

Session 5

God's promises to Jacob

Our 5 to 8s may not be physically alone very often, but young children can often feel lonely and alone. Use this session to encourage them that wherever they are, whatever they are doing, however they are feeling, God is with them and will never leave them.

To plan your session... Choose a selection of *Opening, Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

Options to open your session...

Sing

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to remember that God is with us even when we are on our own

- 1 Teach the children the following words, sung to the tune of 'If you're happy and you know it, clap your hands':
When you're all alone in bed, God's with you. (x2)
When you're all alone in bed, you can sing this in your head,
When you're all alone in bed, God's with you.
- 2 Invite the children to invent more verses about other places they might be alone.
- 3 Explain that today they will hear about someone who discovered that God was with him when he was alone.

Shadow fun

Activity time: 5 minutes

Aim: to appreciate that God is always with us

You will need: a bright light

- 1 Set up the bright light in a darkened area so there are strong shadows.
- 2 Have fun experimenting with the different shadows the children can make with their hands and bodies.
- 3 Have a competition to see who can get the furthest from their shadow. Say that, just as in the bright light we always have our shadows next to us, so God is always next to us – not just in bright light, but all the time!

Aim

To find out that God is with us even when we're on our own

Bible passage

Genesis 28:10–22

Ready to use activity

Draw and discuss

Activity time: 5–10 minutes

Aim: to think about situations when we are on our own

- 1 Encourage the children to think of a situation in which they feel they are on their own. For example: going to a new school, being lost in a supermarket, being alone in the playground, while they are in bed at night, feeling left out on an outing to the park or at the swimming pool. Invite them to draw it.
- 2 Explain that although they feel they are on their own, God is still with them. Encourage them to draw God with them in their picture.

Tip for Leaders: It is important to have a variety of styles of activity in your group. Make time for movement, stillness, interaction and the creative arts.

Into the Bible - options to explore the Bible passage...

Ready ^{to use} activity

Bible story with actions

Activity time: 20 minutes

Aim: to find out that God is with us even when we are on our own

1 Remember

Ask the children if they can think of any people in the Bible who had special dreams. (Here are some examples: Joseph, Potiphar, Pharaoh, Nebuchadnezzar, Mary, Joseph, the wise men.) Challenge them to listen out for the special dream in today's story.

2 Story with drama

Tell the children that today's story goes a very long way back in time. Ask them to imagine that they are Jacob and act out the story. As you tell the story, do the actions yourself.

Story: Jacob set off on a very long journey on his own. *(Everyone walks on the spot or around your area if it is big enough.)*

He walked until it was getting dark. As he was tired he decided to stop for the night. He looked around for somewhere to sleep. *(Everyone stretch their arms, yawn, then lie down.)*

He was soon fast asleep. *(Invite the children to close their eyes and snore quietly.)*

As Jacob was sleeping he dreamed that he saw a stairway going from earth to heaven with angels going up and down. *(Encourage the children to imagine Jacob's dream as you continue to speak.)* As Jacob slept God spoke to him. *(Read Genesis 28:13-15 from a child-friendly Bible such as the Good News Bible or Contemporary English Version.)*

Jacob woke up. *(Encourage the children to suddenly sit up and open their eyes.)*

Ask the children how they think Jacob might have felt after he woke up. Read verses 16 and 17 and then continue:

Jacob got up and lifted up the stone he had used as a pillow and stood it upright to show that the place was a special place to worship God. *(Invite the children to mime standing the rock upright.)*

3 Think

See if the children can tell how Jacob knew that God was with him. Say that even though that may not happen to us, we know that God is everywhere, and so, wherever we are, God is with us.

4 Recap

Go through the story again, a bit faster. Encourage the children to do the actions as before, but add in the following refrain:

When you say, 'He was all on his own', they respond, 'But God was with him.'

Story: Jacob set off on a very long journey. He was all on his own... *(Refrain)*

He walked until it was getting dark. As he was tired he decided to stop for the night. He looked around for somewhere to sleep. He was all on his own... *(Refrain)*

He was soon fast asleep. He was all on his own... *(Refrain)*

As Jacob was sleeping he dreamed that he saw a stairway going from earth to heaven with angels going up and down. As Jacob slept God spoke to him.

Pause and see what the children remember about what God said to Jacob in Genesis 28:13-15, then continue:

Jacob woke up. He was all on his own... *(Refrain)*

Jacob got up and lifted up the stone he had used as a pillow and stood it upright to show that the place was a special place to worship God. He was all on his own... *(Refrain)*

You will find another
Into the Bible option
on the next page...

Into the Bible - options (continued)...

Bible story with models

Activity time: 20 minutes

Aim: to find out that God is with us even when we are on our own

You will need: chenille wires, a stone, sticky tack

1 Quiz

See how much of the story of Abraham and his descendants the children know.

Sample questions:

Whose family did God promise would be as large as the stars? (*Abraham's.*)

What was Abraham's wife called? (*Sarah.*)

What was their son called? (*Isaac.*)

Who did Isaac marry? (*Rebekah.*)

What were their twin sons called? (*Esau and Jacob.*)

What did the twins fight over? (*Jacob stole the blessing that Esau should have received as the firstborn.*)

2 Making

Help the children use the chenille wires to make props for the story: a person to be Jacob, a tall ladder and angels.

3 Story

Sit in a circle with your group. As you tell the story, encourage the children to walk the Jacob model around the circle, acting out the story you are telling.

Story: Jacob was going on a long journey to visit his uncle in a faraway land. Imagine what he might take with him. How would he feel? Who was with him? (*Walk the Jacob figure along the floor. Ask the children to pass him around the circle to help him make his journey.*)

Jacob walked and walked and walked until it started to get dark. He was very tired and lay down on the ground. He used a stone for a pillow. (*Ask the children with the Jacob model to lay him on the ground and put the stone under his head for a pillow.*)

Jacob started to dream of a stairway reaching from earth to heaven with angels on it who were going up and coming down. (*Invite the children who made the ladder to hold it up and the others to move their angels up and down the ladder. Encourage them to do this silently as they listen to what God said to Jacob.*)

Jacob dreamed that God was standing beside the ladder talking to him, saying: 'I am God. I will give you and your family this land on which you are lying. There will be so many people that they will live all over this land and other lands. Remember, Jacob, that I will be with you and protect you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have done all that I have promised you.'

Jacob woke up. (*Encourage the children to quickly move the ladder and the angels away from the Jacob figure and invite one child to make 'Jacob' sit up.*)

Suddenly Jacob realised that God was with him. He was not on his own. He got up early the next morning, took the stone that was under his head and stood it up to mark the spot as the special place where God had spoken to him. (*Invite a child to stand the Jacob figure up and tack the stone upright next to him.*)

4 Chat and remember

Ask the children what they liked best about the story. Encourage them to take away the model they made (you might need to divide up the ladder carefully!) to remind them that God is always with them, just like he was with Jacob when he thought he was alone.

More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

Session 6 Jacob gets married, Genesis 29-31

Session 7 Jacob goes home, Genesis 32,33

Session 8 God blesses Jacob, Genesis 35:1-15

Session 9 God at work, Genesis 45:1-13

Living the life - options to help live God's way...

Game

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to remember that God is always with us

You will need: diary from page 40

- 1 Invite the children to sit in two equal rows on the floor, facing each other, with their legs outstretched touching the person opposite to form a ladder. You may prefer them facing the front instead of jumping over each other's legs.
- 2 Label each pair with one of the place names from the diary on page 40, and talk about God being with them in each place.
- 3 Read the diary slowly. When you name a 'place', that pair must run over the ladder (legs) or through the aisle, and then return to their space. The child who gets back first gets a point. When you say, 'God is with me', encourage everyone to shout, 'Yeah!'

Puzzles

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to discuss with the children that God is with them

You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheets from pages 41 and 42

- 1 Make copies of pages 41 and 42, ideally so that they are back to back on one sheet of paper; you will need one copy per child. Give each child a copy of the *Splash!* sheet and challenge them to complete the puzzles.
- 2 Spend time chatting with the children about any situations when they felt alone or perhaps were with other people but felt afraid or worried. Reassure them that, just as he was with Jacob, God is with us, even if we are alone. Say short prayers for them individually, asking God to let them know how much he cares for them and thanking him that he is always with them.



Ready to use **activity**

Pray and sing

Activity time: 5-15 minutes

Aim: to remember that God is with us

- 1 Say the following responsive prayer, with the children saying the refrain, 'You are with me and I can be brave.' Ask the children to practise the refrain before you begin.

Father God, when sudden loud noises give me a fright,
You are with me and I can be brave.

When lightning flashes and thunder rumbles,
You are with me and I can be brave.

When ordinary things look much different in the dark,
You are with me and I can be brave.

When children much bigger than me are rushing around,
You are with me and I can be brave.

When I meet lots of people I've never seen before,
You are with me and I can be brave.

Wherever I go, whatever I do, thank you, God, that
You are with me and I can be brave.

- 2 You could also sing 'I am with you' from the *Bitesize Bible Songs* CD.

An MP3 for this activity is available in the zip folder.

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...

Get some large stones from a garden centre and help the children to write 'God is always with me' on them, decorating them with paints or pens.

Diary for 'Game'

home

school

park

garden

Girls' Brigade


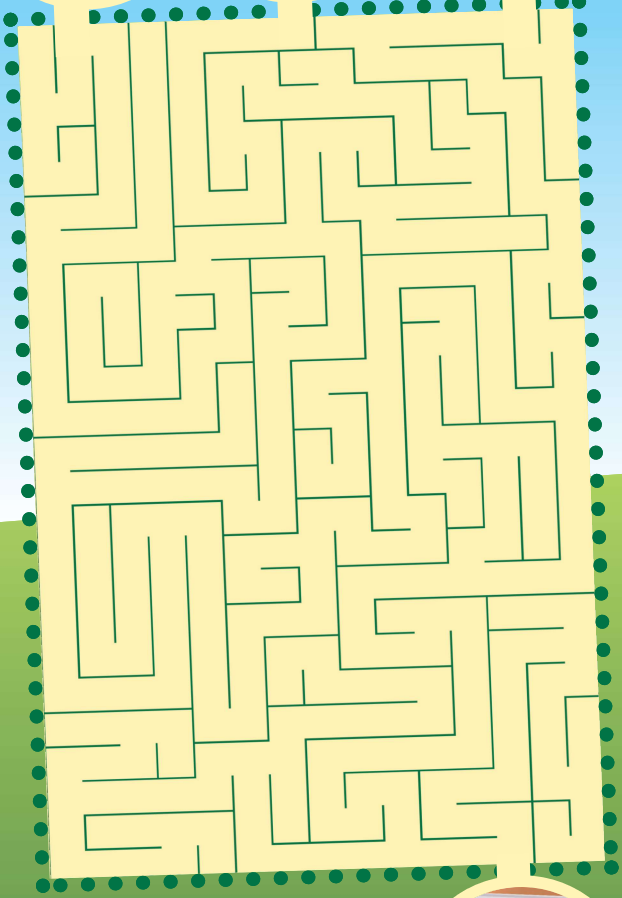

car

trumpet lesson

On Monday morning, I wake up at **home**. God is with me. I know I need to get up and go to **school** but I'm really tired and would rather stay at **home**. But I do get up and I get in the **car** and go to **school**. God is with me in the **car**. When I'm at **school**, I think about how I'd like to go to the **park** and play on the swings. I wonder if my friend, Gemma, would like to come with me. When I get **home** from **school**, I go and find Mum, who is in the **garden**. I ask her if Gemma can come and play and if we can go to the **park**. Mum reminds me that Mondays is my night for **trumpet lessons**, so I quickly leave the **garden** and run indoors to pack my trumpet. I dash off to my **trumpet lesson** instead of the **park**. God is even with me at my **trumpet lesson**. I wonder if he likes my trumpet playing.

Tuesday morning I go to school in the **car**. When I get there I talk to Gemma about my **trumpet lesson**. She says she would like to come to the **park** tonight, but she has **Girls' Brigade**. So we play while we're at **school** but when we go **home** we can't play together. I practise my pieces for next week's **trumpet lesson** then I go out to play, but only in the **garden**, not in the **park**. When I'm playing in the **garden**, I think about Gemma at **Girls' Brigade** and wonder if I should go to **Girls' Brigade** too. That way Gemma and I could play more often without having to go to the **park** or play in my **garden**. But then I think about all the practice I need to do for my **trumpet lessons** and I wonder if I really have time for **Girls' Brigade** as well. And I think about all the places I go: school in the **car**, **home**, the **garden**, the **park**, **trumpet lessons** and how I might go to **Girls' Brigade**, but how everywhere I go, *God is with me*.

light

Follow the maze.

Find out how many things you could play on at the park before going home.

Splash!

start

a i e o
n h p i
f t e l
i y a u
b g u z
r o n w
k s d y

finish

Find out where else God is with you by writing down the letters that lead to the finish.

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