# THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

## CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON

# DATE: January 29, 2017

**SUBJECT: GOD’S CALLING IN THE OLD TESTAMENT: God Called Jacob (Part 4 of 5)**

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 29:31-35; 30:25-43; 31:1-55

**AIM:** To show the children that the Lord blesses and protects those whom He calls.

**SUGGESTED MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Psalms 121:7 (Jehovah will keep you from all evil; He will keep your soul.); Psalms 121:8 (Jehovah will keep your going out and your coming in from now and to eternity.); 2 Thessalonians 3:3 (But the Lord is faithful, who will establish you and guard *you* from the evil one.); Isaiah 41:10a (Do not be afraid, for I am with you; Do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you; surely I will help you; …)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 24 (He’s Able); 52 (God Is Always Near Me); 32 (Trust In The Lord); 172 (Why Worry When You Can Pray?); 6732 (Trust and Obey); 96 (No Never Alone); 64 (Every Promise in the Bible is Mine); 9410 (I Believe the Promises of God); 2822 (God’s Promise)

**CRAFT IDEA:** Make speckled and spotted goats, and black sheep (representing Jacob’s flock), and solid colored goats and non-black sheep (representing Laban’s flock). Paste the animals onto paper.

**BACKGROUND:** Jacob served his uncle Laban fourteen years in payment for his two wives, 7 years for Leah and another 7 years for Rachel. During that time his family grew a lot. He eventually had four wives: Leah, Rachel, and their handmaidens Bilhah and Zilpah, respectively. He had eleven sons: Reuben, Judah, Simeon, Levi, Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher, Issachar, Zebulun, and Joseph. Later, Rachel bore him another son, Benjamin—altogether twelve sons. And he had at least one daughter, Dinah.

**CONTENT:**

**Jacob’s Agreement with Laban about the Flocks.** At the end of the fourteen years when Jacob’s service to Laban had ended, Jacob told Laban that he wanted to go back home to his own country. But Laban didn’t want him to go. He knew that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob. So he asked Jacob what wages he would like to be paid to stay and work for him. Jacob proposed the following: “Let me again feed your flock and keep it. Let me pass through all your flock today, removing from there every speckled and spotted animal, that is, every black animal among the sheep, and the spotted and speckled among the goats; and such will be my wages.” (Genesis 30:31b–32) So every speckled or spotted goat, and black sheep, would be Jacob’s wages.

Laban agreed to Jacob’s word. But on that day Laban took away all the streaked, spotted and speckled goats, every one that had white in it, and all the black ones among the sheep! These were supposed to be the sheep for Jacob’s wages, but Laban secretly took them away. He told his sons to watch over them and took them to a far away place that was three days’ journey from Jacob. Even though Laban did this, Jacob took care of all the animals that were left. It seems his uncle cheated him again. But Jacob had a plan. He took rods of fresh poplar and almond and plane trees and peeled white stripes in them, exposing the white in the rods. He set the rods in front of the flock at the watering places. Jacob must have thought that if he put the rods at the watering places, the baby animals would be speckled or spotted, but it was really God helping him. When the animals came to drink there, they also bred. The young that were born were streaked, speckled or spotted. Moreover, when the stronger animals were breeding, Jacob put the rods before them. But when the feebler, weaker animals were breeding, he took away the rods. Sothe weaker baby animals were Laban’s and the stronger baby animals were Jacob’s. Eventually, Jacob became a very rich man with large flocks, and many servants, camels, and donkeys.

**Jacob Flees from Laban and is Pursued by Him.** One day Jacob heard Laban’s sons talking, “Jacob has taken away all that belonged to our father; and from what belonged to our father he has made all this wealth.” (Genesis 31:1) Then Jacob noticed that Laban was not as friendly as he had been before. And Jehovah said to Jacob, “Return to the land of your fathers and to the relatives, and I will be with you.” (Genesis 31:3) Jacob talked it over with Rachel and Leah. They told him to do whatever God had told him to do.So Jacob took his wives and children and all the livestock and everything he owned and began his journey back to the land of Canaan. Laban was out sheering his sheep. While he was gone, Rachel stole his household idols. Jacob did not tell Laban he was leaving with his family. Three days later Laban learned that Jacob had run away. So Laban gathered his relatives and began to chase Jacob. After seven days Laban found him in the mountains of Gilead. But that night God came to Laban in a dream. The Lord said, “Be careful that you do not speak to Jacob either good or bad.” (Genesis 31:24) Laban caught up with Jacob. Laban said to Jacob, “What are you doing deceiving me and carrying away my daughters like captives of the sword? … I might have sent you away with joy and with songs;… you did not allow me to kiss my sons and my daughters. Now you have acted foolishly.” (Genesis 31:26-28). Laban told Jacob that he could have harmed him, but then told him of the dream God gave him. Laban then accused Jacob of stealing the idols from his house.

Jacob told Laban that he left without telling him because “I was afraid, for I thought that you might take your daughters from me by force.” (Genesis 31:31) Jacob did not think anyone had taken idols from Laban’s house, so he also said, “The one with whom you find your gods shall not live. In the presence of our brothers indicate what there is with me that is yours, and take it.” (Genesis 31:32) Now Jacob did not know that Rachel had stolen Laban’s idols. So Laban searched the tents. When he came to Rachel’s tent, Rachel was sitting on her camel’s saddle. The idols were hidden inside the saddle! She asked her father if she could remain seated, so Laban did not find his idols.

Then Jacob became very angry and contended with Laban; and Jacob answered and said to Laban, “What is my transgression? What is my sin, that you have so hotly pursued me? Although you have rummaged through all my possessions, what have you found of all your household goods? Set it here before my brothers and your brothersthat they may decide between the two of us. These twenty years have I been with you; your ewes and your female goats have not miscarried, and I have not eaten the rams of your flocks. That which was torn by beasts I did not bring to you; I bore the loss of it myself.” (Genesis 31:36-39) Jacob said to Laban that he had served him twenty years, including fourteen years for Laban’s two daughters and six years for his flock, “and you have changed my wages ten times.” (Genesis 31:41) “If the God of my father, the God of Abraham, and the Dread (Fear) of Isaac, had not been with me, surely now you would have sent me away empty. God has seen my affliction and the labor of my hands and rebuked you last night.” (Genesis 31:42)

**Laban and Jacob Make a Covenant of Peace.** Laban answered and said to Jacob, “The daughters are my daughters, and the children are my children, and the flocks are my flocks, and all that you see is mine. But what can I do this day to these my daughters or to their children whom they have borne?” So Laban proposed that he and Jacob make a covenant. Jacob took a stone and set it up as a pillar. His relatives gathered stones and made a heap. Laban said to Jacob, “This heap is witness between me and you today…. Jehovah watch between me and you when we are absent from one another…. This heap is a witness, and the pillar is a witness, that I will not pass beyond this heap to you and that you will not pass beyond this heap and this pillar to me, for harm.” And Jacob offered a sacrifice on the mountain and then they all ate together. Early the next morning Laban kissed his grandchildren and daughters. He blessed them and then left to return home.

**SUGGESTED APPLICATIONS TO CHOOSE FROM:** *Please pray and fellowship over which applications to cover. Please do not feel obligated to cover all the suggested applications.*

* **God is faithful.** We can trust God to protect us. Jacob and his young family were no match for Laban and his men. Laban really could have hurt Jacob. Not only was he more powerful than Jacob but he also was very angry. In his estimation Jacob had stolen his daughters, grandchildren, cattle, and household idols. Jacob was in real danger. Jacob, in his fear, ran away. But the Lord was with him. He prevented Laban from doing anything to Jacob. Laban even initiated a covenant of peace between them.
* **God is able.** We must realize our God is able. No one is stronger or more powerful than He. When the children feel threatened by a situation (a bully at school, gangs in their neighborhood, older kids, burglars, muggers, or even imaginary “monsters” in the dark), they need to learn to pray to the Lord and depend on Him to protect them. Children should go to their parents and pray together with them.

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 2/ 20/94; 2/06/00; 1/29/06; 2/5/12