

ELEMENTARY

LESSON 4

JACOB WRESTLES WITH GOD

LESSON AT A GLANCE

IN GOD'S BIG STORY

Jacob is left alone with his thoughts and doubts, and God sends an angel who wrestles him and gives him a new name.

WONDER TRUTH

God Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 32-33

WORD OF WONDER

Before you created the whole world and the mountains were made, from the beginning to the end you are God. Psalm 90:2 (NIrV)

This lesson is flexible and can be used in large group/small group, age-graded classrooms, and one-room classrooms.



CURIOSITY

15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An object lesson, experiment, or activity that sparks curiosity, encourages exploration, and gets kids thinking about the wonder of God.

- Welcome Question: What is the first letter of your name? What is your favorite describing word that also begins with that letter?
- Curiosity Questions
- Multisensory Activity: The Notable Name Memory Game
- Declaring God's Wonder

BELIEF

25-35 minutes • Large Group

A deep and interactive dive into Scripture that guides kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

- Prayer of Invitation
- God's Big Story: Hear It, Watch It, Experience It!
- Connecting the Wonder Truth
- In Awe of God's Wonder
- Word of Wonder: Psalm 90:2

WONDER@HOME A

FOR FAMILIES

Designed for families to engage in the wonder of God together at home. This resource includes a video, conversation starter, Word of Wonder, and hands-on activities for families.

FAITH

15 minutes • Small Group

An intentional conversation that helps kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own, emboldening their faith and fostering a deeper understanding of their place in God's kingdom.

- Word of Wonder Activity
- Discussion Questions for Younger and Older Kids
- Small Group Prayer Time

IDENTITY

10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

An interactive worship response activity that creates space for God to remind kids of these core truths: I am known, I am loved, I am led, and my life can tell of God's wonder.

- Responding in Worship: A Name from God
- Blessing Your Kids







LESSON 4 AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH

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Genesis 32-33

WORD OF WONDER

Psalm 90:2

INVITATION

We invite you to pause, listen, and shift your gaze toward the Father ...

One of my favorite moments before Jacob wrestles with God is in Genesis 32:7 when we discover Jacob was worried and afraid. I'm so grateful that, amid the pages of Scripture, we find real, human emotions.

I mean, how would you feel? You have stolen your brother's birthright, masquerading in goat hair; you have run away and been hoodwinked by your now father-in-law; you know it's time to come home and face the music, but look around you. Look what you have done!

Yet, following Jacob's very honest look at how the next few days could go, he prays. After taking stock of the situation, Jacob does the only thing he knows to do in the face of his future: he talks to the Author. And amid reminding God of His promises, he asks God to save him from his brother. Jacob did all he could do to prepare for this encounter with Esau; now he is asking God to do what only He can do.

Read Genesis 32–33 for context, and then go back and read Genesis 32:22–32. What do you question in this event? If you could ask Jacob three questions about this experience, what would they be?

I am curious about the limp. Did it give him pain all his life or simply remind him of the thing he could never forget? But I don't question Jacob winning the wrestling match. I think he won for so many reasons, but mostly because every good father lets his child win at wrestling at least once. God allowed it, and Jacob never forgot it.

So how did you get your limp? Where has He conceded so that you would continue to lean in and ask questions about who He is? What has His faithfulness looked like to you, as you look back at how far you've walked with Him by your side?

-Christie Penner Worden

Cross-Regional Kids & Curriculum Pastor

DID YOU KNOW?

FOUNDATION BUILDING BLOCKS

WHO?

Jacob, son of Isaac and Rebekah, and twin brother to Esau, deceived his brother and lived in hiding for many years. While Jacob was in hiding, he married and had a family.

WHAT?

Years earlier, Jacob tricked Esau and received their father's blessing, so Jacob was afraid Esau might kill him. After Jacob prayed for God's protection, an angel who looked like a man came and wrestled with him until morning.

WHERE?

Jacob had been in Haran living with his uncle. When the time came, he returned to Canaan and settled in Bethel, where he previously had seen God and built an altar because he knew God was there.

WHEN?

Twenty years after he fled to safety, Jacob left Haran with his family and all he had accumulated to head back to the place God had shown him. That 20 years allowed for reconciliation between him and Esau.

WHY?

Jacob was afraid of Esau and prayed for God's deliverance. God sent an angel and blessed Jacob. Despite all his deceptions and lies, God still chose to protect Jacob and use his family to fulfill the promise He had made to Abraham.



LESSON 4

AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH

WORD OF WONDER

God Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE
Genesis 32–33

Psalm 90:2

Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 ELEMENTARY

15 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

Spark curiosity, encourage exploration, and get kids thinking about the wonder of God.

SUPPLIES: adhesive name tags, markers, colored pencils, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Jacob Wrestles with God Welcome Question Slide, What's Special About My Name Slide, Jacob Wrestles with God Wonder Truth Slide, Jacob Wrestles with God Declaration Slide

Series Bumper Video

Introduce kids to the God's Family series by playing the God's Family Series Bumper Video.

Leader Tip

As part of your prep work, decorate an adhesive name badge with the first letter of your own name! Wear it proudly as an example for the kids!

Welcome Question

Before kids arrive, display the Jacob Wrestles with God Welcome Question Slide or write the following questions on a whiteboard: "What is the first letter of your name? What is your favorite describing word that also begins with that letter?"

family What is the first letter of your name? What is your favorite describing word that also begins with that letter?

As kids arrive ...

Warmly welcome kids with a smile and show them the Welcome Question. Read the Welcome Question aloud for the benefit of younger kids and share your own response. Give everyone adhesive name tags, markers, and colored pencils. Invite them to create beautiful badges displaying the first letter of their names. If they have trouble thinking of descriptive words to go with their names, display the What's Special

About My Name Slide for help. Encourage kids to share their favorite describing words with their neighbors.



Use one of the countdown videos provided and then show it every week two minutes before your official start time.

At your start time ...

Enthusiastically welcome all the kids. Encourage them to wear their letter badges. Call on several who would like to share their answers to the Welcome Question: What is the first letter of your name? What is your favorite describing word that also begins with that letter?

I love talking about your special names and special qualities. Did you know God has special names and qualities, too? It's time to be curious!

Curiosity Questions

Pose the following "I'm curious" questions. Say "I'm curious..." between each question and give kids a chance to think about and answer each. After each question, consider having kids share their ideas with a neighbor before you call on one or two of them to share with the group.

I'm curious ...

- When you hear your own name, how do you feel? What does it remind you of?
- Just for fun, if you could choose a new nickname, what would you choose? Why do you like that name? Share about that.
- Do you think God has a special name for you? What could it be?

Multisensory Activity: The Notable Name Memory Game

Everyone will get up and form a large circle around the room. (If your group is very large, consider breaking into two or more smaller circles for this game.) Begin with the youngest person in the room, who should point to himself and state his describing word and first name. For example: Joyful Jonah.

Make It Virtual!-

This activity would work great in a virtual or digital ministry!

The next person in the circle will point to the first person and repeat, "Joyful Jonah" then point to herself and add her own combination name afterward. For example: Joyful Jonah, Confident Cara. The third person will repeat both names and add his own to the end of the list: Joyful Jonah, Confident Cara, Excellent Evan. The kids will continue like this until the last person has successfully said all the names. If anyone says the wrong name or cannot

remember some of the names, simply start over with that kid. This should allow everyone a chance to say their name and attempt to play the game. For an optional challenge, up the ante with the second round by adding personalized gestures!

Wow! It is so much fun to learn more about each other by playing the Notable Name Memory Game! Your names certainly suit you well! Today, in God's big story, we are going to learn more about a man

Make It Inclusive!

Some kids do better emotionally with games of collaboration where no one needs to be "out" of the game.



who was called Jacob until God gave him a new name with a very special meaning! God may have changed Jacob's name, but He never changed His mind about him. Even when Jacob made mistakes, God loved him, protected him, and kept His promises to him and his family because God never changes. Display the Jacob Wrestles with God Wonder Truth Slide. Today's Wonder Truth is "God is faithful."

Declaring God's Wonder

Display the Jacob Wrestles with God Declaration Slide. Read each line boldly and invite kids to repeat after you.

Thank You, God, that You are good! (Kids repeat.)

You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Kids repeat.)

And I am Your kid! (Kids repeat.)

You know me, love me, and lead me. (Kids repeat.)

You never change Your mind about me! (Kids repeat.)

You are always faithful! (Kids repeat.)

My life can tell of Your wonder! (Kids repeat.)



Our words have



Thank You, God, that You are good! (Repeat)
You made me on purpose, for a purpose. (Repeat)
And I am Your kidl (Repeat)
You know me, love me, and lead me. (Repeat)
You never change Your mind about me! (Repeat)
You are always faithful! (Repeat)
My life can tell of Your wonder! (Repeat)



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 ELEMENTARY

25-35 minutes • Large Group

Guide kids into knowing God more deeply, exploring His big story, and marveling at His wonder.

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), half sheets of paper (1 per kid), pencils **Wonder Ink RESOURCES:** Jacob Wrestles with God Title Slide, Jacob <u>Wrestles with God God's Big Story Video</u>, Jacob Wrestles with God Wonder Truth Slide, Word of Wonder Slide (optional)

Prayer of Invitation

Before entering into God's big story, lead kids in a prayer of invitation. Use the prayer here or your own words:

Holy Spirit, we invite You to speak to our hearts today as we remember what You did in the life of Jacob. Teach us more about Your love and your faithfulness. Lead us to a deeper understanding of who You are, God. You are faithful. In Jesus' name, Amen.

This is an opportunity to quiet hearts and invite the Holy Spirit to lead, teach, and reveal God's love to each kid (and you!).

LESSON 4 AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH

God Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 32-33

WORD OF WONDER

Psalm 90:2

HEAR IT,— WATCH IT,

EXPERIENCE IT!

This lesson includes three opportunities for your kids to enter the story—each one reinforces the others!

- 1. HEAR it read directly from the Bible.
- 2. WATCH it in a video.
- 3. EXPERIENCE it through the live script.

God's Big Story

Share your excitement with the kids as you open the Bible together.

Help them know they can pick up God's holy Word for themselves and find this story in Genesis, the first book of the Old Testament. Encourage

volunteers to assist the kids as they locate Genesis 32. Display the Jacob Wrestles with God Title Slide.

Let's start by reading part of God's big story directly from the Bible. Afterward, we will watch and experience more of the story!



Read Genesis 32:11–12, 24–30; 33:1–4 aloud as the kids follow along. Then do one or both of the following:

- View Jacob Wrestles with God God's Big Story Video
- Use the following Jacob Wrestles with God Experience It! Script

LESSON 4 Jacob Wrestles with God Experience It! Script

SUPPLIES: none

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: none

Today, as I tell you part of God's big story, I will ask you to respond by using facial expressions and/or body language. So, if I were to say, "Abraham was excited," how would you use facial expressions or body language to show me excitement? Allow kids to respond freely.

Or, if I were to say, "Jacob hid in a tent," how would you show me you were hiding? Again, allow kids to respond. Great job!

Throughout today's story, I will ask you to respond to certain words the same way you just did for our two examples. Does everyone understand? Allow kids to respond. Great, then let's get started!

Jacob was a grandson of Abraham, and God promised to bless the whole world through their family. But Jacob was also a trickster. His older brother, Esau, foolishly gave Jacob his birthright, and Jacob deceived their father, Isaac, so he received God's blessing instead of his older brother. This made Esau jealous and angry.

Can you show me what it looks like to be jealous or angry? Allow kids to respond.

Good job! Esau would have killed his brother, Jacob, if Jacob hadn't escaped and lived in hiding for many years.

Can you show me how you would hide? Allow kids to respond.

For two whole decades, God was with Jacob, even in the foreign land where he lived with his uncle. Jacob got married and had many children, and so God's chosen family grew large. Jacob was a shepherd of flocks.

Can you show me how you would watch over a flock of sheep? Allow kids to respond.

Whatever Jacob did, God blessed and multiplied. This made Jacob very happy.

Can you show me what it looks like to be happy? Allow kids to respond.

Awesome! Finally, the time came for Jacob's family to return to the land God promised them. Jacob knew that he would have to face his brother, Esau, but all he could do was pray that God would protect him.

Can you show me how you would pray and ask God to protect you? Allow kids to respond.

Jacob knew that he had wronged his brother, and he had no doubt that Esau was still angry with him, even after 20 years.

As Jacob's large clan traveled together, Jacob sent messengers ahead of them to talk with Esau. The messengers reported that Esau was coming out to meet them. And, Esau was bringing 400 men with him. Jacob feared that Esau was bringing these men to attack and kill them all!

Can you show me what it looks like to be afraid? Allow kids to respond.

Then Esau would have his revenge.

LESSON 4 Jacob Wrestles with God Experience It! Script

So, Jacob prayed that God would be faithful and protect him, and he sent gifts to his brother. Jacob was very wealthy, so he had goats and sheep and camels and cows and donkeys to give. He thought, "If Esau is angry with me, maybe all these gifts will calm him down."

Can you show me what it looks likes to be calm? Allow kids to respond.

Then Jacob put his family on the other side of a river to keep them safe. At night while Jacob was alone with his thoughts and fears, an angel who looked like a man came and wrestled him. Jacob was surprised to see this stranger.

Can you show me what it looks like to be surprised? Allow kids to respond.

He didn't know who this stranger was, but he held the angel tightly and said, "I will not let you go until you bless me!" So, the angel blessed Jacob and said, "No longer will your name be Jacob, but your name is now Israel. You have fought with God and with men and have prevailed." Jacob understood that God was watching over him.

When the dawn came, Jacob gathered his family and watched as Esau approached with 400 men who could attack at any moment. Jacob was still afraid.

Can you show me what it looks like to be afraid? Allow kids to respond.

Because Jacob was afraid, he arranged his family into groups to protect the women and children, and he went to the front to face Esau.

When Esau approached, Jacob bowed down to show respect to his older brother. But instead of harming Jacob, Esau hugged and kissed him. They both were so happy to see one another that they cried.

Can you show me what it looks like to be happy? Allow kids to respond.

Jacob introduced his family. He said to Esau, "Now that I see you, it's as if I have seen the face of God. Accept my gifts."

Esau wanted Jacob to travel with him, but Jacob returned to the land that was promised to the family of Abraham. He set up his tents and built an altar for the worship of God.

Can you show me how you would build a tent and altar? Allow kids to respond.

Jacob would never forget his experiences. He could only say that God had been with him and protected him all the way. OK, now this one is a little harder because you'll need to show me how you would feel.

Can you show me how you feel knowing that God is protecting you? Allow kids to respond.

The amazing thing about Jacob's life is that Jacob did not do everything right. He cheated his brother and lied to his father. God could have said, "I change my mind, and you will not be the family I use to bless the world." But God did not break His promise.

God was with Jacob and protected him from harm. And God did use Jacob's family to bring blessings to the whole world. One day Jesus, the Savior, would be born from this very family. Even though humans make mistakes and do not keep all their promises, God is faithful. Always.

Connecting the Wonder Truth

Display the Jacob Wrestles with God Wonder Truth Slide. Pose the following question to kids to help them connect the Wonder Truth to God's big story:

Our Wonder Truth today is GOD IS FAITHFUL.

Where did you see our Wonder Truth in action in the story? Allow kids to answer freely.



In Awe of God's Wonder

Leader Tip –

Simply ponder kids' responses and questions without attempting to answer them. Embrace the sense of awe and amazement.

Spend a few moments allowing kids to think about the wonder of God's story, ask questions, and simply be in awe of Him!

My goodness! What surprised you the most about this fascinating part of God's big story?

Allow kids to answer freely. Consider sharing your thoughts as well.

What did you find yourself thinking about as these events unfolded? Give the kids time to voice thoughts and questions.

In what ways did Jacob change throughout the story? In what ways did God stay the same? Invite kids to share their initial observations first with a neighbor and then with the whole group.

Word of Wonder

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Slide

When we honor God by memorizing His Word, we are doing something very powerful! Hiding God's Word in your heart means you will carry it with you, wherever you go, for the rest of your life! Nothing can ever take it away! Let's review our Word of Wonder together. Let's hide Psalm 90:2 in our hearts right now and keep it forever.

Have kids turn to Psalm 90:2 in their Bibles. Display the Word of Wonder Slide. Together, read the verse several times. This is a declaration of truth! So, encourage the kids to recite the verse in their strongest, most authoritative voices.

Discuss these optional questions:

- This verse describes the greatness and the vastness of God. What is the biggest, most enormous thing you have ever seen?
- When you hear from the beginning to the end, what do you imagine or see in your mind?
- What great things did God do in today's story that show us He thinks BIG?



Curiosity

Belief

Faith

Identity

LESSON 4 **ELEMENTARY**

15 minutes • Small Group

Help kids see the wonder of God's story and how it connects to their own story.

SUPPLIES: Bibles (1 per kid), half sheets of paper (1 per kid), pencils

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Word of Wonder Slide

LESSON 4 **AT A GLANCE**

WONDER TRUTH

God Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE

Genesis 32-33

WORD OF WONDER

Psalm 90:2

Word of Wonder Activity

Display the Word of Wonder Slide and have kids look up Psalm 90:2 in their Bibles.

Give each kid at least one sheet of paper and a pencil. Display the Word of Wonder Slide or write out the verse for kids to see. One person in each group is going to silently choose a word from the memory verse and



draw a picture of that word on their paper. The rest of the group has to guess the word he has drawn. Continue playing until everyone has had a chance to draw. Have everyone recite the verse together at the end.

Make It Virtual!-

This activity would work great in a virtual or digital ministry!

Make It Inclusive! -

Creating pictures for words is incredibly helpful for children, especially children with special needs. Having visual aids to go with your activity helps all kids feel included and that you understand their needs.



Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2 (NIV)

Before you created the whole world and the mountains were made, from the beginning to the end you are God.

Psalm 90:2 (NIrV)

Discussion Questions for Younger Kids

- How did Jacob treat his brother when they were younger?
- What did Jacob do to try to calm Esau down?
- Why would Jacob go home even though he was afraid?
- What did you notice about God in the story? Why does that matter to you?
- Who do we trust when we are afraid? Why?
- How do you feel knowing that God has a plan and is faithful?

People are not perfect, but God is perfect. We often make mistakes and choose to do the wrong thing, but God is faithful always. Let's thank Him in prayer for His faithful love.

Leader Tip

Encourage kids to share all their ideas and thoughts. Listen deeply and see how God's Holy Spirit surprises you with new ideas! The faith of kids is so amazing!

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praise reports. Encourage them to thank God for His faithfulness in their lives. Be sensitive to any hesitancy to participate and warmly encourage quieter kids to pray silently if that makes them more comfortable, or to share an "unspoken" prayer request. Thank God for always being faithful to keep His promises!



Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.

Psalm 90:2 (NIV)

Before you created the whole world and the mountains were made, from the beginning to the end you are God.

Psalm 90:2 (NIrV)

Discussion Questions for Older Kids

- How would you describe Jacob at the beginning of this story?
 Why did he go to live with his uncle?
- How did Jacob change? What clues show us how much he changed through his experiences?
- Why did Jacob return home even though he was afraid?
- When we obey God, we can trust Him to be close to us. There are situations in all our lives where we need to follow God and trust Him. What does that look like for you?
- Who do we trust when we are afraid? Why?

God wants us to know His character and His nature. God loves because
He is loving. What does He do because He is faithful? How does that change how you see Him?

Small Group Prayer Time

Invite kids to share prayer requests and praise reports highlighting God's faithfulness. Invite the Holy Spirit to reveal God's faithfulness to you and develop faithfulness in you as a result. Be sensitive to any hesitancy to participate and warmly encourage quiet kids to pray silently if that makes them more comfortable, or to share an "unspoken" prayer request.

Leader Tip

Encourage kids to share all their ideas and thoughts. Listen deeply and see how God's Holy Spirit surprises you with new ideas! The faith of kids is so amazing!



LESSON 4

AT A GLANCE

WONDER TRUTH

God Is Faithful

SCRIPTURE

Psalm 90:2

Genesis 32-33

WORD OF WONDER

Curiosity

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LESSON 4 ELEMENTARY

10 minutes • Large Group or Small Group

Create space for God to remind kids they are known, loved, led, and their lives can tell of God's wonder.

SUPPLIES: pencils, colored pencils, markers, whiteboard (optional), dry-erase marker (optional)

Wonder Ink RESOURCES: Responding in Worship, Jacob Wrestles with God Name and Identity Slide, Name and Identity Sheet (1 per kid), God's Family Elementary Spotify playlist, Jacob Wrestles with God Blessing Slide

Responding in Worship

Gather kids together. Display the Responding in Worship Slide.

Set out pens, pencils, or markers. Play the song "God of Jacob" by Mountain Experience Collective or "Names" by Elevation and Maverick City from the God's Family



Elementary Spotify playlist. Let the kids spread out across the room and find a place to sit down in a comfortable position. Invite the kids to quiet their hearts, to be still and calm as they worship God and spend time in His presence. Encourage them to repeat the words quietly or simply listen as you pray these words over them:

Thank You, God, for revealing Your faithfulness in the life of Jacob.

Thank You for loving me and caring for me just like You watched over Jacob and his family. Thank You for Your promises to me as Your kid.

I invite You to mark my life with Your faithfulness like You did with

Jacob. Please show me how You see me and what You call me. I ask in Jesus'

name, Amen.

Now take time to listen to God. What name does God call you? Allow time for kids to ponder this question before moving on to the next question.

What does He see when He looks at you? Allow time for kids to ponder this question.

Leader Tip

Wait for kids to indicate they are ready for their response sheets. This builds eagerness and enthusiasm in the room as they seek guidance from the Holy Spirit.

Make It Inclusive!

If any kids hesitate to respond about themselves, modify the request. Ask them what name they use when talking to God, and how do they see God? Listen to these words: You are beloved. You are precious. You are My son. You are My daughter. You are My little one. You are worthy. Does another name come to mind? Allow space for kids to take in these names.

What do you think God loves about you? Give kids time to sit quietly and listen to what God is saying to them. Encourage them to pay attention to ideas that cross their minds. This can be the Holy Spirit

speaking to them!

Display the Name and Identity Slide. Ask kids to raise their hands when they have an idea of a name God is giving them or something He loves about them, and a leader will give them a Name and Identity Sheet.

Invite kids to write their names on the stone

in the picture. They may write their given name or a name God calls them. Some examples include beloved, daughter, son, precious, little one, etc. (Younger kids may need help spelling words, so consider writing these examples on the whiteboard.) Invite them to draw or write how God sees them in the space provided on their sheet.



Leaders can move through the room and help kids complete the Jacob

Wrestles with God Name and Identity Sheet. Encourage kids and ask questions. Pray with them if they need help.

Today we saw how God was faithful to Jacob and kept His promise. The same God that was faithful to Jacob is also faithful to us.

Blessing Your Kids

In God's big story, people and places are often given new names when God visits them.

Display the Jacob Wrestles with God Blessing Slide. As this activity winds down, when most of the kids have finished their Name and Identity Sheet, speak a blessing over the group.



Blessing: God blessed and protected Jacob throughout his life. He met with him, marked him, and gave him a new name. May you always hear God's voice calling you by name, too. Remember that no matter what, He is with you. As you walk with Him, may you always remember that God is faithful.