

LESSON 21

# Jacob's Wrestling Match

GENESIS 32:1-32



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**BIBLE TRUTH**

GOD PROTECTS, DISCIPLINES, AND BLESSES HIS CHOSEN ONES

LESSON SNAPSHOT

1. OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN

2. BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** *The Gospel Story Bible* (story 21)

3. BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN

Where Is Jesus?

**SUPPLIES:** Bible (ESV preferred); Review “Where Is Jesus?” to prepare

4. SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN

**SUPPLIES:** Snack food/water

5. SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5–10 MIN

6. ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS (CHOOSE ONE OR MORE) 20–30 MIN

Coloring Page 20

**SUPPLIES:** markers/crayons

The Name Change

**SUPPLIES:** two sheets of paper taped back to back—one with the letter *J*; the other, with the letter *I*, or the letters written on the front and back of card stock

The Angel’s Touch

7. CLOSING PRAYER . . . . . 5 MIN

**TOTAL 60–75 MIN**

THE LESSON

**OPENING ACTIVITY AND INTRODUCTION . . . . . 5 MIN**

In today's lesson the children will learn how Jacob wrestled with the angel of the Lord.

Challenge the children to an arm wrestling contest. Ask for volunteers. Line up three challengers. Quickly (but gently) beat the first two challengers. With the third challenger, apply just enough strength to make it a good contest. Finally after struggling for a minute or two, allow the child to win. Lead the class in shouts of hurray for the winner! Ask the class the following questions:

- Do you think I was stronger than all three?  
*(yes)*
- What happened in the last arm wrestle?  
*(The teacher allowed the child to win.)*

Explain to the children that God is all-powerful and could use his strength against us any time he wishes. Because of his love and his plan for us though, he sometimes allows us to question him and learn from that rather than overpower us right away.

Pray for the remainder of the class time before moving forward with the lesson.

**BIBLE STORY . . . . . 10 MIN**

Read story 21, "Jacob's Wrestling Match," from *The Gospel Story Bible*.

**BIBLE STORY DISCUSSION . . . . . 5 MIN**

After reading the story, use the following questions to involve the children in a discussion:

- What is this story about?  
*(Jacob wrestles with an angel.)*
- How long did Jacob wrestle?  
*(all night long)*

- What did the angel do to Jacob?  
*(touched his hip and put it out of joint)*
- Who sent the angel to wrestle Jacob?  
*(God)*

**SNACK QUESTIONS . . . . . 10 MIN**

While the children are eating the snack, engage them by asking:

- Did angels ever appear to anyone else in the Bible?  
*(Yes, angels announced the birth of Jesus to the shepherds keeping watch over the flocks. The angel Gabriel appeared to Zechariah to announce John the Baptist's birth. Gabriel also appeared to Mary to announce Jesus' birth. Angels also appeared to Joseph and to the wise men.)*
- What was special about this angel?  
*(Genesis 32:30 tells us that Jacob saw God face-to-face. The angel Jacob wrestled with was God who appeared as an angel.)*
- Who was more powerful: Jacob or God who appeared as an angel?  
*(God)*
- How do we know from the story that God was more powerful?  
*(The two wrestled all night long, and then God put Jacob's hip out of joint.)*

**SWORD BIBLE MEMORY . . . . . 5-10 MIN**

Take time during the class to review the SWORD Bible Memory verses with the class. Provide the opportunity for each child to recite the verses to an adult worker.

**ACTIVITIES AND OBJECT LESSONS. . . . . 20-30 MIN**

**Coloring Activity**

**SUPPLIES:**

- ✓ coloring page 21—one copy for each child

While the children are coloring, engage them by asking the following questions:

## Where Is Jesus? \_\_\_\_\_

Please use the following comments connecting today's lesson to the gospel to help inform your understanding and serve you by aiding your preparation for class. Remember, we want to do more than present disconnected Bible stories and lessons to our young children. We want them to understand how each story in the Bible plays a part in God's greater plan of redemption.

Passage: John 12:13

Can you imagine what Jacob must have thought when in the middle of the night a stranger appeared and began to wrestle with him? Jacob may have thought it was a robber or one of Esau's men. They wrestled all night, but Jacob did not give in. Then, toward morning, the man put Jacob's hip out of joint with one small touch. Suddenly, Jacob realized he had been wrestling with God.

Despite the pain, Jacob held on and refused to let go until God blessed him. So God blessed Jacob and gave him a very special name: Israel. From that time on, God's people would be known as the people of Israel.

When Jesus came riding into Jerusalem just before going to the cross, the crowds waved palm branches and shouted, "Blessed is ... the King of Israel."

- Do all angels have wings?  
*(No, some look like ordinary men.)*
- What did Jacob say to the angel?  
*("I will not let you go unless you bless me" [Genesis 32:26].)*
- Why did Jacob know the angel could bless him?  
*(Jacob thought that he must be powerful because he caused his hip to ache just by touching it.)*

### The Name Change

#### SUPPLIES:

- ✓ two sheets of paper—one with the letter *J* on it and the other with the letter *I* on it. Tape the sheets of paper back to back. Alternatively, print the letters on the front and back of a piece of card stock.

Remind the children that in today's story God changes Jacob's name to Israel. Tell them that each time you read the name Jacob in your story you are going to show them the letter *J* and they should shout out the name "Jacob," and the same for the letter *I*. When they see you raise the letter *I* they should shout out "Israel." *(Even though your children in class cannot read or may even not know their letters, they can learn to associate the two names with the different looking letters.)*

Read the story again and raise the letters as you go. This time, they will be participating and looking forward to calling out the right name.

Go on to tell the children that the whole nation of God's people was named after Israel because they all came after him. Even today we call the Jewish nation, the nation of Israel. When you explain this to them, keep using the cards that you made so that they say the word Jacob or Israel as you instruct.

### **The Angel's Touch**

Have the class line up along the wall. Stand in the center of the room and pretend to be an angel. Have the children cross the room one at a time, walking past you. Touch them with one finger on the leg or arm. The children are to act as though the touch hurt them. If they are touched on the leg, they should limp or hop to the other side of the room. If they are touched on the arm they should hold the "wound" with the other arm. When everyone has had a chance, gather around and discuss the game:

- **What does our game remind you of from the story?**  
*(When the angel touched Jacob's hip he hurt him.)*

Ask the children to point to their hip.

- **What can we learn from our story today?**  
*(God is very powerful. He can cause pain with just one touch.)*
- **Why do you think God did this to Jacob?**  
*(He wanted Jacob to always remember how powerful he is.)*

**PRAY** ..... **5 MIN**

Take time at the end of class to thank God for all you learned today. Include parts of your Bible lesson in your prayer as another way for the children to remember what today's lesson was about.

LESSON 21 - JACOB'S WRESTLING MATCH

