

Lesson 8

Jacob Meets Esau

Objective

Study Genesis 33: Jacob meets his brother Esau and the importance of forgiveness.

Supplies

Teachers and/or Coordinators ensure supplies are ready prior to each class.

Print From the Site:

- Jacob & Esau Visual Aid – one for class
- Bibles – enough for everyone to have one
- Pens/Pencils/Crayons/Pencil Crayons
- Stickers (for attendance)
- Attendance Chart
- Playdough or bread/cookie dough – enough for each student to have a small piece to learn forgiveness
- Kleenex/Tissue – enough in case the discussion makes some students cry
- Large Writing Surface – Easel with Paper, whiteboard or Paper on Table – to play Snowman
- Marker for Teacher

Optional Supplies

Print From the Site:

- Match the Name Card Set – printed on cardstock paper and cut out – one set per 2-4 students or give one set to each student to take home and practice.
- Jacob's 12 Sons List – from Lesson 5 or print again.
- Snack: Heart shaped fruit – enough for each student

Teacher Tips

- ★ See Lesson One to Review

1) Introduction to Lesson

As students enter, welcome them and help them find a chair to sit at. Thank them for coming. Take attendance.

What did we study last time about Jacob and his family? Jacob prepared to meet his brother Esau but he was scared that Esau would hurt his family. So, Jacob prayed to God and then later in the night God wrestled with Jacob to show Jacob – that he could overcome any obstacle if he trusted in the Lord.

This time we will study about Jacob and his return to Esau. We will see how Esau reacted and learn how we should react when someone we have had problems with returns to us.

2) Class Time – Jacob Meets Esau

10-15 minutes

Have visual and Bibles ready. Ask for volunteers to read **Genesis 33:1-18** or read yourself.

Discuss the following Questions:

How did Esau respond when he saw Jacob? He ran to Jacob, hugged and kissed him, verse 4.

Was that the response Jacob expected? No

Why did Jacob not want to travel with Esau? Because he had young animals and children and needed to go slowly.

Where were they to meet up in verse 16? Seir

Where did Jacob set up camp first? Succoth

Then where did he buy land? Shechem

What was the name of the altar? El Elohe Israel.

This can mean either – the God of Israel or mighty is the God of Israel.

How did Esau behave when he saw his brother? He was happy and forgiving.

Esau had sold his birthright and Jacob stole his blessing – last time Jacob and Esau were together Esau wanted to kill Jacob. Now Esau was showing forgiveness. Let's turn to Matthew 6:14-15 and read from there.

Matthew 6:14-15

For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. ¹⁵ But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.

What does this verse say about the importance of forgiving? Without it you won't be forgiven by God.



God forgives us of ALL our sins when we are baptized and stay faithful. He is willing to continually forgive us. Because of that, God expects us to forgive people when they sin against us.

What does that mean we must do? Allow students to answer. Forgive!

What can we learn from Esau? Allow students to answer.

3) Optional: Joys of Forgiveness Activity

10 minutes

Have playdough and Kleenex ready.

Let's talk about our own lives. Have you ever been so mad at somebody you just wanted to scream or cry? What happened? Let students answer.



Have you ever been so mad at somebody that you stayed mad, and you're still mad at them today? Let students answer.

Because humans live in a fallen world, it means people are more likely to think of themselves than of others. And at some point, someone's selfish behavior will surely hurt you. Forgiveness is a needed virtue and skill God says we need to master to live a healthy, God-fearing life.

Hand out playdough (or if that is not available use bread or cookie dough) and have them each make a simple heart shape. You make one too.

Our hearts get broken (meaning our feelings get hurt) when someone does something to us that makes us sad. Somebody is mean to you and just doesn't care about your feelings. Break a small piece of your playdough heart off, have them do the same.

Somebody breaks a huge trust, telling a secret that you didn't want to get around. And you know you can't trust your most trusted friend anymore.

Break another piece of the heart off. They do the same.

Somebody takes something from you and then lies about it, saying it was never yours to begin with. You're out a favorite piece of clothing or a favorite toy, and you have to watch somebody use it and refuse to give it back. Break a piece of the heart off again.

Somebody lets you down, swearing they are going to do something very important for you or with you. They don't show up and don't seem to care how disappointed and let down you are. Break a piece of the heart off again.

You see our hearts get broken. Show the 4 pieces.

But then what happens? Did you know a broken heart can heal? Think of things your siblings or friends/family have done that made you so mad you just wanted to scream and cry and now sometime later you either barely remember or can even laugh about it. Say yes if that has happened to you.

Let students answer yes if it has.

However, some hearts stay broken. And this is where things become dangerous to our health and welfare. A heart that has been unable to forgive. That heart remains broken. It becomes distrustful of others. It wants and seeks revenge. It doesn't sleep well, doesn't digest food well, doesn't find any peace. However, it's not always easy to forgive someone. Just how do you forgive?

The most important part of forgiveness is to realize it is a commitment and not a feeling. Feelings come and go. They are not reliable and change often. Our feelings may not match what's actually going on in heaven or with God.

The first thing you do is *tell Jesus you want to forgive this person so that you can stop feeling your torment.* You give Jesus your broken heart. Then, He starts to work. Take the broken heart and the pieces and reshape a bit of it to look more whole again but not perfect yet.

The feelings of forgiveness will come and go for a while. Just remember that no matter what you are feeling, you gave Jesus your commitment, and He is doing His work. We might feel the pain and the hurt still, but it doesn't mean you haven't forgiven if you are committed. If you are committed you will pray that God helps your heart to heal, and that He helps the person to repent and learn from the wrong they did.

Eventually you will be able to fully let go of that situation that broke your heart and your heart will heal again. Put it back fully together and have them do the same with theirs.

Jesus will make your heart fresh. You will feel a great sense of renewal, peace, and calm. You will sleep well, eat well, think well, and feel well. Make a commitment to forgive. Believe Jesus is working on it for you. When you feel anger or resentment or hurt, remember your commitment and know feelings will come and go but not to trust them, trust God.

A commitment to forgive is what starts it all. Be like Esau and be willing to forgive. Do not repay with evil but repay with trust in God, prayer, and peace.

Pray:

God we know our hearts are soft and easily broken like playdough. But we know we can trust You to heal us and help us overcome when they are broken. Help us remember to forgive and commit to putting our sadness and hurts into Your mighty hands, knowing You will take care of it. Help us to trust in You and not our feelings and to commit to forgiveness. Put our hearts back together and make them whole. Thank You for helping us in Jesus' name, Amen.

Let students choose to keep their heart playdough or put it back in the container. If you used bread/cookie dough – you can cook them for them to eat later or toss away.

4) Snowman Word Game

10-15 minutes

Before class get a large easel or chalkboard with marker or chalk to show kids while playing the game of snowman. If neither are available sit around a table and hold up a page with room to draw a snowman and slots for the word you will choose underneath large enough for all students to see – (see image below) use a marker.

Game instructions: Start the game by choosing a word from the list below. Don't let the children know what word you have chosen and don't let them see your list of words.

1. Place one dash on the bottom of a piece of paper for each letter of the word chosen. Leave a space between words. Example: Jacob – you would write
 _____ at the bottom of the page the students can see.
2. Have one of the students guess one letter at a time - or he or she can use a turn to guess the entire word. If they get the letter right – fill it in where it belongs – example: If a student guessed "J" it would go at the first slot above for
 J _____.

5. If they get the letter wrong – write the letter on the top of the page – so other students know it was already chosen and then draw a part of the body of a snowman. Begin by drawing the bottom, then middle, then head, arms, eyes, nose. Then another student gets a turn guessing a letter.
6. If they can't determine the word, before the snowman is complete the guessing player and all the other students lose. If the player(s) figure out the word first, they win.
7. When the word is discovered ask them to explain something that they know about the word and how it relates to Jacob and his family.



List of Words to Use

(and possible suggestions for things they might know about that word):

Jacob – son of Isaac, stole his brother's blessing, had 12 sons

Rachel – woman he loved and worked seven years for. Mother of Joseph and Jacob's favorite wife.

Leah – Jacob's first wife – was married to Jacob through the trickery of her father, mother of 6 of Jacob's sons and had one daughter.

Twelve – Total number of Jacob's sons

Israel – the name Jacob received from God meaning – One who overcomes or struggles with God

Forgive – what Esau did when Jacob returned and what we should do too.

Esau – Jacob's brother who forgave him for stealing his blessing. Sold his birthright for lentil stew.

5) Optional: Matching Names Game

10-15 minutes

Prep

Print and bring the list of "Jacob's 12 Sons" sheet – one for every 2-4 students.

Print on cardstock paper and cut out the "Match the Name Cards" – one set for every 2-4 students (or if you want them to take a set home each to practice – one set per student). There will be one blank card space – remove that.

Reuben	Reuben	Simeon
Simeon	Levi	Levi
Judah	Judah	Dan

Jacob's 12 Sons	
Mother	Son
Leah	1. Reuben
	2. Simeon
	3. Levi
	4. Judah
Bilhah (Rachel's Maid)	5. Dan
	6. Naphtali
Zilpah (Leah's Maid)	7. Gad
	8. Asher
Leah	9. Issachar
	10. Zebulun
Rachel	11. Joseph
	12. Benjamin

Put students into groups and hand out the appropriate amount of card sets to each group.

Explain to students to take their cards, shuffle and mix them up and place them spread out and face down so no one can see. Each student gets a turn to flip over two cards, read out the name and if the name matches, they can keep the two cards. If they don't match, they flip the cards back down and let the next student have a turn. If someone matches a set, they get another turn until they no longer find a matched set. The student with the most matched sets wins.

*To make it more interesting have the student that finds a match try and guess who the mother was. Use the "Jacob's 12 Sons Sheet" to help.

6) Optional Songs

5 minutes

Sons of Jacob (to the tune of "Ten Little Ladybugs")

Reuben, Simeon, Levi, Judah,
Issachar, Zebulun, Dan, Naphtali,
Gad, Asher, Joseph, Benjamin.
These are the sons of Jacob.

Sing the books of the Old Testament together as practice as well if you choose.

7) Optional Snack: Heart-shaped fruit

5 minutes

You've all done a great job this morning learning about the importance of forgiveness. Hand out handfuls or paper cups full of fruit pieces to each student. Explain that: **When Jacob came to meet his brother, he was concerned because he had hurt his brother years before, but Esau forgave him. Let's eat our heart shaped fruit reminding us of the importance of forgiving.** Provide a napkin for children to clean their hands. Discuss questions while snacking!

Any questions about today's story?

What was the favorite thing you learned or did today? Why?

What are ways we can forgive? Pray to God, trust in Him, ask Him to bless and help us and then let Him work in our lives and take care of the issue as we commit to forgiving the person. Tell the person we forgive them. Be kind to them like Esau was to Jacob even though Jacob had tricked Esau out of his blessing years earlier.

What are the benefits of forgiving someone? Peace, restored relationship, God is pleased and will forgive us, feel better, etc.

8) Closing Prayer

**Before the prayer, make sure the activities/snacks have been cleaned up. Ask if there are any prayers the students want to share and if so write them down.

Dear God help us to remember to forgive like Esau did and how important it is to forgive others so You God will forgive us when we sin. We pray You will help us with our families. Bless us and help us make wise decisions in how we deal with our siblings and parents. Help us to learn from Jacob and Esau – to be kind, forgive, and not cause our siblings any harm. May we forgive everyone when needed as You are willing to forgive us. May we commit to having a forgiving attitude.

We pray for those who are sick, weak, or could not attend and that they will return to us next time. We pray for the church family, that we will all worship You in spirit and truth as You ask us too.

Thank You for Your help, Your love, and for being our Father. In Jesus' name, Amen.

9) Things to Remember

Thank the children for coming.

Take their activity sheets home.

Make sure students leave with a responsible person.

Thank you for serving Christ in this way!