

A PROMISING DREAM

Jacob
Genesis 28:10–22
1930 BC

BIBLE TRUTH

God is with us.

LEARNER GOAL

I can identify multiple ways God is with us, His human creatures and His redeemed children.

BIBLE VERSE

I am with you and will keep you wherever you go. Genesis 28:15

LAW & GOSPEL

We think God does not care or has left us alone. **God promises in His Word never to leave us. His gracious love for us, revealed through His Son, Jesus, moves our hearts to worship and praise Him.**

SCRIPTURE SNAPSHOT

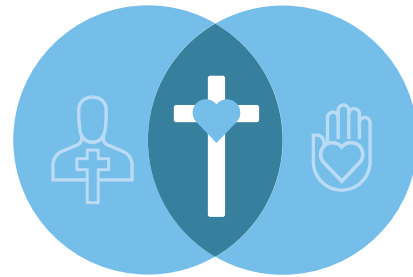
Jacob undeservedly receives his father's blessing—he and his offspring will dwell in the land of Canaan. As Isaac's life approaches its end, Jacob rightly fears for his life. Following the urging of Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob sets out for the house of his Uncle Laban. Along the way, Jacob dreams of a ladder reaching to heaven, with the Lord Himself standing at the top. The preincarnate Christ repeats God's promise to give this land to Jacob and his descendants.

LESSON PREP

BASIC Read the narrative and study notes in *The Lutheran Study Bible (TLSB)*.

MORE TIME Look through the map and commentary on Jacob's travels from *TLSB*, page 60.

IN DEPTH Read the article "Family Life in Israel" on pages 54–55 in *TLSB* to get a better idea as to what family life among the patriarchs looked like.



CONNECTING IDENTITY & CALLING

IDENTITY: WHO AM I?

God calls me His precious possession; He is near to me even when I feel that He is far away.

CALLING: WHY AM I HERE?

I worship God and always remember that He is with me and cares for me.

GROWING IN FAITH FOR LIFE

See how this lesson builds on learning for each age.

ADULT

I can identify multiple ways God is with us, His human creatures and redeemed children.

YOUTH

I can express confidence that God is with me.

ELEMENTARY

I understand that God is with me all the time.

EARLY CHILDHOOD

I know God is with me.



LEADER NOTE

For the opening question, try to get learners to think about how people outside of the Christian faith feel they can turn to God, the gods, or the universe before turning to God's promises, Word, and Sacraments as ways of knowing God is with them. Try having your learners share in pairs first before opening up to the whole group.



BONUS ACTIVITY

If your learners are unfamiliar with the Bible narratives, use a youth or story Bible to tell the stories that bridge the gap between the last lesson and this one. Tell the learners that this is a good way to demonstrate how to teach children. Then, give the learners opportunities to chime in on how they use Bible story books to teach at home.

LAUNCH

WELCOME

Welcome the group and open in prayer. It may be a good time to take prayer requests; pray for those requests either now or at the conclusion.

REVIEW

Review the Bible Truth, Learner Goal, and Bible Verse. Then, begin with the opening reflection question on the lesson handout.

OPENING REFLECTION

What things do people turn to to feel close to God or their gods or the universe? How do we, God's people today, know that God is with us?

LEARN & LIVE

GENESIS 28:10–12

BIBLE COMMENTARY

This episode comes right on the heels of Jacob's stealing of the birthright from Esau. That great deception, fueled by Rebekah's despising of Esau's pagan wives, tore a great rift in the first family of God's promised people. Jacob now flees to his uncle and, about seventy miles from home, lies down. The Savior-God shows Jacob this vision, a powerful one, considering it reveals how God is there, working behind the scenes to fulfill His promise to restore creation despite human sin.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Imagine you are Jacob. What are you thinking and feeling before the vision? What does the vision look like? What does it mean to you?

REFLECTION HELPS

Jacob had just left everything, so he was probably feeling scared, alone, and maybe even ashamed. The vision, among the first of its kind in Scripture, was mysterious. It showed God's presence among His chosen people. It was an awesome sight, bringing comfort and perspective to Jacob about the epic nature of God's salvation story.

GENESIS 28:13–15

BIBLE COMMENTARY

Now that Jacob has seen this great vision of angels ascending and descending from God to earth, God reiterates His promise. God makes it clear that Jacob is His child. A weak and immature child with much to learn, but God's child nonetheless. He is chosen to be the one through whose family the Savior of the world would one day come, blessing the world forever. In Christ, we not only have the fulfillment of this promise but we also have the assurance that the same God who was with Jacob is with us now through His Word and Sacraments. God is never far from us. He is still at work.

REFLECTION QUESTION

God reiterates His promise to His chosen people. Look once more at **Genesis 12:1–3**, and then compare the words God spoke to Abraham and to Abraham's grandson Jacob. What stands out to you?

REFLECTION HELPS

God promised Abraham he would be a great nation, he would inherit the Promised Land, blessings and curses would come to those who blessed and cursed him, and most important, the world would be blessed through him and his ancestors. Differences include the promise to bring Jacob back to the land and the assurance that God would be with him until all that He had promised would come to pass.

GENESIS 28:16–17

BIBLE COMMENTARY

It is clear here that Jacob sees just how important God’s promise to him and his family really is. He states that he saw the gate of heaven. Roughly two thousand years later, Jesus indicates that He is the gate to heaven. But in John 1:51, He is not at the top of the ladder; He is at the bottom. Jesus is literally God with His people, working to give us forgiveness, mercy, and grace and to show us who He is.

REFLECTION QUESTION

Think about the different emotions Jacob might have felt upon waking up: perhaps joy, awe, and wonder. God showed Jacob that He was with His people, acting behind the scenes. Jesus later used similar imagery. Read **John 1:49–51**. How do Jesus’ words relate to the narrative about Jacob?

REFLECTION HELPS

Brainstorm the different emotions that accompanied Jacob, along with the different emotions that may accompany us as God reveals Himself to us through Word and Sacrament. Jesus indicated that He is like the ladder to heaven. At His Baptism, the heavens were opened and the people caught a glimpse behind the scenes of God’s plan of salvation. In Christ, we can go to the Father in prayer, for Jesus has promised to never leave us.

GENESIS 28:18–22

BIBLE COMMENTARY

In a land of heathens and idol worshipers, God is working to accomplish His promise. Jacob sets up a pillar and names the place Bethel, or “house of God.” His response is to worship the one true God, learning, though meekly at first, to trust in God’s promises even when he cannot see them coming to pass.

REFLECTION QUESTION

What strikes you about Jacob’s responses? Why? Draw equivalents between how Jacob responded and how we respond to God’s presence among us.

REFLECTION HELPS

Though it may seem as though Jacob is doubting or bargaining in his response to God, the context shows that Jacob is still fairly weak and is just now learning to trust in God as a child trusts its father. We respond to God’s presence through tithing, prayer, and recognizing God’s hand in giving us all good gifts. Jacob sets up a memorial pillar; we work to hold up God’s good gifts and remind the next generations of God’s faithfulness to us.

LEAVE

FINAL REFLECTION

What is one way that you can more fully embrace the joy of receiving the gift of God’s Word this week?

TAKE HOME

Equip your learners with ideas for taking the lesson into their households by giving them access to the Enduring Faith Page.

CLOSE WITH PRAYER

If you haven’t yet, take prayer requests or encourage a volunteer from the class to pray before you leave.



BONUS ACTIVITY

Look up an online video that shows nomadic life in the Middle East. Get reflections from the learners on what that life was like. Then, reflect with your learners on just how powerful the permanence of Jacob’s vision would have been to people who were always on the move.



CHRIST CONNECTION

In Jesus, we have the fulfillment of God’s promise of salvation. As we endure the uncertainties of this life, we have the assurance that God is always with us through His Word and Sacraments.



LEADER NOTE

Just as God was with Jacob, He is with us in Christ, His Word, and the Sacraments. We rejoice in prayer, but we also continually return to the Word in our daily tasks, knowing God is with us in it wherever we go.

