

Fort Hill Christian Youth Camp 2024

Class Curriculum - The Book of Genesis

Age - Junior Campers

Thursday - Jacob/Israel

Summary

1. Subject: The life of Jacob/Israel
2. Scripture: Genesis 25:19-34, Genesis 27, Genesis 33
3. Grade/Level: Junior Campers
4. Objective: Learn the story of Jacob and Esau, with an emphasis on honesty and forgiveness
5. Time Allotment: 1 Hour

Prayer: Don't forget to begin and end your class with a prayer! If possible, have a camper lead one or both of these prayers.

Story

10-15 minutes

Jacob and Esau

The story of Jacob and Esau can be a difficult story to tell younger children. Jacob/Israel is a man of God, but acts strange relative to other men in Genesis. He tricks his brother, tricks his uncle, wrestles with God, and more. Many of these can be hard to understand. For this class, focus on the relationship between Jacob and Esau, and lessons we can learn about honesty and forgiveness, as well as God's commitment to answering His promises. A brief summary of this account is listed below: please read the full account yourself and teach the story at an age-appropriate level to your class.

- Isaac, the son of Abraham, has twin boys with his wife Rebekah. They are Jacob and Esau, and Esau is born first

- Esau is his father's favorite, and Jacob is his mother's favorite
- Jacob plots with his mother to trick Esau out of his inheritance. One day when Esau returns from hunting he is very hungry. Jacob offers him stew in exchange for his birthright. After this, Jacob dresses up like Esau to trick their father into giving Jacob the blessing
- The Bible says that Esau hated Jacob for this, and Jacob was worried Esau would take revenge, so he leaves for a long time
- After many years both brothers have large families and groups that they travel with. They meet each other one day, and Jacob is afraid that Esau will kill him. Instead, Esau tells Jacob that he forgives him, and offers to travel together and help Jacob in many ways

This story displays some relatable things, like sibling rivalry, but is mostly a story of relationship and forgiveness. It is important to realize that our actions have consequences in our relationships. If we are not intentional, we may hurt someone's feelings and jeopardize the relationship we have. Sometimes that damage can last for a long time. It is important to be honest and have integrity.

When we have hurt someone, it is important to ask for forgiveness and try to fix the relationship. When someone has hurt us it is important that we are able to forgive.

Lesson

Discussion: Integrity & Forgiveness

10-15 Minutes

Guided Discussion: Ask the question, "What is integrity?". Depending on the age of your class, they may not be familiar with this word. There are many ways to define integrity, but one good definition for younger children is, "doing the right thing when no one is looking" or "doing the right thing all the time". Of course, this doesn't mean we have to be perfect to have integrity, but it means we are always trying to be honest and do good with our words and actions.

To help understand, ask "What are some examples of integrity?". Some scriptural examples and worldly examples are below:

- Noah living righteously even when no one else in the world chose to
- God keeping His promises to His people all the time, even when we've been unfaithful to Him
- The story of Daniel and the Lion's den highlights the spiritual integrity of Daniel; he would not compromise his faith even knowing the consequences

- We show integrity when we do the things our parents ask us to do without needing them to remind us
- If we have made a mistake, we show integrity by being honest and speaking up to those around us about it

Move on to forgiveness. Like Esau forgave his brother Jacob, we should also forgive those who hurt us. Ask, “What is a time where you forgave someone?” and, “Was it easy or difficult to forgive them?”. Sometimes forgiveness can be simple, especially when we are not very bothered. Other times it can be really tough. Even when it’s difficult, we should always be quick to forgive. Esau was really hurt by Jacob’s trick, but when they reunite it seems like he has already forgiven Jacob.

Ask, “What can help us to forgive when it’s difficult?”. Sometimes we want to hold a grudge, or still have hurt feelings that make it tough to forgive. Things that can help are:

- Prayer to God
- Talking to the person who hurt you and explaining how they made you feel
- Talking to someone else who loves and cares about you, to express your feelings
- Giving yourself some time to work through your feelings. This is not withholding forgiveness, but asking the person who hurt you to be patient as you forgive them

Genesis and the Church

Every part of the Old Testament foreshadows the coming of the Church and God’s redemptive plan, including the Book of Genesis. Use this lesson and story to help your class understand the nature of God’s Church and His plan for it. The life of Jacob/Israel can relate to the church in many ways, especially in his meeting with Esau in Genesis 33. Jacob has wronged Esau and comes to this meeting fearing rightful retribution. Likewise, in the Church today, Christians know that we have wronged God when we sin, and should live with a healthy fear of God. However, Esau chooses to forgive Jacob. There are no conditions to this forgiveness, and Esau even attempts to refuse the gifts given to him by Jacob. This is not a forgiveness that Jacob has earned on his own. In the same way, God decided to offer forgiveness through the redeeming blood of Jesus to anyone who wants to join the Church. This is not a forgiveness that we could earn or deserve. While each of us must believe in Jesus Christ, repent of our sins, and be baptized in order to receive God’s forgiveness, it is described in scripture as the perfect gift of God, given freely to us.



Scripture

- a. 1 Peter 3:16
 - a. This verse talks about the importance of integrity in the life of a Christian. When we live with integrity, no one is able to talk about us poorly. Our actions eventually turn into our reputation.
- b. Matthew 6:15
 - a. This verse is from the Lord's prayer and tells us how important it is to forgive. God forgives our sins, so we shouldn't hesitate to forgive those who hurt us, even when it is difficult.

Activity/Illustration

Remaining Time

“Freeze and Forgive”

This is a take on the game, “Freeze Tag”. Designate an area to play tag in, and have someone be the “freezer” (maybe a counselor). If any student is tagged, they have to freeze in place.

Designate one other person to be the “forgiver”. If a student is frozen and they are tagged by the “forgiver” they get to unfreeze and play again. The “forgiver” cannot be frozen. This way, the game will not end until the teacher decides to end the game.

For added fun, instead of a single “forgiver” make all students capable of “forgiving” any frozen classmate, but allow everyone to be frozen. Once frozen, you cannot “forgive”. Designate two or more freezers, and play until everyone ends up frozen.

Application: this game incorporates integrity, in being honest when you are tagged and choosing to freeze. It also shows how a lack of forgiveness can be bad; in the game, you are stuck in place, and in your relationships, you can feel “frozen” with a lack of forgiveness. Forgiveness sets you free.