



The standard Youth Sabbath School materials for this topic contain a Student Lesson and a Teacher’s Guide. In addition to these materials provided by the General Conference Sabbath School Department, the North American Division Youth Department is providing supplemental materials you can also choose to add to this lesson. Think in terms of your specific setting and the young people at your Youth Sabbath School. As you seek to involve them in the study and application of the Bible for this week, prayerfully pick and choose the components that will form the Youth Sabbath School for your young people. Be sensitive to the Holy Spirit as you make your plan, and continue to be sensitive as it guides you during the Sabbath School.

Session 12 Struggle by a Stream (March 23, 2019)

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 28–33

OVERVIEW

Depending on our connection with God, the struggles of life—whether we caused them ourselves or they simply came to us—can either break us or make us.

You can obtain the Student Lesson as well as the Teacher’s Guide with a click by visiting YouthSabbathSchoolIdeas.org, which will provide everything you need for your Youth Sabbath School

real.solid.stories LESSON 12
CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
 MARCH 2019
 struggle by a stream
 key text
 "I am with you, and will watch over you wherever you go, and will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you until I have promised you."
 (Genesis 28:15, NKJ)
 flashlight
 "I'm the first of many to realize that the presence of God, even when we feel alone, is the most powerful and comforting presence we have. But the only way to truly experience that presence is to be open to it. The more we are open to it, the more we can experience it. The more we are open to it, the more we can experience it. The more we are open to it, the more we can experience it."
 (Genesis 28:15, NKJ)

Student Lesson

LESSON 12
CORNERSTONE CONNECTIONS
 MARCH 2019
 struggle by a stream
 PREPARING TO TEACH
 I. SYNOPSIS
 The story of Jacob is mostly understood in the light of Joseph. Overwhelmed with guilt and coming for the life, Jacob encounters God on the way to Hebron. He dreams of a ladder reaching to heaven. "The ladder represents Jacob's close relationship to God. The ladder reaches up to the heavens and represents with the source of divine power" (Patriarchs and Prophets, p. 188). The story of Jacob illustrates God's unconditional acceptance and grace.
 There are several other themes that emerge from the season of Jacob's life. For example, the story underscores the glory consequence of sin. For more than 20 years Jacob suffered in fear and shame as a result of the deception. Every day Jacob worried that Esau's fit men would come kidnapping on the spot, wanting us of how we value us of the daily joy and blessing we can experience in Christ. Another theme that could be explored in this lesson is the value of perseverance. When Jacob found himself on the morning end of Laban's trickery, he fought ahead and worked another seven years in order to marry Rachel. He also had the grace of perseverance in this story. In time, Jacob was reconciled to God and to his long-gone brother. And finally, the love of God using our weaknesses to make us strong is presented through Jacob's life. "The best and noblest in Jacob is his ability to find reconciliation. He acted about his mistakes and sought a peaceful goal. In the end, Jacob prevailed because of his unyielding faith. God rewarded Jacob's weakness with strength."
 II. TARGET
 The students will:
 • Learn of the unconditional acceptance of God.
 • Be asked to experience the joy of persevering through problems of life.
 • Be challenged to control every aspect of life to God. (Patriarchs)
 III. EXPLORE
 • Progression from God
 • Faith
 TEACHING
 I. GETTING STARTED
 Activity
 Before the students in the What Do You Think? section of the student lesson.
 An icebreaker will be the students to offer advice on how to remedy the following family relations scenario for Jacob's perspective.
 "Jacob has been given the blessing from Esau. The parents wonder what they should do with the son."
 The students will be given 10 minutes to discuss the situation. The teacher is to assign that this young man has for the life. How can he find reconciliation with the offended brother?
 • Reconciliation is a contrast with the Laban father-in-law, but when the time comes for the father-in-law to make good on his commitment, he is not

Teacher's Guide

The following are additional components you can pick and choose from, use as is, or adapt to your specific Sabbath School lesson. These supplemental ideas provide more options for this topic. Here's a brief description of each.



1. **Opening Activity**

This is an icebreaker or some other activity designed to get people focused as you begin.



2. **Video Clip and Follow-up Questions**

This is a short video clip and an idea for you to create your own video on this week's topic, plus a few follow-up questions to spark discussion afterwards.



3. **Music**

These are recommendations for song selection. Remember that it's best to create your own music and choose songs and styles that are best for your setting. We are not endorsing a particular style or even a specific song, but we will suggest several different songs with lyrics that relate to the topic for this week. You can sing along with prerecorded tracks (YouTube is a good source) or better yet, ask youth with musical talent in your Sabbath School to play instruments and lead the singing.



4. **Bible Study Guides for Scripture for This Lesson**

This is another approach to the same topic found in the Teacher's Guide, but from a different angle. Expect activities to illustrate the topic followed by some questions.



5. **Application Ideas for Living Out This Lesson This Week**

These are designed to spark ideas for ways you and your participants can move from talk to action and live out the lesson in a practical way this week.



6. **Youth Leader Tip for the Week**

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip and an illustration to enhance the way you do youth leadership. If it's something you already know or have learned through trial and error, this is a quick reminder.



7. **A Resource for You**

These are a few resources to add to your collection as a Youth Sabbath School leader. The fourth week of each month will have a few resources for a variety of purposes.

And here are those seven supplemental materials in more detail for this week's lesson: "Struggle by a Stream."



Opening Activity

OPTION 1: THUMB WAR

Most people have played this simple hand game in the past. It fits this week's lesson, "Struggle by a Stream," very well.

Here are the instructions for playing Thumb War. Have your participants team up in groups of two. Have them curl the fingers of their right hand forward with their thumb pointing up, then hook their cupped hand around their partner's. Both people's thumbs should be free.

The partners then say together, "One, two three, four, I declare a thumb war." As they say each word, they alternate tapping their thumbs on the right and left sides of their cupped hands. Once the thumb war starts, the goal is for them to pin their thumb down on top of their partner's before the other person can do it to them. Both partners must keep their fingers cupped the whole time.

The person who manages to pin down the other's thumb is the winner. You can do a single elimination or make the winner the person who wins two out of three attempts.

When everyone is done, have the people who won against their partners then compete against each other. Continue eliminating people until you end up with a single champion for the day.

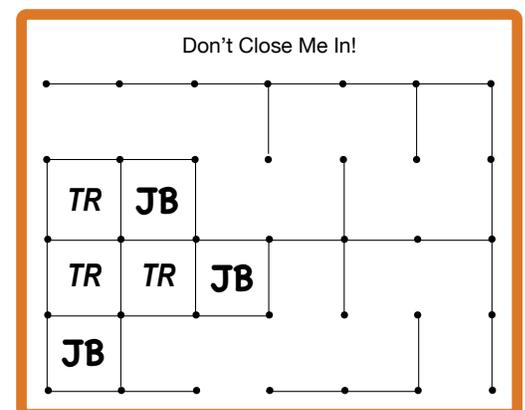
If you don't know how to do a thumb war, just go to YouTube search for "How to Play Thumb War" by Ziven Romero.

OPTION 2: DON'T CLOSE ME IN

Instead of doing a physical activity like wrestling or a thumb war, you can also have your participants match wits with each other. There are many types of games that allow for this. The age-old Tic-Tac-Toe is one possibility, although by their teen years most participants will end it with a "cat's game," with neither person winning. Another way to match wits is by having one participant face off with another on a page filled with dots. The two take turns drawing a straight line between any two dots on the page, with the object being to enclose as many complete boxes as possible. Whenever someone is able to draw four sides and form a box, they put their initials inside and take another turn. This can continue until the person has drawn a whole series of boxes. When the two have connected all the dots and the entire page is full of boxes, whoever has more the most initialed wins.

This activity can take a lot of time depending on how many dots you have at the start. We have a basic version and an advanced version with a lot more dots. Both of these are available at the end of this PDF. Here's an example of what a partially completed basic version looks like.

TRANSITION: As you consider our lesson, "Struggle by a Stream," today, think about what little face-offs or competitions you come across in your day-to-day lives, and compare them to what it would be like to be in a big, major showdown with life-or-death consequences. That level of intensity is what today's lesson is about. The opening activity is kids' stuff in comparison to the Bible story we're going to look at today.





Video Clip and Follow-up Questions

This is a short video clip and an idea to help you to create your own video on this week's topic, plus a few follow-up questions to spark discussion afterwards.

If you do decide to create a video clip yourself, use one that illustrates our world today and how those connected to God live in such a world. Ask someone to create some follow-up questions based on these video clips in advance.

You can also use one of the following video. You'll find follow-up questions included afterward or you can create your own.

OPTION 1: JACOB'S FAMILY (LIE TO ME PT. 2) [IBELIEVEBIBLE]

You can show this short video clip in your Sabbath School as is or let it give you an idea for you to create your own video on this week's topic. If you choose to use it as is, here are a few follow-up questions to lead your group in discussion afterwards. If you choose to create your own video, make sure it illustrates the struggles we face in life, whether large, small, or both.

The YouTube video "Jacob's Family (Lie To Me pt. 2) [iBelieveBible]" is just over 3 minutes. This is a follow-up to one of the videos from last week, when the lesson was about Jacob deceiving his father and brother. This week's lesson picks up right afterwards and dives into what happens when the estranged brothers cross paths again after twenty years.

If you choose to create your own video, you will also need to create your own follow-up questions to ask your participants afterward.

FOLLOW-UP QUESTIONS

1. On a scale of one to ten, how serious is lying?
2. Do you consider lying a sin? Why or why not?
3. When has lying helped you? When has lying hurt you?
4. How long does it take to reestablish trust with a person after they find out someone has lied to them?



Music



1. It's best to do live music in your own setting, even if people are just learning.
2. Tap into Christian Copyright Licensing International (CCLI) to access Christian music legally. Your local church might already be doing this. If not, we recommend that you start. Their website is us.ccli.com.
3. Sing along with existing music. You can type song titles into YouTube and see how others are doing the same songs you choose. If you need lyrics, you can Google the song title and find them that way.

4. Here are ten songs related to today's lesson, "Struggle by a Stream."

- Blessed Assurance
- I Could Sing of Your Love
- Amazing Grace, Alleluia
- You Raise Me Up
- Days of Elijah
- Come Thou Font, Come Thou King
- Strong Enough
- 10,000 Reasons
- You Are My Strength
- Cornerstone

"Your Kingdom" is an original song written specifically for Youth Sabbath School. Go to the Youth Sabbath School Ideas website and download the lyrics, download the music, or download the video if you would like to learn this song and teach it in your Youth Sabbath School. The lyrics have been added to the collection of items at the end of this PDF. People usually need to repeat a new song several times before they catch on. You may want to have a few get familiar with it in advance so they can lead the rest of the group.



Bible Study Guides for Scripture for This Lesson — "Struggle by a Stream"

This is another approach to the same topic as in the Teacher's Guide, but just a different way of looking at it. Expect activities to illustrate the topic followed by some questions.

SCRIPTURE PASSAGES

- Genesis 28–33
- Jacob's Ladder—Genesis 28:1–22
- On the Run (Again)—Genesis 31:1–55
- Wrestling With God—Genesis 31:1–55

Jacob's Ladder

(BASED ON GENESIS 27:46–28:27)

What in the world were Jacob and Rebekah thinking when they deceived Isaac and Esau into giving Jacob the birthright blessing? If Isaac had realized what was going on, what would have happened to Jacob? What would happen to Rebekah, the one who initiated this scheme? And what would Esau do when he found out about it? Would he treat it as nothing more than a pot of stew

HERE'S ONE WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

MATERIALS NEEDED

- "Let's Make a Deal" round 1
- "Let's Make a Deal" round 2
- "Family Christmas Letter" handout
- Pencil or pen for each participant

now, or would he stew and stew until he exploded? As a hunter, Esau wasn't known for his patience or gentle ways.

In an old TV game show from the 1960s, 70s, and 80s called *Let's Make a Deal*, host Monty Hall would play with contestants picked arbitrarily from the audience. To get his attention, audience-goers would wear outlandish outfits that screamed, "Pick me, pick me!" If picked, they would trade something they had, such as a bobby pin or a pair of shoes or a \$5 bill, for whatever was hidden on stage. Contestants would always pick what was on the stage, which would be worth hundreds of dollars. And remember, this was decades ago when \$100 bought a lot more than it does today!

At the end of the show, contestants who had won the most valuable prizes were given the option to trade the valuable deal they'd already won for one last shot at three options hidden behind three large, sliding doors on stage. One might have a brand new car. Occasionally there would be a gag gift—a terrible deal the contestant had agreed to without knowing the results in advance. Part of the fun of the game show was the immediate benefits of trading up, but also the risk of losing big time.

When it came to deceiving the old and nearly blind Isaac into blessing Jacob instead of Esau, it seems like Jacob and Rebekah were playing their own high stakes version of *Let's Make a Deal*.



Choose a volunteer from your Youth Sabbath School to play this version of *Let's Make a Deal*. You can project pictures of the doors via PowerPoint or Keynote on a screen in your Sabbath School room. Tell your volunteer that unlike in the game show, they have four options to choose from instead of three. Remind them that they are playing as Jacob, then ask them to pick a door. Let them choose whichever one they want without warning them what might be behind it.

After your volunteer chooses a door, reveal what each of the four options were one at a time. They are:

Door #1: Isaac isn't fooled and kicks Jacob out of the family

Door #2: Esau finds out and doesn't mind being cheated out of the birthright

Door #3: Esau finds out and kills Jacob in a rage

Door #4: Isaac isn't fooled and bans both Jacob and Rebekah

As it turns out, none of those were very good options for Jacob, were they?

QUESTIONS

- Why did Jacob and Rebekah want to deceive Isaac?
- Would you have played along if you were Jacob? Why or why not?
- What was the best outcome they could have expected from this deception? What would have been the worst outcome?
- What did Jacob gain? What did he lose?
- What did Rebekah gain? What did Rebekah lose?
- What counsel would you give to each member of this family just before this deception?
- What counsel would you give to each member of this family right after this deception?

We played Let's Make a Deal from the point of view of Jacob and Rebekah just before he went into Isaac's room sounding, feeling, and smelling like Esau so Isaac would give him the birthright blessing. Let's play it again, but this time from Jacob's perspective after he and his mother have successfully deceived Isaac.

Once again, you'll have four doors to choose from and need to pick one—along with the surprise that comes with it!



Select another volunteer from your Youth Sabbath School and have them play round two of this version of *Let's Make a Deal*. Have the participant choose one of the four doors, then reveal the deals behind each door one by one.

Door #1: Jacob is killed or enslaved by bandits

Door #2: Jacob is rejected by his relatives

Door #3: Jacob joins his distant family

Door #4: Jacob starts a new life somewhere on his own

Once again, the options weren't good for Jacob. He had successfully deceived his father, but it turned out to be very costly. Esau was enraged and Rebekah, fearing that he would kill Jacob as soon as Isaac passed away, added to the lies and manipulation by going to Isaac and convincing him to send Jacob to live with her relatives. Isaac agreed and sent Jacob away. This turned out to be the last time Jacob saw his mother. Strangely, the aged and blind Isaac went on to live another 43 years.

ACTIVITY

Writing a letter to send to friends and family during Christmastime is a custom many families do nowadays. These letters usually give the people they know an update on how a family is doing and what has happened to them over the past year. For this activity, choose one of the characters in this story—Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, or Jacob—and write a Christmas letter as if you were him or her. I know it's not Christmas time right now, but try to use your imagination! Explain everything that happened with Isaac's blessing and how Jacob had to leave home.



Print off "Christmas Letter Option 1" or "Christmas Letter Option 2" and hand them out along with pens or pencils to the participants in your Youth Sabbath School. You can find these at the end of this PDF. You can also Google other Christmas note templates. Play some Christmas songs in the background while the participants compose their Christmas cards. When the music is over, invite those who are willing to share what they wrote by reading their letters aloud.

QUESTIONS

- What things did you include in your Christmas letter? What did you leave out?
- If you received this Christmas letter, what would you think of this family?
- What thoughts and feelings does a Christmas letter like this create in you?
- Is there a way to make this story sound good?

So Jacob left his parents and his seething brother to go find his mother's relatives, who lived about 450 miles away. Walking the equivalent of a marathon each day would take

15–20 days of travel. That would give him plenty of time to think, but it would also include uncertain travel in terms of bandits or slave traders or wild animals or anything else. What types of things do you think were going through Jacob's head during his trip? (Feel free to get feedback.)

We can get a very short version of the story. Let's read Genesis 27:46–28:27. (Take turns having people in your group read the story.)

QUESTIONS

- What surprises you about this story? What do you think surprised Jacob?
- In the song "Jacob's Ladder," the lyrics say, "We are climbing Jacob's ladder." What part did Jacob play in his vision of the ladder? What part did God play? What part did the angels play?
- Why would God give Jacob this dream at this point during his journey (the first night after leaving home on his long trip into an unknown future)?
- If you were Jacob, what would this dream have meant to you at this time?
- Has there ever been a time in your life when might have God been with you, complete with angels ascending and descending from heaven, but you didn't know it?
- What do you make of Jacob's offer to make a deal with God after God had shown Jacob such amazing grace?
- Have you ever made a deal with God before? What vows will you make to God now?

Many of us have been hearing this story since we were children. Jesus even made a reference to it at the start of his public ministry. You can read about it in John 1:51, when Jesus told Nathanael he would see even greater things than the wow factor that had initially brought him to Jesus—he would see heaven open and angels going up and down upon the Son of Man. Can you think of any times this happened during Christ's ministry? Has anything like this happened in your lifetime so far?

WRAP-UP

Jacob and Rebekah took a big risk in deceiving Isaac so Jacob could receive the magical and momentous blessing—which would affect the generations after him—that was Esau's by birthright. Even though it could have been much worse, it still turned out badly—for the entire family. Deception is a high-stakes game with low returns. And yet God, in his amazing Old Testament grace, still revealed a perpetual connection between heaven and Jacob in the dream he gave him. The angels ascending and descending that ladder showed that Jacob remained linked with heaven. That is grace!

On the Run (Again)

(BASED ON GENESIS 31:1–55)

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

This is a two-page relational Bible study based on Genesis 31:1–55. To save on paper, download it and print it double-sided so there is text on both sides of the sheet. It's available at the end of this PDF.

It starts with an icebreaker question designed to level the playing field and make everyone realize that no one in the

group is more of an expert than anyone else. The group will have to depend on the Holy Spirit to speak through them and give them divine insights. If you have more than 8–10 people in your Youth Sabbath School, divide them into groups of 4–8.

Take turns reading the passage out loud. Then give everyone some time to fill out their responses on the handout. Explain that they can choose more than one answer if they need to. When everyone is done, collect the handouts and follow up with a discussion based on the questions and the responses the participants gave. Ask them to explain the reasons behind their responses. If your group has more than ten people, break into smaller groups so more people have the opportunity to share.

Check the Application Ideas section for additional ideas about how to live this out this lesson in the coming week.

WRAP-UP

Years after running away from home, Jacob made a new home with his uncle Laban and ended up marrying... Leah, and then Rachel. Feeling like his father-in-law had ripped him off repeatedly, Jacob went on the run again, this time with his wives, children, and riches. Oh, and the false gods Rachel took with them. He escaped from the relative who had deceived him so he could return home to where his brother lived—who he had deceived twenty years ago. We don't know exactly how nervous Jacob was to take this risk, but we do know that God had promised to be with him. God had given him another assurance of His presence.

Wrestling with God

(BASED ON GENESIS 32:1–32)

HERE'S ANOTHER WAY OF STUDYING
THE LESSON FOR THIS WEEK

At his birth, Jacob received his name probably because, as the second twin boy out of the birth canal, it appeared he was grasping the heel of his brother (see Genesis 25:26). Unfortunately, Jacob's name could also be translated as "deceiver." That's certainly not a trait his parents would have wanted Jacob to develop, yet it seems that's what he

MATERIALS NEEDED

- "On the Run (Again)" handout for each participant
- Pen or pencil for participants

MATERIALS NEEDED

- "Ranking Negatives and Positives" handout
- Pen or pencil for participants
- A table and chairs for arm wrestling

became known for—of the way he deceived his father into giving him the blessing that Isaac had prepared to give to Esau (Genesis 27).

Perhaps deception ran in the family. Jacob's mother, Rebekah, pushed Jacob to deceive his father and helped him do it. When Jacob left home and went to live with his relatives on his mother's side, Jacob got to get a taste of his own medicine from Laban, for whom deception seemed to be commonplace. Maybe the name "Jacob" (meaning "deceiver") was appropriate. Would you wear that name like a badge of pride or a moniker of shame?



Pass out a copy of the "Ranking Negatives and Positives" handout along with a pen or pencil to each Youth Sabbath School participant. It's available at the end of this PDF. Ask them to do just the first half of the page for now (or cut the pages in half and hand out the top half first). This is the "Ranking Negatives" section. Have the participants rank the list of things in order of most to least negative. Then lead them in a discussion with the following questions (or questions you create on your own).

QUESTIONS

- Which experience on the list did you rank as the most negative—#1?
- Which experience did you rank as the least negative—#5?
- Did Jacob receive an unfair amount of negative experiences?
- Did Jacob deserve these negative experiences? Did he deserve more than what he received?
- So far, has your life had more negative experiences or more positive experiences? What do you deserve? What do you expect for yourself in the future?

After 20 years of living with Laban, marrying his two daughters, having children, and obtaining flocks and herds, Jacob took all he had and headed back toward his homeland. God gave Jacob the message to return, as well as a promise to be present with him (Genesis 31:3). But fearing Laban, Jacob and his family left secretly when Laban was away (Genesis 31:17–21). And demonstrating that deceit wasn't the only problematic trait in this family, Jacob's wife, Rachel, stole Laban's household gods in the process of their sneaky departure. She later lied about it (Genesis 31:34–35). The Bible certainly doesn't gloss over or cover up some of the unbecoming elements of God's people. Perhaps that can give us hope when we mess up too. Does it demonstrate to you God's patience, love, and forgiveness for his people?

Let's not forget that Jacob received a message from God to head back home. After the showdown with Laban and his agreement to leave Jacob alone, God even sent Jacob an angel escort (Genesis 32:1–2). Even so, Jacob still chose to send five sets of gifts to Esau. He spaced them apart so Esau would receive them as five different waves of offerings—peace offerings.



Take turns reading Genesis 32:1–21 aloud as a group.

Earlier we ranked a set of five negative experiences that Jacob went through. Now we're going to do something similar and rank a list of positives rather than negatives. Rank this list of gifts from 1–5 in order of what you think Esau would consider most valuable.



Tell the participants to start the second half of their "Ranking Negatives and Positives" handout or, if you cut the pages in half, hand out the lower half.

QUESTIONS

- What do you think of Jacob's plan and actions to appease Esau?
- What more could Jacob have done?
- Why was Jacob afraid? Didn't God promise to be with him?
- Would you rather have a visible army of soldiers with you or an invisible God who sometimes communicates with you?
- What stands out to you in Jacob's prayer in Genesis 32:9–12?

The title of this lesson is "Wrestling With God." We have now come to that part of the story! But before we read it, let's try a fairly brief version of what happens in it. Let's try some arm-wrestling. Go ahead and partner up.



Most people know how to arm wrestle, but feel free to explain it if needed. Search for WikiHow's article "How to Win at Arm Wrestling." Have those who win then arm wrestle each other. Try to expend the participants' strength with one contest after another.

QUESTIONS

- Each time two people arm wrestle, one of them will lose. Were you the one who lost? How are you feeling right now?
- What are some good strategies for winning at arm wrestling?
- If you struggled for a while to win a long contest with one person in particular, how did it affect your next contest in a playoff like we just had? Is that fair?
- Do you think doing weight lifting to build more upper body strength would give you an edge in arm wrestling?

This was just arm wrestling. Full body wrestling is also a taxing activity and actually, it's an official sport! Athletes take part in competitions and face each other in matches that consist of up to three rounds, but with each round lasting between 1–2 minutes depending on the participants. Wrestling is a lot of work and can be very exhausting.

With this in mind, let's read Genesis 32:22–32.



Take turns reading this passage aloud in your group.

QUESTIONS

- What do you find most amazing about this story?
- How long would you last against a wrestler in these circumstances?
- If wrestling is so exhausting, how did Jacob do it all night?
- What is the significance of the man changing Jacob's name to Israel?
- Have you ever wrestled with God? What happened next?
- What advice would you give to someone who is wrestling with God right now?

When many people read this surprising story about Jacob wrestling with a stranger, the first question they ask is often, "Who was the stranger? Was it God or an angel?"

The answer is not as definitive as we'd like it to be. The Bible calls the individual "a man" multiple times (Genesis 32:24–25). But afterward Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning "face of God," because he said, "I have seen God face-to-face, yet my life has been spared" (Genesis 32:30).

Jacob's ancestors had seen God previously (see Genesis 12:7; Genesis 17:1; Genesis 26:2, 24) and later his descendants as well (Exodus 3:16; Exodus 6:3; Judges 13:8-11; 21–22; 1 Samuel 3:21). Some think of the request of when Moses asked to see God's glory (Exodus 33:18) and God's response was that no one can look on his face and live (Exodus 33:19–23). Evidently there's a glory of God that God veiled when he appeared to people on earth. Sometimes God disguised himself or "closed the eyes" of those to whom he appeared, often so much that they didn't even recognize him (see Genesis 18:1; Luke 24:13–16; 31).

For those who think this was an angel, the word "angel" doesn't appear in this passage. Jacob's struggle with God through the night serves as a prefigure that Jesus, God who came to earth in the form of "a man," struggled with God the Father in the Garden of Gethsemane (Mark 14:32–42).

Perhaps the more important thing to note in this story is that Jacob, formerly known as a "deceiver," gets his name changed to Israel, signifying that he'd "struggled with God." Some might not like that meaning any more than "deceiver." Still, it meant he'd clung to God and refused to release his hold until he received a blessing. With all of God's supreme power, you'd think he could have overpowered Jacob at any time. But that wasn't what God was after. What mattered was that Jacob continued to cling to God. When Jacob/Israel met Esau the next morning, it would seem that the limp God gave him before the blessing put Jacob at both Esau and God's mercy.

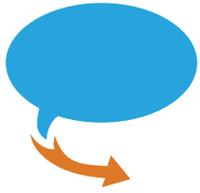
QUESTIONS

- What are you most likely to wrestle with God about?
- Who would win? How do you know?
- What name would you like God to give you?
- Do you want to see God face-to-face now? Why or why not?

WRAP-UP

Despite his best attempts to appease his brother, Jacob still encountered an opponent in a mysterious stranger who approached him in the night and started wrestling with him. This went on until daybreak—exceptional considering this was a life or death struggle. If this had been a matter of physical power, God would've won right away. But it seems choosing to cling to God was what mattered—and it resulted in a physical change to Jacob's body (a

limp) that in turn represented an even bigger change in his life—the changing of his name from Jacob to Israel.



Application Ideas for Living Out This Lesson This Week

Let these spark ideas for ways you can move from talk to action and live out the lesson in a practical way this week.

The following applications relate to the corresponding Bible Study Guides for Scripture for the lesson above.

- A. It's your turn to make a deal with God. Jacob received a vision with a ladder connecting heaven with earth, with angels ascending and descending along it. What did Jacob do to deserve this? Is this ladder that connects heaven and earth something that is true for you now? If so, what deal/vow will you make with God? What greater things can you expect? Share this with another person in Sabbath School today. Record it in some way (write it on a note and place it in your Bible or pocket, or take a photo of this with your device or make a short video of your vow so you can refer to it during the coming week). Check with each other one week from now.
- B. During this week jot down the things from which you are running. This could be something like a schoolwork assignment, a friend who is no longer a friend, a deadline, a punishment, a responsibility you don't want, a reputation you can't seem to shake, a God you don't trust or love, a family member you just don't want to be around, etc. At the end of the week, make this list a starting point for praying to God and listening to what God has to say to you about each one. Respond to God's promptings.
- C. Several times this week do a set of push-ups to physically exert yourself. As you lower yourself all the way to the ground, think of drawing close to God. As you extend your arms, think of the types of things you do or thoughts you have that push you away from God. When you get to the point of not being able to do even one more push-up, lower yourself to the ground and ask God to bless you, just like Jacob/Israel asked.

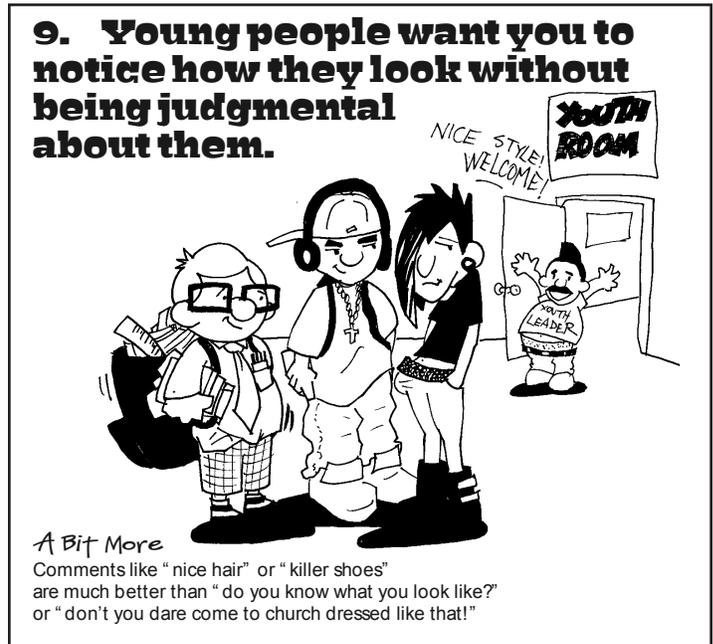


Youth Leader Tip for the Week

This bonus is just for the youth leader—a quick tip and an illustration to enhance your youth leadership. You may already know this idea, have learned it through trial and error, or maybe just need a reminder. Here it is in a quick infusion:

A BIT MORE

While some young people are completely oblivious to how they look, many place tremendous importance on how they look, even if that look is sloppy or a look you would never choose for yourself. Exactly! As teens try out new identities, they need to pick something adults would never pick for themselves. You don't have to like it, or even pretend you like it. Just acknowledge their look with something like, "This is the first time I've seen your new look!" or "It looks like you thought a lot about your outfit today," or "I could never get away with that look, but you sure know how to do it!" Don't be too surprised when it changes next week.



A Resource for You

Here are a few resources to add to your collection as a Youth Sabbath School leader. The fourth week of each month will have a few resources for a variety of purposes.

LEADING THE WAY

The Youth Department of the Seventh-day Adventist Church created a special, youth edition Bible. Starting with the New King James Version (though we're not sure why they didn't choose a more youth-friendly English translation), this Bible has loads of helpful materials included for young people. These include short introductions to each book of the Bible, and lots of resources right in the pages. While you're reading, you'll come across comments in the sidebar and QR codes where readers can access short articles on that portion of Scripture. It's an amazing collection that both youth and those who lead them will find helpful. At the back are the maps, but also Bible reading plans and other helpful articles. This product is a bit pricey (\$35) but that's because it's loaded with helpful resources! It's available in English, Spanish, or French at SafelizBibles.com as well as Adventist Book Stores. For a YouTube overview, go to YouTube and type in "Youth Bible Safeliz."

DOWNLOAD YOUTH MINISTRY

Get a couple of youth pastors together, mix some online savviness and an entrepreneurial spirit, and their ideas are what you get with Download Youth Ministry. This is a collection

of youth ministry ideas from a variety of denominations all mixed into one. While there can be nuanced as well as distinctive differences between Bible studies based on one's denomination, many things are still universal across all denominations. For example, what's the difference between an Adventist icebreaker and a Baptist icebreaker?

Check out this online resource at DownloadYouthMinistry.com. Each month a new set of resources gets posted. You can choose your financial level of access, whether it's a single item, a bronze level membership (\$12/month), a silver level (\$22/month), or a gold level (\$27/month). You'll be amazed by the great variety of youth ministry resources available. If you're an entrepreneur yourself, you can upload materials you've created and get some money for letting the website share it. This means the materials available are what others are currently using and have found worthwhile in their own ministry context. Check it out for yourself!

PERSONAL FINANCE FOR TEENS

Dave Ramsey has become the Christian guru for finances. The American proclivity of "buy now, pay later" creates all kinds of difficulties. Ramsey's Financial Peace University has helped many adults with these difficulties, and now he's packaged it for other age groups as well, including youth. You can Google "Dave Ramsey" or "Financial Peace University" and then go to the youth curriculum. For a little more than \$100 you can get videos and workbooks. It's geared more for a school setting than a church setting, but you can still adapt it for your situation. Young people may not be rich, but they have access to money and are developing habits that will shape their present and future lives, attitudes, and practices.

Cornerstone Connections is provided by the General Conference Sabbath School Department.

The supplemental materials for Youth Sabbath School found here are provided by the North American Division

Tracy Wood, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Director

Vandeon Griffin, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

Armando Miranda, Youth and Young Adult Ministries Associate Director

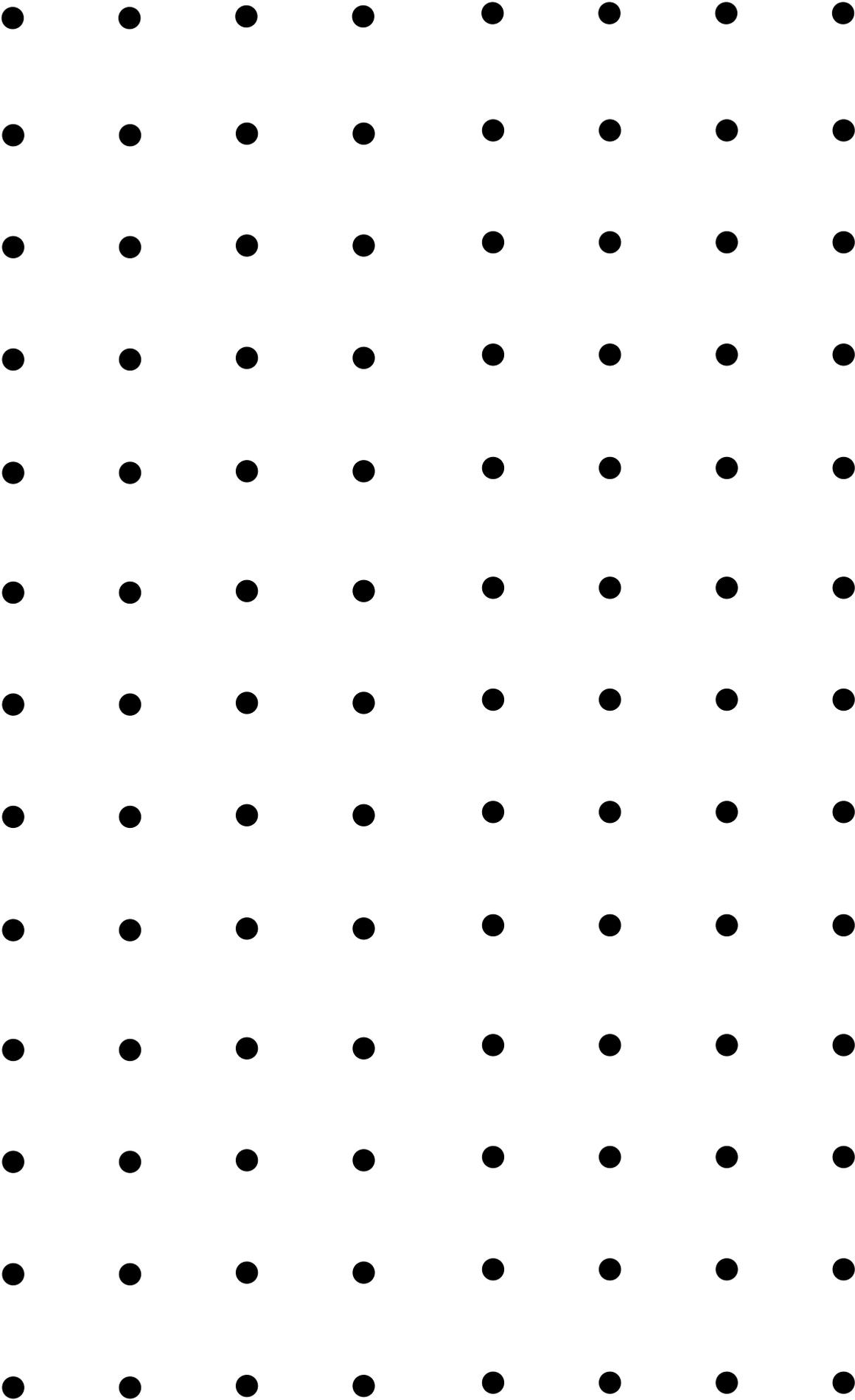
Steve Case, Editor

AdventSource, Publisher

Don't Close Me In!



Don't Close Me In!



Your Kingdom

Written by Werner Carrasco

Performed by Allison Padilla

To be in your Kingdom,
To sit by your throne
My heart must be broken,
Remove every stone

To be in your presence
To linger with you
I must see the world
With the Love that you do

CHORUS

Because your Kingdom
Is never a place,
A mansion or city,
It's greater than that,
To walk with you, Lord
To be by your side
I must see the world,
With the Love that you do

Your home is within me,
My home within You
Your Kingdom is Love
Your castle is Truth

Ranking Negatives

The story of Jacob includes his negative experiences after leaving his home and taking up residence with his cousin Laban in Haran (Genesis 29–30). Rank the following negative experiences Jacob had, with 1 being the most negative and 5 being the least negative.

- ___ Laban tricked Jacob to marry Leah instead of Rachel as agreed
- ___ Jacob had to work 14 years for free in order to marry Rachel
- ___ Laban cheated Jacob out of the flocks and herds he agreed to give him
- ___ Laban changed Jacob's wages 10 times
- ___ Rachel, Jacob's wife, couldn't have children for years and years

Ranking Positives

When Jacob returned with his wives, flocks and herds to the land of his childhood, he received word that Esau (with an army of 400 men) was coming his direction. Jacob, knowing this would be their first encounter since Jacob's great deception and Esau's vow of revenge, sent what he considered what Esau would consider most valuable. Rank these positive things, 1–5, in the order you think Esau would want them.

- ___ Jacob
- ___ Jacob's wives
- ___ Jacob's children
- ___ Jacob's flocks and herds
- ___ Everything Jacob had

On the Run (Again)

As a child, did you ever consider running away from home? Explain.

Read Genesis 31:1–55.

1. Why did Jacob decide to leave Laban and return to Esau's land?
 - A. God told him to return.
 - B. He really didn't like Laban any longer.
 - C. Laban really didn't like Jacob any longer.
 - D. There was a famine in the land.
 - E. God had a promise to fulfill to the descendants of Abraham.
 - F. Jacob had obtained about all the wealth he needed.
 - G. Jacob felt homesick for Esau.
 - H. Esau really wanted to see Jacob.
 - I. Other.

2. What feedback did Jacob receive from Rachel and Leah?
 - A. There were split—one wanted to stay and the other wanted to leave.
 - B. Both wanted to stay with the extended family of their childhood.
 - C. Both wanted to leave.
 - D. They loved Jacob so much and were willing to go wherever he went.
 - E. They felt fearful about going to a place they had never been.
 - F. They worried about their children and who they might marry.
 - G. They wanted to consult the gods they had growing up.
 - H. Yahweh's promise to be with them gave them utmost confidence.
 - I. Other.

3. Why did Rachel steal her father's household gods?
 - A. This family lies, steals, and cheats all the time
 - B. Rachel wanted a memento from home.
 - C. She wasn't "stealing;" she was "borrowing."
 - D. To build her father's faith in Yahweh instead of idols.
 - E. Rachel felt more at home with her father's gods than with Yahweh.
 - F. Jacob hadn't cultivated faith in Yahweh with his two wives.
 - G. So she could sell them and get some money if needed.
 - H. To pass on her father's gods to the next generation.
 - I. Other.

4. Why did Laban and Jacob need a "watchtower" (vs. 49)?
 - A. They couldn't trust each other.
 - B. It provided a strategic spot for military advantages.
 - C. They needed a legal stamp to ratify their agreement.
 - D. This provided a good place to say "Goodbye."
 - E. They were "Jehovah's Witnesses" and this was their PR publication.
 - F. To have a physical marker to stay on their own side and not cross.
 - G. Other.

5. "May the LORD watch between me and thee; while we are absent one from another."
This is:
 - A. Called the "Mizpah" which means "watchtower."
 - B. What you're supposed to say when it's time for a religious "Goodbye."
 - C. I don't know; I memorized it when I was young.
 - D. A promise to stay away from each other.
 - E. A promise to return.
 - F. A prayer to ask for God's protection.
 - G. A request for God to take care of those outside our immediate care.
 - H. Other.

6. What oaths have you taken?
 - A. Be loyal to my family.
 - B. Always trust God.
 - C. Take care of myself.
 - D. I don't take oaths.
 - E. Treat others the way they treat me.
 - F. I don't swear.
 - G. To God and country.
 - H. Other.

7. Who do you feel more sorry for in this story: Jacob or Laban? Why?

8. If you were Jacob, would you rather face Laban or Esau? Explain



Merry
Christmas!

A red Christmas ornament with a green ribbon and a green patterned ornament hanging from a string.

Merry Christmas

