

A Good Shepherd Sacred Story

Sold Birthright

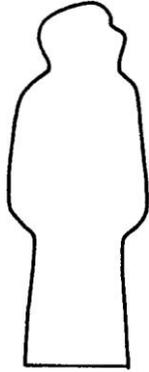
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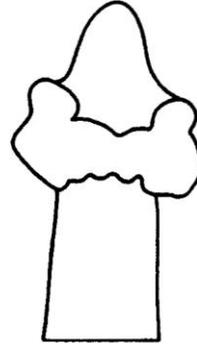
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SOLD BIRTHRIGHT ... MATERIALS

- medium wicker basket to hold:
 - wooden figure of Isaac
 - wooden figure of Rebekah holding twins
 - wooden figure of Esau
 - wooden figure of Jacob



Isaac
c



Rebekah
Jacob



Esau



SOLD BIRTHRIGHT GENESIS 25:27-34, 27:1-46, 28:1-5

ACTIONS

After speaking, stand up and go to the shelf. Carrying the story with both hands, walk back to the circle.

After speaking, allow 10-15 seconds of silence while you reverently stroke one of the wooden figures to center yourself and the children.

Place Isaac in the center of the storytelling area.

Place Rebekah next to Isaac on the right.

Place Esau (with bow) next to Isaac on the left.

Place Jacob next to Rebekah on the right.

Move Esau and Jacob side by side to the left side of the storytelling area.

Gently touch first Esau and then Jacob.

WORDS

Watch carefully where I go to get this story so you will always know where to find it if you decide to make it your work today or another day.

All of the words to this sacred story are inside me. Will you please make silence with me so I can find all the words to my story?

When the baby whose name was laughter grew up he took a wife. Isaac married a woman named Rebekah.

Rebekah had twin sons named Esau and Jacob.

When they grew up, Esau, the oldest became a great hunter and was happy working outdoors.

Jacob was a quiet man who stayed more in the tents.

Isaac had a special love for Esau, because Esau would bring him things from the field. But Rebekah thought Jacob was more special.

One day Esau came in from working in the field. He was very, very hungry! His brother, Jacob, was making stew in the tent.

Esau was so hungry that he asked Jacob to give him some stew.

Turn Esau and Jacob toward each other.

But Jacob said, "I will only give you some stew if you give me all the things that are supposed to be given to the oldest son by his father. "

Hold your stomach in pain.

Esau thought he would die, because he was so hungry. So he sold his birthright to his brother.

Slowly nod your head.

Much later, when Isaac, their father, was very old, Jacob again took something from Esau.

Move Isaac to the right side of the storytelling area. Move Jacob to the center and Esau farther left. Return Rebekah to the story basket.

The oldest child in each family was to get a special blessing. The words given to each child could not be taken back. The people of God believed that all the words that were said would come true.

Stir as though cooking.

Isaac was so old now that he couldn't see. Jacob, who was the younger twin, wanted the blessing that was supposed to be given to Esau. So he and his mother disguised him to feel and smell like Esau.

Pat your arms and neck.

When Isaac was hungry they made him some food.

Move Jacob to the right, toward Isaac.

Then they took animal hair and put it on Jacob, because Esau had a lot of hair on his arms and neck. That way they knew they could trick Isaac. He would think that Jacob was really Esau.

Move Jacob even closer to Isaac.

When Jacob brought the food to Isaac he said, "I, your son Esau, brought the food you wanted. Eat it now and then give me my blessing. "

Isaac was confused. The voice sounded like Jacob. He said to his son, "Come close so I may touch you."

Isaac felt the hairy arms and hands. He was sure then that this was Esau.

So Isaac said the words to Jacob that were supposed to go to Esau. Those words promised that people would always serve Jacob and that he would always have blessings. It was a very powerful promise.

Then Jacob left, after having tricked his father.

Later his brother, the real Esau, came back to the tent.

When Isaac realized what he had done, he was very sad. He could not give the same words to Esau.

Esau was very angry at Jacob. He hated Jacob and wanted to kill him.

Jacob and his mother were afraid that Esau would kill Jacob.

So Jacob went to live with his uncle in a land far away.

WONDERING QUESTIONS:

I wonder if Jacob and Esau ever really liked each other?

I wonder how Jacob felt when he pretended that he was Esau?

I wonder if Jacob felt lonely away from his mother, father and brother?

Move Jacob away from Isaac, back to center.

Move Esau to the right, next to Isaac.

Shake your head sadly.

Clench your fist and shake it in front of you.

Move Jacob far to the left, away from the other figures.

Place the wooden figures in the basket carefully.

Watch carefully how I put these away so you will know how to use them if you decide to make this story your work today or another day.

After speaking, stand and return the basket to its shelf and then return to the circle.

Watch carefully where I return this story so you will know where to find it if you decide to make this story your work today or another day.

Dismiss the children to their work ONLY after all children have chosen their work.

What will you make your work today? There are stories, paints, crayons ... many things for you to work with. Let's go around the circle and decide.

SOLD BIRTHRIGHT TEACHER HELPS

This story raises question after question. Esau was the oldest son and by right should have received the blessing. But in some ways he had given up the right to that blessing when he sold his birthright. The birthright that always went to the oldest son consisted of the leadership of the family and a double share of inheritance. This was that which Esau sold to Jacob for a bowl of stew.

Much time passes between the birthright story and the story of blessing. The blessing is that which is passed on to the oldest son from the father, before his death. For the Hebrew the words of blessing were irreversible and would become truth. So when Isaac realized that he had given the blessing to the wrong son, he didn't have the option of saying, "I didn't mean it", and giving the blessing to Esau instead. The blessing to Jacob found in Genesis 27:27-29, is one of great wealth, power and greatness. The reiteration of blessings on those who bless Jacob and curses on those who curse him is a reiteration of the promise made to Abraham in Genesis 12. Abraham would have been Jacob's grandfather.

The second blessing given to Esau in Genesis 27:39-40 tells Esau that he will not have an easy time living off the land, but will need to live by his sword. But there is hope for him to break away from the yoke of serving his brother.

For the children a major emphasis here is that God is in all acts. Esau was wrong to sell his birthright and Jacob and Rebekah were wrong to try to steal the blessing. We find ourselves asking again and again, "Why would God use someone like Jacob?"

Our first wondering question talks about how the twins felt about each other. We really don't know. We have no stories about Jacob and Esau growing up together. Most children will

say that they probably liked each other when they were really little. They may continue that the twins did not like each other as much when they got older. Don't be surprised if you get statements from some children that they don't like their siblings. That is a very common statement from children. What the children are usually saying is that it is difficult for them to share the affection of parents and friends with their siblings and so, at certain times, they see themselves in competition for that affection. What is important to help children understand in this story is that, even in stories about God's actions in their lives, people in the Bible weren't perfect. We aren't perfect, either. What Jacob did was not right. But, feelings are feelings and they usually can't be changed. God didn't ask that Jacob change his feelings about his brother. But God did not intend for Jacob to cheat his brother Esau, nor did God intend for Esau to hurt Jacob.

The second wondering question can be answered on at least two different levels. Young children may say that Jacob liked dressing up like Esau. Perhaps, some will say that he didn't like it, or that the hair on his arms made him itch. Older children may be able to identify more with the feelings we have when we try to deceive someone. You may want to ask them if they think Jacob liked himself when he was cheating his brother and tricking his father.

The third question in this lesson talks about Jacob's feelings when he left his home. No doubt Jacob had some lonely moments. Some follow up questions to this one might be: Was Jacob ever sorry for stealing the blessing from his brother? Did he ever think about going back home? Did he wonder what they were doing there without him? Who did he miss the most? Children who have parents that travel for work will be able to talk about missing their parent. So will children who spend time with one parent while having to leave the other parent behind because of a divorce situation. This is very much a feeling question. Encourage participation by accepting all comments and showing compassion for those who miss parents or a home they've recently left.

SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS FOR OLDER CHILDREN:

Obviously Esau and Jacob were like other brothers, sometimes they didn't get along. When is it the hardest for you to be a good brother or sister, if you are one? If not, when is it hardest for you to be a good friend?

Which person do you think you're more like, Jacob or Esau? Why?

Jacob ended up with some things that were very precious to Esau. Esau was angry enough to kill Jacob. Do you think the brothers could ever be friends again after that? Have you and one of your siblings ever had a fight so bad that you didn't know if you could ever forgive each other? What did you do about it?