

# FAMILY BIBLE STUDY

## Jacob, The Deceiver

THE BIG YEAR SEASON 1 WEEK 4

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### WHAT YOU NEED

- "Jacob Charades" sheet (*printed*)
- Scissors
- Timer

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### LET'S READ THE BIBLE

Take turns reading the following passages:

- Genesis 25:19-34
- Genesis 27:1-45

### WHAT DOES IT MEAN?

Esau and Jacob were the twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah. Esau should have inherited the responsibilities and blessings that come with being the oldest son but, without thinking about it too much, he sold his birth right to his younger brother for a pot of stew. Later, in a very sneaky way, Rebekah helped her favourite son, Jacob, trick the old and blind Isaac into promising him the rest of the birth right, the blessing. Jacob escaped his angry brother by traveling to his mother's brother, Laban, in Haran.

On the way to his uncle, Jacob dreamed of a stairway between heaven and earth on which angels were climbing up and down. God reassured Jacob of His blessing and promises. Jacob built a pillar on the spot where he was sleeping and called the place "Bethel". When Jacob arrived in Haran, he met Rachel, the younger daughter of his uncle Laban and he immediately decided that he wanted to marry her. (*If the question comes up about whether or not it's okay to marry your cousin, simply explain to your child/children that this was a very common thing to do at the time that Jacob lived but that most people wouldn't do that today*).

Jacob has always been the one who tricked or deceived other people, but once he connected with his family in Haran, he learned what it meant to be the recipient of deception. Jacob made a deal with his uncle Laban that he would work for him for seven years in exchange for marrying Rachel.

Seven years later, at the wedding, Laban switched the brides so that Jacob married his older daughter, Leah, instead. Jacob was not very happy about this, and he still wanted to marry Rachel. Laban agreed to let Jacob marry Rachel too under the condition that he worked for him under the condition that he work for him another seven years.

Bargains, tricks and deception were all part of the lives of Laban, Jacob and Jacob's wives. Jacob's wives were jealous of each other, and they all tricked each other and Jacob over and over.

After Jacob's 14 years of work to get his two wives, God commanded Jacob to leave and return to his home, but Laban wanted to squeeze even more years of work out of him. Jacob used his knowledge of animals to trick Laban and in the process he made up a large herd of animals for himself. As if all of this was not enough, Rachel steals from her father as the family sneaks away from Laban to return to Beersheba where Jacob had come from. An angry Laban follows them, and Laban and Jacob finally come to make a kind of treaty and separate.

Ironically, the only person who acts righteously in this story is Jacob's brother, Esau. Jacob was scared about how his brother would act after all of Jacob's tricks and deception, but instead of being angry, Esau welcomes his brother with open arms. Even though Jacob did terrible things to his family and tricked his way through life, God stayed faithful to what He had promised Jacob's father and grandfather and He blessed Jacob and his descendants.

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## LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

- What is a "blessing"?
- What is a "birth right"?
- How did Rebekah and Jacob trick Isaac into giving the blessing to Jacob?
- After working seven years, Laban said Jacob could marry Rachel. What happened?
- What happened when Jacob found out that he had been tricked?

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## LET'S GO A BIT DEEPER

- If you were Esau, how would you have handled the situation?
- Do we ever benefit from tricking/deceiving someone?
- What kept happening to Jacob after he had tricked his brother and father? (*He kept getting tricked by others*).
- Did God keep His promises to Jacob? Even after he tricked people?
- Maybe you don't trick other people, but are there things that you do that are not what god wants you to do?
- Does God keep His promises to us, even when we sin?

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## LET'S PRAY TOGETHER

Pray together:

- Thank God that He always keeps His promises to us, even when we sin.
- Thank God for all the ways that you can see Him working in your family's life (*think of specific examples where you've seen God working in your lives*).
- Pray that God would help you as a family to be a blessing to others.

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## LET'S HAVE SOME FUN

Print out the "Jacob Charades" sheet and cut it into squares. Place the squares upside down on a pile. Family members take turns taking a square, reading what it says without anyone else seeing (assist younger kids), and then acting out what it says on the square without making any sounds. The rest of the family members have 30 seconds to try and guess what is being acted out.

## Jacob Charades

Isaac was blind	Esau was a hunter	Jacob gave Isaac stew
Isaac smelled Jacob's clothes	Esau was very angry	Jacob flees from Esau
Jacob had a dream	Jacob built a pillar	Jacob worked for 7 years