

Session 7

Jacob goes home

Much of the difficulty in Jacob's life relates to problems in his family relationships, so be sensitive to any children for whom this is a current reality. However, don't be tempted to miss out tricky family events, as by exploring how God was with Jacob our 5 to 8s have a chance to discover that God is also always with them, even when things are difficult.

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...

Card game

Activity time: 10–15 minutes

Aim: to think about families

You will need: cards from pages 54 and 55

- 1 Choose four 'Happy families' cards for each family group from pages 54 and 55 – choose cards most suited to the children in your group. Cross out the names of the family members you are not using from the list on each card.
- 2 Play the game following the rules on page 54.
- 3 See how many complete families the children have collected. Point out that some 'families' are split up, just like in real life. (Be sensitive here!) Explain that it can be really difficult when families split up, but God promises to be with us even in difficult times.

Play fights

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to think about making up

You will need: play people

- 1 Say that today's story is about two brothers, who had had a big fight, meeting again after a long time.
- 2 Invite the children to make up a story with the play people about a fight between brothers or sisters and how they became friends again.
- 3 Tell the children that God wants us to forgive each other, even if the things someone has done to us are bad. We can forgive other people because God forgives us for all the wrong things we do and say.

Aim

To know that God is with us in difficult relationships

Bible passage

Genesis 32,33

Ready to use activity

Thanks

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to thank God for people we love

- 1 Ask the children to think of someone they really love. Find out why they love that person and how they show their love for them. Encourage them to write the name of the person or draw them on a sticky note and stick it on themselves over their heart. Invite the children to thank God for their friendship and love.
- 2 Ask them if they know of someone else who loves them. Explain that whereas friends may stop liking us for a while and family members may have to leave us, God never stops loving us.

Tip for Leaders: Challenging behaviour is not exclusively the responsibility of the child. They may just be tired, bored, find an activity difficult or just be feeling out of sorts that day.

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

Ready to use activity

Bible story with ‘mistakes’

Activity time: 15–20 minutes

Aim: to know that God is with us in difficult relationships

1 Think about

Invite the children to look at the SU Bible *Timeline* and see if they can find any people who appear to have enemies – for example, Gideon, Daniel, Jesus and Paul. Discuss briefly why they had enemies. If you do not have the *Bible Timeline*, encourage the children to think of Bible stories about enemies, for example, David and Goliath. Explain that sometimes countries become enemies and may even go to war. Sometimes friends and families fall out.

If you have done them, ask the children who they have been learning about in Sessions 5 and 6. Ask who Jacob had fallen out with and why. Explain that, although Jacob had to run away from his angry brother, God had been with him and blessed him. But now God wanted Jacob to return home again. Ask the children how they think Jacob felt about that.

2 Telling the story

Encourage the children to listen very carefully as you read the following summary, leaving out the words in brackets.

Story: Jacob was on his long journey home. Before he reached the country where Esau lived, Jacob sent messengers (a text message) to Esau telling him that he was on his way home. When the messengers returned they told Jacob that Esau was on his way to meet him with 400 men (tanks).

Jacob was so frightened (happy) that he divided all his family and all his animals into two (three) groups. He thought that if Esau attacked one group the others would be able to escape (go home). Jacob prayed to God, asking him to protect him and his family. He reminded God that he had promised that his family would be greater than the number of stars in the sky (bees in a beehive).

The next day Jacob sent some presents (flowers) to Esau. He chose 220 (500) goats and also lots of sheep, camels, cows and donkeys (elephants, tigers and crocodiles).

Jacob spent the night alone (with all his friends). During the night God met with him and reminded him that he would be with him. The next day Jacob walked in front of (behind) his family, servants and animals and went to meet Esau. When he saw his brother, Jacob bowed down seven (20) times. Esau ran towards Jacob and hugged and kissed him (knocked him over). Jacob introduced his wives and children to his brother and persuaded him to keep (give back) all the animals he had sent ahead as a present. Jacob was so happy that he and Esau were friends again.

3 Retelling the story

Explain that you are going to tell the story again, but this time there may be some mistakes. Tell the children that if they hear a mistake they should stand up and call out the correct words. Retell the story above, but using the words in brackets instead. You could do this as a team game, where teams score points for each correct mistake they spot, and lose a point if they wrongly spot a mistake.

4 God’s promise

Say that everything turned out well for Jacob. Ask the children why they think this was so. Read Genesis 32:9–12. Explain that Jacob trusted God to keep his promise to be with him and make his family into a great nation. Say that God promises to be with us too, so we can trust him even when things are very difficult. Allow time for the children to talk to God quietly about any difficulties they may have with friends or family. If they don’t have any problems encourage them to thank God for their friends and family and pray for good things for them.

**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 know that God is with us in difficult relationships

You will need: models from pages 56 and 57

Read verses 9–12. Say that Jacob decides to send his brother a present to make him feel friendly towards him.

Read verses 13–18, allowing the children to move the animals across to Esau. Say that finally the time has come to meet his brother face to face.

1 In advance

Make four copies of page 56 on thin card. Cut out the pictures and use the women as Rachel, Leah and their maidservants, and Jacob's 11 sons. (Benjamin is born later.) Make lots of copies of page 57, also on thin card. Cut out the pictures and use the men as Jacob, Esau, Jacob's messengers and Esau's men, and the sheep and goats as Jacob's flocks. The children should colour the people characters differently.

Read Genesis 33:1–4, allowing the children to move the people together. Finish by saying that Jacob introduced his family to Esau and persuaded him to keep the gift of animals he had sent ahead.

5 Think about

Invite the children to look at all the play people and ask what has changed. Explain that, because of Jacob's behaviour in the past, he and Esau had a very bad relationship and in fact lived apart for many years. But Jacob knew that God was with him even when things were really difficult. Say that sometimes we too have difficult times. It may be that we've had an argument with a friend, or someone at school has been unkind to us; we may have had arguments with our brothers and sisters or our parents. Say that it can be really sad and difficult if we don't have both Mum and Dad living with us. Emphasise that God has promised to be with us to help us through the difficult times, just as he was with Jacob.

2 Bible Timeline

Ask the children to look at the SU *Bible Timeline* and find the panel called 'God promises blessing'. Read, or invite a good reader to read, the first sentence under the title. Ask: 'Where is the family? Can you see any children? Why is Abraham looking at the stars?' Remind them of God's promise to Abraham. Ask who his son was, and his grandson. Remind the children of the difficulties they had been through.

3 Getting ready

Divide your group in half. Give one group the models of Jacob, his wives, their maidservants, 11 children, the messengers and the animals. Give the other group the models of Esau and his men. Make sure all the characters are standing up in the two groups.

4 Telling the story

Read Genesis 32:3–6, pausing to allow the children to move the people as appropriate. Ask the children how they think Jacob feels when he hears that Esau is on his way with 400 men.

Read verses 7 and 8, allowing the children to divide the models into two groups. Ask the children whether there is anything else they think Jacob should do. Explain that he remembers God's promise to watch over him wherever he goes and so he prays to God.

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 5** God's promises to Jacob, Genesis 28:10–22
- Session 6** Jacob gets married, Genesis 29–31
- 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...

Forgiveness prayers

Activity time: 5–20 minutes

Aim: to ask God to help us forgive others

You will need: card, envelopes (optional)

- 1 Explain that when we fall out with people it is important to put things right. God wants us to forgive people who do wrong things to us, just like he forgives us. Ask the children if they can think of someone they need to forgive or make up with. Encourage them to say short prayers like, ‘God, please help me to forgive [friend’s name] and to make up with them. Please help us be friends again.’
- 2 The children may also like to make a card for the person, saying how they want to be friends again. If they do this, encourage them to give the card to the person and pray that God will help them be friends.

Making up game

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to remember that God helped Jacob and Esau become friends again

You will need: fast music

- 1 Put the children into pairs, preferably girls with girls and boys with boys.
- 2 Play the music and encourage the children to run around, trying to keep as far as possible from their partners. When the music stops they should run towards their partners and hug or shake hands, as if making up.
- 3 If the children like competitive games, you could eliminate the last pair to get together each time, until there is a winning pair. (Make sure they don’t cheat by staying close together during the music.)

Ready to use
Activity

Drawing

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to thank God that he is with us

- 1 Give each child a sheet of paper and help them to draw around their hand. Explain that this represents a picture of God’s hand.
- 2 Ask the children to draw themselves and their friends and families inside the hand, to symbolise the fact that God is always with them (be sensitive to children with a complicated family situation). Encourage them to write: ‘In God’s hand’ at the top of their sheet.
- 3 Either when they have finished or while they are drawing, say a short prayer for each child (by name). Thank God that he cares for them and that he is always with them. Invite them to say a similar prayer for the people they have drawn.
- 4 Encourage them to use their pictures at home to pray for the people they have drawn and their relationships with them.

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...













For the Bible story, read the passage and have the children act out the story. Jacob sent animals as a present for his brother. Discuss what we would send today in similar circumstances.

















Read ‘Here is Jacob’ from page 58 and do the actions together.

Happy families

Share out the cards. The children take turns to ask another player if they have a particular card. The player must hand it over if they have it, and the recipient has another turn, asking for particular cards until the person they ask says 'no'.

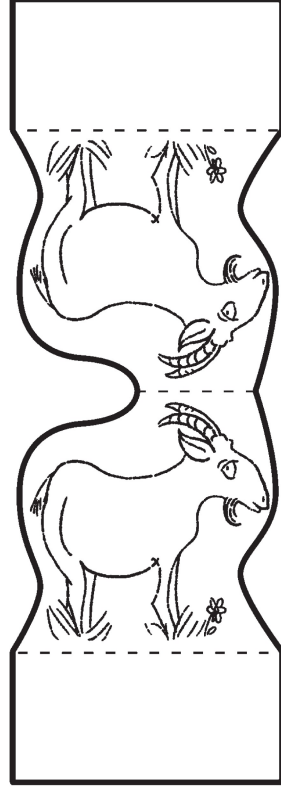
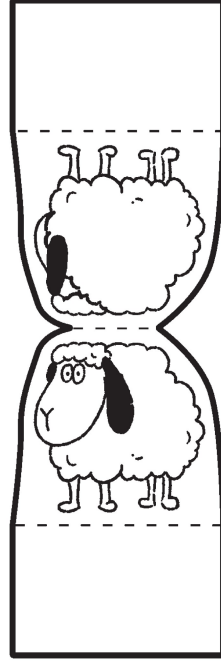
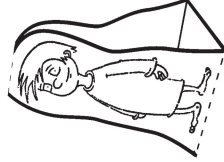
Control of the game then goes to the person who was asked. When a player has four members of one family, they shout, 'Everyone!' The game continues until all the families have been completed.

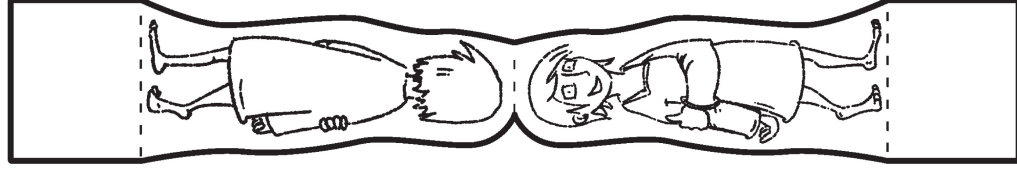
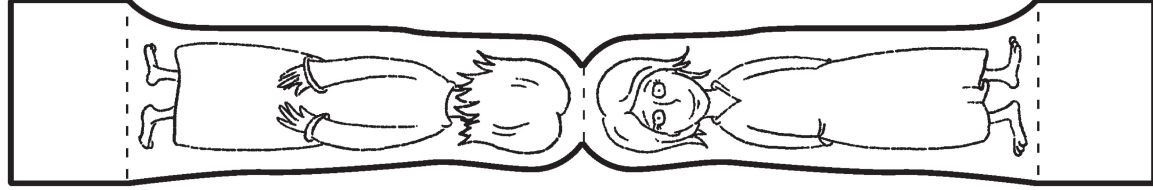
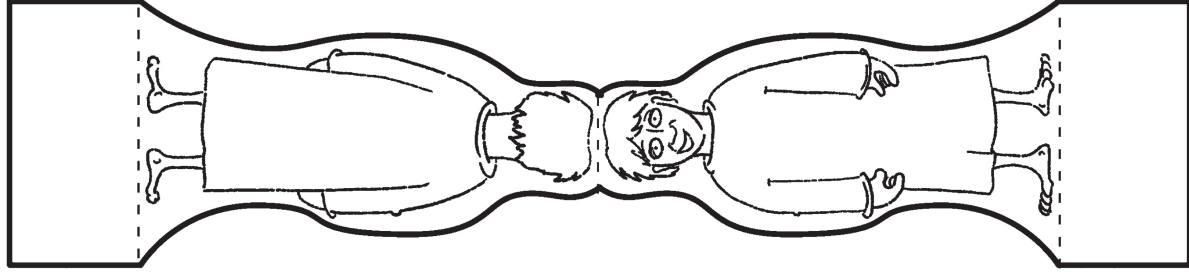
<p>Mr Fisherman</p>  <p>Mrs Shepherd • Master Shepherd Miss Shepherd • Grandpa Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Mrs Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Master Fisherman Miss Fisherman • Grandpa Fisherman Grandma Fisherman • Baby Fisherman</p>	<p>Master Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Mrs Fisherman Miss Fisherman • Grandpa Fisherman Grandma Fisherman • Baby Fisherman</p>	<p>Miss Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Mrs Fisherman Master Fisherman • Grandpa Fisherman Grandma Fisherman • Baby Fisherman</p>
<p>Mr Shepherd</p>  <p>Mrs Shepherd • Master Shepherd Miss Shepherd • Grandpa Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Mrs Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Master Shepherd Miss Shepherd • Grandpa Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Mr Baker</p>  <p>Mrs Baker • Master Baker Miss Baker • Grandpa Baker Grandma Baker • Baby Baker</p>	<p>Mrs Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Miss Baker • Grandpa Baker Grandma Baker • Baby Baker</p>
<p>Master Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Mrs Shepherd Miss Shepherd • Grandpa Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Miss Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Mrs Shepherd Master Shepherd • Grandpa Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Master Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Miss Baker • Grandpa Baker Grandma Baker • Baby Baker</p>	<p>Miss Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Master Baker • Grandpa Baker Grandma Baker • Baby Baker</p>

<p>Grandma Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Mrs Fisherman Master Fisherman • Miss Fisherman Grandpa Fisherman • Baby Fisherman</p>	<p>Baby Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Mrs Fisherman Master Fisherman • Miss Fisherman Grandpa Fisherman • Grandma Fisherman</p>	<p>Grandpa Fisherman</p>  <p>Mr Fisherman • Mrs Fisherman Master Fisherman • Miss Fisherman Grandpa Fisherman • Baby Fisherman</p>	<p>Master Tax Collector</p>  <p>Mr Tax Collector • Mrs Tax Collector Miss Tax Collector • Grandpa Tax Collector Grandma Tax Collector • Baby Tax Collector</p>
<p>Grandma Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Mrs Shepherd Master Shepherd • Miss Shepherd Grandpa Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Baby Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Mrs Shepherd Master Shepherd • Miss Shepherd Grandpa Shepherd • Grandma Shepherd</p>	<p>Grandpa Shepherd</p>  <p>Mr Shepherd • Mrs Shepherd Master Shepherd • Miss Shepherd Grandma Shepherd • Baby Shepherd</p>	<p>Mr Tax Collector</p>  <p>Mr Tax Collector • Mrs Tax Collector Miss Tax Collector • Grandpa Tax Collector Grandma Tax Collector • Baby Tax Collector</p>
<p>Grandma Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Master Baker • Miss Baker Grandpa Baker • Baby Baker</p>	<p>Baby Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Master Baker • Miss Baker Grandpa Baker • Grandma Baker</p>	<p>Grandpa Baker</p>  <p>Mr Baker • Mrs Baker Master Baker • Miss Baker Grandma Baker • Baby Baker</p>	<p>Mrs Tax Collector</p>  <p>Mr Tax Collector • Master Tax Collector Miss Tax Collector • Grandpa Tax Collector Grandma Tax Collector • Baby Tax Collector</p>
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Instructions

- 1 Cut out the models along the thick black lines.
- 2 Fold along the dotted lines, then glue the tabs together to make your model stand up, as shown in the diagram.





Here is Jacob

Here is brother Jacob, <i>(Hold up forefinger of one hand.)</i>	Jacob stayed with Uncle Laban. <i>(Hold up forefinger.)</i>
Here is brother Esau, <i>(Hold up forefinger of other hand)</i>	Married Leah and Rachel, <i>(Circle third finger of left hand for wedding ring.)</i>
Living in a tent. <i>(Make sloping tent shape above head with both hands.)</i>	They had lots of babies, <i>(Rock babies.)</i>
One day they quarrel, <i>(Clench fists and pummel air.)</i>	Lots of animals too, <i>(Make animals ears with hands on head.)</i>
Oh dear, dear, dear, <i>(Shake head sadly.)</i>	"Thank you, God!" said Jacob, <i>(Hands together as if praying.)</i>
Jacob has to go away. <i>(Make fingers walk.)</i>	"I'm so happy now!" <i>(Indicate smiley face with fingers.)</i>
Here is brother Jacob, <i>(Hold up forefinger.)</i>	But Jacob remembered <i>(Hold up forefinger, then touch temple and frown slightly.)</i>
Going on a journey, <i>(Make fingers walk.)</i>	His home and his brother. <i>(Make tent shape and hold up other finger for Esau.)</i>
Feeling scared and lonely. <i>(Hunch shoulders, look sad and fearful.)</i>	He wanted to see them again. <i>(Cross arms on chest.)</i>
Then he has a good dream, <i>(Head on hands, close eyes and smile.)</i>	Got up on the camels, <i>(Mime holding reins and riding.)</i>
God says, 'I'll look after you!' <i>(Bring arms round to front as if protecting someone.)</i>	Said sorry to Esau, <i>(Open hands upwards and look sorry.)</i>
Jacob wakes up happy! <i>(Mime waking up and smiling.)</i>	And then the brothers were friends! <i>(Clap.)</i>

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Taken from Let's All Clap Hands © Scripture Union