Preschool–Grade 6

Jacob's Ladder

Sunday School Lesson for Kindergarten to 2nd Grade, 45 minutes

Main point: God is with me everywhere I go, and He keeps His promises.
Bible passage: Genesis 28:10–22. Read it before class.
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, a soft pillow, a smooth rock, masking tape, 7 paper strips, a marker, crayons, and one take-home sheet for each child.
Before class: make a masking-tape ladder on the floor with 7 rungs. Write the memory verse on the 7 paper strips (see part 4). Put a bookmark in your Bible at Genesis 28.

1. Opening game: Rock or Pillow? (5 minutes)

Pass around the soft pillow and the rock. Ask: *Which one would you like to sleep on tonight? Why?* Let each child lay their head on the pillow, then gently touch their cheek to the rock. Ask: *Where would you have to be to sleep on a rock?* Say: "Today we will meet a man who slept outside, far from home, with stones for his pillows. And that night, God showed him something amazing."

2. Bible story: God Is With Jacob (10 minutes)

Hold up your Bible open to Genesis 28, so the kids can see the story comes from God's Word. Tell it in your own words:

Jacob had to leave home. He had tricked his father Isaac (Genesis 27:19), and his brother Esau was very angry with him (27:41). So Jacob's mother sent him far away, to her brother's family in a place called Haran (27:43), and his father sent him off too (28:5).

Jacob went out from Beer-sheba toward Haran (28:10). He walked and walked. When the sun went down, he stopped in a certain place to stay all night. There was no house and no bed. Jacob took some of the stones of that place for his pillows and lay down to sleep (28:11).

Jacob **dreamed**. In his dream he saw a **ladder** set up on the earth, and the top of it reached to heaven! The angels of God were **ascending and descending** on it (28:12). Ascending means going up, and descending means coming down.

And the LORD stood above it (28:13). God said, "I am the LORD God of Abraham thy father, and the God of Isaac." Abraham was Jacob's grandfather. God promised to give the land to Jacob and his family, and that all the families of the earth would be blessed through his family (28:13–14).

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The story continues: Then God made Jacob a wonderful promise. **Read Genesis 28:15 from your Bible:** "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." Say: "That means: I am with you, I will take care of you everywhere you go, I will bring you home again, and I will not leave you."

Jacob woke up. He said, "**Surely the LORD is in this place; and I knew it not**" (28:16). God was there all along, and Jacob didn't know it! Jacob was afraid, a holy kind of afraid, and he said, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven" (28:17).

Early in the morning, Jacob took the stone he had used for his pillows and stood it up straight, like a post. The Bible calls it a **pillar**. He poured **oil** on the top of it (28:18). He called that place **Bethel** (28:19). And Jacob made a promise to God: the LORD would be his God, and he would give back to God a tenth of all God gave him (28:20–22). A tenth means one out of every ten.

3. Questions to ask (5 minutes)

1. Where was Jacob going? *(Toward Haran, Genesis 28:10)*
2. What did Jacob use for his pillows? *(Stones of that place, 28:11)*
3. What did Jacob see in his dream? *(A ladder that reached to heaven, with the angels of God going up and down on it, 28:12)*
4. What did God promise Jacob? *("I am with thee, and will keep thee in all places whither thou goest," 28:15)*
5. What did Jacob call the place? *(Bethel, 28:19)*

4. Memory verse: Ladder Verse game (5 minutes)

Put one strip on each rung of the tape ladder, from the bottom up: *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.* Explain the old words: **behold** means look, **thee** means you, **keep** means take care of, and **whither thou goest** means wherever you go. Kids climb the ladder, stepping on each rung as they say its words. Then take one strip away and climb again, saying the missing words from memory. Keep taking strips away until the kids can say the whole verse by themselves.

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5. What this means for us (5 minutes)

Say: "Jacob had done wrong. He had tricked his father. But God still came to him and promised, 'I am with thee.' God loves you very much too. But everyone has done wrong things. The Bible calls that sin: 'For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). That means none of us is as good as God. Jesus is God who came to earth as a man (1 Timothy 3:16). Jesus died for our sins, He was buried, and He rose again (1 Corinthians 15:3–4)! The Bible tells us how to obey the gospel, the good news about Jesus: '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 we are sorry for our sin and we turn away from it. We are **baptized**, buried all the way under the water, in Jesus' name, so our sins are washed away (Romans 6:4; Acts 22:16). **Remission** means God takes our sins away. And God fills us with the **Holy Ghost**, His own Spirit, and we speak in other tongues, words God gives us, just like the believers did in the Bible (Acts 2:4)."
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: when you are in a new place, or it is dark, or you feel alone, say, "Surely the LORD is in this place!"

6. Activity (10–15 minutes)

Choose one: the **Jacob's Ladder word search** (vbshq.com/puzzles/jacobs-ladder-word-search), crossword, maze or worksheet, the craft (vbshq.com/crafts/jacobs-ladder-craft), or **God Is With Me There:** call out a place, and the kids act it out: at school (write), at the doctor (say "ahh"), at the park (swing), in the car (drive), in bed at night (sleep). After each one, everyone jumps up and says, "God is with me there!" Let kids name places too.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You that You are with us everywhere we go, at home, at school and in the dark at night. Thank You that You keep Your promises and never leave us. Thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. In Jesus' name, amen."

About Esau's anger: this lesson says Esau was very angry. Genesis 27:41 says he planned to slay (kill) Jacob. Younger children don't need that detail; if an older child asks, say it simply and add that years later the brothers made peace and hugged (Genesis 33:4).

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

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