**Rivalry**

**(Jacob and Esau)**

**Fifth Sunday after Pentecost**

 **12 July 2020**

***Reading:*** *(Gen 25:19-26; 27-34, Gen 27:1-45, Gen. 28-31, Gen. 32:1-23, Gen 33)*

***Theme:*** *Sibling rivalry*

***Memory verse:***  Do all you can to get along with others. *Romans 12:18 or*

*Try to live in peace with everyone, and seek to live a clean and holy life. Hebrews 12:14*

**Information for the teacher:**

The story of Jacob and Esau tells of twins born to Isaac and Rebekah. It is a story of deception and sibling rivalry. This is not the only story in the Bible that tells of sibling rivalry. In Genesis 4, the story of Cain and Abel, we saw that Cain became jealous of God’s approval of Abel and killed him. In Genesis 37-50 we read the story of Joseph and his brothers, who were jealous of Joseph and sold him to the Midianites. Being frustrated and even jealous of a sibling is something that a lot of people can relate to. Think about your own family, what types of relationships are present in your family? Do your family members know you love and forgive them? Does everyone in your family feel they are valued, loved and respected?

Our message to the children today is about rivalry and competition between people rather than co-operating and working together. It explores the dynamics within Jacob and Esau's family, the struggles, the agreements, forgiveness and reconciliation. So, the main focus is sibling rivalry but for those who are single children, or where there is not much rivalry in the family, other relationships can also be considered. However, remember that relationships with siblings are very special, as your family is with you for life, and it is important to value and nurture these relationships.

• Genesis 25:19-26. These verses provide the background of Jacob and Esau's births. Notice that the struggle between the brothers began before they were born.

•verses 27-34. How much did a pot of stew cost Esau? A birthright was 'a special right based on order of birth and inheritance.' Typically, the firstborn Hebrew son received a double portion of the inheritance as well as a major blessing from the father. Did Esau understand the implications of his agreement with Jacob?

• Genesis 27:1-45. Explore the relationship between Rebekah and Isaac? Do you see love and forgiveness demonstrated in this family?

• Genesis 28–31. Notice how the choices made by Jacob and Esau not only affected them, but also their families and people around them.

•Genesis 32:1-23. How would you feel if you were preparing to be reunited with your sibling?

• Read Genesis 33. If this were the first time you had heard the story of Jacob and Esau, would you have imagined this is how it would end?

**Lesson Suggestions:**

**Younger Children (3 - 6 years):**

**Lesson Objectives:**

* To realise that family relationships are important and need to be nurtured
* That forgiveness and love are essential in relationships.
* Spend time praying for your family members by name and for friends

** Attention Grabber:**

Drawing a family tree. You will need to show the children how to do this. Then ask the following questions.

1. Ask the children if they have any brothers and/or sisters or cousins who are close to them. Ask the children if they sometimes fight with their brothers and sisters?

2. What makes them cross with their brothers and sisters? (or friends)

3. Do they sometimes say and do things to their brothers and sisters that they would never say to their friends?

**Setting the scene:**

Can you remember who Abraham was?

Who was he married to? *(Sarah)*

What was the name of their son? *(Isaac)*

Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. They had two children named Jacob and Esau – today we will learn more about them.

 **Bible Story:**  **The Story of Jacob and**

These chapters tell us the story of Jacob and Esau. You can use the breakdown from the teacher information and the review questions to guide you through telling the story. If possible, use a Children’s Bible with pictures, or tell the story in your own words. Perhaps even have some props as you relate the story e.g. pot of soup, rough and soft pieces of material to represent Esau and Jacob; even puppets to represent the different characters.

(The words **“birthright**” and **“blessing”** are difficult concepts for the children to understand, so find ways of explaining these words simply. A **birthright** can be explained as a special gift which was given to the eldest child when his father died. He became head of the family and most of what the family owned became his. A **blessing** can be explained as a special goodbye, made to the eldest son before his father died, again promising all the family’s riches and leadership to him.)

**Review questions:**

1. Who did Isaac marry? *(Rebekah)*
2. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys. What are twins? Do they always look the same?
3. What were the names of their children? *(Jacob and Esau)*
4. What was Esau like? *(Elder twin,* *red hair and hairy; skilful hunter; liked the open country; Isaac favoured Esau)*
5. What was Jacob like? *(Not hairy; preferred to stay at home and help with the cooking; Rebekah favoured Jacob)*
6. Re-tell the story of how Jacob stole Esau’s birthright but this time get the children to participate by perhaps filling in the words as you retell the story e.g. ...... had been hunting and was very hungry. ...... had cooked a delicious soup ........... etc  *(Gen 25:29 – 34)*
7. Re-tell the story of how Jacob stole Esau’s blessing, again getting the children to participate. *(Gen 27:1 -40)*
8. How did Esau feel when he found out that Jacob had stolen his blessing*? (He was furious and wanted to kill Jacob, so Jacob had to run away. Also mention that after a long time, Jacob did meet up with Esau again. Esau was happy to see him. Esau forgave Jacob.)*
9. Today we learnt about Jacob and Esau. Jacob did something to Esau that was not nice. Esau wanted to kill Jacob. Which other brothers did we learn about a few weeks ago where the one brother was angry with the other brother? *(Cain and Abel)*

**Application Questions:**

1. Discuss the following situations:
2. Your younger sister wants you to play with her, rather than you going to your friend’s house.

What do you do?

1. Your older brother is preparing supper and asks you to help, even though it is not your turn.

What do you do?

1. Your brother is studying for a test. You are watching tv which is disturbing him. What should you do?

Explain that brothers and sisters are likely to be with you for life, through good times and bad, while many of your friends will not be. Friends come and go but family is forever. It is important to look after this relationship – treat your brothers and sisters as you would treat your best friend.

**Craft:**

* At the beginning of the lesson, give each child a piece of paper that has been folded in half. The children can paint a stick-figure on the one half of the paper. Then fold the piece of paper and press it so that an image of the painting is made on the other half of the page. The painting can dry as you continue with the lesson. Towards the end of the lesson the children can then decorate their stick figures - the one representing Jacob and the other Esau. If possible, provide scraps of material for the children to add to their pictures. Encourage them to draw a pot of soup next to Jacob and a bow and arrow as part of Esau’s picture. Esau can also be shown to have red hair and be very hairy.

(If you don’t have paint you can use crayons and the children will draw two figures.)

**Snack**: Make “one minute” noodles with your class in a soup bowl. Bring a selection of items that the children can add to the stew such as herbs and spices, canned vegetables such as chick-peas and lentils, frozen vegetables, grated cheese. Then enjoy the soup. Perhaps provide some bread.

**OR**

 As part of the lesson tell the story of stone soup. To do this you will need a pot, a stone and some vegetables that go into a soup. As you tell the story you add vegetables. Make sure you have a safe place to cook the soup. Do this near the beginning of the lesson so that it has time to cook. Below is the story.

**The Story of Stone Soup**

Once upon a time, there was a great famine in which people jealously hoarded whatever food they could find, hiding it even from their friends and neighbours. One day a wandering soldier came into a village and began asking questions as if he planned to stay for the night.

"There's not a bite to eat in the whole province," he was told. "Better keep moving on."

"Oh, I have everything I need," he said. "In fact, I was thinking of making some stone soup to share with all of you." He pulled an iron cauldron from his wagon, filled it with water, and built a fire under it. Then, with great ceremony, he drew an ordinary-looking stone from a velvet bag and dropped it into the water.

By now, hearing the rumour of food, most of the villagers had come to the square or watched from their windows. As the soldier sniffed the "broth" and licked his lips in anticipation, hunger began to overcome their scepticism.

"Ahh," the soldier said to himself rather loudly, "I do like a tasty stone soup. Of course, stone soup with *cabbage* -- that's hard to beat."

Soon a villager approached hesitantly, holding a cabbage he'd retrieved from its hiding place, and added it to the pot. "Wonderful" cried the soldier. "You know, I once had stone soup with cabbage and a bit of salt beef as well, and it was fit for a king."

The village butcher managed to find some salt beef . . . and so it went, through potatoes, onions, carrots, mushrooms, and so on, until there was indeed a delicious meal for all. The villagers offered the soldier a great deal of money for the magic stone, but he refused to sell and travelled on the next day. The moral is that by working together, with everyone contributing what they can, a greater good is achieved.

**Physical Activities:**

* Play a game such as soccer or “piggy- in-the- middle” which involves trying to take the ball from another player, just as Jacob took what belonged to Esau.
* The children may enjoy acting out the stories told today. Provide some props for them to add to the story.

**Prayer:** Dear Lord. Help me to always be kind to my brothers and sisters and to treat them as nicely as I treat my friends.

**Older children (7 -13 years):**

**Lesson objectives:**

* To realise that family relationships are important and need to be nurtured

 • That forgiveness and love are needed in relationships.

 • Spend time praying for your family members by name.

** Attention Grabber:**

1. Ask the children if they have any brothers and/or sisters or cousins who are close to them. Ask the children if they sometimes fight with their brothers and sisters?

2. What makes them cross with their brothers and sisters?

3. Do they sometimes say and do things to their brothers and sisters that they would never say to their friends?

4. You could do a family tree like with the younger age group.

**Setting the scene:**

We have learnt about Abraham before

Who was he married to? *(Sarah)*

What was the name of their son? *(Isaac)*

Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. They had two children named Jacob and Esau, they were twins – today we will learn more about these characters.

 **Bible Story:**  **The Story of Jacob and Esau (Gen 25:19-26; 27-34, Gen 27:1-45, Gen. 28-31, Gen. 32:1-23, Gen 33)**

These chapters tell us the story of Jacob and Esau

The stories as told in the bible are long, and so it is suggested that the readings are condensed or told in your own words; or perhaps the children can help you tell the stories if they are familiar with them.

Another option for the 11 – 13 age group is to prepare skits (little acts). Different groups can cover the two stories, although this could be time consuming. The children can be provided with props for the skit, such as a pot for soup, pieces of fabric to use as robes, and rough and soft pieces of material to be used for Jacob and Esau.

**Definitions:**

**Birthright:** A special honour that was given to the firstborn son. It included a double portion of the family inheritance along with the honour of becoming the family’s leader when the father died. The eldest son could sell his birthright or give it away if he chose, but in so doing, he would lose both material goods and his leadership position.

**Blessing:** A ceremony of blessing was performed before a father died, during which the birthright was handed down to the rightful heir. Although the firstborn was entitled to the birthright, it was not actually his until the blessing was pronounced. Before the blessing was given, the father could take the birthright away and give it to a more deserving son. After the blessing was given, the birthright could no longer be taken away. This is why a father usually waited until later in life to pronounce the blessing. In the story of Jacob and Esau, we read that Esau gave Jacob his birthright, but Jacob still needed his father’s blessing to make it binding. Once Jacob was given the blessing, his father could not go back on his word, even though he knew he had been deceived by Jacob.

**Review Questions:**

1. Who did Isaac marry? *(Rebekah)*
2. What were the names of their twin sons? *(Jacob and Esau)*
3. Describe Esau. *(red hair and hairy; skilful hunter; liked the open country; Isaac favoured Esau)*
4. Describe Jacob. *(Not hairy; preferred to stay at home and help with the cooking; Rebekah favoured Jacob)*
5. Describe the story of how Jacob stole Esau’s birthright. *(Gen 25:29 -34)*
6. Later in life, Jacob deceived Isaac (and in so doing also stole Esau’s blessing). Explain the story .*(Gen 27:1-40)*
7. Esau was of course furious with his brother for stealing his blessing and wanted to kill him. How did Jacob escape? *(Rebekah organised for Jacob to flee to her bother, Laban)*

 **Application Questions:**

1. The choices that you make are important, and can have huge consequences, as seen in today’s lesson. What were the consequences to the choices made by?
2. Esau? *(He gave up his birthright for a bowl of stew(!) and so lost material wealth as well as leadership of the family)*
3. Jacob? *(He had to flee for his life and never saw his mother again. He did however gain his brother’s birthright which meant he became the leader of the clan and gained the wealth)*
4. Do you think it was right for Rebekah to help Jacob deceive his father? *(No – we find throughout the Bible that the bible characters are human and do wrong, just like us. God still loves them and uses them. However, we should try to stay away from doing wrong.)*
5. Jacob listened to his mother to deceive his father.Jacob knew that lying was wrong. Do you think lying is still wrong if a parent or family member makes you do it?

Or if you get something you really want?

1. Later in the book of Genesis, we read that after many years, Jacob wanted to return to Esau. Esau welcomed Jacob back with open arms (Gen 33). If you were Esau, would you have welcomed Jacob back so gracefully?
2. Do you sometimes fight with your brothers and sisters? And with friends?
3. What makes you cross with them?
4. Do you sometimes say and do things to your brothers and sisters that you would never say to your friends? Do you regret this?
5. Sometimes our parents make mistakes. Just like Isaac and Rebekah. What kind of mistakes did Isaac and Rebekah make? (*they struggled with favouritism, they didn’t treat their sons equally, Rebekah encouraged Jacob to lie to his family etc.)*
6. Think about your own parents. Have they ever made mistakes? How did you learn from them?

Do you know that your brothers and sisters are likely to be with you for life, through good times and bad, while many of your friends will not be? It is important to look after this relationship – treat your siblings as you would treat your best friend.

**Snack**: Make “one minute” noodles with your class in a soup bowl. Bring a selection of items that the children can add to the stew such as herbs and spices, canned vegetables such as chick-peas and lentils, frozen vegetables, grated cheese. Then enjoy the soup. Perhaps provide some bread.

**Physical Activity:** Play a game such as soccer or piggy- in-the- middle which involves trying to take the ball from another player, just as Jacob took what belonged to Esau.

**Or 3 legged race.** To show that its better to work together and to do life with people than being alone!

**Prayer:** Encourage the children to discuss what they have learnt from today’s lesson and then use these ideas as the basis for a prayer.

**References:**

[www.dtlk-bible.com](http://www.dtlk-bible.com); <http://www.missionarlington.org>

https://www.extremelinux.info/stonesoup/stonesoup.html

Life application Bible