Preschool–Grade 6

Jacob's Ladder

Sunday School Lesson for 3rd to 5th Grade, 45–60 minutes

Main point: God is with us everywhere, even when we don't feel it, and He keeps every promise He makes.
Bible passage: Genesis 28:10–22. Read it before class, and read Genesis 27 to know why Jacob left home.
Memory verse: "And, behold, I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest, and will bring thee again into this land; for I will not leave thee, until I have done that which I have spoken to thee of." *Genesis 28:15 (KJV)*
You need: a Bible for each child (or one for every two children), a whiteboard or large paper, a marker, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: write the memory verse on the board.

1. Opening game: Up and Down (5–10 minutes)

Everyone stands. Read each sentence about Jacob's family. If it's true, kids stretch up tall (ascending, going up). If it's false, they crouch down low (descending, coming down). 1) Jacob had a twin brother named Esau (Genesis 25:24–26). *(True)* 2) Esau was a cunning hunter, a man of the field (25:27). *(True)* 3) Jacob was a hunter who lived in the fields. *(False: Jacob was a plain man, dwelling in tents, 25:27)* 4) Esau sold his birthright to Jacob (25:33). *(True)* 5) Jacob told his father, "I am Esau thy firstborn" (27:19). *(True)* 6) Esau was glad that Jacob got the blessing. *(False: Esau hated Jacob, 27:41)* Say: "Up and down is a big part of today's story."

2. Bible story: God Is With Jacob (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Genesis 28. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

Running from home. Jacob had tricked his father to get the blessing (27:19), and Esau was so angry he planned to kill him (27:41–42). Their mother Rebekah told Jacob to go to her brother Laban in Haran (27:43), and Isaac sent him there to find a wife (28:1–2, 28:5). **Look up Genesis 28:10–11.** Jacob went out from Beer-sheba toward Haran. When the sun set he **tarried** (stayed) all night, and he took stones of that place for his pillows.

The dream. Look up Genesis 28:12. A ladder was set up on the earth, the top reached to heaven, and the angels of God were **ascending and descending** (going up and coming down) on it. **Look up Genesis 28:13.** The LORD stood above it and said, "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Abraham was Jacob's grandfather; **father** here means forefather. God promised the land to Jacob and his **seed** (his children and grandchildren), and said they would be as many as the dust of the earth, and that in Jacob and his seed all the families of the earth would be blessed (28:13–14).

The promise. Look up Genesis 28:15. God promised four things: I am with you, I will keep (protect) you everywhere you go, I will bring you back to this land, and I will not leave you until I have done what I said.

Waking up. Look up Genesis 28:16. "Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not." God had been there all along. **Look up Genesis 28:17.** Jacob was afraid and said, "How **dreadful** is this place!" Dreadful here means full of holy fear and wonder. He called it "the house of God" and "the gate of heaven."

The pillar. Look up Genesis 28:18–19. Early in the morning Jacob set up his pillow stone for a **pillar** (a standing stone to mark the place), poured oil on top of it, and called the place Bethel. Before, the city was called Luz. **Look up Genesis 28:20–22.** Jacob **vowed a vow** (made a serious promise): if God would be with him and keep him and bring him home in peace, then the LORD would be his God, the stone would be God's house, and he would give God **the tenth** (one part out of every ten) of all God gave him.

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

Thinking questions (no single right answer; let kids talk)

1. Jacob had done wrong and was running from home. Why do you think God still came to him with a promise?
2. Jacob said, "the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not" (28:16). When might you forget that God is with you?
3. Which of God's four promises in Genesis 28:15 would help you most right now? Why?
4. Jacob set up a stone so he would remember what God did there (28:18). What helps you remember what God has done for you?
5. Jacob promised to give God a tenth (28:22). What are some ways kids can give back to God?

Recall questions

1. What did Jacob use for his pillows? *(Stones of that place, Genesis 28:11)*
2. What were the angels of God doing on the ladder? *(Ascending and descending, 28:12)*
3. What did Jacob name the place? *(Bethel, 28:19)*

4. Memory verse: Erase a Word (5 minutes)

Explain the old words: **behold** means look, **thee** means you, **keep** means take care of and protect, and **whither thou goest** means wherever you go. Read the verse on the board together. Erase two words and read it again. Keep erasing two words at a time until the board is empty and the class can say it alone. Then kids say it to a partner.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jacob had sinned, but God came to him with grace and a promise. God loves you. The Bible says: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means all of us have done wrong, and none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God manifest in the flesh, which means God came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Christ died for our sins, was buried, and rose again the third day (1 Corinthians 15:3–4). How do we obey the gospel? '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) To **repent** means to turn away from sin; our old self dies (Romans 6:6). We are **buried with Jesus in baptism**, all the way under the water, in Jesus' name. **Remission** means our sins are washed away, and we come up to live a 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 the words (Acts 2:4). The Bible calls this being born again (John 3:5)."
Pray with the kids, 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.
This week: each time you go somewhere new, say, "Surely the LORD is in this place."

6. Activity: Bible Look-Up Race (10–15 minutes)

Kids work in pairs with one Bible. Read a reference and a question. The first pair to find the verse and read the answer out loud wins the point.

1. Genesis 28:10: Where did Jacob go out from? *(Beer-sheba)*
2. Genesis 28:11: Why did Jacob stay there all night? *(Because the sun was set)*
3. Genesis 28:12: Where did the top of the ladder reach? *(To heaven)*
4. Genesis 28:13: Who stood above the ladder? *(The LORD)*
5. Genesis 28:14: What would Jacob's seed be as many as? *(The dust of the earth)*
6. Genesis 28:18: What did Jacob pour on the top of the pillar? *(Oil)*
7. Genesis 28:19: What was the city called at first? *(Luz)*
8. Genesis 28:22: What part would Jacob give to God? *(The tenth)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are with us in every place, even when we don't feel it. Thank You that You keep every promise and never leave us. Help us remember what You have done and give back to You with glad hearts. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

About the angels: the Bible says only "the angels of God ascending and descending on it" (28:12). It doesn't describe them, so keep to its words.

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