

## Middle/High School Sunday School Lessons by

**rfour.org**

**Year 1: Session 1** – Getting to know Jacob, a patriarch

**Class 1: Genesis 27:1-35, 41-44** – Jacob deceives to get what he wants

### **CONCEPTS that will be covered in the lesson**

- Introduction to Jacob
- Explore one reason why deception is so tempting
- Offer one way to address the causes of deception (by speaking words of belonging)

### **Materials needed:**

- Movie clip (available on rfour.org)
- Devices to show the movie
- Paper and writing utensils

## **THE LESSON**

### **OPENING PRAYER**

### **OPENING QUESTION**

- For the opening question for today's class, I [the teacher] will ask the question, and then to give you some time to think of an answer, I will answer first.
- Once I answer the question, we'll go around the circle.
- When it's your turn, start with your name and then answer the question to the best of your ability.
- *Here's this week's question:* What's something that you once thought was correct but then found out was incorrect.

### **(Optional) INTRODUCING THE NEW YEAR**

It's the start of a new school year and there are a few things that we need to cover -- *(share your expectations & schedule for the year)*

### **TRANSITION to MOVIE CLIP**

- The Bible story we're going to read in just a moment centers around one son wanting something that his brother, the other son, is going to get.
- In order to get what he wants, the younger brother deceives his father.

- What do you think the word, “deceive” means?
- Right! It means to lie.
- More specifically, it means to lie *successfully* – meaning the lie is actually believed by other people.
- To help us think a little bit more about deception, we’re going to watch the following and somewhat silly clip from the 1973 movie, “Tom Sawyer” (based on writings by Mark Twain)
- Tom Sawyer will be the young red-headed boy in overalls
- One thing to note: They say “whitewashing” which might seem strange to us. It simply means to paint a fence white.
- Let’s see what happens

## WATCH MOVIE CLIP

### ASK/TELL

- So what is the deception that takes place? (Tom Sawyer convinces other kids to do his chore for him)
- How does he do that? (He tells them that painting a fence is not work, but play (grati-facation)
- How do we know that the other kids are actually deceived? (they give him stuff so that they can go do the painting)
- Does it seem likely to you that this type of lie would actually be believed? (yes)
- Why? (It’s not a very convincing lie – work is not fun!)
- So in today’s scripture story, we’ll see that the lie is more convincing.
- But before we read the story, here’s a little background

### BACKGROUND of scripture story

- Jacob lived about 1900 years before Jesus lived.
- In other words, the amount of time between when Jacob lived and when Jesus lived is the same amount between when Jesus lived and our lives, today.
- Jacob lived before there was a nation called Israel.
- In fact, Jacob is one of the “founding fathers” of Israel.
- The fancy word we use to describe Jacob as a “founding father” is “patriarch”
- There are three people who are considered to be the patriarchs of Israel: Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.
- Jacob was the last one born of the three. Isaac was Jacob’s dad and Abraham was Isaac’s dad -- which means that Abraham was Jacob’s grandfather.
- In fact, Jacob’s name was actually changed to “Israel.”
  - We’ll discuss that story in our next lesson.
- Today’s story happens about 20 years before Jacob’s name change.
- He’s still very young, but his dad, Isaac, is dying.
- And Jacob, who is a twin, wants what his older brother is going to get: the blessing and birthright.
- As we’ll see, both Jacob and his mother will go to great lengths to make sure that he, and not Esau, get that blessing and birthright.
- Let’s see what happens

### READ Genesis 27:1-35, 41-44 (recommend class reads it out loud; one person per verse)

**1** When Isaac was old and his eyes were so weak that he could no longer see, he called for Esau his older son and said to him, "My son." "Here I am," he answered. **2** Isaac said, "I am now an old man and don't know the day of my death. **3** Now then, get your weapons--your quiver and bow--and go out to the open country to hunt some wild game for me. **4** Prepare me the kind of tasty food I like and bring it to me to eat, so that I may give you my blessing before I die." **5** Now Rebekah (who is Isaac's wife and the mother to both Esau and Jacob) was listening as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. When Esau left for the open country to hunt game and bring it back, **6** Rebekah said to her son Jacob, "Look, I overheard your father say to your brother Esau, **7** 'Bring me some game and prepare me some tasty food to eat, so that I may give you my blessing in the presence of the LORD before I die.' **8** Now, my son, listen carefully and do what I tell you: **9** Go out to the flock and bring me two choice young goats, so I can prepare some tasty food for your father, just the way he likes it. **10** Then take it to your father to eat, so that he may give you his blessing before he dies." **11** Jacob said to Rebekah his mother, "But my brother Esau is a hairy man, and I'm a man with smooth skin. **12** What if my father touches me? I would appear to be tricking him and would bring down a curse on myself rather than a blessing." **13** His mother said to him, "My son, let the curse fall on me. Just do what I say; go and get them for me." **14** So he went and got them and brought them to his mother, and she prepared some tasty food, just the way his father liked it. **15** Then Rebekah took the best clothes of Esau her older son, which she had in the house, and put them on her younger son Jacob. **16** She also covered his hands and the smooth part of his neck with the goatskins. **17** Then she handed to her son Jacob the tasty food and the bread she had made. **18** He went to his father and said, "My father." "Yes, my son," he answered. "Who is it?" **19** Jacob said to his father, "I am Esau your firstborn. I have done as you told me. Please sit up and eat some of my game so that you may give me your blessing." **20** Isaac asked his son, "How did you find it so quickly, my son?" "The LORD your God gave me success," he replied. **21** Then Isaac said to Jacob, "Come near so I can touch you, my son, to know whether you really are my son Esau or not." **22** Jacob went close to his father Isaac, who touched him and said, "The voice is the voice of Jacob, but the hands are the hands of Esau." **23** He did not recognize him, for his hands were hairy like those of his brother Esau; so he blessed him. **24** "Are you really my son Esau?" he asked. "I am," he replied. **25** Then he said, "My son, bring me some of your game to eat, so that I may give you my blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate; and he brought some wine and he drank. **26** Then his father Isaac said to him, "Come here, my son, and kiss me." **27** So he went to him and kissed him. When Isaac caught the smell of his clothes, he blessed him and said, "Ah, the smell of my son is like the smell of a field that the LORD has blessed. **28** May God give you of heaven's dew and of earth's richness--an abundance of grain and new wine. **29** May nations serve you and peoples bow down to you. Be lord over your brothers, and may the sons of your mother bow down to you. May those who curse you be cursed and those who bless you be blessed." **30** After Isaac finished blessing him and Jacob had scarcely left his father's presence, his brother Esau came in from hunting. **31** He too prepared some tasty food and brought it to his father. Then he said to him, "My father, sit up and eat some of my game, so that you may give me your blessing." **32** His father Isaac asked him, "Who are you?" "I am your son," he answered, "your firstborn, Esau." **33** Isaac trembled violently and said, "Who was it, then, that hunted game and brought it to me? I ate it just before you came and I blessed him--and indeed he will be blessed!" **34** When Esau heard his father's words, he burst out with a loud and bitter cry and said to his father, "Bless me--me too, my father!" **35** But he said, "Your brother came deceitfully and took your blessing." **36** Esau said, "Isn't he rightly named Jacob? He has deceived me these two times: He took my birthright, and now he's taken my blessing!"

**41** Esau held a grudge against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him. He said to himself, "The days of mourning for my father are near; then I will kill my brother Jacob." **42** When Rebekah was told what her older son Esau had said, she sent for her younger son Jacob and said to him, "Your brother Esau is consoling himself with the thought of killing you. **43** Now then, my son, do what I say: Flee at once to my brother Laban in Haran. **44** Stay with him for a while until your brother's fury subsides.

## ASK

- In verse 3 and 4, what does Isaac tell Esau to do? (hunt and prepare some game for Isaac, who will then give his blessing to Esau)
- Who overhears this conversation? (Rebekah, the mother)
- And what does she do? (Tells Jacob)
- And who comes up with the plan to deceive Isaac? (Rebekah does)
- Does Jacob object? (No, not really – he's just worried about certain details)
- Verse 33 – how does Isaac react to being deceived? (he "trembled violently" – in other words, not very well)

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- Verse 41 – how does Esau react to being cheated? (also not very well – he plans to kill his brother)
- Verse 43 – What is the result of Jacob’s deception? (Jacob must flee his home)
- Did you notice any of the characters listening to God in prayer about what they should do? (nope! None of them do that – this is a pretty godless story in that sense.)
- What were the reasons that you think caused Rebekah and Jacob to choose to deceive?
- What do you think ... was the deception worth it for Jacob and Rebekah? Were the results worth it?

## TELL

- When Rebekah was pregnant with Jacob and Esau (who were twins), the brothers “jostled” within her. So she asks God in prayer why they fight within her and the response she hears is, “*Two nations are in your womb, and two peoples from within you will be separated; one people will be stronger than the other, and the older will serve the younger.*”
- In today’s story, it appears that Rebekah tried to make those last few words come true on her own.
- What she doesn’t do is say, “OK, God, how do I help my son Jacob become this great nation that you talked about?”
- Instead she tries to make it happen her way.
- This way of “grabbing” for something instead of seeking God’s way is what we see Jacob deal with throughout his life.
- In fact, that’s actually what his name of “Jacob” means, “Grasper.”
- The reason he was given this name is because when he and Esau were born, Jacob was born grasping/holding onto Esau’s foot.
- When they are older, Jacob buys Esau’s birthright from him for a bowl of soup (Esau was very hungry and probably never super-bright)
- Now that they are grown up, guess what Jacob is still doing? He’s still trying to get a hold of and grab/grasp on to that which is his older brother’s.
- Here’s what he was trying to grab: The **birthright** and **blessing**. As the firstborn son, Esau automatically held the “birthright.” A birthright was an honor given to the firstborn, bestowing “head of household” status and the right to inherit his father’s estate. The son with the birthright would receive a **double** portion of whatever was passed down from the father (see Deuteronomy 21:17). (taken from <http://www.gotquestions.org/blessing-birthright.html>)
- A blessing *could* be given regardless of birthright. However, a greater blessing was *almost always* given to the one who held the birthright. (taken from <http://www.gotquestions.org/blessing-birthright.html>)
- So the birthright and the blessing seem like pretty tempting things to go after, right?
- Jacob bought the birthright and stole the blessing – he successfully grasped.
- But how successful was he, really? At the end of today’s story, it looks like he’s not going to get *any* possessions from his father (and he never actually does, at least that we’re told of), and even though he received the greater blessing, he can’t live at home anymore because his brother wants to kill him.

## EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- We’re now going to do an activity, now, where even if we don’t feel the temptation, you will get to practice your powers of deception. <if you wish, feel free to rub your hands together and cackle manically at this time>
- Believe it or not, this is actually a “get to know you” type of activity.
- We’re going to write down two very interesting things about ourselves that are TRUE
- And then we’re going to write down one very interesting thing that is NOT TRUE about ourselves
- Once we’re all done, we’ll then go around the room.

- One at a time, we'll (quickly) read the three interesting things about ourselves. And then, the class has to figure out/vote on which of our three statements is the lie.
- The idea is to see if we can actually deceive our classmates or not
- The person who deceives the most classmates...will be considered the most deceptive of all, and we'll be very very wary of you for the rest of the year – but, on the flip side, you might very well go on to be a founding father/mother of a new nation! 😊

## DO ACTIVITY -- “2 Truths and a Lie”

### ASK

- Was it easy to think of a lie?
- Was it easy to tell the lie?
- Was it easy to spot/hear the lie?
- And who do you now think of as the most deceptive of all the class?

### TELL

- As we saw in the story, Rebekah and Jacob's way of getting what they wanted was pretty damaging to them and those around them.
- And, even if it was a fun and silly exercise that we just finished, we can see how *actually* deceiving one another might lead to not trusting what a person might say in class.
- Deception, in the end, often leads to more pain than gain.
- But to be fair to Jacob, his mom and all of us: This is pretty typical behavior of humans
  - Maybe we want to be seen as cool or important, so we lie about what we've done
  - Or maybe we want to get something that isn't ours, so we deceive someone to get it
  - Or maybe we don't think we're good enough at something, so we cheat so that others won't know that we aren't good enough
- All of these reasons for deception share at least one thing in common: The fear of “Not enough.” The fear of not enough coolness, for example. Or importance or stuff or skills or talents or friends or prestige, etc.
- So we try to do whatever we can to get more of it.
- But here's the thing we often forget, the thing that we see Rebekah and Jacob forget, too: We don't need to impress God with these things – God loves us and we belong to God regardless of how much we do or do not have.
- And, the more aware we are of God's love and our belonging to God, the more we can then share that love and belonging with each other.
- For some of you, this is our first class together. For others, we've been doing this together for awhile.
- But, regardless of how long we've known each other, I want you to know this:
  - **As far as we, the teachers, are concerned, we think you are cool enough and important enough and everything else...**
- **In other words, we don't need you to impress us. We're *already* impressed with you.**
- Which is why we are so very excited about the start of this year: We get to spend all these classes with you. And you. And you. And it's going to be awesome. Not because the lessons will be awesome (though hopefully they are), but because *you* are going to be here. And your being here is what is going to make this an awesome year.
- So thank you, not just for today, but for all the classes we're going to have together!
- Next class, we'll read the story where Jacob wrestles with God – and it helps him stop grasping.

### CLOSING PRAYER