

# Blessings and Birthrights

## Bible Verse

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

## Did You Know?

**T**he 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](http://DeepBlueKids.com).

## Exploration Points

Children will:

- hear the story of Jacob and Esau.
- explore the story of Jacob and Esau through science activities.
- 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

## Science Station

### Bible Story

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

### Anchor Point

God blesses us.

### My Plan

- Bible Story—Blessings and Birthrights
- Arrange the Bible Verse
- Fingerprint Fun All Children
- Match by Touch All Children
- Identify the Smell Younger Children
- Inherited Traits Older Children
- Worship



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## 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)*

*Place mirrors around the room. Use a combination of handheld and wall mirrors if you have them.*

## BIBLE STORY—BLESSINGS AND BIRTHRIGHTS

**SAY:** Our Bible story today is about two brothers who were twins.

Tell the children the following story.

Isaac and Rebekah were married for twenty years before Rebekah became pregnant. Rebekah gave birth to twins—two boys. The first boy came out red all over, with lots of hair. He was named Esau. The second baby came out holding on to his brother's heel. He was named Jacob. When the boys grew up, Esau became an outdoorsman who knew how to hunt. Jacob grew into a quiet man who liked to stay at home.

As the oldest son, Esau would have received the birthright when Isaac died. 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 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!"

Jacob said, "Sell me your birthright today, then."

Esau agreed, so Jacob gave Esau bread and lentil stew. Esau ate the bread and soup and then got up and left.

When Isaac grew old, he called Esau to him. He told Esau to go hunting and make him some food. He told Esau that after he ate the food he would give Esau his blessing.

Rebekah, Isaac's wife and Jacob and Esau's mother, overheard the conversation between Esau and Isaac. She 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. Rebekah fixed the food Isaac liked and covered Jacob's neck and arms with goat hair so he would be hairy like Esau. She even gave Jacob some of Esau's clothing so that he would smell like Esau.

Jacob went along with the plan. He went into Isaac's tent, gave him the food, and asked for a blessing. Isaac's eyesight was failing because he was old. He touched Jacob's hands and arms, and they were hairy like Esau's because of the goat hair. He 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'd already given the blessing to Jacob. Esau was furious! He decided that after their father died, he would kill Jacob.

Rebekah heard about Esau's plan to kill his brother. To keep Jacob safe, Rebekah sent him far away to live with her brother's family until Esau calmed down.

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## ARRANGE THE BIBLE VERSE

**Supplies:** Leader's Guide—p. 8, scissors, tape

**Before Class:** Make a copy of "Bible Verse Cards" (p. 8), and cut the cards apart.

- Invite eight children to stand in the front of the room, and tape one Bible verse card to each child's forehead.

**SAY:** This is our Bible verse for today, but the words are not in the correct order. Those of you who are sitting down need to rearrange these children so we can read the verse. However, you may not call anyone by his or her name. You will need to tell the people up front to move by describing them. You might say, "The person with long brown hair needs to be first in line."

- Encourage the children who are sitting down to arrange the standing children in the correct order. When the Bible verse is in the correct order, invite the sitting children to read the verse with you.

## Activity Options

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

### FINGERPRINT FUN—ALL CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader's Guide—p. 9, scrap paper, pencils, clear tape, wet wipes or wet paper towels, magnifying glasses

**Before Class:** Make copies of "Fingerprint Fun" (p. 9).

**SAY:** Our Bible story today was about twin brothers.

**ASK:** Did the brothers look alike? (No) How were they different? (Esau was red and hairy. Jacob was smooth-skinned.) Did Jacob and Esau like the same things? (Esau liked to hunt. Jacob liked to stay at home.)

**SAY:** Even though Jacob and Esau looked different and liked to do different things, they probably had some similarities. For example, they both liked stew!

- Invite children to share how they look similar or different than their relatives.

**SAY:** No matter how alike two people are, no two people are identical. For example, no two people have the same fingerprint.

- Give each child a copy of "Fingerprint Fun," and go over the information about fingerprints together as a group.

**SAY:** You're going to put your fingerprints on the hand on this page.

- Have each child take a pencil and scribble on a piece of scrap paper to completely shade in an area about twice the size of her or his fingertip.
- Have each child rub the tip of his or her index finger across the pencil marking.

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### ≈ TIPS ≈

If you have a small class, tape more than one word on each child's forehead, making sure that the words on each child occur consecutively in the Bible verse.

- Give each child a piece of clear tape about 1½ inches long.
- Encourage each child to carefully press the dirty tip of his or her index finger onto the sticky side of the tape, and then peel the tape off and tape it onto the corresponding finger of the hand outline.
- Have each child repeat this process for each finger and her or his thumb.
- Give the children wet wipes or wet paper towels to clean their fingers.
- Encourage the children to use magnifying glasses to compare their fingerprints to see how they are different.

**SAY:** God has blessed us each in different ways. Even our fingerprints are unique.

- Encourage children to form groups of two or three and look together in the mirrors around the room. Have children notice the similarities and differences in their facial features and coloring.

**SAY:** No matter what we look like, God loves us and blesses us.

## MATCH BY TOUCH—ALL CHILDREN

**Supplies:** index cards; large box or bag; items with different textures such as sandpaper, a variety of fabrics, paper, aluminum foil, plastic wrap, waxed paper, wood, clay, and so forth

**Before Class:** Cut two 2-inch squares of each textured item. Glue or tape each square on a separate index card. Place one card of each set of matching textures in the box.

**SAY:** In the Bible story of Jacob and Esau, one of the ways the brothers were different was that Esau was hairier than Jacob.

**ASK:** What did Rebekah do to help Jacob feel hairy like his brother? (*She put goatskin on his arms and neck.*) Do you think you could be fooled into thinking goatskin is a person's hair?

**SAY:** Since Isaac wasn't able to see well, he had to rely on his other senses to figure out if Jacob was who he said he was.

**ASK:** What are the senses besides sight? (*hearing, taste, smell, and touch*)

**SAY:** We're going to do an activity that uses your sense of touch.

- Show the children the texture cards that are not in the box.
- Encourage the children to feel the different textures.
- Have each child choose a card and then reach into the box and, without looking, choose the card that matches it.
- Increase the challenge by having one child turn his back to the group while another child selects one of the cards.
- Have the child with the card describe the texture.
- Have the child with his back to the group reach into the box and, without looking, try to select the texture card being described.

### ≈ TIPS ≈

If you have a large class, you may wish to make multiple sets of texture cards and divide the class into groups for this activity.

## IDENTIFY THE SMELL—YOUNGER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** cups, aluminum foil, spices and other fragrant substances (cinnamon, cloves, oregano, vanilla, lemon juice, oranges, vinegar, and so forth), sharp pencil

**Before Class:** Place each fragrant substance in a separate cup and cover with aluminum foil.

**SAY:** When Isaac got old his eyesight failed. When Jacob tricked Isaac into thinking he was Esau, Isaac used his sense of touch and his sense of smell to identify him.

**ASK:** Why did Jacob smell like Esau? (*He was wearing Esau's clothes.*) What do you think Esau smelled like? (*The outdoors, animals*) Have you ever thought about the fact that you could identify someone by the way they smell?

**SAY:** We're not going to identify each other by smell today! We're going to see how you do at identifying other things by their smell.

- One cup at a time, use a sharp pencil to poke a few holes in the aluminum foil over the top of each cup. Let the children take turns smelling the fragrance.
- Invite the children to guess what is in the cup.
- After each child has guessed, show the children what's in the cup.

**ASK:** How did your nose do today? Do you think you would be able to identify your family members by smell?

## INHERITED TRAITS—OLDER CHILDREN

**Supplies:** Leader's Guide—p. 10, pencils, mirrors

**Before Class:** Make copies of "Survey of Inherited Traits" (p. 10).

**SAY:** Esau and Jacob looked different from each other even though they were related. We're going to talk some more about the ways we're similar and different from each other by comparing certain traits. A trait is something that can be used to divide people into groups. For example, eye color is a trait.

- Have the children sort themselves into groups according to the color of their eyes. Let the children use a mirror if they need to check the color of their eyes.
- Give each child a copy of "Survey of Inherited Traits" and a pencil.
- Have the children work together to determine the number of people having each eye color.
- Have each child record the results on his or her sheet.

**SAY:** As you can see, the next trait on your survey is hair color.

- Have the children sort themselves into groups according to hair color.
- Have the children determine the number of people having each hair color.
- Have each child record the results on his or her sheet.

**SAY:** Let's check out our ears. Your earlobe is the soft part at the bottom of your ear.

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Some people have attached earlobes. Their ear shape curves down straight to their head. Other people have unattached earlobes. Their ear shape dips down and then back up before attaching to their head so that part of the ear hangs down.

- Have the children sort themselves into two groups according to whether their earlobes are attached or unattached.
- Have the children determine how many of them are in each group and record the result on their sheets.

**ASK:** How many of you can curl or roll your tongue?

- Have the children who can curl their tongues stand on one side of the room and the children who cannot curl their tongues stand on the other side.
- Have the children determine how many of them are in each group and record the result on their sheets.

**SAY:** One more. Take your hand and smooth back your hair so that your hairline is visible at the top of your forehead. Turn to your neighbor and have them tell you whether your hairline forms a point or goes straight across. Or use a mirror to check your hairline.

- Have the children with a hairline that forms a point stand on one side of the room and the children with a straight hairline stand on the other side of the room.
- Have the children determine how many of them are in each group and record the result on their sheets.

**SAY:** The traits on our survey have something in common. They're all inherited traits. These are all things that are determined when you are born. You can dye your hair, but the dye won't change your natural hair color. Inherited traits are not taught but are passed on through genetic code.

## Worship

**Supplies:** Leader's Guide—p. 7

**Before Class:** Make copies of the "Reproducible Family Letter" (p. 7).

**SAY:** Today we've talked about some ways that we're similar and different from each other. One way we're all alike is that God blesses each of us.

**ASK:** What are some ways God blesses you? What are you thankful for?

**SAY:** Another way that we are alike is that each of us can bless other people.

**ASK:** How can you be a blessing? How can you help other people feel God's love?

**PRAY:** Creator God, thank you for making each of us unique. Help us to celebrate the ways we're different as well as the ways we're alike. Thank you for blessing us with your love. Help us to be a blessing to other people. Amen.

### ≈ TIPS ≈

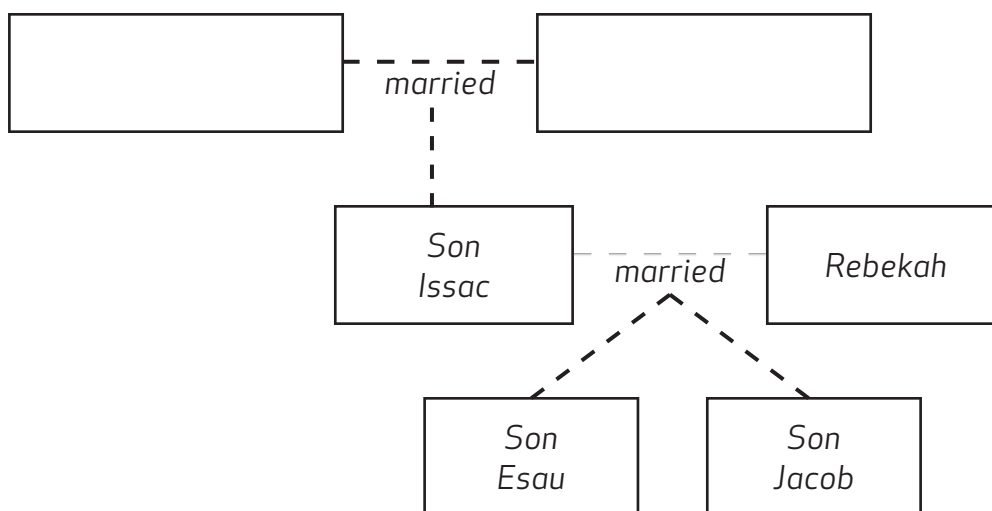
Send a family letter home with each child.

# Reproducible Family Letter

Today we heard the story of Jacob and Esau and used science activities to explore blessings.

## Do This Activity at Home With Your Family

### ESAU AND JACOB'S FAMILY TREE



We have been hearing the story of Isaac, Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau. Who were Jacob and Esau's grandparents? Look up Genesis 21:1-3 in the Bible and read the verses to find the answer. Write Isaac's parents' names in the family tree.

Although Jacob and Esau were related, they looked different and liked different things. Maybe Jacob inherited his grandfather's looks and Esau inherited his grandmother's looks. We don't know for sure, but we often inherit traits not only from our parents, but also from our grandparents. Even families brought together by adoption or marriages often pick up characteristics from other family members.

Talk about your family tree. How far back can you trace your ancestors? Invite each family member to discuss what he or she has inherited from other family members.

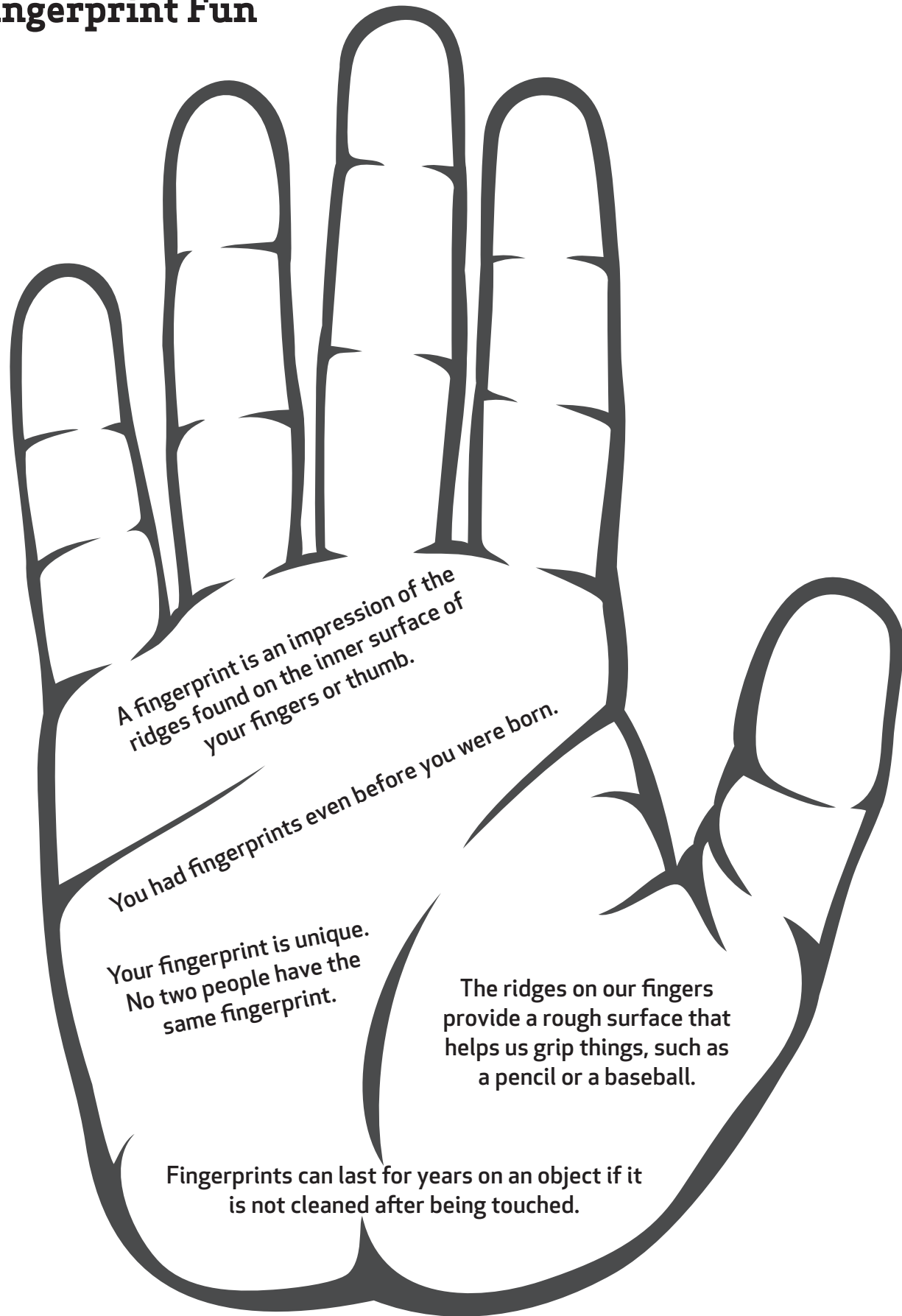
## Bible Verse Cards

<b>The</b>	<b>LORD</b>
<b>bles</b>	<b>you</b>
<b>and</b>	<b>keep</b>
<b>you.</b>	<b>Numbers 6:24</b>

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# Fingerprint Fun



A fingerprint is an impression of the ridges found on the inner surface of your fingers or thumb.

You had fingerprints even before you were born.

Your fingerprint is unique.  
No two people have the same fingerprint.

The ridges on our fingers provide a rough surface that helps us grip things, such as a pencil or a baseball.

Fingerprints can last for years on an object if it is not cleaned after being touched.

# Survey of Inherited Traits

For each trait listed below, take a survey of your friends and discover how many people fit in each category.

## Eyes

Blue	Brown	Green	Hazel	Other

## Hair

Black	Blonde	Brown	Red	White	Other

## Earlobes

Attached	Not Attached

## Ability to Curl Tongue

Yes	No

## Hairline

Forms a Point	Straight Across

