

Jacob found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. After stealing his older brother’s blessing, he fled his home to escape Esau’s anger. He spent time with his uncle Laban, got married, and fathered many children. Overall, Jacob prospered. God blessed him, but Jacob’s time with his uncle Laban did not end well. Laban’s sons accused Jacob of taking their father’s wealth.

God was with Jacob and when He told Jacob to leave, Jacob did not hesitate. He gathered his family and all of his possessions and headed home to Canaan with Laban in pursuit. But uncertainty awaited Jacob in his homeland. His brother Esau was there. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau wanted to kill him.

God had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac, and He had promised to be with Jacob. But with Laban behind him and Esau before him, how could Jacob possibly survive?

Jacob tried to prepare for his meeting with Esau. He strategically divided his family into separate groups. He sent gifts ahead of them to appease Esau. That night, Jacob anxiously awaited word from Esau, and that is when he encountered the Lord.

Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? The victory was ironic; Jacob did not win by strength (God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch) but by confessing his dependence on God’s blessing.

Jacob had nowhere else to turn. He could not succeed by his own strength. Jacob held onto God and would not let go. God poured out His grace on Jacob. He blessed Jacob 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.

As you talk with your kids about this story, emphasize that **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. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus’ death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God’s family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God. (John 1:12)**

Check this session’s Activity Page and Big Picture Card as well as the Gospel Project for Kids Family App for ways to interact with the Bible content this week.

FAMILY STARTING POINTS

● **Babies and Toddlers**

○ God keeps His promises.

○ God told Jacob to go back home.

○ God gave Jacob a new name: Israel.

○ God sent Jesus through the people of Israel.

● **Preschool**

○ Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises.

○ God changed Jacob’s name to Israel.

● **Kids**

○ Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.

○ God changed Jacob’s name to Israel, the name of God’s covenant people.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE

● **Genesis 28:15**