

Session 6

Jacob gets married

New places are something that our children will experience quite regularly, and their confidence can be boosted with the knowledge that God doesn't stay behind in church but goes with them wherever they are going. Take care if reading directly from the Bible this session and lead the children away from discussions about wives and concubines. Keep the focus on Jacob and how God showed himself to be faithful to him.

To plan your session... Choose a selection of *Opening, Into the Bible* and *Living the life* activities to make your session fun and memorable.

Options to open your session...

Family tree

Activity time: 15 minutes

Aim: to think about Jacob's family

- 1 Draw an outline of a house with simple stick people standing by it to represent your family when you were a child. Next draw the homes of any aunts and uncles you had. Invite the children to draw their families. Be sensitive to any family issues the children may have.
- 2 Encourage the children to tell you anything they know about Jacob. Draw Jacob's diagram together, including the families of Isaac and Laban. Say that, because of a fight with Esau, Jacob's dad told him to go and stay with his uncle Laban.

Parachute worship

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to thank God for being with us in new places

You will need: a parachute or large sheet

- 1 Sitting around the parachute, ask the children for ideas of new places they have been, for example, a new school, new holiday destination or new club.
- 2 Encourage everyone to stand around the parachute and hold it. On the count of three, call out one of the places the children mentioned. Challenge all the children who have been to this new place recently to run underneath and swap places, at the same time shouting, 'Thank you, God, for being with me [*at my new school*].'
- 3 Repeat this using the children's other ideas.

Aim

To be confident because God is with us when we go to new places

Bible passage

Genesis 29–31

Ready to use activity

Chat and draw

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to think about how we feel in new places

- 1 Ask the children if they have ever moved to a new home, school, childminder or club. Chat about how they felt. What was different, difficult or fun?
- 2 Invite the children to draw themselves going to a new place of their choice.
- 3 Say that today they will learn that we can be confident because God is with us when we go to new places. Encourage the children to add God to their pictures.

Tip for Leaders: The Bible points to parents as those primarily responsible for a child's faith development. It is important to see that we are working in partnership with parents and carers.

Into the Bible - options based on the Bible passage...

Ready ^{to use} activity

Bible story with pictures

Activity time: 20 minutes

Aim: to be confident because God is with us when we go to new places

You will need: copies of the *Splash!* sheets from pages 47 and 48

1 Prepare

Make copies of pages 47 and 48, ideally so that they are back to back on one sheet of paper; you will need one copy per child.

2 Story with *Splash!*

Say that they are going to hear about Jacob travelling to a new place called Haran and how he had confidence, knowing that God was with him.

Give out copies of *Splash!* sheets, and help the children cut out the pictures with green outlines. Read the story, encouraging the children to glue on the right pictures as you go through it.

Story: When Jacob and Esau (twins) grew up, they had a big fight. Isaac, their dad, told Jacob to go and live in Haran with his uncle, Laban.

Jacob set off on his journey, and one night he had a dream in which God told him that he was with him and would look after him. When Jacob woke up, he set up a stone as a special memorial to remind him this was a special place to worship God. (*Invite the children to glue on the upright stone near the road in picture 1.*)

After a long journey, Jacob arrived in a field of sheep near a well. (*Ask the children to glue on the well and some sheep in the field in picture 2 as the story continues.*)

A shepherd girl, called Rachel, arrived in the field to give her sheep some water. Amazingly, Rachel was his uncle Laban's daughter! Uncle Laban agreed to let Jacob marry Rachel if he looked after his flocks of sheep for seven years.

But after seven years Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his older daughter, Leah. If he wanted to marry Rachel, Jacob had to work for another seven years! Jacob worked hard but Laban kept changing his wages unfairly.

But God looked after Jacob. He blessed him with lots of children. (*Encourage the children to glue on the children in picture 3. As they do this, continue the story.*)

One day Jacob decided he wanted to go back to his homeland. Laban persuaded Jacob to stay by agreeing to let him keep all the sheep and goats that were black or had spots or speckles on them. But after he made this agreement, Laban took away all the black, speckled and spotted sheep and goats from Jacob and gave them to his sons to look after. (*Help the children to glue the sheep on to picture 4.*)

But God was looking after Jacob, and soon many of the sheep and goats he was looking after also had speckles and spots. (*Invite the children to put speckles and spots on Jacob's sheep in picture 4.*)

This made Laban angry. So God told Jacob to take his family and flocks and make the long journey back home. But Laban chased after Jacob. After three days he caught up with him, but God told Laban not to harm Jacob. After an argument, Jacob and Laban promised not to go into each other's fields. To remind them of their promises they built a pillar out of stones. (*Ask the children to glue on the stones in the shape of a pillar between Jacob and Laban in picture 5.*)

Jacob returned home to his family, knowing that God had been with him all the time he had been living with his uncle Laban.

3 Reflect

Ask the children where they think God was in the story. Encourage them to show their answer by placing sticky notes on the pictures where they think God was with Jacob. (*Of course, God was with Jacob in every new place and situation!*)

Bible story with building

Activity time: 20 minutes

Aim: to be confident because God is with us when we go to new places

You will need: plastic bricks or other building materials

1 Setting the scene

See what the children know about Jacob. You could use the *SU Bible Timeline*, if you have one. Give them clues such as, 'Today's story is about someone whose name begins with "J" and whose dad's name begins with "I".' Make sure the children know that Jacob had always lived with his mum and dad (Isaac and Rebekah), that he tricked his brother, Esau, and that Esau was so angry he wanted to kill Jacob. So Jacob was forced to take a long journey to a new place called Haran where he could live with his uncle Laban.

2 Unpack

Invite the children to help you unpack the bricks or other building materials. Explain that as you tell the story you will ask the children to build models of some of the things they hear about. Depending on the size of your group, they could each do one, or work in pairs or small groups. Make sure you encourage them to listen carefully to the story as they build.

3 Listen and build

Story: For many days Jacob travelled away from his home until he arrived at a field with a well in it. (*Ask the children to build a well.*) God was with Jacob at the well, because there he met a girl called Rachel giving water to her sheep. Amazingly, Jacob's uncle, Laban, was Rachel's father!

Jacob went with Rachel to meet his uncle Laban. (*Ask the children to build Laban's home.*) God was with Jacob when he lived with Laban. Jacob fell in love with Rachel and wanted to marry her. But Laban said he must first work as his shepherd for seven years. After seven years, Laban tricked Jacob into marrying his older daughter, Leah. Jacob had to work as a shepherd for another seven years if he wanted to marry Rachel. (*Ask the children to build a sheep pen.*)

To make matters worse, Laban unfairly changed his wages ten times. But God took care of Jacob. He blessed him with lots of children and didn't allow Laban to harm him.

After working for Laban for 14 years, Jacob wanted to return home. But Laban persuaded him to stay by agreeing to allow Jacob to keep all the sheep and goats that were spotted or speckled.

Jacob knew how to help the flocks become spotted and speckled. He put special branches in the animals' water troughs. (*Ask the children to build a water trough.*)

Laban became angry because God was with Jacob and helped him to have lots of healthy spotted and speckled flocks. God told Jacob to run away from Laban with Rachel, Leah and the children. He promised to be with Jacob on his journey home. Laban chased after Jacob and caught up with him near some hills. But God was with Jacob and told Laban not to harm Jacob.

After an argument with Laban, Jacob promised to look after Rachel, Leah and the children. Jacob and Laban also promised never to go into each other's fields. To help them remember their promises they built a pillar from a heap of stones. (*Ask the children to build a pillar.*)

4 Recap

Admire the children's models in turn, asking the children about that bit of the story. Find out if God was with Jacob during that bit of the story. Bring out how even though Jacob went to new places, God was still with him everywhere he went.

More on this theme

If you want to do a short series with your group, other sessions that work well with this one are:

Session 5 God's promises to Jacob, Genesis 28:10-22

Session 7 Jacob goes home, Genesis 32,33

Session 8 God blesses Jacob, Genesis 35:1-15

Session 9 God at work, Genesis 45:1-13

Living the life - options to help live God's way...

Postcard prayer

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to pray for people in new places

You will need: blank postcards, postage stamps

- 1 Ask the children if anybody they know is visiting a new place. Perhaps a sibling has started a new school or club, a friend has moved away or a member of the church has gone abroad to serve God.
- 2 Encourage the children to draw on their postcards a picture of the person, showing God being with them in the new place. Suggest they write a sentence of encouragement about God being with them.
- 3 Give each child a stamp. As they stick it to their card, invite them to thank God that he is with the person they have chosen, and to ask God to help that person know he is with them.
- 4 Make sure the cards get addressed and posted.

Sing

Activity time: 10–15 minutes

Aim: to remember that God is with us in new places

You will need: music

- 1 Ask the children to call out some new places they have been to and some they might visit soon. Encourage them by saying that God is with them in all of these places.
- 2 Sing some songs about God being with us wherever we go. You could use the song 'I am with you' from the *Bitesize Bible Songs* CD.
- 3 Between songs, give the children time to pause and thank God that he is always with them.

An MP3 for this activity is available in the zip folder.



Ready to use activity

Plane thanks

Activity time: 10 minutes

Aim: to thank God that he is with us in new places

You will need: instructions from page 49

- 1 Remind the children of how God was with Jacob. Ask if any of them have ever travelled to a new place in an aeroplane.
- 2 Help the children to make aeroplanes using the instructions on page 49. Ask them to add the name of a new place they may soon be visiting on to one wing of their aeroplane, and to draw a picture of themselves on the other wing.
- 3 As the children launch their aeroplanes, encourage them to thank God that he is with them even in new places. (Make sure that the launch area is free of other children!)

Extra ideas for the session, and beyond...

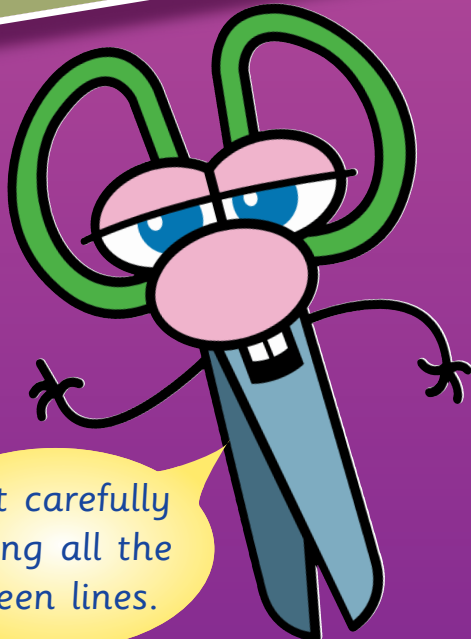
Visit somewhere new with your group, maybe an ice-cream parlour or a park.

Splash!

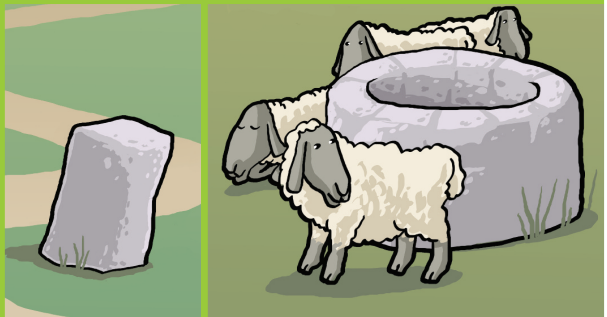


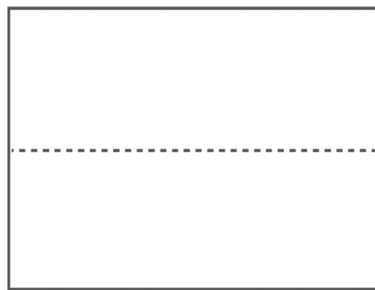
Cut out the pictures with the green lines on the other side and glue them in the right places.



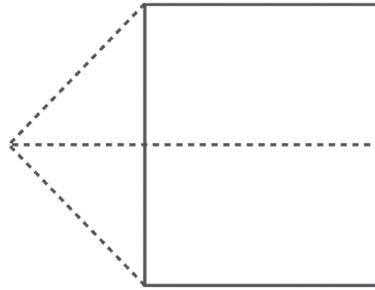


Cut carefully along all the green lines.

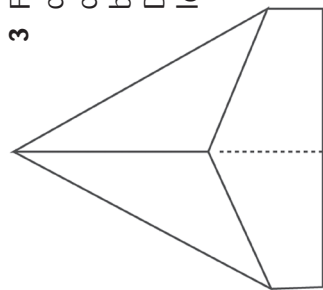




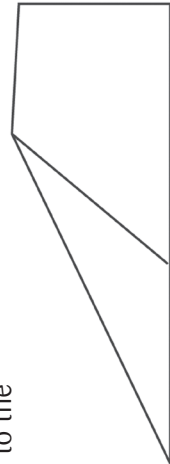
1 Fold an A4 sheet of paper in half lengthways. Open it out again. There'll be a crease in the centre.



2 Fold the top corners diagonally down towards the crease.



3 Fold the right hand corner down to the crease, about 45mm below the first turnover. Do the same to the left corner.



4 Now fold the sheet in half lengthwise, with the flaps on the outside.



5 Finally, fold down the wings at an angle so that they rise up at the rear of the plane (as shown). Now you are ready to fly!