



## **GOD CHANGED JACOB: GENESIS 25-33**

**UNIT 3: SESSION 3**

# GOD CHANGED JACOB: GENESIS 25-33

## UNIT 3: SESSION 4



### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 135:5-6



### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.



### CHRIST CONNECTION:

- **Toddlers:** God loves us and keeps His promise.
- **Younger Preschool:** God gave Jacob a new name, Israel. When we follow Jesus, God calls us His children.
- **Older Preschool:** God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. By dying and rising from the dead, Jesus made the way for us to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we get a new name, too—children of God.
- **Kids:** God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God.

### LEADER BIBLE STUDY

Jacob's journey in Genesis is one of unexpected and undeserved blessing after blessing. With a name that literally means "he cheats," Jacob was a surprising recipient of the privilege and opportunity God gave him. Jacob was a cheater, a liar, and a deceiver. He was quiet and not strongly gifted. And he was gullible, too. We cannot miss that the deceiver was deceived at times too—easily convinced by his mother and tricked by his uncle. But God would work through Jacob when no circumstances or characteristics made it seem possible.

Have you ever had a moment of astonishment at the magnitude of what God has given you through Christ? Have you taken the time to recognize that all that you have is from God? Does it cause you to rejoice when you think about God's grace? It's easy to look at Jacob and say he didn't deserve what God gave him. It's hard to feel that way about ourselves. But it's just as true. Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, "For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord." Salvation should bring about this astonishment in us as well. It should remind us that we are not worthy, and it should lead us to rejoice in the undeserving gift of God's grace.

# 1. WELCOME KIDS



**SAY:** In today's Bible story, we will see how God changed Jacob's name to Israel. But that's not the only thing God changed about Jacob. Let's see what else changed.

## OPTIONAL GAMES (10 minutes)

### OPTION 1: QUICK CHANGES

Guide kids to form pairs. Instruct one partner to turn her back or close her eyes. Give the other partner 30 seconds to change three things about his physical appearance. He might untie or remove a shoe, move his watch to his opposite hand, restyle his hair, tuck or untuck a shirt, and so on. Then challenge the first partner to identify the three changes. Switch rolls and play again. As time allows, form new pairs and play again.

**SAY:** We will hear a Bible story today about how God changed Isaac's son Jacob. God changes us too. Sometimes these changes are obvious and happen quickly. Sometimes God changes us subtly and slowly.

### OPTION 2: NAME SIGNS

Use provided pipe cleaners. Invite kids to use the "craft stems" to form their first names. Instruct kids to connect the letters in a cursive style or with extra pieces of craft stems. Help kids cut lengths of fishing line or twine and tie it to each end of their name signs so they can hang them in a locker or in their rooms.

**SAY:** Our names are something we do not get to pick. Usually, our parents choose our names for us. In the Bible, a person's name was sometimes given by a family member other than the parents. Sometimes a name was given by God. God told Abraham and Sarah to name their baby Isaac. When Isaac had a son, he named him Jacob. Today, we will hear how God changed Jacob—including his name.

# 2. INTRODUCE THE BIBLE STORY

## INTRODUCE THE SESSION

We've been hearing about God's promise to Abraham and his descendants. God chose Abraham and promised to give him land and a large family. God would bless the whole world through Abraham's family. Many years later, God kept His promise by sending Jesus into the world through Abraham's family. In the stories about Abraham and his descendants, we see how God worked to keep His promises.

Last week, we heard about God's provision after God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. God provided a ram instead. Today's story skips forward many years. Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. They had twin boys: Esau and Jacob. We're going to focus on the life of Jacob and how God changed him in a significant way.



## BIG PICTURE QUESTION



**SAY:** Our big picture question is, Who is in control of everything? Who remembers the answer? [Allow kids to respond.] God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan. This is important to remember. Nothing happens by chance. As surprising as some events are to us, nothing surprises God. Keep that in mind as you hear today's story.

## REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY



Before they were even born, God told Rebekah that the boys would form two nations, so Jacob and Esau's relationship was rough from the start. They struggled in the womb, and Jacob was born grabbing onto Esau's heel. Then, even though he was younger, Jacob received the birthright because Esau traded it to him for some stew.

Later, when Isaac was old and blind, the time came for Isaac to bless Esau. With the blessing came the privilege given to the firstborn—leadership over the family. **Jacob deceived his father and stole his brother's blessing.** Was Esau OK with that? Look at Genesis 27:41. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 27:41.] **Esau was angry. He planned to kill Jacob.** Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away from home. Rebekah expected him to be gone for a few days—just until Esau calmed down. (See Gen. 27:44.)

But days and then weeks and then months passed; **Jacob was away for 20 years.** In that time, he became the father of 12 sons. God was with Jacob. He had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac. But Jacob was still nervous about going home because Esau was there. **Jacob encountered the Lord one night when he wrestled a man.** The man was actually an appearance of God. Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? Look at Genesis 32:24-25. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 32:24-25.] The victory was unexpected. Jacob did not win by strength—God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch—but by confessing his dependence on God. Jacob had nowhere else to turn. His whole life, he had tried to get his own way by tricking people and working things out by his own plans. But now Jacob realized he could not succeed by his own strength. **So Jacob held onto God and would not let go. Just before dawn, God showed grace to Jacob and blessed him.**



**SAY:** God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would bring into the world His Son, Jesus. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God.



### 3. GROUP DISCUSSION

Ask the following questions. Lead the kids to discuss their answers.



**SAY:** How did God change Jacob?

God not only blessed Jacob, He gave Jacob a new name. Jacob meant “deceiver.” He had tricked his father and cheated his brother. Jacob’s new name was Israel, which meant “struggles with God.” God changed Jacob from the inside out. He gave Jacob a limp, humbling him. From then on, Jacob would look to God, not himself, for everything he needed (Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 22:4).



**SAY:** How can God use difficult circumstances for our good?

Guide kids to consider how difficulties can draw us closer to God, leading us to turn away from sin and depend completely on Him. Remind kids that Jacob clung to God because he knew he would have no success apart from God’s blessing. Desperation and dependence may seem like weakness, but that place of humility is where we find the power of God. (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 1:8-9).



**SAY:** How does God change us?

When we trust in Jesus, God changes us from the inside out. Jesus forgives our sin and adopts us into His family. When we are adopted into the family of God, we also receive a new name and identity—children of God. He blesses us and gives us the mission of telling others about Him (Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 3:1).

If time remains, take prayer requests. **Pray for your group.**

### 4. NOTES

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## God Changed Jacob

### BIBLE STORY SUMMARY:

- Jacob stole his brother's blessing, and fled from him.
- Twenty years later, Jacob's family grew, and Jacob decided to return home.
- On the way, Jacob wrestled with a man who crippled Jacob's hip. Then he blessed Jacob and changed his name to Israel.

### CHRIST CONNECTION:

God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God.

**KEY PASSAGE:** Psalm 135:5-6

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

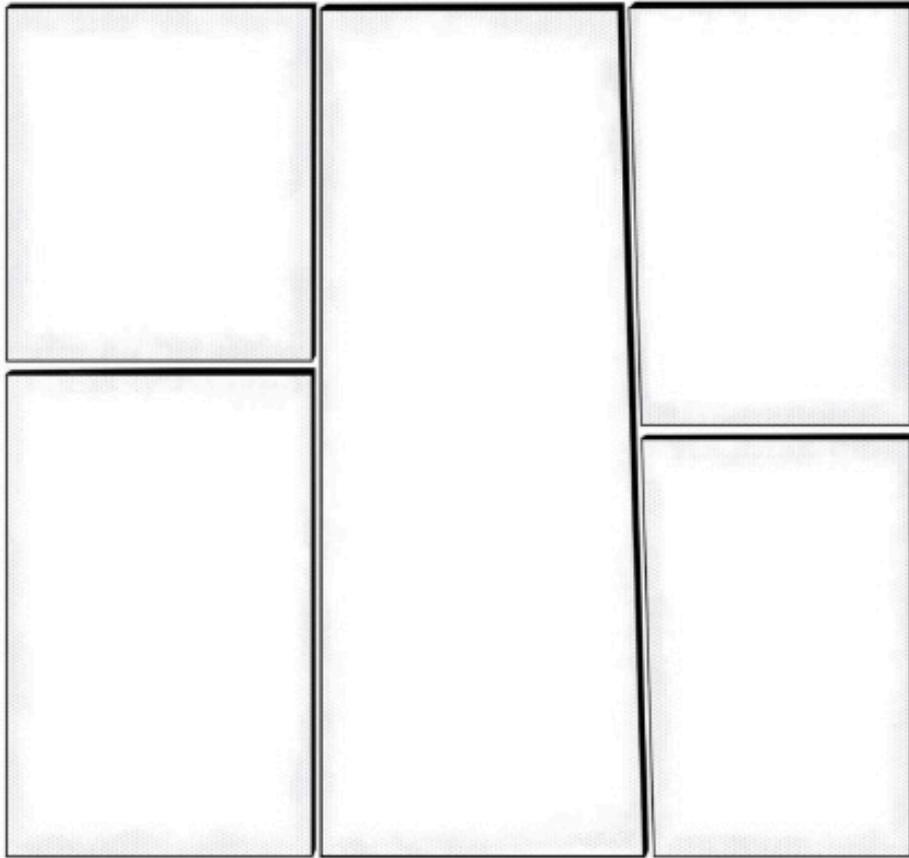
NAME:



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**Jacob's Life Story** | Use the template to draw Jacob's life as a comic strip. Use the five events suggested or choose your own.

- Jacob and Esau were twins, but they were different. (Genesis 25:27)
- Jacob stole his brother's blessing. (Genesis 27:35)
- God spoke to Jacob and made a covenant with him. (Genesis 28:15)
- Jacob wrestled with a man, and the man blessed him. (Genesis 32:24-28)
- Jacob met with Esau, and Esau was not angry anymore. (Genesis 33:10-11)



**Jacob**

1 2 3

**Jake**

**Israel**

**Esau**

**Name Change**

Find the path to connect Jacob to his new name.



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Unit 3, Session 4: God Changed Jacob



### JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 3 • Session 4

## GOD CHANGED JACOB

Genesis 25–33

**WHO IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING? GOD IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. NOTHING IS OUTSIDE OF GOD'S GOOD PLAN.**

Abraham's son Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. Rebekah gave birth to twins. Esau was born first, and then Jacob. When they grew up, Isaac wanted to bless Esau. Instead, Jacob tricked Isaac and stole his brother's blessing. Esau was very angry, so Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away.

One night, God spoke to Jacob. God made the same covenant with Jacob as He had made with Abraham. God said, "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go."

Years passed. Jacob got married and had a family. Finally, Jacob took his family and headed home to Canaan. He sent a large gift of animals to try to make Esau happy.

That night, a man appeared to Jacob. The man wrestled with Jacob all night. "Your name will no longer be Jacob," said the man. "Your name will be Israel because you wrestled with God and men, and you have won." The man blessed Jacob.

Now Jacob went to meet Esau. Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.

Jacob and his family traveled on, and Jacob bought land for them to live on. Jacob was finally home in the land God had promised him.

**Christ Connection:** God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God.



# Bible Pathway Adventures

WORD SEARCH

## JACOB'S FAMILY

A Y J D J P O S F L E V I X D K I X R P  
G A D A Z N O J R O K B X E O F B J V P  
R S Z B C X O Z T Q I L L I H L I D B D  
M A O P P O P E S N A K P D Z E L I I G  
L N C U Z P B B N V K F M Y F A H N B I  
V H M H L L L U A G V D S M O H A A O X  
K C L N E Z Q L P S N J G T V J H H E Z  
B U K D N L P U H N C J S K K P H M S L  
G J O S E P H N T Q R U L E A H A A A D  
C Q T H H R Q S A Y K D V E K F T F U X  
R X J B N N U M L E L A U L W H B K G F  
X D A I E N Y K I I R H O F Q W E C T O  
U U J Z I L P A H N P M A R E U B E N K  
P U Y F H Q B C A S H E R X U Y J I L O  
N L A B A N L Q Q J I S S A C H A R P D  
A Q I H C F S G G X N H W R K E O F D W  
B W W S I M E O N C S W U T L A P R A L  
X H T J S Y N W H I L R S G D Q P V N Q  
X U J J X X F H Y Z A N O X M R O X I D  
P B E N J A M I N S W Q E E P Q S U C M

BENJAMIN  
ZILPAH  
JACOB  
LEAH  
JUDAH  
BILHAH  
ZEBULUN

JOSEPH  
NAPHTALI  
LEVI  
REUBEN  
SIMEON  
ISSACHAR

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ESAU  
LABAN  
GAD  
DINAH

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