Jacob's New Name

BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 32–33

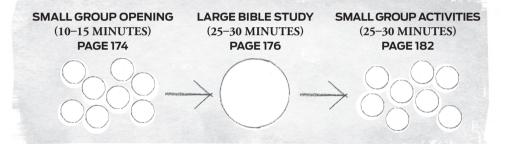
MAIN POINT: God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's

covenant people.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop

God's perfect plan.



Leader BIBLE STUDY

Jacob found himself stuck between a rock and a hard place. After stealing his older brother's blessing, he fled his home to escape Esau's anger. He spent time with his uncle Laban, got married, and fathered many children. Overall, Jacob prospered, but his time with his uncle Laban did not end well. Laban's sons accused Jacob of taking their father's wealth.

God told Jacob to leave, and Jacob did not hesitate. He gathered his family and all of his possessions and headed home to Canaan with Laban in pursuit. But uncertainty awaited Jacob in his homeland. His brother Esau was there. The last time Jacob saw Esau, Esau wanted to kill him.

God had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac, and He had promised to be with Jacob. But with Laban behind him and Esau before him, how could Jacob possibly survive?

Jacob tried to prepare for his meeting with Esau. He strategically divided his family into separate groups. He sent gifts ahead of them to appease Esau. That night, Jacob anxiously awaited word from Esau, and that is when he encountered the Lord.

Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? The victory was ironic; Jacob did not win by strength (God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch) but by confessing his dependence on God's blessing. Jacob had nowhere else to turn. He could not succeed by his own strength. Jacob held onto God and would not let go. God poured out His grace on Jacob. He blessed Jacob and gave him a new name, Israel. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would bring into the world His Son, Jesus.

Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people with the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into God's family, we also receive a new name: children of God (John 1:12).



Additional resources for each session are available at *gospelproject.com*. For free training and session-by-session help, visit *www.ministrygrid.com/web/thegospelproject*.

The BIBLE STORY

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32-33

God had made a covenant with Jacob's grandfather, Abraham. Then God told His promise to Jacob's father, Isaac. God had a plan for Jacob too. Even though Jacob was the younger brother, God wanted Jacob to receive the blessing for his family.

Years before, Jacob tricked his father and his brother; he stole the blessing from Esau. Then Jacob ran away to escape Esau's anger. God met with Jacob and promised to be with him. After 20 years, God told Jacob that it was time to go home.

Jacob began the trip with his family and all of his possessions. Going home meant that Jacob would see his brother Esau again. **Jacob was afraid that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing.** So Jacob sent messengers to tell Esau that he was coming. When the messengers came back, they told Jacob that Esau was coming to meet Jacob, and he had 400 men with him.

Jacob was very afraid! God had promised that his family would be as numerous as the stars, but how could that happen if Esau was going to kill them all? Jacob made a plan. He divided his family into two groups. If Esau attacked one group, maybe the other group could escape. Then Jacob asked God to keep His promise. Jacob prayed, "Please rescue me from my brother Esau."

Jacob sent a large gift of animals—goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls, and donkeys—to try to make Esau happy. Maybe then Esau would forgive him.

That night, Jacob moved his family across the stream where they might be safer, but Jacob stayed behind. **A man**

appeared. (The man was actually God Himself!) The man wrestled with Jacob all night. Jacob refused to give up, so the man injured Jacob's hip.

"Let Me go. The sun is coming up," the man said.

But Jacob would not let Him go. "I will not let You go unless You bless me," Jacob said.

"Your name will no longer be Jacob," said the man.
"Your name will be Israel because you wrestled with God and men, and you have won." The man blessed Jacob. The sun came up, and Jacob limped because of his hip.

Now Jacob looked and saw Esau and his 400 men coming to meet him. **Jacob went to meet Esau.** He bowed down seven times to show respect to his brother. **Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.** The two brothers cried together. "Why did you send so many animals ahead of you?" Esau asked.

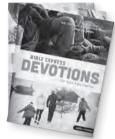
"I wanted to make you happy," Jacob said."

"I have enough," said Esau. "You keep them."

"Please take my present," said Jacob. "God has given me more than I deserve.

Esau agreed to take the gifts, and he returned to his home. Jacob and his family traveled on to Shechem (SHEK uhm), and Jacob bought land for them to live on. He was finally home in the land God had promised him.

Christ Connection: God changed Jacob's life and gave him a new name, Israel. Jesus came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people with the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God (John 1:12).



WANT TO
DISCOVER
GOD'S WORD?
GET
BIBLE EXPRESS!

Invite kids to check out this week's devotionals to discover that Jacob gave gifts to Esau generously because God had blessed Jacob and had given him grace. (Gen. 33:11) Order in bulk. subscribe quarterly. or purchase individually. For more information, check out www.lifeway.com/ devotionals.

Small Group OPENING

SESSION TITLE: Jacob's New Name **BIBLE PASSAGE:** Genesis 32–33

MAIN POINT: God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's

covenant people.

UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop

God's perfect plan.

Welcome time

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, and help new kids connect to your group. Prompt kids to share their favorite names. What would they name a new sibling or pet?

Activity page (5 minutes)

Give each kid an activity page and a pencil or marker. Review the big picture question and answer together. Instruct kids to put their pencil on the first letter of the puzzle, *N*. Kids should follow the letters of the big picture answer to reach the end.

SAY • What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.



• heavy books, 2

"What Can Stop God's Plan?" activity

page, 1 per kid

pencils or markers

• timer (optional)

Tip: Use books weighing less than 2 pounds.

Session starter (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Out of strength

Invite a volunteer to come to the front of the room. Ask him how long he thinks he can hold up two heavy books.

Instruct the volunteer to stand with his arms out to the side, palms up. Carefully place a heavy book (for example, a Bible) on each palm. See how long the volunteer can hold up the books. You may use a timer to record his time.

Choose new volunteers to try to beat the first player's time. Be ready to assist kids who are ready to drop the books when their strength runs out.

SAY • In today's Bible story, Jacob wrestled with a man all night. By the morning, Jacob was exhausted! But he would not let go. We'll listen to the Bible story to find out what happened next.

OPTION 2: New name game

For each kid, punch holes in the top corners of an index card. Thread a 2-foot piece of yarn through the holes and knot the ends. Invite each kid to write a name on a card and wear it around her neck. Encourage kids to pick names that are not their own.

At your signal, kids should begin introducing themselves to each other. Two kids will shake hands.

- 1. The first person says, "Hi, my name is [new name]."
- 2. The second says, "Hi, my name is [new name]."
- 3. The first person says, "Nice to meet you." The second says, "Nice to meet you too."
- 4. The first person says, "See you later." The second says, "Bye!"

After the exchange, the partners split up and find someone else to introduce themselves to. Challenge kids to introduce themselves to as many people as time allows.

SAY • Today's Bible story is about Jacob. Isaac and Rebekah named their son Jacob because the name *Jacob* means "He Grasps the Heel." But God gave Jacob a new name. We'll find out soon what his new name was.

- index cards
- hole punch
- varn
- markers

Option: Hide the name tags and challenge kids to identify friends by their new names.

Transition to large group

Large Group LEADER

SESSION TITLE: Jacob's New Name BIBLE PASSAGE: Genesis 32–33

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Countdown

· countdown video

Show the countdown video as your kids arrive, and set it to end as large group time begins.

Introduce the session (2 minutes)

- leader attire
- · empty water bottles

[Large Group Leader enters, struggling to carry several empty water bottles. Just as the leader reaches the front of the room, he or she drops the water bottles and they scatter all over the floor.]

LEADER • Yikes! Hey there, will one or two of you help me pick up these water bottles? Oh, thank you so much! You know, this job as assistant to the assistant coach isn't as great as I thought it would be. I know what I'm doing is important; I mean *somebody* needs to fill up these water bottles or the players will get really thirsty! So I'm glad I can help.

Do any of you like to play basketball? How do you feel if you've been running up and down a court and you don't have a break? You get really tired! You might run out of energy and just collapse! That is almost what happened to Jacob in today's Bible story. He wasn't playing basketball, though. He was wrestling, and he was exhausted! Are you ready to hear today's Bible story?

Giant timeline (2 minutes)

Point to the giant timeline to review previous Bible stories. Remind kids of God's promise to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Then review last week's story, "The Stolen Blessing."

LEADER • Jacob was in a difficult situation. He stole his brother Esau's blessing, and Esau was so angry that Jacob had to leave home so that Esau would not kill him. So Jacob went to stay with his uncle Laban. Jacob got married and had children. Finally, God told Jacob it was time to go home. Jacob had not seen his brother, Esau, in many years! Would Esau

still be angry? Would he still want to hurt Jacob?

Giant Timeline

Big picture question (1 minute)

LEADER • God had big plans for Jacob. Do you think Jacob ruined his future by stealing his brother's blessing?

Do you think God had to come up with a new plan for Jacob? No! What can stop God's plan?

Can anyone tell me the answer to our big picture question? What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan.

Tell the Bible story (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 32–33. Tell the Bible story in your own words, or show the video "Jacob's New Name." **LEADER •** Jacob had grown up away from his home. He got married, had children, and owned a lot of possessions. Moving day was a big deal, and he didn't have a truck to carry everything! As Jacob got close to home, he worried that Esau would attack him. So he sent messengers and gifts ahead to please Esau.

The night before Jacob met with Esau, a man

- Bibles
- "Jacob's New Name" video
- Big Picture Question
 Poster
- Bible Story Picture Poster

appeared to Jacob. The man was actually God Himself! They wrestled, and finally, God told Jacob, "You wrestled with God and men, and you have won." Was Jacob stronger than God? Did he pin God in a wrestling match? Impossible!

Jacob did not win a physical fight; he "won" because he learned that he was not strong on his own. He held onto God and asked for a blessing. Jacob knew he was weak, and he needed God. God had injured Jacob's hip, and Jacob limped the rest of his life. He probably never forgot about his encounter with God.

Esau was happy to see Jacob, and Jacob moved with his family to the land God had promised. Jacob's family would become the nation of Israel, God's covenant people.

Sing (4 minutes)

• "Rest in His Promise" song **LEADER** • Jacob must have been exhausted after wrestling all night. The Bible says that Jacob wrestled with God! Jacob refused to give up. Do you think Jacob was stronger than God? No way!

Even with an injured hip, Jacob would not let go. He wanted God's blessing. He needed God's blessing. God gave Jacob a new name, Israel. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would send His Son, Jesus, into the world. Let's sing.

Sing together "Rest in His Promise."

Discussion starter video (4 minutes)

LEADER • Have you ever pretended to be somebody else? What makes you *you*? Think about it while we watch this video.

 "Unit 3, Session 2" discussion starter video

Show the "Unit 3, Session 2" discussion starter video. Guide kids to discuss identities as you give the following prompts:

- Did Samuel become Emiliano when he put on his name tag?
- Does your name make you who you are? Does changing your name change who you are?
- How can we recognize someone has changed? Explain that when God changed Jacob's name to Israel, God changed more than Jacob's name. He changed Jacob's heart. Jacob's actions showed that he was different.

LEADER • The Bible says that people who sin are enemies of God. [*See Rom. 5:10.*] But Jesus died to bring us back to God. When we trust in Jesus as Lord and Savior, God adopts us into His family. He gives us a new name—children of God!

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me (optional)

Use Scripture and the guide provided with this session to explain to boys and girls how to become a Christian. Assign individuals to meet with kids who have more questions.

Encourage boys and girls to ask their parents, small group leaders, or other Christian adults any questions they may have about becoming a Christian.

Key passage (5 minutes)

Key Passage Poster"I Am With You" song Show the slide or poster of Genesis 26:24. Lead the girls to read the verse together. Then lead the boys to read the verse. **LEADER** • These are the words that God spoke to Jacob's

father, Isaac. God promised to be with Isaac, and God also promised to be with Jacob. [See Gen. 28:15.] God was with Jacob and Jacob traveled back to his home to meet Esau. God promised to make Jacob successful and to give him a big family. Jacob trusted that God would keep His promise.

Lead boys and girls to sing together "I Am With You." Encourage them to memorize the key passage at home.

Prayer (2 minutes)

Before dismissing to small groups, lead kids in prayer.

LEADER • Father God, we come to You so thankful that nothing can stop Your perfect plan. Help us submit to Your plan because it is the best for us and because it brings You glory. Thank You for adopting people into Your family and calling them Your children. Thank You for Your Word and for Jacob's story which reminds us that You are with us and You faithfully keep Your promises. We love You, Lord. Amen.

Dismiss to small groups

The Gospel: God's Plan for Me

Ask kids if they have ever heard the word *gospel*. Clarify that the word *gospel* means "good news." It is the message about Christ, the kingdom of God, and salvation. Use the following guide to share the gospel with kids.

God rules. Explain to kids that the Bible tells us God created everything, and He is in charge of everything. Invite a volunteer to read Genesis 1:1 from the Bible. Read Revelation 4:11 or Colossians 1:16-17 aloud and explain what these verses mean.

We sinned. Tell kids that since the time of Adam and Eve, everyone has chosen to disobey God. (Romans 3:23) The Bible calls this sin. Because God is holy, God cannot be around sin. Sin separates us from God and deserves God's punishment of death. (Romans 6:23)

God provided. Choose a child to read John 3:16 aloud. Say that God sent His Son, Jesus, the perfect solution to our sin problem, to rescue us from the punishment we deserve. It's something we, as sinners, could never earn on our own. Jesus alone saves us. Read and explain Ephesians 2:8-9.

Jesus gives. Share with kids that Jesus lived a perfect life, died on the cross for our sins, and rose again. Because Jesus gave up His life for us, we can be welcomed into God's family for eternity. This is the best gift ever! Read Romans 5:8; 2 Corinthians 5:21; or 1 Peter 3:19.

We respond. Tell kids that they can respond to Jesus. Read Romans 10:9-10,13. Review these aspects of our response: Believe in your heart that Jesus alone saves you through what He's already done on the cross. Repent, turning from self and sin to Jesus. Tell God and others that your faith is in Jesus.

Offer to talk with any child who is interested in responding to Jesus.

Small Group LEADER

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UNIT KEY PASSAGE: Genesis 26:24

BIG PICTURE QUESTION: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop

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Key passage activity (5 minutes)

- Key Passage Poster
- strips of paper
- marker
- Write the words of the key passage on several strips of paper. Make at least two sets.

Invite two volunteers to have a "word wrestling" match. Mix up each set of strips and give the paper strips to a player. When you say go, each player will rearrange her paper strips to put the key passage in the correct order. The first player to do so wins the round.

Play three rounds, and then invite two new volunteers to play. You may choose to facilitate several matches at once by creating additional key passage strips, or you may choose to play single rounds, allowing the winner to play again against a new challenger.

- SAY These words from our key passage are words that God told Jacob's father, Isaac, when He reaffirmed the promise He made to Abraham. God's covenant with Abraham was not only for Abraham. It was for Abraham and his future family—including Isaac and his son Jacob.
 - Today's Bible story shows us that God had a plan for Jacob. God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. Jacob's future family would be called Israelites, people of Israel.

Bible story review & Bible skills (10 minutes)

Print the Bible story bingo cards and make copies so each kid has one. If you choose, use the blank card to create your own versions of the card. Supply dry beans or O-shaped cereal for kids to use as game pieces.

Retell or review the Bible story using the bolded text of the Bible story script. Encourage kids to listen carefully. When they hear a word that appears on their Bible story card, they may cover it with a game piece. When a player covers four words in a row (horizontally, vertically, or diagonally), she should shout, "Four in a row!"

Prompt the player to list the covered words. Then continue telling the Bible story. As kids cover rows, challenge them to keep playing to cover all the words. You may ask review questions about some of the key words.

- 1. Who was Jacob's grandfather? (Abraham)
- 2. What did God make with Abraham? (covenant)
- 3. Who was Jacob's brother? (Esau)
- 4. What did Jacob steal from Esau? (blessing)
- 5. How did Esau feel when Jacob stole his blessing? (*angry*)
- 6. God told Jacob it was time to go where? (home)
- 7. Who traveled home with Jacob? (his family)
- 8. Whom did Jacob wrestle? (God)
- 9. Where was Jacob injured? (his hip)
- 10. What was Jacob's new name? (Israel)

SAY • God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. When we trust in Jesus, God changes our names from "enemies of God" to "children of God" and adopts us into His family.

- · Bibles, 1 per kid
- · Main Point Poster
- "Bible Story Bingo" printable
- dry beans or O-shaped cereal



- · pens or pencils
- index cards
- tane
- markers

Activity choice (10 minutes)

OPTION 1: Name flag acrostics

Give each kid a pen or pencil. Distribute index cards and markers. Instruct kids to write their names vertically on the flag. Encourage them to list things about themselves using the letters in their names. Example:

Caring

Awesome

Loves music

Eight years old

Brown eyes

Demonstrate how to tape the short side of the index card to the non-writing end of a pen or pencil. The pen and card will form a flag.

SAY • God changed Jacob's name, which meant "one who takes by the heel" to *Israel*, which means "he who strives with God." **God changed Jacob's name to**Israel, the name of God's covenant people.

OPTION 2: Color-changing milk

Conduct the following experiment to demonstrate change. Invite kids to gather around as you follow each step.

- 1. Cover the bottom of a plate with a thin layer of milk.
- 2. Allow the milk to settle. Then add a few drops of food color in the center of the milk.
- 3. Dip the end of a cotton swab into dish soap, and then hold the swab into the milk at the center of the plate for 10 to 15 seconds.

The food color in the milk should appear to move around as soon as the dish soap is added. Invite kids to describe the change. What did they see?

If kids desire an explanation, tell them that the dish soap

- whole milk
- plastic plate
- food color
- · cotton swab
- · liquid dish soap

bonds with (holds tight to) the fat in the milk. This strong bond pushes out the water and the food color. Everything else moves out of the way for the soap and fat bond.

- **SAY** God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. From Jacob's descendants—from the nation of Israel—God would bring into the world His Son, Jesus. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people with the way to be adopted into God's family.
 - When we are adopted into God's family, we also receive a new name: children of God.

Option: Review the gospel with boys and girls. Explain that kids are welcome to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions.

Journal and prayer (5 minutes)

Give each kid the journal page and a pencil. Suggest that kids list things about themselves that make them unique. What makes them different from their friends or siblings?

• What makes you *you*? Your interests or hobbies or likes and dislikes might help describe you, but if you are a believer, your true identity is *child of God*. When we receive God's invitation into His family by trusting in Jesus, He doesn't only change our names; He changes our hearts.

Invite kids to share prayer requests. Then choose one or two volunteers to lead the group in prayer.

If time remains, invite kids to complete the "Name Changers" activity to discover Jacob's new name. (*Israel*) Encourage kids to figure out the code. (The first letter of each item goes in the blank. For example, snake = *S*.) Remind kids that **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.**

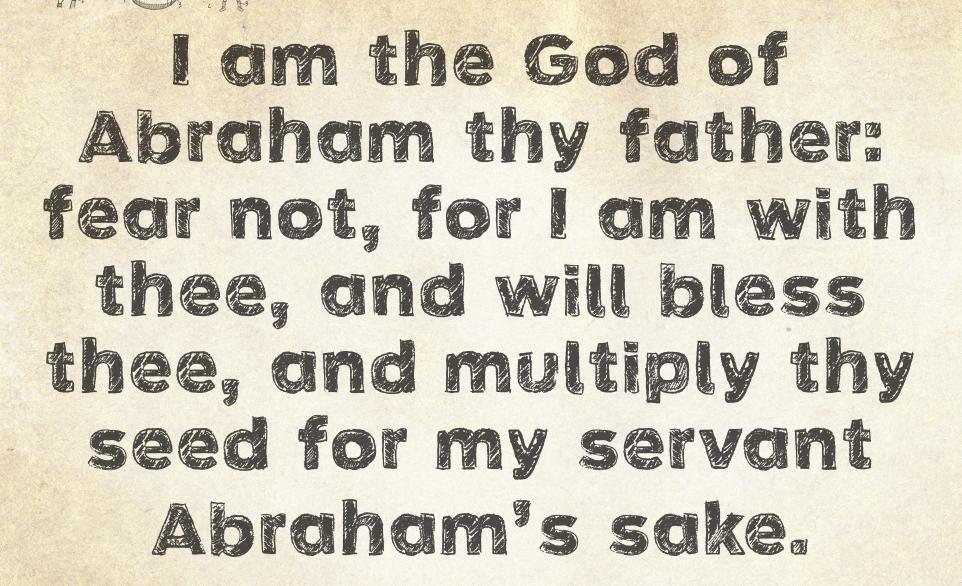
- Journal Page
- pencils
- "Name Changers" activity page, 1 per kid

Tip: Give parents this week's *Big Picture Cards for Families* to allow families to interact with the biblical content at home.

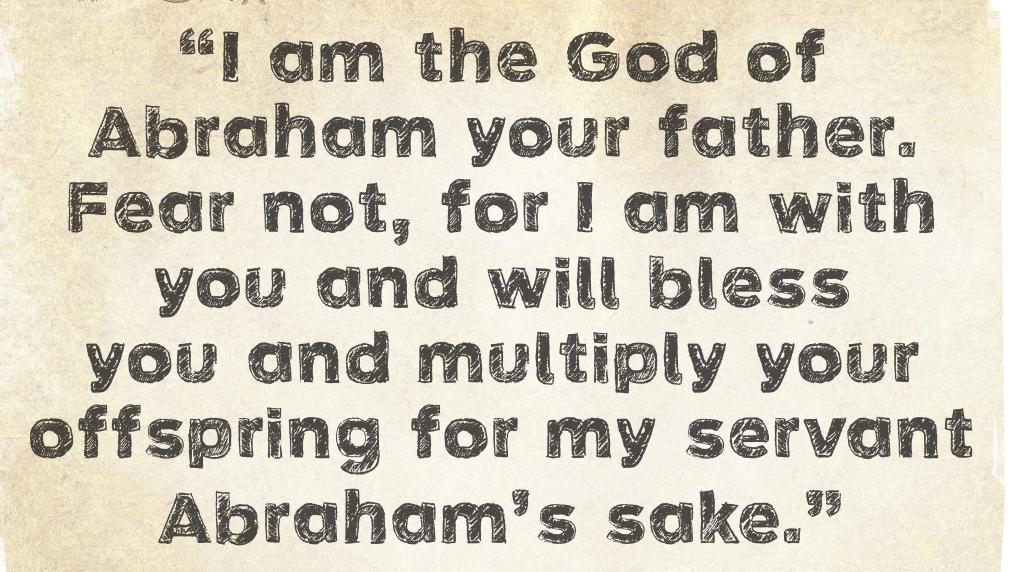
Journal Page **God the Covenant-Keeper** Key Passage: Genesis 26:24 Big Picture Question: What can stop God's plan? Nothing can stop God's perfect plan. Session 1: The Stolen Blessing Genesis 25:27-34; 27:1-45 Jacob stole Esau's blessing. Session 2: Jacob's New Name Genesis 32–33 God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people. Session 3: Joseph Sent to Egypt Genesis 37:1-36; 39:1-41:57 God used Joseph's suffering for good. Session 4: Joseph's Dreams Came True Genesis 42:1-46:34; 50:15-21 God sent Joseph to Egypt to establish a remnant.

til am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you. I will bless you and multiply your offspring because of My servant Abraham."











tel am the God of your father Abraham. Do not be afraid, for I am with you: I will bless you and will increase the number of your descendants for the sake of my servant Abraham.







Jacob's New Name (Genesis 32–33) • Unit 3, Session 2 • @ 2015 LifeWay OK to Print

Journal Page

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FAMILY DISCUSSION STARTERS

- •Tell about a time you were afraid. What did you do?
- What was Jacob's new name? (See Genesis 32:28.)
- Have you ever been forgiven? How did you feel?



Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32-33

MAIN POINT: GOD CHANGED JACOB'S NAME TO ISRAEL, THE NAME OF GOD'S COVENANT PEOPLE.

God had made a covenant with Jacob's grandfather Abraham. Then God told His promise to Jacob's father, Isaac. God had a plan for Jacob too.

Years before, Jacob tricked his father and his brother; he stole the blessing from Esau. Then Jacob ran away to escape Esau's anger. God met with Jacob and promised to be with him. Now God told Jacob that it was time to go home.

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WHAT CAN STOP GOD'S PLAN?

Use the big picture answer to find your way through the puzzle, one letter at a time.

START E N N 0 H P END



God changed Jacob's name! Write the first letter of each picture to discover Jacob's new name. We've done the first one for you.



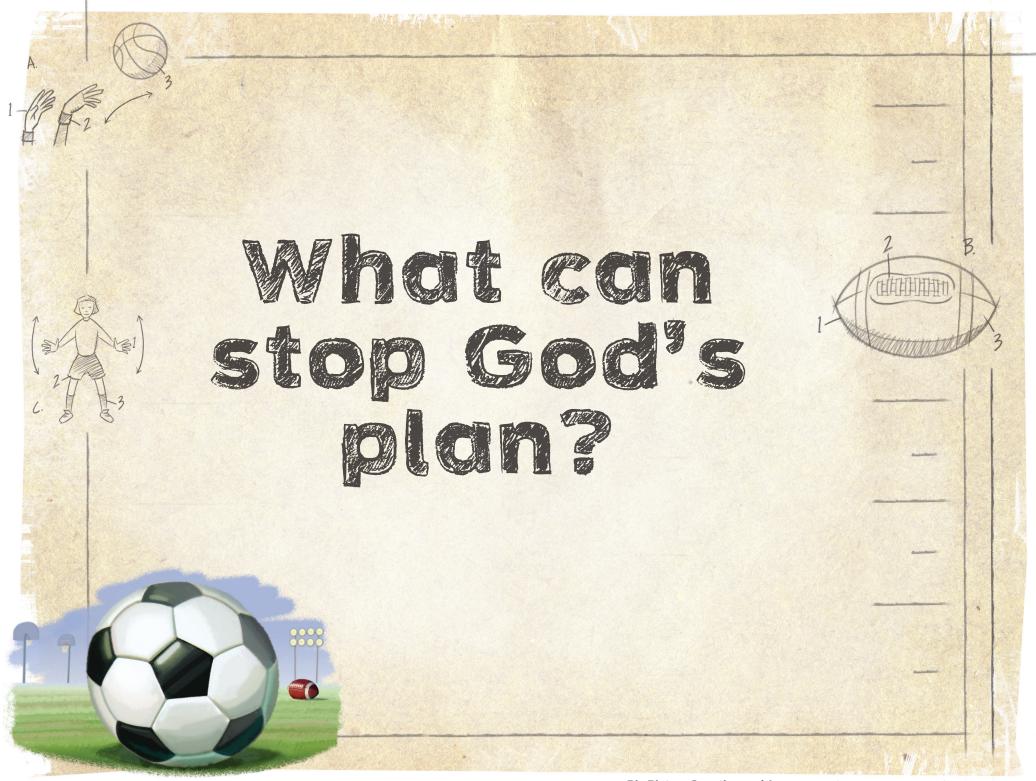














Jacob	promise	hip	father
home	God	Israel	angry
blessing	family	Abraham	Esau
wrestled	covenant	night	land

father	family	wrestled	covenant
Jacob	God	Esau	Night
blessing	promise	land	home
Abraham	hip	Israel	Angry

Jacob	promise	land	hip
blessing	night	Israel	Abraham
angry	family	wrestled	Esau
covenant	home	God	father

Abraham	angry	blessing	covenant
Esau	family	father	God
hip	home	Israel	Jacob
land	nighy	promised	wrestled

hip	promise	Jacob	Esau
Israel	God	Abraham	angry
nighy	family	home	father
wrestled	covenant	land	blessing

