob and his family.

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