

Supplies: 1 paper plate per student, air-dry clay (I recommend about 3/4 lb per student - I bought 20 lbs for about \$1 per lb at Michaels. Amazon also has some good deals, but shipping can be expensive. For a more "authentic" look, get a reddish clay instead of the white clay); smocks; newspaper to put on the table.

OPENING PRAYER

TELL

- For the opening question, I'm going to ask you a question and then we'll go around the circle and say our names and then our answer to the question.
- I'll ask the question and then I'll answer first, ok?
- Opening question: *There are lots of mistakes being made in the story that we're reading this week. What's a mistake that you've made? Did you know you were making it at the time, or not until after you made it?*

GO AROUND THE CIRCLE

- During this Session (Patriarchs, Joseph and Moses), we've been talking and learning about Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph and Moses.
- These 5 individuals had a lot to do with the beginning of who we call the Israelites.
- By learning the stories of these 5 individuals, we are also getting the chance to learn and see how the relationship between the Israelites and God starts, struggles, and matures.
- All of these stories that we're hearing and talking about in this Session are from the Old Testament. This means these things happened well before Jesus was born. Between 1600 to 2000 years before Jesus was born. This means some of these stories are 4000 years old!
- Last week we heard and talked about Abraham and God's covenant with Abraham that God would make Abraham into a great people who would be God's light to the world.
- This covenant begins with the son Abraham has named Isaac.
- For today's story, Isaac has grown up and is married. We're going to hear about Isaac's two sons, Esau and Jacob.

READ Genesis 25:20-34

Isaac was Abraham and Sarah's son. 20 Isaac was forty years old when he married Rebekah, daughter of Bethuel the Aramean of Paddan Aram. She was the sister of Laban the Aramean. 21 Isaac prayed hard to God for his wife because she did not have kids. God answered his prayer and Rebekah became pregnant. 22 But the children tumbled and kicked inside her womb so much that she said, "If this is the way it's going to be, why go on living?" She went to God to find out what was going on. 23 God told her, "Two nations are in your womb, two peoples butting heads while still in your body. One people will overpower the other, and the older will serve the younger. 24 When Rebekah's time to give birth came, sure enough, there were twins in her womb. 25 The first came out covered in hair, as if snugly wrapped

in a fuzzy blanket; they named him Esau (Hairy). 26 His brother followed, his fist tightly cluthing Esau's heel; they named him Jacob (Grabber). Isaac was sixty years old when they were born. 27 The boys grew up. Esau became an expert hunter, an outdoorsman. Jacob was a quiet man preferring life indoors among the tents. 28 Isaac loved Esau because he loved the food Esau hunted and brought back, but Rebekah loved Jacob.

29 One day Jacob was cooking a stew (which is like a soup). Esau came in from an unsuccessful hunt and was very hungry. 30 Esau said to Jacob, "Give me some of that red stew - I'm starved!" That's how he came to be called Edom (Red). 31 Jacob said, "Make me a trade: my stew for your rights as the firstborn." 32 Esau said, "I'm starving! What good is a birthright if I'm dead?" 33 Jacob said, "First, swear to me." And he did it. On oath Esau traded away his rights as the firstborn. 34 Jacob gave him bread and the stew of lentils. He ate and drank, got up and left. That's how Esau shrugged off his rights as the firstborn.

ASK

- Who was Isaac's father? (Abraham)
- And who did Isaac marry? (Rebekah)
- What were the names of the two children Isaac and Rebekah had? (Esau and Jacob)
- Did Esau and Jacob get along? (didn't sound like it, they were fighting before they were even born)
- What did Jacob sell to Esau (some stew)
- What did Esau use to buy the stew? (He sold his rights as a firstborn)
- So at the beginning of class, we talked about mistakes we've made. Do you think Esau made a mistake? Why?
- Do you think Esau could have done anything differently?
- And what do you think about Jacob *selling* food to his hungry brother?

TELL

- In ancient times, the birthright was a very important and sacred thing. It belonged to the firstborn. The family name and titles were to pass along to the eldest son. He would also receive a chief (a double) portion of the inheritance.
- But the birthright was more than just a title to the physical assets of a family. It was also a spiritual position. In the case of Jacob and Esau, the one with the birthright was the one God would use to help make his covenant with Abraham come true: That Abraham's descendants would be as many as the stars and that they would be a blessing to the world.
- So either Esau made a very foolish mistake when he sold his birthright or he just didn't care or he thought he and his brother were just joking around.
- But as we'll see in the next story, Jacob wasn't joking around. But first....

EXPLAIN ACTIVITY

- We're each going to make a clay bowl today, a bowl maybe like the one that Esau ate his soup out of.
- I'll show you how to make your bowl and then while you're doing that, I'm going to read to you a longer story about Jacob and Esau.
- First what I'm going to do is make a flat "pancake" of clay. This will be the bottom of your bowl.
- Then I'm going to take my remaining clay and roll it into long snakes (make them pretty skinny and long)

- After I'm done doing that, I'll coil the snakes around the edge of the pancake of clay, building up the pot as I go.
- Notice that you'll need to squeeze the snakes onto the pancake and onto each other so that they stay together
- Then we let it air-dry by placing the bowl on a paper plate. You'll use this paper plate to carry your bowl home on.

DO "Clay Pot using the coil method" Activity

- Once the students seem like they are understanding the activity, read the following passage to them.
- Before reading, tell them, "This is how Jacob chose to make sure trade for the birthright with Esau took place":

READ Genesis 27:1-45

1 When Isaac had become an old man and was nearly blind, he called his eldest son, Esau, and said, "My son." "Yes, Father?" 2 "I'm an old man," he said; "I might die any day now. 3 Do me a favor: Get your quiver of arrows and your bow and go out in the country and hunt me some game. 4 Then fix me a hearty meal, the kind that you know I like, and bring it to me to eat so that I can give you my personal blessing before I die." 5 Rebekah was eavesdropping as Isaac spoke to his son Esau. As soon as Esau had gone off to the country to hunt game for his father, 6 Rebekah spoke to her son Jacob. "I just overheard your father talking with your brother, Esau. He said, 7 'Bring me some game and fix me a hearty meal so that I can eat and bless you with God's blessing before I die.' 8 "Now, my son, listen to me. Do what I tell you. 9 Go to the flock and get me two young goats. Pick the best; I'll prepare them into a hearty meal, the kind that your father loves. 10 Then you'll take it to your father, he'll eat and bless you before he dies." 11 "But Mother," Jacob said, "my brother Esau is a hairy man and I have smooth skin. 12 What happens if my father touches me? He'll think I'm playing games with him. I'll bring down a curse on myself instead of a blessing." 13 "If it comes to that," said his mother, "I'll take the curse on myself. Now, just do what I say. Go and get the goats." 14 So he went and got them and brought them to his mother and she cooked a hearty meal, the kind his father loved so much. 15 Rebekah took the dress-up clothes of her older son Esau and put them on her younger son Jacob. 16 She took the goatskins and covered his hands and the smooth nape of his neck. 17 Then she placed the hearty meal she had fixed and fresh bread she'd baked into the hands of her son Jacob.

18 So Jacob went to his father and said, "My father!" "Yes?" Isaac said. "Which son are you?" 19 Jacob answered his father, "I'm your firstborn son Esau. I did what you told me. Come now; sit up and eat of my game so you can give me your personal blessing." 20 Isaac said, "So soon? How did you get it so quickly?" "Because your God cleared the way for me." 21 Isaac said, "Come close, son; let me touch you - are you really my son Esau?" 22 So Jacob moved close to his father Isaac. Isaac felt him and said, "The voice is Jacob's voice but the hands are the hands of Esau." 23 He didn't recognize him because his hands were hairy, like his brother Esau's. 24 Isaac asked him again, "You're sure? You are my son Esau?" "Yes. I am." 25 Isaac said, "Bring the food so I can eat of my son's game and give you my personal blessing." Jacob brought it to him and he ate. He also brought him wine and he drank. 26 Then Isaac said, "Come close, son, and kiss me." 27 He came close and kissed him and Isaac smelled the smell of his clothes. "The smell of my son is like the smell of the open country blessed by God," said Isaac, and then he blessed Jacob, "28 May God give you of Heaven's dew and Earth's bounty of grain and wine. 29 May the people

serve you and nations honor you. You will master your brothers, and your mother's sons will honor you. Those who curse you will be cursed, those who bless you will be blessed.

30 And then right after Isaac had blessed Jacob and Jacob had left, Esau showed up from the hunt. 31 He also had prepared a hearty meal. He came to his father and said, "Let my father get up and eat of his son's game, that he may give me his personal blessing."

32 His father Isaac said, "And who are you?"

"I am your son, your firstborn, Esau."

33 Isaac started to tremble, shaking violently. He said, "Then who hunted game and brought it to me? I finished the meal just now, before you walked in. And I blessed him - he's blessed for good!" 34 Esau,

hearing his father's words, sobbed violently and most bitterly, and cried to his father, "My father! Can't you also bless me?" 35 "Your brother," he said, "came here falsely and took your blessing."

36 Esau said, "Not for nothing was he named Jacob, the Grabber. Twice now he's tricked me: first he took my birthright and now he's taken my blessing." He begged, "Haven't you kept back any blessing for me?"

37 Isaac answered Esau, "I've made him your master, and all his brothers his servants, and lavished grain and wine on him. I've given it all away. What's left for you, my son?" 38 "But don't you have just one blessing for me, Father? Oh, bless me my father! Bless me!" Esau sobbed inconsolably.

41 Esau seethed in anger against Jacob because of the blessing his father had given him; he brooded, "The time for mourning my father's death is close. And then I'll kill my brother Jacob." 42 When these words of her older son Esau were reported to Rebekah, she called her younger son Jacob and said, "Your brother Esau is plotting vengeance against you. He's going to kill you. 43 Son, listen to me. Get out of here. Run for your life to Haran, to my brother Laban. 44 Live with him for a while until your brother cools down, 45 until his anger subsides and he forgets what you did to him. I'll then send for you and bring you back. Why should I lose both of you the same day?"

ASK

- Why do you think Jacob didn't just ask his father for the blessing or explain the trade that had been made? (Maybe he was afraid his father wouldn't listen or believe him...?)
- What happens when we trick people by lying to them? (They get angry like Esau did).
- If Jacob keeps acting this way, is he going to be God's blessing to the world? (No, not at all).

TELL

- What we see in this story is that Rebekah and Jacob do not at all trust that God will follow through with God's promise.
- And so instead of trusting God, Rebekah and Jacob instead act on their own to make God's way happen.
- The way Rebekah and Jacob do this, though, is destructive to the family. The family is torn apart.
- If we think God is calling us to do something, then the next thing we need to pay attention to from God is how God wants us to do the thing we think God is calling us to do.
- Rebekah and Jacob did not do this.
- But as we'll see next week, this doesn't mean God gives up on Jacob.

CLOSING PRAYER