

## Aim of lesson

To show that plotting and scheming does not result in real benefit. God's blessing is the only one worth having and that is given freely.

## Bible background

Genesis 25:27-34; 27; 28; 29:1-30; 31; 32; 33.

## Outline of lesson

### Two sons

Remind the class of the marriage of Isaac and Rebekah and introduce their twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Explain that the name Jacob means 'one who grasps the heel' or by implication 'a supplanter', one who takes the right or position of another. Use the workbook as the structure for the lesson. This lesson covers most of the life of Jacob, so you will have to keep to the main points of the incidents mentioned. This is a lesson in which it may be helpful to give the Bible passages one to each member of your class as a Bible reading the week before. Then they can give the necessary summaries as required.

### Two crafty schemes

Read together Genesis 25:29-34 and work through the first box in the workbook. Turn to Genesis 27. If the class know the story at all, ask the questions and let them search for the answers. If this is the first time they have met this passage then summarise the chapter first. Having completed Crafty Scheme 2, discuss with the class the character of Jacob and how he lives up to his name.

### Three lessons for life

Explain that you are now going to look at three parts of the life of Jacob to see how God teaches him and changes him. Turn to Genesis 28:10-22 and set the scene of Jacob running away because of Esau's anger. Introduce the vision that he saw. Help the class to answer the questions for Lesson 1 bringing out in discussion that blessing comes from God; not from scheming and that God gives it freely. However, Jacob does in fact treat it rather as a bargain (verses 20-22.).

In Lesson 2 (Genesis 29:15-30; 31:4-7,38-42) Jacob learns that scheming can produce unpleasant results now that he is at the receiving end! Again, you may need to summarise the passages and highlight these verses which make the point you want to draw out.

Lesson 3 (Genesis 32:3-33:10). Show how this incident was a test for Jacob. He was doing what God had told him (verse 9). He really did fear Esau, not only for himself but also for his wives and children, and all that he could do was pray. He sent presents on ahead but he did not trust in their effect. He spent the night seeking what he knew he really needed in order to survive the next day namely the blessing of God. He wrestled with an angel and in the morning was given the blessing. You may wish to include the point that Jacob called the place 'Peniel' because he had seen the face of God in the angel he had wrestled with, and survived. The next day, when he saw Esau and came to no harm, he recognised the blessing that he sought from the angel (see chapter 33:10). After going alone, ahead of his family, to meet Esau and being greeted as a brother, Jacob learned to trust in God. He knew that God keeps his promises. He could say, having received the blessing of God, that he has enough (Genesis 33:11). At the end of chapter 33 it is recorded that he built an altar to the God of Israel.

## Digging deeper

### Jacob and his family

This exercise completes the family tree of Abraham and considers where the members of the family were buried. It also serves to remind the children that just as the Ammonites and Moabites were descended from Lot, the Edomites were descended from Esau.

## Relevance to our lives

Ask the class what sorts of things they, or other people, want: money, clothes, new bike, records, etc. What sort of character do they think they would develop if they spent all day plotting and scheming to get these things by any means they could, without any regard to the feelings of others. Lead the discussion towards a consideration of the way in which God wants them to trust him in their lives.

## Prayer

Dear Lord, God of Jacob, thank you for giving us blessings that we do not deserve. Help us to seek your kingdom and your righteousness, and to trust you for everything we need.

## Other suggestions for activities

- Any one of the incidents in this story could be dramatised.
- A frieze depicting Jacob's life could be made.
- Jacob's changing attitude could be shown by writing a prayer that he might have said after each of the five incidents.