

LESSON 4

THE STORY OF JACOB

LESSON NOTES

FOCUS: THE PERSON WHO BECAME ISRAEL (GENESIS 25:19-33:20; 35:16-29)

- **SACRED STORY**
- **ENRICHMENT PRESENTATION**

THE MATERIAL

- **LOCATION: OLD TESTAMENT SACRED STORY SHELVES, BOTTOM SHELF, UNDER "ABRAHAM"**
- **PIECES: BASKET WITH 14 PEOPLE OF GOD (JACOB, ESAU AND JACOB'S 12 SONS), SOUP BOWL, FAKE ANIMAL SKIN, LADDER AND ROCK, 2 WEDDING VEILS, WOODEN SIGN SAYING PENIEL**
- **CONTROL**
- **UNDERLAY: TAN FELT STRIP, 42" X 11"**

BACKGROUND

The story of Jacob adds to the core narrative of the journey of the people of God from the beginning of "the Great Family" to the Exodus.

Isaac and Rebecca had twins, Esau and Jacob. Much of Jacob's story is in his two names. "Jacob" refers to how he was born second and grabbed his brother's heel, but it also means he took his brother's place by trickery (Genesis 25:26). He also wrestled all night with an angel by the Jabok River. The angel named him *Israel* (Genesis 32:28), saying, "for you have striven with God and with man and have prevailed." "Israel" means "one who struggles with God." This is the story about the origin of the twelve tribes of Israel.

NOTES ON THE MATERIAL

Jacob's story sits in a deep wooden or wicker tray (12" x 8" x 3"). The story icon (5" x 2.5") is a drawing of Jacob wrestling with an angel. It can be attached to the end or the side of the tray depending on the size of the shelves, the classroom or other considerations. The underlay is a strip of tan felt, 42" x 11". Each object in the story is

approximately the same size (no more than 4" high and 4" wide). The story calls for the following objects: a small basket containing fourteen People of God (Jacob, Esau, and Jacob's twelve sons), a small soup bowl, a piece of fake animal skin, a ladder standing up, a rock with the word *Bethel* written on it, two wedding veils (one for Leah and one for Rachel), piece of wood (3" x 2") with the word *Peniel* written along the bottom of it.

A control for the lesson is folded and placed in the tray for the children to use to check their work. The sequence of the story is important because when you change the sequence, you change the story.

SPECIAL NOTES

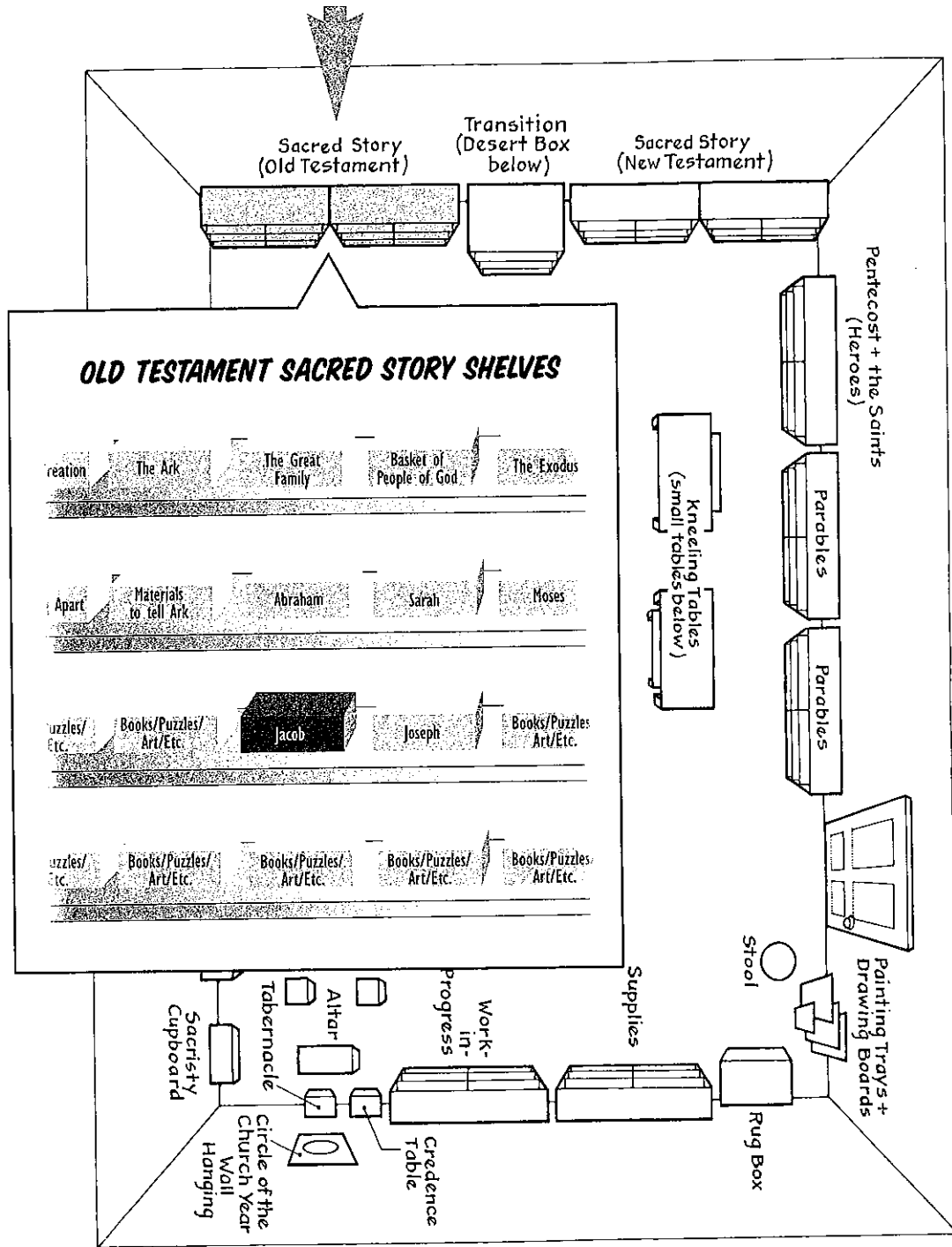
The core stories about the People of God are placed on the top of the sacred story shelves. The enrichment stories about the key people in the core stories are placed on the lower shelves of the sacred story section in the room, under the core stories they enrich and extend (see diagram below).

Jacob's story adds to the core narrative the journey of the people of God from the beginning of the Great Family to the Exodus. When you introduce the stories in this volume take care to set them in the larger context of the sacred story of which they are a part.

As you tell the story of Jacob's life, place objects on the underlay to remind you of each important event. Unroll the underlay slowly, just enough for each object, as if you are unrolling a life. At the end of the wondering, show the children the control card and then carefully place each object back in the tray saying something about each event like, "Here are the twelve sons of Jacob," and so forth. Lastly, model how to roll the underlay back up and place it in the tray.



STORY ICON FOR THE STORY OF JACOB



WHERE TO FIND MATERIALS (TEACHING OBJECTS)

MOVEMENTS

Move with deliberation to the shelf where the material waits.

Pick up the tray containing the material and return to the circle.

You may need to say:

Remove the underlay from the tray and unroll it so that the first object will fit, right to left (storyteller's perspective).

*Place **Object #1** (two People of God) on the underlay as you mention the twins, Esau and Jacob.*

*Place **Object #2** (soup bowl) on the underlay as you mention the soup.*

*Place **Object #3** (animal skin—a piece of fake fur) on the underlay when you mention the animal skins.*

WORDS

Watch. Watch where I go.

Everyone needs to be ready.

God promised Abraham that he would be the father of a great family. But Abraham and Sarah had only one son, Isaac.

Isaac married Rebekah. For a long time, they had no children, until with God's help they had two boys, Esau and Jacob.

Esau and Jacob were twins, but they were not like each other. Esau was big and Jacob was small. Esau had red hair and Jacob had dark hair. Esau was hairy and Jacob had smooth skin. Esau liked to hunt and Jacob stayed by the tent to watch the sheep. Esau was born first, so he was the one who was supposed to have his father's things when he died. Isaac loved Esau best but Rebekah loved Jacob best.

Jacob thought it was not fair that Esau was treated special because he was the oldest. They had been born on the same day! Once Esau came home from hunting and he was very hungry. Jacob had made some soup. Esau asked his brother for some. "I will give it to you," said Jacob, "if you will agree that I can have father's things when he dies." Esau did not even think about it. "What use are father's things when I am so hungry?" He took the soup. Now there was an agreement between the brothers that Jacob would be like the oldest son.

Isaac was old. He could not see. He asked Esau to go hunting and make the stew he liked best. Then Isaac would bless him.

Rebekah overheard this. She thought Jacob should get the blessing. So she and Jacob made Isaac's special stew from a lamb, instead of a wild animal. They put animal skins on Jacob's arms so he would seem hairy and dressed him up like Esau. Jacob went to his father with the stew. Isaac believed that Jacob was Esau and he laid his hands on him and blessed him.

MOVEMENTS

Place **Object #4** (rock and ladder) on the underlay as you mention them. Put the rock down with the blank side up; you will turn it over when you speak of the naming of this place.

Make a pouring motion with your hand to show the pouring of oil. Turn the rock over to reveal the word *Bethel*.

Place **Object #5** (two wedding veils) on the underlay as you mention each wedding.

WORDS

When Esau returned with stew for his father, he discovered that Isaac had been tricked into giving away the blessing that should have been his. He was angry and threatened to kill Jacob. Rebekah asked Isaac to send Jacob away to her family to find a wife. Isaac agreed.

Jacob set off quickly through the desert towards Haran, where his mother's family lived. One night, he found a rock and made it his pillow. While he slept, he dreamt of a great ladder stretching all the way into heaven. There were angels climbing up and down the ladder and God seemed to be above and around and beside the place. A voice said:

"I am the God of Abraham and Isaac. I will give this land on which you lie to you and to your descendants. Through them all the world will be blessed. I am with you, and I will bring you back to this land."

When Jacob awoke, he knew he had heard God in his dream! He poured oil on the stone so that he would always remember what God had said and named the place *Bethel*—the house of God.

Jacob traveled on and came to a well where the shepherds watered their flocks. There was a beautiful young woman there with her father's sheep. She was Rachel, the daughter of his mother's brother. Jacob wanted to make her his wife, so he offered to work for her father Laban for seven years in exchange for his permission to marry Rachel.

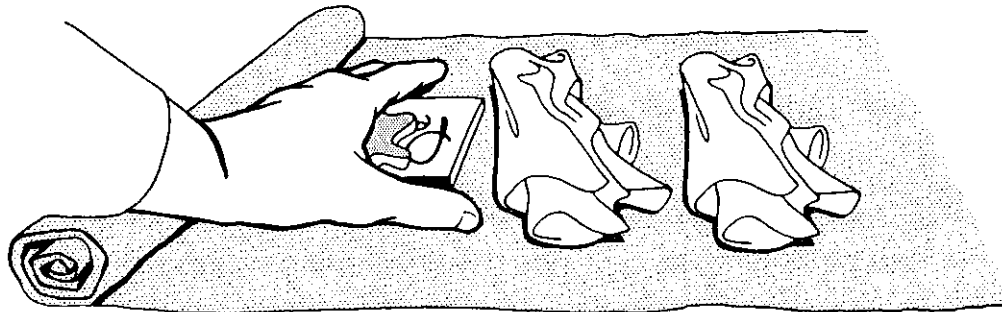
After seven years the wedding took place. When Jacob saw his wife's face, he discovered that *he* had been tricked, and that he was married to Leah, Rachel's sister. Laban told Jacob that he could marry Rachel too, if he worked another seven years. Finally Jacob and Rachel were married. Then Jacob worked seven more years for his uncle Laban. In all this time, God blessed Jacob and his work, and Laban's flocks grew.

Jacob worked for his uncle for twenty-one years. Then God came close to him and told him it was time to return home. Jacob packed up all that he had and began the journey home with his family.

Jacob was afraid to meet his brother again. Esau had threatened to kill him and was coming to meet him with 400 men! Jacob prayed to God and sent presents to Esau.

MOVEMENTS

When you speak of Jacob going apart to pray, place **Object #6** (wooden sign reading *Peniel*) on the underlay. Take Jacob from the beginning of the lesson and place him on the sign. Cover him with your hand when you speak of the man wrestling with him all through the night. After you say, "And he blessed him," remove your hand.



WOODEN SIGN ON UNDERLAY (STORYTELLER'S PERSPECTIVE)

The stranger touched Jacob's thigh and his hip came out of joint. But Jacob held on until morning. The stranger said "Let me go." But Jacob knew this was no ordinary person. He refused to let go until the stranger had given him a blessing. The stranger said: "Your name will no longer be Jacob. You will be called Israel—for you have struggled with God and with people and have prevailed." And he blessed him. So Jacob called the place *Peniel*, which means "the face of God," because he knew he had been struggling with God.

Jacob caught up with his family, limping because of his injury. Then he went in front of them to meet Esau. He bowed down to the ground as Esau came near. Then his brother ran to him and put his arms around him.

Finally old Isaac died, and his sons Esau and Jacob buried him.

Place **Object #7** (12 People of God—one for each of Jacob's sons) on the underlay as you mention each son.

Jacob, or Israel as he was now called, had twelve sons. Each of these sons became the head of a tribe. Now there were twelve tribes in the Great Family, and it was called *Israel*.

