# THE CHURCH IN NEW YORK CITY

## CHILDREN’S MEETING LESSON

# DATE: February 5, 2017

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

**SCRIPTURE:** Genesis 32:1-32; 33:1-20; 35:1-15

**AIM:** To see that God desires that we cry out to Him in time of trouble or fear, because He is for us and is able to deliver us.

**MEMORY VERSES TO CHOOSE FROM:** Psalms 56:3 (When I am afraid, I trust in You.); Psalms 56:11 (In God do I trust; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?); Hebrews 13:6 (So that being of good courage, we say,“The Lord is my Helper, and I will not fear. What shall man do to me?”); Psalms 107:13 (Then they cried out to Jehovah in their trouble, *And* He saved them from their distresses.)

**SONG SUGGESTIONS:** 28 (Just Keep On Believing); 32 (Trust in the Lord); 33 (When Your Fears Grow Mountain High); 164 (Sing, Sing, Sing); 172 (Why Worry When You Can Pray); 6733 (Trust in the Lord); 3102 (Happy is the People); 6730 (To Make Happy); 136 (Thou Will Show Me the Path of Life)

**CRAFT IDEAS:** Fold a piece of construction paper in half horizontally along the longer length like a tent. On one side write JACOB in very large letters and on the inside write ISRAEL. Cut out the “A” from JACOB as a window to show and share the “A” from ISRAEL on the inside.

**BACKGROUND:** Jacob had worked for Laban for twenty long years. During these twenty years, Jacob had obtained two wives (Leah and Rachel) and two female servants, and God had graciously given Jacob eleven children as well as material blessings. Jacob was ready to go back to his country after Rachel gave birth to their son, Joseph, but Jacob’s uncle Laban did not want him to go. Laban knew that the Lord had blessed him because of Jacob. Jacob made an arrangement with his uncle Laban for his wages (sheep and goats) but Laban tried to trick him again. Jacob, being a very clever man, devised a plan to thwart Laban. Then the Lord appeared to Jacob and told him to return to the land of his fathers and promised that He would be with him. Jacob secretly left Laban’s place with his wives, children, animals and possessions. After finding out, Laban pursued after him. But God warned Laban in a dream not to speak to Jacob either good or bad. Laban caught up to Jacob, and after their confrontation, Laban and Jacob made a covenant of peace. Laban blessed Jacob’s family and he departed to return home.

**CONTENT:** While Jacob was returning to the land of his father, the angels of God met him. When he saw them Jacob said, “This is God’s camp.” (Gen. 32:2) Hoping that he would find grace in Esau’s sight, Jacob sent messengers ahead of him and commanded them to tell his brother Esau: “Thus says your servant Jacob, I have sojourned with Laban and stayed until now; And I have oxen and donkeys and flocks, and male servants and female servants; and I have sent to tell my lord this, that I may find favor in your sight.” (Gen. 32:4-5) He wanted to let Esau know that God had blessed him with a big family, many servants and with many possessions.

The messengers returned to Jacob saying that they met Esau and that his brother Esau was coming to meet him and four hundred men were with him. When Jacob heard this, he became very afraid and distressed. He divided up the people who were with him and the flocks, and the herds and the camels into two camps thinking that if Esau attacked one camp, the other camp could escape. At this point Jacob cried out to God, “O God of my father Abraham and God of my father Isaac, O Jehovah, who said to me, Return to your country and to your relatives, and I will do you good, I am not worthy of all the lovingkindness and all the faithfulness which You have shown to Your servant; for with my staff *only* I crossed over this Jordan, and now I have become two camps. Deliver me, please, from the hand of my brother, from the hand of Esau, for I fear him, lest he come and attack me *and* the mother with the children.” (Gen. 32:9-11)

After he prayed, he spent the night there. Then he sent a present to Esau including goats, ewes, rams, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys. Jacob divided the livestock into groups to go before him, hoping that Esau would accept them and be appeased by them. He told his servants to tell Esau upon meeting him that the present was sent to him from his servant Jacob who is right behind them. Jacob spent that night in the camp.

**Jacob Wrestles with God.** After Jacob sent the present, he rose that night and took his large family to cross over the Jordan. After sending his wives and children away, Jacob was left alone. It was here that a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When the man saw that He did not prevail against him, He touched the socket of his hip; and the socket of Jacob’s hip was dislocated. (Gen. 32:24-25) This man was the Lord! “And the man said, Let Me go, for the dawn is breaking. But Jacob said, I will not let You go unless You bless me.” Jacob refused to let go unless the Lord blessed him! The man asked, “What is your name? And he said Jacob. And He said, Your name will no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.” (Gen. 32:27-28) It was here that God changed Jacob’s name to Israel (which means one who struggles with God). Jacob called the name of that place Peniel for he said “I have seen God face to face, and yet my life has been preserved.” (Gen. 32:30) The sun rose upon him as he crossed over Penuel and limped because of his hip.

**Jacob and Esau are Reconciled.** The next day Jacob saw Esau coming with his four hundred men. He divided his family and children with the two female servants and their children first, followed by Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph last. Jacob came nearer and bowed down to the ground seven times until he came near his brother Esau. Esau ran to meet him, embraced him and kissed him and they wept. The Lord answered Jacob’s prayer. Esau did not come to attack him. Esau received Jacob favorably. After meeting Jacob’s family, Esau received the gifts that Jacob gave him and returned to Seir that day. Jacob led his family and flocks and herds on slowly so as to not overdrive them. Jacob first journeyed to Succoth and then later safely to Shechem where he bought a piece of land and pitched his tent. It was here that Jacob erected an altar and called it El-Elohe-Israel, meaning El, the God of Israel.

After some time God appeared to Jacob and told him to leave Shechem and go up to Bethel and make an altar to God. Jacob went with his household to Bethel. Jacob built an altar there and called the place El-bethel. It was here where God first appeared to him twenty years ago when he fled from his brother Esau.

**God Blesses Jacob (Israel).**God appeared again to Jacob and blessed him. God reaffirmed the promise that He had given to Abraham. Jacob set up a pillar in the place where God had spoken with him. On this pillar of stone, Jacob poured out an offering and poured oil on it. Jacob called the name of the place Bethel.

**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 for us.** From a very young age Jacob always planned and strategized. However, no matter how much Jacob planned and schemed, at times he was very fearful and afraid, even for his life. In times of trouble, Jacob knew to turn to God and cry out to Him and God delivered him. When we face difficulties, we need to realize God is on our side. God is for us. We can cry out to Him in our times of distress and despair.
* **Trust in God, not in ourselves.** When Jacob was about to meet his brother, he again came up with his own plan to appease Esau by sending his livestock in droves in three groups ahead of him, along with his servants and special messages to Esau. He called Esau “my lord” and referred to himself as “your servant Jacob”. Jacob really wanted to make sure that he found favor in Esau’s eyes. We should trust God to take care of everything and not try to plan our own way out according to what we think is best. God knows best and God was protecting Jacob.
* **Reconciliation and forgiveness among brothers.** Jacob and Esau had not seen each other in twenty years. Esau once wanted to kill Jacob, but when they met again, Esau ran to meet him, kissed him and they wept. This indicates that some reconciliation and forgiveness occurred. When we have wronged someone or offended someone, we can ask for forgiveness and be at peace with one another (1 John 1:9; Psalms 133:1). When someone has wronged us, we should be willing to forgive as God has forgiven us(Matthew 6:14-15; Ephesians 4:32; Colossians 3:13). It is much better to be happy, peaceful and content rather than feeling angry, upset and mad with our family members and friends. We may be afraid and distressed to interact with them, similar to how Jacob was feeling before he met Esau, but God can take care of all our situations.

Adapted from the Church in New York City’s Children’s Meeting lessons: 2/ 27/94; 2/13/00; 2/5/06; 2/12/12