

Lesson Plans That Work: Lesson Plans for Older Children

Proper 10 (A)

Old Testament: Genesis 25:19-34

BACKGROUND

The Season After Pentecost is the longest season of the church year, spanning almost half the calendar year. The weeks after Pentecost are called Ordinary Time coming from the word “ordinal” which means counted time. This time is not ordinary as in common or regular, but it is the time of counted weeks between Pentecost and Advent. The liturgical color of the season is green. It is often thought of as a season of growth both in our personal faith and in the life of the church. Common themes to focus on throughout the season are:

- Our relationship with God.
- Our relationship with Jesus Christ and with one another through our prayers, the sacraments and life in the body of Christ.
- The presence of the Holy Spirit in our lives.
- The Church and its work for God’s mission.

A NOTATION FOR THIS WEEK’S READING

The Book of Genesis provides the foundational stories of our faith: God’s calling of a people; their often failed responses to Him; and God’s steadfast love throughout. The Abraham saga tells of the formation of Israel, beginning with the faithfulness of its patriarch Abraham. Although disillusioned with the wickedness of men, God separates out one family line to bring divine blessing to all subsequent families of the world. Abraham, the model of absolute faithfulness, trust, and obedience, is symbolic of Israel’s idealized self. At the request of God, Abraham has left his homeland to travel to a promised land. God promises him an heir, even though Abraham and his wife Sarah are long past childbearing age, and Sarah gives birth to Isaac. In a test of faith, God asks Abraham to sacrifice Isaac. Abraham passed God’s test of faith and God spared Isaac. Abraham sends his servant with gifts and camels to the Mesopotamian city of Nahor to seek a wife for Isaac. Isaac marries Rebekah who gives birth to twins, Esau and Jacob.

THEME

Sibling Rivalry and God’s Love

BEFORE CLASS

You will need copies of the story for each child, a bible map, shallow pans, soap and water, towels for clean up, large paper, and art supplies. Draw a circle for the Family Pie demonstration.

BEGINNING

Today we are going to be Bible scholars. (Explain that scholars are people who study in detail a particular subject) The Bible uses many different kinds of language to teach us and tell its story. The Bible uses the language of poetry and song (like the Psalms); the language of myth and legend; sayings and parables, history and prophecy and more. Some stories, like today's, are part of a longer saga that follows one person or family for a long time. Before all the stories were written down they were passed on orally (verbally) from one generation to the next. (You may want to explain generations using the examples of grandparents, parents, and children) The people who collected the stories and put them together were called redactors, or editors. They were very respectful of the different tribes and traditions that the stories came from. So if there were two different versions of the same story, they put them both in. You may read several stories that sound similar. Stories were included for different purposes. Some stories were put in because they provide background information about why something is the way it is or how something came to be. Often they tell us how a place or person got their name. These are called etiological stories (The investigation of a cause or reason). The Bible also shows us that human nature hasn't changed much over thousands of years. You can find family situations that show feelings and behavior that are still true today. Today's story shows sibling rivalry, trickery, deceit, and the results of such actions.

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Lord, Thank you for the rich gift of the Bible and all it has to teach us. May the Holy Spirit give us the gift of insight and understanding as we read your Word. Amen.

THE STORY: GENESIS 25:19-34

Since we will be marking the story up, make a copy for each student.

These are the descendants of Isaac, Abraham's son: Abraham was the father of Isaac, and Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan-aram, sister of Laban the Aramean. Isaac prayed to the LORD for his wife, because she was barren; and the LORD granted his prayer, and his wife Rebekah conceived. The children struggled together within her; and she said, 'If it is to be this way, why do I live?' So she went to inquire of the LORD. And the LORD said to her,

"Two nations are in your womb,
and two peoples born of you shall be divided;
one shall be stronger than the other,
the elder shall serve the younger."

When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb. The first came out red, all his body like a hairy mantle; so they named him Esau. Afterwards his brother came out, with his hand gripping Esau's heel; so he was named Jacob. Isaac was sixty years old when she bore them.

When the boys grew up, Esau was a skillful hunter, a man of the field, while Jacob was a quiet man, living in tents. Isaac loved Esau, because he was fond of game; but Rebekah loved Jacob.

Once when Jacob was cooking a stew, Esau came in from the field, and he was famished. Esau said to Jacob, 'Let me eat some of that red stuff, for I am famished!' (Therefore he was called Edom.) Jacob said, 'First sell me your birthright.' Esau said, 'I am about to die; of what use is a birthright to me?' Jacob said, 'Swear to me first.' So he swore to him, and sold his birthright to Jacob. Then Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew, and he ate and drank, and rose and went his way. Thus Esau despised his birthright.

Teaching Points for Teacher

1. Ancestry or family lineage was very important to the Hebrews; so many stories begin with a genealogy.
2. Not being able to have children and then giving birth was a common miracle of God's blessing in the Old Testament.
3. Rebekah went to a special sanctuary to ask God why she was having so much pain.
4. "The elder shall serve the younger" shows the power of God's election. The first born son traditionally gets the birthright [a double portion of the inheritance and family leadership]. God typically overturns the established patterns for his own purposes.
5. Names are often plays on words. Esau's name is a play on the Hebrew words for red, hairy, and Edom. Jacob's name is a play on the word for heel or 'he takes by the heel' or 'he supplants' [meaning replaces]
6. The two boys typify the hunter and the shepherd, two rival ways of life in those days.

[Put the two squares for Jacob and Esau on the chart. See Attachment Chart]

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

- I wonder if you remember what the servant prayed to find the right wife?
- Why do you think he wanted to see who would offer to water his camels? [It would show kindness and generosity, or hospitality]
- Have you ever traveled in a desert or very dry place?
- I wonder what would be very important to have with you? [water]
- Have you ever asked God to help you make a good choice or show you what to do?

ACTIVITY: THE FAMILY PIE

People feel competitive or jealous when they think there isn't going to be enough stuff, food, or love to go around. Draw a large circle. This is the family pie. When two people get married they can have half each. Draw a line to divide the pie in half. If they have two children there is still enough pie. Divide each half in half. If they have four or eight [keep drawing] there is always enough pie. The pieces may get smaller, but everyone still gets some. Fortunately God's pie is enormous enough for everyone to get a nice big piece

ACTIVITY: GROWING TOGETHER IN FAITH

Some children at this age start to feel self-conscious of their drawing skills so give the children a choice here.

Have the children work in small groups so they may converse together while they are working. Busy hands sometimes loosen tongues. Reflect back on the story noting that each brother had their own unique gifts and skills. Ask the children to discuss together what special or unique role each plays in his or her own family [Same question for both options]. Those who wish may draw a family portrait.

Others can make a group banner. Someone draws a long curvy branch on a large sheet of paper. The children dip their hands in shallow pans of paint and then onto the paper to make leaves, as many as needed for a full looking branch. Write on the paper: In Pentecost We Grow in Faith Together. Invite sharing using the invitation method [Children invite one another by name to share. Once invited a child can "talk" or say "pass" or "come back to me," but he/she still invites the next child until all who wish get a turn].

End the activity with a Prayer for the Human Family (Book of Common Prayer, page 815): O God, you made us in your own image and redeemed us through Jesus your Son: Look with compassion on the whole human family; take away the arrogance and hatred which infect our hearts; break down the walls that separate us; unite us in bonds of love; and work through our struggle and confusion to accomplish your purposes on earth; that, in your good time, all nations and races may serve you in harmony around your heavenly throne; through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

GETTING CLOSURE

Invite the children to share what they created.

CLOSING PRAYER

Dear Jesus, you were born into a human family. Help us to appreciate our differences and share our gifts so that our families and all families may grow together in your love. Amen.

Written by Trudy Ardiszone.



Published by the Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society, 815 Second Avenue, New York, N.Y. 10017. © 2015 The Domestic and Foreign Missionary Society of the Protestant Episcopal Church in the United States of America. All rights reserved.

Abraham's Family Tree

