

# Unit 3: God's Rescue Plan

**Unit Description:** God's solution for sin, which He promised in Eden, became clearer when God made a covenant with Abraham. God promised to bring the Rescuer through Abraham's family. This family was far from perfect and endured great adversity, but through it all, God remained faithful, revealing that nothing could stop His plan.

**Big Picture Question:** Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.



**SESSION 1: God Made a Covenant with Abraham**  
Genesis 12–20



**SESSION 2: Melchizedek Blessed Abraham**  
Genesis 14; Hebrews 5; 7



**SESSION 3: God Provided Isaac**  
Genesis 21–22



**SESSION 4: God Changed Jacob**  
Genesis 25–33



**SESSION 5: God Had a Plan for Joseph**  
Genesis 37–50



**SESSION 6: God Controls Everything**  
Job



UNIT 3 | SESSION 4

## GOD CHANGED JACOB

GENESIS 25–33

### KEY PASSAGE:

Psalm 135:5-6

### BIG PICTURE QUESTION:

Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.

### 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. Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION



## LEADER Bible Study

Jacob’s journey in Genesis is one of unexpected and undeserved blessing after blessing. With a name that literally means “he cheats,” Jacob was a surprising recipient of the privilege and opportunity God gave him.

Jacob was a cheater, a liar, and a deceiver. He was quiet and not strongly gifted. And he was gullible, too. We cannot miss that the deceiver was deceived at times too—easily convinced by his mother and tricked by his uncle. But God would work through Jacob when no circumstances or characteristics made it seem possible.

In Genesis 32:10, Jacob expressed his own bewilderment to the Lord. “I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. Indeed, I crossed over the Jordan with my staff, and now I have become two camps.”

Jacob came to realize that nothing that he had accomplished or accumulated was the result of his own doing. He was not capable or competent enough to produce the many good things he had received and especially not to be the recipient of the promise of God to make his family like the dust of the earth. Jacob was humbled by the reality that through him and his offspring, all of the families of the earth would be blessed.

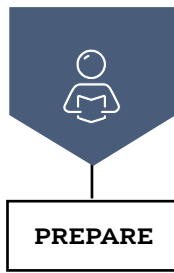
Have you ever had a moment of astonishment at the magnitude of what God has given you through Christ? Have you taken the time to recognize that all that you have is from God? Does it cause you to rejoice when you think about God’s grace?

It’s easy to look at Jacob and say he didn’t deserve what God gave him. It’s hard to feel that way about ourselves. But it’s just as true.

Paul wrote in Romans 6:23, “For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.” Salvation should bring about this astonishment in us as well. It should remind us that we are not worthy, and it should lead us to rejoice in the undeserving gift of God’s grace.

### FACTS TO KNOW

**Name changes in the Bible:** Jacob was the third person to be renamed by God, after Abraham and Sarah. God usually gave a person a new name to indicate a new identity. Jacob’s new name—*Israel*—became the name of God’s people.



PRIOR TO TEACHING THE SESSION

## GATHER Supplies

Keep a regular supply of the following items available at all times: Bibles, pens or pencils, markers, crayons, colored pencils, scissors, glue or tape, paper.



WELCOME

### Activity Page

- “Name Change” activity page

### Session Starter (Option 1)

- stopwatch or timer (optional)

### Session Starter (Option 2)

- chenille stems
- fishing line or twine



LEARN

### Introduce the Session

- countdown video

### Big Picture Question

- Big Picture Question Poster

### Review the Timeline

- Giant Timeline

### Tell the Bible Story

- “God Changed Jacob” video
- Bible Story Picture Poster

### Questions from Kids

- “Unit 3, Session 4” questions from kids video

### Missions Moment

- Printable: “Ecuador Thanksgiving Photo”

### Key Passage Activity

- Key Passage Poster
- “For I Know (Psalm 135:5-6)” song
- worship song of your choice (optional)



LOVE

### Review & Bible Skills

- Small Group Timeline and Map Set
- world map



LIVE

### Activity Choice (Option 1)

- large empty boxes, 2 to 4

### Activity Choice (Option 2)

- large sheet of paper or poster board

### Journal and Prayer

- Journal Page
- “Jacob’s Life Story” activity page



## WELCOME Kids

Greet each kid as he or she arrives. Use this time to collect the offering, fill out attendance sheets, build relationships, and help new kids connect to your group.

**SAY** “ If you could change your name, would you? Why or why not? What would you call yourself? ”

### 1 ACTIVITY PAGE (5 minutes)

Invite kids to complete “Name Change” on the activity page. Kids will find the path from Jacob to his new name. Point out that only one path led to a name.

**SAY** “ In today’s Bible story, we will see how God changed Jacob’s name to Israel. But that’s not the only thing God changed about Jacob. Let’s see what else changed. ”

### 2 SESSION STARTER (10 minutes)

#### OPTION 1: QUICK CHANGES



Guide kids to form pairs. Instruct one partner to turn her back or close her eyes. Give the other partner 30 seconds to change three things about his physical appearance. He might untie or remove a shoe, move his watch to his opposite hand, restyle his hair, tuck or untuck a shirt, and so on. Then challenge the first partner to identify the three changes.

Switch rolls and play again. As time allows, form new pairs and play again.

**SAY** “ We will hear a Bible story today about how God changed Isaac’s son Jacob. God changes us too. Sometimes these changes are obvious and happen quickly. Sometimes God changes us subtly and slowly. ”

#### OPTION 2: NAME SIGNS

Provide chenille craft stems of various colors. Invite kids to use the craft stems to form their first names. Instruct kids to connect the letters in a cursive style or with extra pieces of craft stems.

Help kids cut lengths of fishing line or twine and tie it to each end of their name signs so they can hang them in a locker or in their rooms.

**SAY** “ Our names are something we do not get to pick. Usually, our parents choose our names for us. In the Bible, a person’s name was sometimes given by a family members other than the parents. Sometimes a name was given by God. God told Abraham and Sarah to name their baby Isaac. When Isaac had a son, he named him Jacob. Today, we will hear how God changed Jacob—including his name. ”

Transition from **WELCOME** to **LEARN**





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

# INTRODUCE the Bible Story

### 1 INTRODUCE THE SESSION (3 minutes)

Show the countdown video as you transition to introduce the Bible story. Set it to end as the session begins.

**SAY** “Hi, everyone! I’m glad to see you. If you brought your Bible, hold it up. [Provide Bibles for kids who need one.] Can anyone tell me what the Bible is about? [Allow kids to respond.] The Bible is God’s Word. It tells us the wonderful story of God’s plan to rescue sinners.

The Bible tells us what is true about God and about ourselves. Today, we will see how God worked to keep His promises and how He calls us His children.”

### 2 BIG PICTURE QUESTION (1 minute)

**SAY** “Our big picture question is, **Who is in control of everything?** Who remembers the answer? [Allow kids to respond.] **God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God’s good plan.**

This is important to remember. Nothing happens by chance. As surprising as some events are to us, nothing surprises God. Keep that in mind as you hear today’s story.”

### 3 REVIEW THE TIMELINE (1 minute)

Show the giant timeline. Point to individual Bible stories as you review.

**SAY** “We’ve been hearing about God’s promise to Abraham and his descendants. God chose Abraham and promised to give him land and a large family. God would bless the whole world through Abraham’s family. Many years later, God kept His promise by sending Jesus into the world through Abraham’s family.

In the stories about Abraham and his descendants, we see how God worked to keep His promises. Last week, we heard about God’s provision after God told Abraham to offer Isaac as a sacrifice. God provided a ram instead. Today’s story skips forward many years. Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. They had twin boys: Esau and Jacob. We’re going to focus on the life of Jacob and how God changed him in a significant way.”



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### LEARN the Bible Story

#### 1 TELL THE BIBLE STORY: VIDEO OR STORYTELLER (10 minutes)

Open your Bible to Genesis 25–33. Use the Bible storytelling tips to help you tell the story, or show the Bible story video “God Changed Jacob.” Use the bolded text to retell or review the story.

#### GOD CHANGED JACOB

“**Abraham’s son Isaac grew up and married Rebekah.** When Rebekah was pregnant, God told her she would have two boys. God said, “They will grow up and have families who will be two separate nations. One nation will be stronger than the other, and the older child will serve the younger.”

**Rebekah gave birth to twins. Esau was born first, and then Jacob. When they grew up** and their father Isaac was old, **Isaac wanted to bless Esau. Instead, Jacob tricked Isaac and stole his brother’s blessing. Esau was very angry, so Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away.**

**One night, God spoke to Jacob:** “I am the God of your grandfather, Abraham, and the God of your father, Isaac. I will give you and your offspring this land.” **God made the same covenant with Jacob as He had made with Abraham. God said, “I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go.”** Jacob promised to follow God and honor Him.

**Years passed. Jacob got married and had a family. Finally, Jacob took his family** and all his possessions **and headed home to Canaan.** Jacob was afraid that Esau would still be angry with him for stealing his blessing. **He sent a large gift of animals to try to make Esau happy.**

**That night, a man appeared to Jacob. The man wrestled with Jacob all night.** Jacob refused to give up, so the man injured Jacob’s hip.

“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.**

**Now Jacob went to meet Esau. Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.**

Esau returned to his home. Jacob and his family traveled on, and Jacob bought land for them to live on. **Jacob 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. Jesus’ death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God’s family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God. ”

#### STORYTELLING TIPS

**Make a sketch:** As you tell the story, draw stick figures and label them with names to help kids understand the relationship between Abraham, Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob.

**Use dramatic dialogue:** Stand in one place when speaking the words of God. Stand in another place when speaking Jacob’s words.



## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 2 REVIEW THE BIBLE STORY

**SAY** “ Before they were even born, God told Rebekah that the boys would form two nations, so Jacob and Esau’s relationship was rough from the start. They struggled in the womb, and Jacob was born grabbing onto Esau’s heel. Then, even though he was younger, Jacob received the birthright because Esau traded it to him for some stew. Later, when Isaac was old and blind, the time came for Isaac to bless Esau. With the blessing came the privilege given to the firstborn—leadership over the family. Jacob deceived his father and stole his brother’s blessing.

Was Esau OK with that? Look at Genesis 27:41. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 27:41.] Esau was angry. He planned to kill Jacob. Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away from home. Rebekah expected him to be gone for a few days—just until Esau calmed down. (See Gen. 27:44.) But days and then weeks and then months passed; Jacob was away for 20 years. In that time, he became the father of 12 sons.

God was with Jacob. He had reaffirmed to Jacob the promise He gave Abraham and Isaac. But Jacob was still nervous about going home because Esau was there. Jacob encountered the Lord one night when he wrestled a man. The man was actually an appearance of God. Did Jacob win the wrestling match? Was he stronger than the Lord? Look at Genesis 32:24-25. [Choose a volunteer to read aloud Gen. 32:24-25.] The victory was unexpected. Jacob did not win by strength—God proved His power by crippling Jacob with just a touch—but by confessing his dependence on God.

Jacob had nowhere else to turn. His whole life, he had tried to get his own way by tricking people and working things out by his own plans. But now Jacob realized he could not succeed by his own strength. So Jacob held onto God and would not let go. Just before dawn, God showed grace to Jacob and blessed him. ”

### 3 CHRIST CONNECTION

**SAY** “ God changed Jacob’s life 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 came so that we might have a changed life, forgiven of sin. Jesus’ death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God’s family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God. ”

(Tip: Use Scripture and the guide provided to explain how to become a Christian. Make sure kids know when and where they can ask questions.)

### 4 QUESTIONS FROM KIDS (3 minutes)

Show the “Unit 3, Session 4” questions from kids video. Prompt kids to discuss:

1. Is it OK to hit someone if he or she hit you first? Why?
2. Can you think of other ways God calls believers to live differently than the world?





## THE STORY OF THE GOSPEL

### 5 MISSIONS MOMENT (3 minutes)

Show the photo from the Caldwell family's Thanksgiving in Ecuador.

**SAY** “ Thanksgiving is celebrated in the United States and in Canada, but not in Ecuador. The Caldwells and the rest of the missions team brought a children's book in Spanish that explained the meaning of Thanksgiving. Then they cooked a traditional Thanksgiving meal to share with their new friends. They told the caregivers and kids of For His Children how thankful they were to be there. Sharing holidays with new friends is a great way to get to know people and share Jesus' love.

When we trust in Jesus, He calls us His children. We can tell others about Jesus so they can have forgiveness for sins and join God's family as His children too. ”

Ask a volunteer to pray for missionaries in Ecuador and for any missionaries your church supports.

### 6 KEY PASSAGE ACTIVITY (5 minutes)

Invite kids to sit around tables. Give each kid a pencil. Show the key passage poster and lead kids to read it aloud. Then remove the poster and invite volunteers to recite the key passage from memory.

Give a piece of paper to one kid at each table. Instruct him to write down the first word of the key passage and pass the paper to the person on his right. That person will write down the second word, pass the paper to her right, and so on. Kids will pass the paper around the table, writing one word at a time until they finish the key passage. When kids finish, invite groups one at a time to say the key passage together.

**SAY** “ God was not surprised by Jacob's trickery toward Esau. He was not surprised by Esau's anger. Our key passage and big picture question remind us of this. **Who is in control of everything? God is in control of everything in heaven and on earth. Nothing is outside of God's good plan.** ”

Lead kids to sing “For I Know (Psalm 135:5-6).” You may also choose to sing a worship song of your choice.

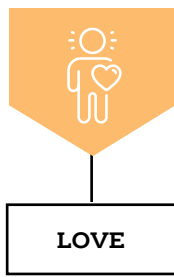
### 7 PRAY (2 minutes)

Invite kids to pray before transitioning from **LEARN** to **LOVE**.

**SAY** “ Father God, You keep Your promises. The Bible tells us that You promise to be with us. We need You. Forgive us for thinking we can get by without You. We need You. Thank You for changing us, bringing us into Your family, and being with us through the Holy Spirit. Amen. ”

Transition from **LEARN** to **LOVE**





## THE GOD OF THE GOSPEL

# LOVE God by Applying the Story

### 1 REVIEW & BIBLE SKILLS (5 minutes)

Distribute Bibles and display the Old Testament Kingdoms Map. Guide kids to open their Bibles to Genesis 33.

**SAY** “Much of Genesis tells the story of Abraham, his son Isaac, and his grandson Jacob. God’s promises for Abraham and Isaac were promises for Jacob too. God showed Jacob in a dream that He would bless Jacob’s family, which would grow to be a whole nation—the nation of Israel—as part of His plan to bring Jesus.”

Help kids locate Canaan, where Jacob grew up, in the land between the Mediterranean Sea and the Dead Sea (J3). Point out the area of Aram (B9) where Jacob fled to Haran. Explain that after 20 years, Jacob and Esau met up again east of the Jordan River (G7).

Consider comparing the Old Testament Kingdoms Map to a modern-day map to help kids understand where these stories took place. (Tip: Locate the areas in and around modern-day Israel.) Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 33:4.

### 2 GROUP DISCUSSION (10 minutes)

Ask the following questions. Lead the group to discuss.

**SAY** “How did God change Jacob?”

God not only blessed Jacob, He gave Jacob a new name. Jacob meant “deceiver.” He had tricked his father and cheated his brother. Jacob’s new name was Israel, which meant “struggles with God.” God changed Jacob from the inside out. He gave Jacob a limp, humbling him. From then on, Jacob would look to God, not himself, for everything he needed.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Prov. 22:4.)

**SAY** “How can God use difficult circumstances for our good?”

Guide kids to consider how difficulties can draw us closer to God, leading us to turn away from sin and depend completely on Him. Remind kids that Jacob clung to God because he knew he would have no success apart from God’s blessing. Desperation and dependence may seem like weakness, but that place of humility is where we find the power of God.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 1:8-9.)

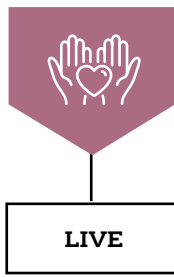
**SAY** “How does God change us?”

When we trust in Jesus, God changes us from the inside out. Jesus forgives our sin and adopts us into His family. When we are adopted into the family of God, we also receive a new name and identity—children of God. He blesses us and gives us the mission of telling others about Him.

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 1 John 3:1.)

Transition from **LOVE** to **LIVE**





## THE MISSION OF THE GOSPEL

### LIVE the Mission

#### 1 ACTIVITY CHOICE (10 minutes)

##### OPTION 1: PLAN TO HELP



Suggest to your kids that they help plan a collection of Spanish Bibles and storybooks to distribute in your community or give to a Spanish-speaking church or ministry in your city or region.

Work with kids to cover two to four large collection boxes with paper and decorate the boxes. As kids work, ask them about places in the church where they could place the boxes so that many people will see them. Generate ideas about letting people know about this missions project.

Make a list of their ideas and talk with your church staff about including the whole church.

**SAY** “ Thank you for being willing to lead others in a missions project! We can share the good news of Jesus with people who speak Spanish by providing Bibles and Bible stories in their language. ”

##### OPTION 2: NEW NAME COLLAGE



**SAY** “ 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. Jesus’ death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God’s family. When we trust in Jesus, we also receive a new name—children of God. ”

Tell each kid to choose one of the suggested verses below and read what the Bible says about what is true about Jesus’ followers.

Encourage kids to work together to create a poster displaying these truths. Kids can write in various fonts, sizes, and colors to make the poster artful. Display the poster in the room.

Suggested verses: John 1:12; John 15:5; John 15:15; Romans 8:17; 1 Corinthians 12:27; 2 Corinthians 5:17; Galatians 2:20; Galatians 3:26; Ephesians 2:10; Ephesians 4:24; Philippians 3:20; 2 Timothy 1:7; 1 Peter 2:9

#### 2 JOURNAL AND PRAYER (5 minutes)

Distribute journal pages and pencils. Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page. As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas.

- What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
- What does the story teach me about myself?
- Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God’s glory and my good?
- Are there promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
- How does this story help me to live on mission better?

Review the gospel and encourage kids to speak with you or another teacher if they have questions. Then pray, asking God to change kids’ hearts. Pray that they would trust in Him and live in their new identities as His beloved children. As time allows, lead kids to complete “Jacob’s Life Story” on the activity page.



JOURNAL PAGE

1. What does this story teach me about God or the gospel?
2. What does this story teach me about myself?
3. Are there any commands in this story to obey? How are they for God's glory and my good?
4. Are there any promises in this story to remember? How do they help me trust and love God?
5. How does this story help me to live on mission better?



Unit 3 • Session 4

## GOD CHANGED JACOB

Genesis 25–33

**WHO IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING? GOD IS IN CONTROL OF EVERYTHING IN HEAVEN AND ON EARTH. NOTHING IS OUTSIDE OF GOD'S GOOD PLAN.**

Abraham's son Isaac grew up and married Rebekah. Rebekah gave birth to twins. Esau was born first, and then Jacob. When they grew up, Isaac wanted to bless Esau. Instead, Jacob tricked Isaac and stole his brother's blessing. Esau was very angry, so Isaac and Rebekah sent Jacob away.

One night, God spoke to Jacob. God made the same covenant with Jacob as He had made with Abraham. God said, "I am with you and will watch over you wherever you go."

Years passed. Jacob got married and had a family. Finally, Jacob took his family and headed home to Canaan. He sent a large gift of animals to try to make Esau happy.

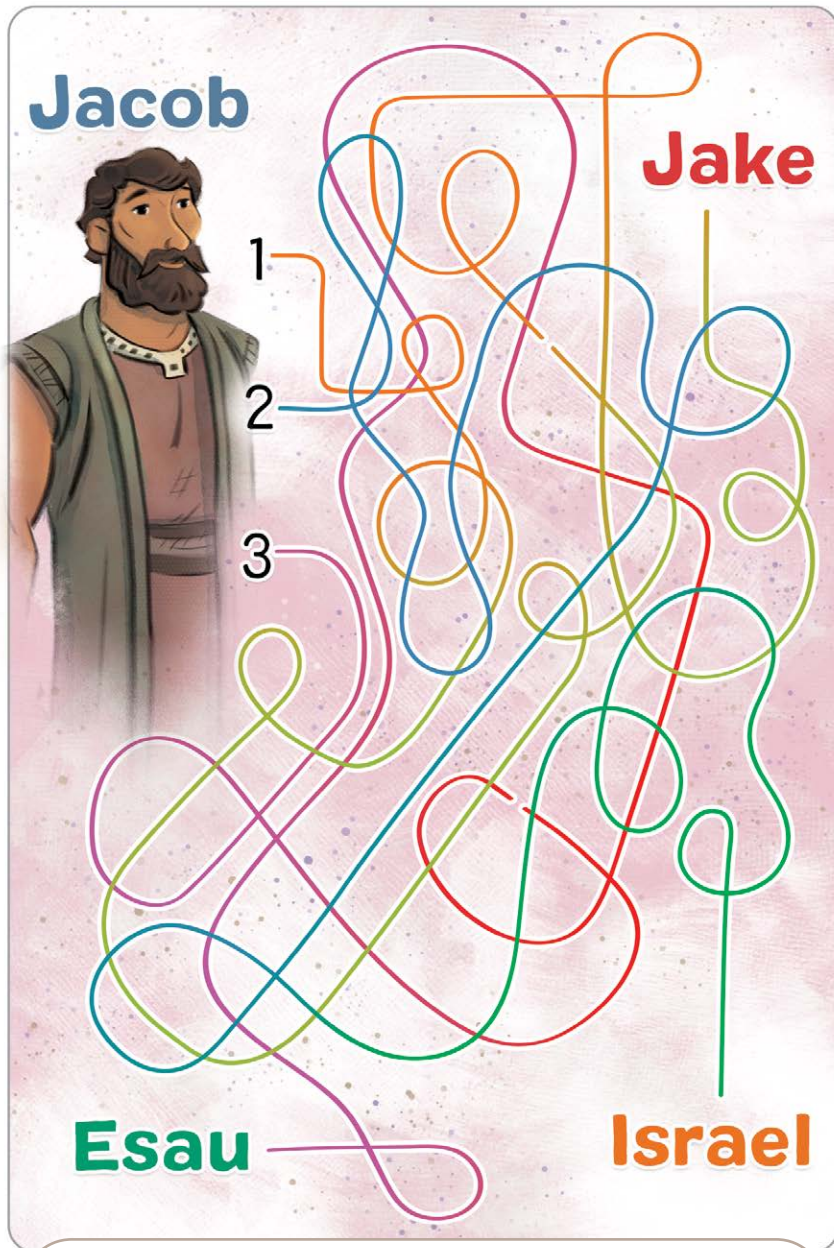
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Now Jacob went to meet Esau. Esau ran to Jacob and hugged him. He was not angry anymore.

Jacob and his family traveled on, and Jacob bought land for them to live on. Jacob was finally home in the land God had promised him.

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FOLD



**Jacob**

**Jake**

1

2

3

**Esau**

**Israel**

**Name Change**

Find the path to connect Jacob to his new name.

**Jacob's Life Story** | Use the template to draw Jacob's life as a comic strip. Use the five events suggested or choose your own.

- Jacob and Esau were twins, but they were different. (Genesis 25:27)
- Jacob stole his brother's blessing. (Genesis 27:35)
- God spoke to Jacob and made a covenant with him. (Genesis 28:15)
- Jacob wrestled with a man, and the man blessed him. (Genesis 32:24-28)
- Jacob met with Esau, and Esau was not angry anymore. (Genesis 33:10-11)

