

Blessings and Birthrights

Bible Verse

The LORD bless you and keep you. (Numbers 6:24)

Did You Know?

The birth of Jacob and Esau, twin sons of Isaac and Rebekah, continues the story of the descendants of Abraham. It is through Jacob, who had twelve sons, that the descendants of Abraham really began to multiply.

Rebekah's sons fought with each other before they were born, setting the stage for a complex relationship that lasted throughout their lives. When Rebekah asked God why her pregnancy was so difficult, God told her that two nations were struggling inside of her. Rebekah eventually gave birth to twin boys. Esau was born first, but the second son, Jacob, came out holding on to Esau's heel.

As the oldest son, Esau was entitled to the birthright. The birthright was a blessing and conferral of rights usually passed on to the oldest son. Israel and some other ancient cultures gave special privileges to the oldest son in a family. The birthright brought with it a leadership role in the family and a larger share of the inheritance. Although the birthright was usually passed on to the oldest son, other stories of the time indicated that it could be forfeited.

The ancient Hebrew concept of "blessing" is also important to our story. It was believed that a blessing released a power that determined the character and future of the person being blessed. Once spoken, it could not be taken back. Genesis 27 tells the story of Rebekah and Jacob conspiring to convince Isaac to bless Jacob instead of Esau.

For more Bible background information, go to DeepBlueKids.com.

Exploration Points

Children will:

- hear the story of Jacob and Esau.
- explore the story of Jacob and Esau through art experiences.
- discover that no matter what we do, God blesses us.
- learn that we can share God's love and bless others.

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UNIT 3

Art Station

Bible Story

Genesis 25:29-34;
27:1-46

Anchor Point

God blesses us.

My Plan

- Bible Story—
Blessings and
Birthrights
- Control the Volume
Bible Verse
- Make a Blessings
Bowl
All Children
- Exploring Texture
All Children
- Bible Verse Poster
Younger Children
- Bible Verse Montage
Older Children
- Worship



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Art Station Setup

Write the Bible verse on a large sheet of mural paper or a piece of posterboard, and hang it where the children can see it. (The LORD bless you and keep you. Numbers 6:24)

BIBLE STORY—BLESSINGS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

SAY: Our Bible story today is about two brothers. It's found in the book of Genesis, the first book in the Bible.

- Tell the children the following story:

Jacob and Esau were twins. Esau was the oldest son. Although they were twins, Esau and Jacob were different from each other. Esau grew up to be an outdoorsman who liked to hunt. Jacob was quieter and liked to stay at home.

In those days, the birthright was a special blessing given to the oldest son. Esau would receive the birthright when Isaac died since he was the oldest. One day Jacob was making soup. Esau came in from the field and he was hungry. Esau smelled the soup Jacob was cooking and said, "Give me some of that stew!"

Jacob saw a chance to get something from his brother and said, "I'll give you some soup if you sell me your birthright."

Esau said, "My birthright won't do me any good if I starve to death!" That's how little Esau thought of his birthright.

So Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the bread and soup and then got up and left.

Years passed and Isaac grew old. His eyesight was failing, and he knew he would die soon. Isaac called Esau to his tent. He told Esau to go hunting and make him some food. Isaac told Esau that when he brought him the food he would give Esau his blessing. Isaac didn't know that Esau had traded his birthright for a bowl of stew.

Now Rebekah overheard the conversation between Esau and Isaac. Rebekah went to Jacob and told him that she would make some food for him to take to Isaac so that he would receive the blessing instead of Esau. Rebekah fixed the food Isaac liked. She also covered Jacob's neck and arms with goat hair so he would be hairy like Esau and gave Jacob some of Esau's clothing so that he would smell like Esau.

Jacob went into Isaac's tent, gave him the food, and asked for a blessing. When Isaac asked who he was, Jacob told him, "I'm Esau, your oldest son." When Isaac asked him how he had returned from hunting so quickly, Jacob told him, "The Lord provided an animal for me."

Isaac touched Jacob's hands and arms and they were hairy like Esau's because of the goat hair. He asked his son to come close and kiss him. Because Jacob was wearing Esau's clothes, he smelled like Esau. Isaac ate the food and blessed Jacob.

Esau came back from hunting, fixed food, and took it to his father. Esau asked Isaac to bless him. Isaac realized what had happened and told Esau that he had already given the blessing to Jacob. Esau was furious! He decided that after their father died he would kill Jacob.

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Rebekah heard what Esau was planning to do. She sent Jacob away to live with her brother's family until Esau calmed down.

CONTROL THE VOLUME OF THE BIBLE VERSE

SAY: A blessing is an affirmation or a way to let someone know that he or she is special. Our Bible verse today is a blessing.

- Show the children the Bible verse poster.
- Encourage the children to read the Bible verse with you.

SAY: Now let's pretend that I'm a volume control slider. We'll say the verse together four more times. When I'm standing over here (move all the way to your right side) ,the volume needs to be very soft. As I walk across the room, the volume increases, and when I'm standing over here (move all the way to your left side) the volume is very loud.

- Encourage the children to say the verse with you four more times as you control the volume with your position.

Activity Options

Choose from the following activities as your time and the children's interests allow.

MAKE A BLESSINGS BOWL—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: *Leader's Guide*—p. 7, scissors, envelopes, air-drying clay or play dough (store bought or homemade), objects for decorating (small rocks, sequins, hobby gemstones), toothpicks or dull pencils

Before Class: Make copies of "Blessings" (p. 7).

- If you are using homemade clay or play dough, make it prior to class.

SAY: We've heard a Bible story about blessing.

ASK: Who gave the blessing in the story we heard today? (*Isaac*) Who received the blessing? (*Jacob*) What did Esau trade his birthright for? (*a bowl of soup*)

SAY: Today you're going to make a bowl, but instead of putting soup in it, you'll put blessings in it.

- Give each child a ball of clay.
- Show each child how to roll the clay into a ball, and then stick his or her thumbs into the center of the ball and begin to press outward to form a bowl.
- Encourage each child to work the clay until she or he is happy with the shape of the bowl.
- Invite each child to decorate his or her bowl with the rocks, sequins, and gemstones and to use toothpicks or dull pencils to draw designs in the clay.

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≈ TIPS ≈

See page 8 for recipes for homemade air-drying clay and play dough.

- Explain that the clay will harden as it dries, and that this may take several days.
- Caution the children that this bowl is not for eating but for decoration.

SAY: Now that you've made a bowl, it's time to fill it with blessings. A birthright was a special kind of blessing, but there are many kinds of blessings.

- Give each child a copy of "Blessings."
- Have each child cut the cards apart and place the blessings in an envelope.

SAY: When your bowl dries, put the blessings in your bowl. Anytime you feel in need of a blessing, take a card out of your bowl and read it, remembering that God loves you and God blesses you.

EXPLORING TEXTURE PICTURE—ALL CHILDREN

Supplies: card stock; scissors; glue; materials with a variety of textures such as sandpaper, different types of fabrics, paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, waxed paper, tissue paper, and so forth

ASK: Why did Rebekah put goat hair on Jacob's arms? (*To make him feel hairy like Esau; to trick Isaac into thinking he was Esau*)

SAY: Isaac's eyesight was failing so he had to rely on his sense of touch.

ASK: Do you think you would be able to tell the difference between goat hair and someone's hairy arm?

- Show the children the materials you have collected. Invite the children to feel the different textures.

SAY: Today you may use these materials to make a texture collage. You may make a specific picture or you may put the materials together in a design.

- Give each child a piece of card stock.
- Encourage each child to cut pieces of the materials and glue them onto his or her card stock to make a texture picture.
- Affirm each child's work.
- Encourage children to admire each other's artwork.

BIBLE VERSE POSTER—YOUNGER CHILDREN

Supplies: **Leader's Guide—p. 9**, tissue paper, glue, empty plastic containers, paintbrushes, protective table coverings

Before Class: Make copies of "Bible Verse Poster" (p. 9).

- Protect the work area with paper or plastic.
- Place glue in each of the plastic containers, and add water to thin the glue.
- Give each child a copy of "Bible Verse Poster."
- Invite each child to tear tissue paper into strips and small pieces.

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- Encourage each child to place a piece of tissue paper on his or her paper and use a paintbrush to cover it with glue.

SAY: When the glue is dry, the writing on the page will show through the tissue.

- Have each child continue gluing tissue paper onto the page, overlapping the pieces.
- Set the pictures aside to dry.

BIBLE VERSE MONTAGE—OLDER CHILDREN

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 9, card stock, magazines, newspapers, scissors, glue sticks

Before class: Make a few copies of "Bible Verse Poster" (p. 9) for the children to look at while working.

- Look through the magazines and newspapers, and remove any pages with inappropriate content or pictures.

SAY: A montage is a picture that is made up of parts of other pictures. Today you are going to make a Bible verse montage by using letters from different magazine and newspaper pages to spell out the words.

- Give each child a piece of card stock.
- Show the children the copies of the Bible verse to use as guides.
- Invite each child to cut individual letters from the magazine and newspaper pages.
- Have each child use the cut out letters to spell the words of the Bible verse on her or his piece of card stock.
- Encourage each child to glue his or her selected letters to the cardstock.
- Invite each child to cut out the letters for her or his name and glue the letters on the poster.

Worship

Supplies: Leader's Guide—p. 6

Before Class: Make copies of the "Reproducible Family Letter" (p. 6).

- Have the children stand in a circle.

SAY: As we finish up today, we'll use the words of our Bible verse to bless each other. We're going to pass the blessing around our circle. I'll begin by turning to the person on my left and saying, "The Lord bless you and keep you." That person will turn and say the verse to the next person. We'll continue this way until the verse comes back to me, and then I'll finish by saying a prayer.

- Start the blessing traveling around the circle, and encourage the children to keep it going.

PRAY: Loving God, we thank you for the many blessings we've received from you. Thank you for your love for us. Help us to share your love with others so we may be a blessing, too. Amen.

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≈ TIPS ≈

Send a family letter home with each child.

Reproducible Family Letter

Today we heard the story of Jacob and Esau and explored blessings through art experiences.

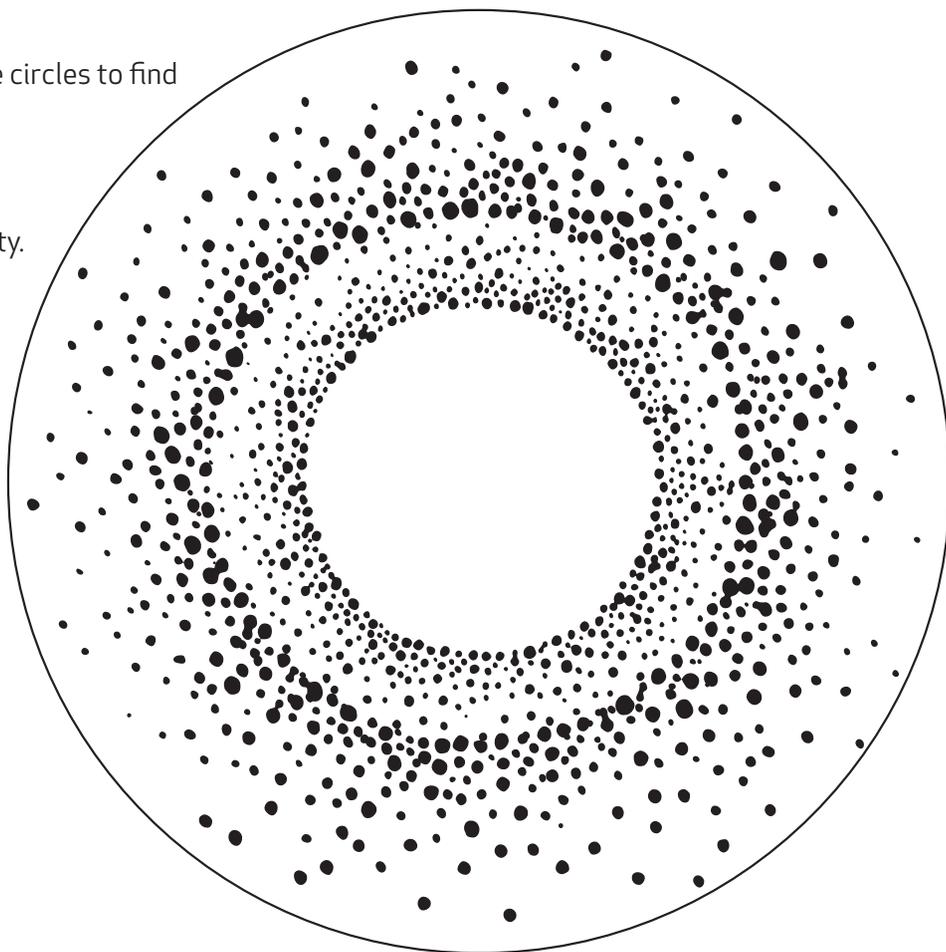
Do This Activity at Home With Your Family

Art experiences are a valuable way of exploring the world. Even more important than the finished project is the process of experimenting with colors and textures. Working together on an art project is a great way to spend time together as a family.

COLLABORATIVE ART CIRCLES

There are many possibilities for collaborative art projects. Here's an easy one for your family to try.

- Cut circles of various sizes out of a piece of paper.
- Give each family member one or more circles.
- Invite family members to decorate the circles in whatever way they choose, using any art materials they wish.
- When everyone has decorated their circles, lay all of the circles out on a large piece of paper or posterboard.
- Admire each other's creativity.
- Work together to rearrange the circles to find an arrangement that you like.
- Glue the circles in place.
- Admire your combined creativity.
- Say a prayer of thanks for your family and for the creative process.



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Blessings

<p>The LORD bless you and keep you. Numbers 6:24</p>	<p>I have called you by name; you are mine. Isaiah 43:1b</p>	<p>I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. Jeremiah 29:11</p>
<p>All the families of earth will be blessed because of you. Genesis 12:3b</p>	<p>Yes, goodness and faithful love will pursue me all the days of my life, and I will live in the LORD's house as long as I live. Psalm 23:6</p>	<p>The earth is the LORD's and everything in it, the world and its inhabitants too. Psalm 24:1</p>
<p>Come to me, all you who are struggling hard and carrying heavy loads, and I will give you rest. Matthew 11:28</p>	<p>Look, I myself will be with you every day until the end of this present age. Matthew 28:20</p>	<p>Arise! Shine! Your light has come; the LORD's glory has shone upon you. Isaiah 60:1</p>

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Recipes

AIR-DRYING CLAY

1 cup flour

1 cup salt

1 cup cornstarch

approximately 1 cup warm water

Measure flour, salt, and cornstarch into a bowl.

Stir dry ingredients together.

Slowly add warm water to dry ingredients until mixture can be shaped.

Continue mixing with hands. Add additional water if clay is too dry. If clay is too wet, add additional flour.

PLAY DOUGH

3 cups flour

1 cup salt

1 cup water

food coloring

1 tablespoon vegetable oil

Combine the flour and salt in a mixing bowl, stirring to mix well.

Measure 1 cup water in a measuring cup, and add several drops of food coloring. Stir.

Add the vegetable oil to the water in the measuring cup.

Pour the liquid ingredients into the dry ingredients, stirring to combine.

Add a small amount of water if the dough is too stiff, or a small amount of flour if the dough is too sticky until the dough is a good consistency to work with your hands.

Store the dough in a sealed container.

Bible Verse Poster

**The LORD bless you
and keep you.
Numbers 6:24**

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