Preschool–Grade 6

Jacob, Rachel and Leah

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

Main point: Love shows itself in service and in truth. Jacob served fourteen years for Rachel and kept his word, even after he was tricked.
Bible passage: Genesis 29:1–30. Students read it out loud themselves.
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)* and "My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue; but in deed and in truth." *1 John 3:18 (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 29:1–30, Genesis 27:18–19 and 1 John 3:18. Write both memory verses on the board. Decide who reads which verses.

1. Opening game: What Counts as Love? (5–10 minutes)

Read each one and let students vote with a thumb up (that's love), a thumb down (not really) or sideways (not sure): 1) Saying "love you" while you ignore your mom. 2) Doing the dishes so your dad can rest. 3) Sending a heart emoji to a friend. 4) Keeping a promise to a friend when something better comes up. 5) Telling a little lie so someone feels good. Ask: *Is love mostly words or mostly actions?* Say: "Today we read about a man who worked fourteen years because of love, and a man who used a trick to get what he wanted."

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

Read out loud: Genesis 29:1–20 and 29:25–28. Students take turns, a verse or two each. The teacher tells verses 21–24 in a sentence: "When the seven years were done, Laban made a feast for all the men of the place, and he brought Leah to Jacob as his wife instead of Rachel." Old words in this passage:

- **lo** (29:2): look; **the well's mouth**: the opening at the top of the well
- **whence be ye** (29:4): where are you from; **is he well?** (29:6): is he doing well?
- **it is yet high day** (29:7): it's still the middle of the day
- **kept them** (29:9): took care of them; **tidings** (29:13): news
- **for nought** (29:15): for nothing, without pay; **wages**: pay
- **tender eyed** (29:17): Leah's eyes were tender, soft or weak; **well favoured**: good-looking
- **beguiled** (29:25): tricked; **fulfil her week** (29:27): finish Leah's week (seven days)

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Look closer. Point out these details with the class:

- **The stone.** The shepherds said they could not move the stone until all the flocks were gathered (Genesis 29:8). When Jacob saw Rachel, he rolled it away and watered her father's flock (29:10). Love got to work.
- **Seven years like a few days.** "They seemed unto him but a few days, for the love he had to her" (29:20). Love doesn't count the cost.
- **The trickster tricked.** Years before, when his father's eyes were dim (Genesis 27:1), Jacob had told him, "I am Esau thy firstborn" (Genesis 27:19). Now Laban told Jacob, "It must not be so done in our country, to give the younger before the firstborn" (29:26). The Bible tells both stories plainly; Laban's trick was still wrong.
- **Jacob kept his word.** He could have argued or walked away. Instead, "Jacob did so" (29:28) and "served with him yet seven other years" (29:30).

3. Questions to ask (15 minutes)

1. What did the shepherds say about the stone (29:8)? What does Jacob rolling it away (29:10) tell you about him?
2. Why do you think seven years "seemed unto him but a few days" (29:20)?
3. Read Genesis 27:19 and 29:25–26. How might Jacob have felt being tricked the way he once tricked his father?
4. Jacob asked, "Wherefore then hast thou beguiled me?" (29:25). How do tricks and lies hurt families?
5. Why is keeping your word hard when someone has treated you unfairly?
6. Read 1 John 3:18. What does loving "in deed and in truth" look like at home or at school?

4. Memory verse (5 minutes)

Old words: **served** means worked for someone, and **they seemed unto him but a few days** means the years felt short. In 1 John 3:18, **in word, neither in tongue** means only by talking, and **in deed and in truth** means by what we do and by being honest.
Read both verses together. Then students cover one phrase at a time and quiz a partner. Say Genesis 29:20 this week; keep working on 1 John 3:18 next week too.

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

Say: "Jacob's love cost him fourteen years. God's love for us cost even more. God loves you, and 'all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God' (Romans 3:23, KJV). 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). People God has loved like that love others in deed and in truth."
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. Who is someone I love, and what is one way I can serve them this week, not just tell them?
2. Is there a promise I need to keep, or a trick or lie I need to make right?
3. Write a short prayer asking God to help you love "in deed and in truth" (1 John 3:18).
   If there is time, invite a few volunteers to share one sentence.

This week: read Genesis 29:1–20 again at home. Do one act of service for someone in your family each day.

7. Prayer

"Dear God, thank You for loving us and coming to save us in Jesus. Help us love in deed and in truth, serve the people we love without counting the cost, and keep our word even when others treat us unfairly. In Jesus' name, amen."

Teacher note: the students read 29:1–20 and 29:25–28; the teacher sums up 29:21–24 in one plain sentence, and 29:29–30 as "Jacob served Laban seven more years." This leaves out the wedding-night wording 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 student asks, God's way from the beginning is one husband and one wife (Genesis 2:24).

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