Preschool–Grade 6

Jacob, Rachel and Leah

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

Main point: Real love serves. Jacob served seven years for Rachel, and when he was tricked, he kept his word.
Bible passage: Genesis 29:1–30. Read it before class.
Memory verse: "And Jacob served seven years for Rachel; and they seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." *Genesis 29:20 (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. On the other side, draw two columns: "What Jacob did" and "What Laban did."

1. Opening game: Feels Long, Feels Short (5–10 minutes)

Read each one and let kids vote: stand up if it feels LONG, sit down if it feels SHORT. 1) Waiting at the doctor's office. 2) Playing with your best friend. 3) A long car ride. 4) A day at Grandma's house. 5) Doing a chore you don't like. 6) Helping someone you love. Ask: *Why does time go fast when you're with someone you love?* Say: "Today a man works seven years, and it seems like only a few days to him. Let's find out why."

2. Bible story: Seven Years and Seven More (15 minutes)

Kids open their Bibles to Genesis 29. When you reach a **Look up** line, a child finds the verse and reads it out loud. Tell the rest in your own words.

At the well. Jacob had left home to go to Haran, to the family of Laban, his mother's brother (Genesis 27:43; 28:2). **Look up Genesis 29:2–3.** He saw a well with three flocks of sheep lying by it and a **great stone** on the well's mouth. The shepherds waited until all the flocks were gathered, then they rolled the stone away together. **Look up Genesis 29:9–10.** Rachel came with her father's sheep, "for she **kept** them" (she took care of them). Jacob went near and rolled the stone away and watered Laban's flock. Then he kissed Rachel and wept, and told her who he was (29:11–12). Laban ran to meet him and brought him home (29:13). In Bible times, family greeted each other with a kiss.

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Seven years. After a month, Laban asked what Jacob's **wages** (pay) should be (29:14–15). Laban had two daughters: Leah, the **elder** (older), and Rachel, the younger (29:16). **Look up Genesis 29:18.** "Jacob loved Rachel; and said, I will serve thee seven years for Rachel thy younger daughter." **Look up Genesis 29:20.** The seven years "seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her." Write "served seven years for Rachel" in the Jacob column.

The trick. When the time was done, Laban gathered all the men of the place and made a **feast** (29:22). But he brought Leah to Jacob as his wife instead of Rachel (29:23). **Look up Genesis 29:25.** Jacob found out it was Leah and said, "What is this thou hast done unto me? did not I serve with thee for Rachel? wherefore then hast thou **beguiled** me?" (Why did you trick me?) **Look up Genesis 29:26–27.** Laban said, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn," and offered Rachel too for "yet seven other years" of work. Write "tricked Jacob" in the Laban column.

Jacob keeps his word. Look up Genesis 29:28. "And Jacob did so." Laban gave him Rachel as his wife too, and Jacob served Laban "yet seven other years" (29:30). Say: "Jacob worked fourteen years in all. Laban was not honest, but Jacob did what he said he would do."

3. Questions to ask (10 minutes)

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

1. Why do you think seven years seemed "but a few days" to Jacob (29:20)?
2. Look at the two columns. How did Laban treat Jacob? How should family treat each other?
3. Jacob could have quit. Why was it right to keep his word and work seven more years?
4. What is one way you can serve someone you love this week?
5. Why is it so important to be honest, even when a trick would get you what you want?

Recall questions

1. What was on the well's mouth? *(A great stone, Genesis 29:2)*
2. Who were Laban's two daughters? *(Leah the elder and Rachel the younger, 29:16)*
3. How many years did Jacob work in all? *(Seven years, then seven other years, 29:20, 29:30)*

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

Explain the old words: **served** means worked for someone, and **they seemed unto him but a few days** means the years felt short, like only a few days. 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 served fourteen years because of love. God's love is even greater. 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. But God loves you. 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). The Bible says, 'by love serve one another' (Galatians 5:13, KJV)."
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: serve someone you love without being asked, tell the truth even when it's hard, and do what you say you will do.

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 29:2: How many flocks were lying by the well? *(Three)*
2. Genesis 29:4: Where were the shepherds from? *(Haran)*
3. Genesis 29:9: Who kept her father's sheep? *(Rachel)*
4. Genesis 29:10: What did Jacob roll from the well's mouth? *(The stone)*
5. Genesis 29:16: What was the name of the elder daughter? *(Leah)*
6. Genesis 29:20: How long did seven years seem to Jacob? *(But a few days)*
7. Genesis 29:22: What did Laban make? *(A feast)*
8. Genesis 29:25: What did Jacob say Laban had done to him? *(Beguiled him)*

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. Help us love others by serving them, help us be honest in everything, and help us keep our word, even when it is hard. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: this lesson leaves out the wedding-night wording (Genesis 29:21, 23, 30) and the two handmaids (29:24, 29). The Bible tells that Jacob had two wives the way it happened, without saying it was right. If a child asks, God's way from the beginning is one husband and one wife (Genesis 2:24).

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