Preschool–Grade 6

Jacob and Esau

Sunday School Lesson for Preteens (Ages 11–12), 45–60 minutes

Main point: Deceit can get you what you want and cost you the people you love. God calls us to put away lying and to forgive as He has forgiven us.
Bible passage: Genesis 25:19–34, Genesis 27 and Genesis 32–33. Students read parts of it out loud themselves.
Memory verse: "And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you." *Ephesians 4:32 (KJV)* and "Wherefore putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour: for we are members one of another." *Ephesians 4:25 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each student, paper or a notebook and a pen for each student, a whiteboard and a marker, and one take-home sheet for each student.
Before class: read Genesis 25:19–34, 27:1–45 and 32:1–33:11. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses, or go around the room a few verses each.

1. Opening game: Right Now or Later? (5–10 minutes)

Name one side of the room "right now" and the other side "later." Read each choice. Students walk to the side they would honestly pick. 1) $20 today or $100 next year. 2) Copy a friend's homework tonight or learn it yourself. 3) Win an argument or keep a friendship. 4) Tell a lie that gets you out of trouble or tell the truth and keep your parents' trust. Ask: *Why does "right now" pull so hard?* Say: "Esau traded something for one meal, and Jacob lied for a blessing. Let's read what it cost them."

2. Bible story: Students Read It (15 minutes)

Tell the start in your own words: Isaac prayed for Rebekah, and God gave them twins. Before they were born, God said, "the elder shall serve the younger." Esau came first, red and hairy; Jacob came holding his heel (Genesis 25:21–26).

Read out loud: Genesis 25:27–34. Old words in this passage:

- **cunning hunter** (25:27): skillful hunter; **plain man, dwelling in tents** (25:27): a quiet man who stayed home
- **venison** (25:28): meat from hunting; **sod pottage** (25:29): cooked a stew; **faint** (25:29): weak with hunger
- **birthright** (25:31): the firstborn son's special place and share in the family
- **sware** (25:33): made a solemn promise; **lentiles** (25:34): lentils, small beans; **despised** (25:34): treated as worth nothing

Read out loud: Genesis 27:1–4 and 27:18–36. Old words in this passage:

- **dim** (27:1): weak, so that he could not see; **savoury meat** (27:4): tasty cooked meat
- **discerned him not** (27:23): did not recognize him; **raiment** (27:27): clothes
- **subtilty** (27:35): trickery; **supplanted** (27:36): tripped up and took the place of

Tell the middle part in your own words: Rebekah had heard Isaac, so she planned the trick, cooked two young goats, dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes and put the goats' skins on his hands and neck (27:5–17). Jacob's only worry was getting caught: "I shall seem to him as a deceiver" (27:12). After Esau's bitter cry, Esau hated Jacob and planned to kill him once their father died, so Rebekah sent Jacob to Laban in Haran (27:41–43). Years later God told Jacob to return home (32:9). He heard Esau was coming with 400 men and was "greatly afraid and distressed" (32:6–7). He prayed (32:9–12), sent a large present ahead (32:13–21), and that night wrestled with a man until daybreak. His name was changed to Israel, and he said, "I have seen God face to face" (32:24–30).

Read out loud: Genesis 33:1–11. Old words in this passage:

- **embraced him, and fell on his neck** (33:4): hugged him tightly
- **graciously** (33:5): kindly, as a gift; **drove** (33:8): a herd of animals driven along
- **find grace in the sight of my lord** (33:8): be kindly welcomed by you; **urged** (33:11): kept asking

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. Esau "despised his birthright" for one meal (25:34). What do people your age trade away for something they want right now?
2. Jacob's worry was "I shall seem to him as a deceiver" (27:12), being caught, not doing wrong. Why is that a dangerous way to think?
3. Jacob used God's name in his lie (27:20). Why does that make it worse?
4. Jacob got the blessing but lost his home and his brother for years (27:41–45). Can a lie ever really "work"?
5. Esau said, "I have enough, my brother" (33:9). What did Esau choose to let go of? What does forgiving cost the one who forgives?
6. Is there someone you need to make things right with, or someone you need to forgive (Ephesians 4:32)?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **tenderhearted** means having a soft, caring heart; **for Christ's sake** means because of Jesus; **wherefore** means so then; **members one of another** means we belong to each other like parts of one body, so a lie hurts all of us. Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Ephesians 4:32 this week; keep working on Ephesians 4:25 next week too.

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5. What this means for us (5–10 minutes)

Say: "Jacob had to face the brother he wronged. Every one of us has wronged God, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). God loves you. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, God who came as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). 'Christ died for our sins according to the scriptures; and that he was buried, and that he rose again the third day according to the scriptures' (1 Corinthians 15:3–4, KJV). We obey the gospel the way Peter preached it: 'Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.' (Acts 2:38, KJV) We **repent**, turning from sin, and our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are buried with Jesus by baptism in His name, all the way under the water. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we rise to walk in newness of life, a brand-new life (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). And God fills us with the Holy Ghost, and we speak with other tongues as the Spirit gives utterance, which means as He gives the words (Acts 2:4). Jesus called this being born of water and of the Spirit (John 3:5)."
Pray with the students, and encourage them to talk with their parents and pastor about being baptized in Jesus' name and filled with the Holy Ghost. Never pressure a child.

6. Activity: Journal (10 minutes)

Each student writes privately. No one has to share. Write these three prompts on the board:

1. Where am I tempted to bend the truth to get what I want?
2. Who do I need to forgive, or ask to forgive me? What is one step I can take this week?
3. Write a short prayer thanking God for forgiving you because of Jesus (Ephesians 4:32).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: go one whole week without a single lie, not even a small one. If you need to make something right with someone, do it.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for forgiving us because of Jesus. Help us put away lying and speak the truth. Give us tender hearts to forgive the people who hurt us, and courage to make things right with the people we have hurt. In Jesus' name, amen."

If a student asks whether God approved of the trick: stay with the text. God said "the elder shall serve the younger" before the twins were born (Genesis 25:23), but the Bible never says God told anyone to lie, and it shows what the lie cost (27:34, 27:41–45). God's Word says, "Lying lips are abomination to the LORD" (Proverbs 12:22).
If a student asks who wrestled with Jacob: read Genesis 32:24–30 together. The Bible calls him "a man," and Jacob said, "I have seen God face to face" (32:30). Stay with those words.

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