



JACOB & ESAU

GENESIS 25:19–34; 27:1–46

GOAL

- ▶ **To teach children that lying and tricking people always results in problems. Children should be encouraged to be honest at all times.**
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CHARACTERS

- ▶ **Isaac:** He was father of Jacob and Esau. He gave them their birthrights and blessings before he died.

Rebekah: She was the mother of Jacob and Esau. She helped her son Jacob trick his father.

Jacob: He tricked his twin brother, Esau, into selling him his birthright.

Esau: He was tricked out of his birthright by his twin brother, Jacob.

MEMORY VERSE

- ▶ **Exodus 20:16:** You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.
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OVERVIEW

- ▶ **Read Genesis 25:19–34; 27:1–46:** Through a series of events and manipulations, Jacob was able to trick his twin brother, Esau, out of the blessing and birthright their father, Isaac, had planned to give him. After Jacob had tricked Esau, Rebekah, the twin's mother, learned that Esau was planning to kill Jacob. To save Jacob from Esau's plan, Rebekah convinced Isaac that Jacob should go stay with her brother Laban so Jacob could choose a wife from his own people. Isaac agreed and sent Jacob to find a wife in the land of Haran.
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SUGGESTIONS

- ▶ Translated, Jacob's name means "he deceives" or "he cheats," so Jacob's actions in life should come as no surprise. Jacob tricks and deceives both his brother and his father into taking what was meant for his older brother.

Jacob put himself onto the path of God's blessing. He didn't deserve such gracious treatment, but God keeps his promises. That's not to say that Jacob did not suffer the consequences for his actions. God blessed him despite his sins, but he did not stop the consequences of sin from playing out in Jacob's life.

Although Isaac followed God, Jacob, it seems, did not. In Genesis 27:20, Jacob answers his father's question by saying, "Because the Lord your God granted me success." If the Lord had been Jacob's God, it is likely that Jacob wouldn't have resorted to deceit to gain the birthright and blessing.

PRE-LESSON ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Guess Who | Supplies:** dress-up clothes, sunglasses, regular glasses, wigs, and hats.

Divide the class into two teams. One team remains in the classroom, while the other team goes into another room or area where they will disguise themselves using the available materials. One at a time, the disguised students go back into the classroom. The team gets one try to guess who the student is underneath the disguise. Play continues until all students have had a chance to disguise themselves, or until the allotted amount of time has expired.



MEMORY
VERSE
MEANING

- ▶ **Exodus 20:16:** Often, we are tempted to lie. We can see how it will benefit us in the short-term, but we fail to see the long-term consequences of such actions. When we don't tell the truth, it hurts the person we lie about and ourselves.
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POST-LESSON
ACTIVITY

- ▶ **Truth or Lie Stew | Supplies:** a large pot, a ladle, two large bowls, and cut outs of vegetable shapes

Come up with a number of questions based on the story that are true and false. These questions should be obvious. For example, "The name of Jacob's brother was Eeoyre," or "Esau sold his birthright to his brother for a bowl of stew." Divide the class into two teams. Instruct the students to raise their hands when they know whether the statement is true or a lie. When they get a question right, they get to come up and ladle out a vegetable from the pot. The team with the most vegetables in their bowl wins.

TAKE
HOME

- ▶ Jacob lied his way into success, making him a great example of how not to act. What God promises us, he will provide. We do not need to manipulate situations to play out in our favor.

No matter what sins we've committed in our past, God can use us to carry out His will. Though forgiven, God will not stop the consequences of sin from affecting our lives. If God is the main focus of our lives, His Holy Spirit will help us avoid sin.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 1



Q1a: How were Esau and Jacob different?

A1: Jacob liked to stay inside, and Esau like to play outside.

Q1b: Do you have any siblings or cousins?

TN: Even though we come from the same family, we often have very different interests. No interests are better than another, but it can help us to have more in common with some people than with others. In this story, we don't hear about anything Jacob and Esau had in common, but it is likely that they weren't constantly fighting or disagreeable to each other as they grew up. Being kind and helping out our families is very important.

SLIDE 2



Q2a: Why was Esau so hungry?

A2: Esau had been out hunting all day.

Q2b: While hiking, your friend finds that a hole in his canteen has leaked out all his water. You agree to share your water in exchange for his boots. Is this right?

TN: No, we should be willing to share our water with our friend without getting anything in return. Our desire to help others should not come from a desire to gain anything. While Esau's need seems exaggerated, Jacob used this moment as a way to trick his brother out of something very valuable.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 3



Q3a: Who overheard the conversation between Isaac and Esau?

A3: Esau and Jacob's mother, Rebekah, overheard the conversation.

Q3b: If you bought a ticket to see a movie, would you try to sneak into the theater through one of the exit doors?

TN: No, with a ticket, we can enter the theater through the doors like honest customers. There is no need for us to be sneaky. When Rebekah was pregnant with Jacob and Esau, God told her that the oldest would bow to the youngest. If she had shared that bit of information with Isaac, it is likely that Jacob wouldn't have had to resort to underhanded tactics and deceit to claim the blessing. If God truly wanted Jacob to have the birthright and blessing, God would have provided it in such a way that sin would not have been necessary. God keeps his promises and never tempts us to sin.

SLIDE 4



Q4a: What did Rebekah and Jacob do to disguise Jacob as Esau?

A4: Jacob dressed in Esau's clothes and they tied goat skin to his neck and arms.

Q4b: If someone wanted to dress up like you, what would he or she need to wear?

TN: Would a wig be necessary? What kind of shoes or pants? Let the students come up with answers and have fun with this. Jacob went to great lengths to pass himself off as his much bigger and hairier brother.



QUESTION & ANSWER

SLIDE 5



Q5a: Did Isaac automatically believe that Jacob was Esau?

A5: No, Isaac asked to feel Jacob's arms and neck before he believed Jacob's lie.

Q5b: Have you ever played a joke on someone?

TN: If Rebekah and Jacob's trick hadn't led to something as serious as stealing Esau's blessing from him, it would have been a good joke played on Isaac. Playing jokes or tricking someone with the intent to hurt or harm is wrong. Rebekah and Jacob tricked Isaac with the intent to steal Esau's blessing, and they were very wrong to have done it.

SLIDE 6



Q6a: What did Esau want to do when he found out what Jacob had done?

A6: Esau wanted to kill Jacob.

Q6b: In a championship race, you're about to cross the finish line in second place. You're close enough to shove the other runner. Do you do it to win?

TN: If we shoved the other runner to win, we didn't really win. The other person, if left alone, would have won. She is a better runner than we are, and she deserves to win, not us. When we face temptation like this, it sometimes helps to think of what our actions would do to the other person. Look at what Rebekah and Jacob's trickery caused Esau and Isaac. Esau lost a blessing over his life that should have been his. Isaac, the father and head of their household was made a fool instead of being respected and obeyed. When we sin, we hurt others and ourselves.



**MEMORY
VERSE**

▷ **Exodus 20:16:** You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

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BIG IDEA

▷ Being deceitful is a sin that hurts others and ourselves.

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**CLOSING
PRAYER**

▷ Dear God, You have taught us to be honest. Help us to be honest and tell the truth at all times. We ask these things in Jesus' name, Amen.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 1



Abraham had one son, Isaac. Isaac ended up marrying Rebekah. They had twin boys named Esau and Jacob. Even though Jacob and Esau were twins, they didn't look anything alike. Jacob liked to stay inside and do peaceful things. Esau was hairy, and he loved to play outside and hunt animals. Because Esau was the first of the twins to be born, he was the one who would receive the family birthright and blessing.

SLIDE 2



One day, Jacob was outside the tent cooking some stew. Esau had been hunting in the field all day. Exhausted from the hard work of looking for wild animals, he was famished. As Esau got closer to the tents, he smelled Jacob's delicious stew. "Jacob!" Esau shouted to his brother. "Let me eat some of that red stew you're making! I'm tired and hungry!" Jacob was a trickster. "Okay, but give me your birthright in exchange," Jacob said. "Fine, I'm about to die of hunger! I don't care about the birthright, just give me some stew!" Esau roared. Esau grabbed the stew, some bread, and devoured it as fast as he could. Esau had just rejected his birthright, leaving Jacob to inherit all of the family's wealth and possessions.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 3



Many years later, Isaac was old and dying. It was time to bless his oldest son, Esau. "Come here, Esau," he said. "I'm old. I'm going to give you the blessing. But please, make me some of my favorite stew." While this happened, Rebekah listened in on the conversation. She loved Jacob more and wanted him to have the blessing. So she devised a scheming plan. "Instead of Esau, you're going to get the food and get the blessing!" Rebekah said. "But Esau is hairy! I'm smooth. Esau smells like the outdoors, and I don't! Dad is going to know I'm tricking him! He'll curse me and not bless me!" Jacob cried. "Don't worry. I'll take the blame and the curse. Just do what I tell you," Rebekah said.

SLIDE 4



So they made food and tied goat skin to Jacob's neck and arms. Jacob even dressed himself in Esau's clothes so he would smell like Esau. Isaac was so old that he was nearly blind. Rebekah and Jacob hoped that he wouldn't be able to tell that it was Jacob instead of Esau who came to get the blessing.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 5



Jacob went to his father, pretending to be Esau. "My father, it's me," Jacob said, trying to make his voice low and gruff like his brother. "Who are you?" his father asked in a feeble voice. "It's me, Esau. I did what you wanted. Here's your food. Now, please bless me," Jacob said. "But how did you find it so quickly, my son?" Isaac asked. "The Lord your God granted me success," Jacob lied. Isaac wasn't convinced. "Come here, I want to feel you to see if you're really Esau," Isaac said. Isaac patted Jacob's hands and his neck and felt the goat skin that his mother had put there. "Strange. The voice sounds like Jacob, but the smell is Esau's. The hairy skin is Esau's," Isaac noted. So Isaac ate the food and then gave Jacob the blessing. "Let people serve you, and nations bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers," Isaac said. There and then, Isaac gave Jacob the blessing of the first born, just as Rebekah had planned.



LESSON TRANSCRIPT

SLIDE 6



Hours later, Esau returned from the hunt and prepared his father's favorite stew. He came in to the tent and gave his father the stew, waiting for Isaac to bless him. "What? Who are you?" Isaac asked in confusion. "Your firstborn son, Esau, of course," Esau replied. "No! Oh no!" Isaac trembled violently. "Then who came in before you? I blessed him instead of you. He got the firstborn blessing!" Esau roared, filling the tent with a horrible cry of anger and grief. Esau hated Jacob. He had tricked him out of his birthright and now his blessing—his whole life's reward for being the first son of his father. Esau said he would kill Jacob. Rebekah wouldn't let this happen, so she convinced Isaac that it would be best for Jacob to go stay with her brother in the land of Haran so Jacob could choose a wife from his own people. Isaac agreed and sent Jacob away; but sending Jacob away would not make him safe forever. Lying and tricking people always creates problems. What Jacob and Rebekah did was very wrong. Jacob would pay the consequences of his actions.