



## Jacob's New Name

**Bible Story:** Jacob's New Name • Genesis 32-33

**Bottom Line:** God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.

**Memory Verse:** <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. *Galatians 3:29, NIV*

**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. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God. (John 1:12)

**LARGE GROUP:** Communicating God's truth in engaging ways.

**SAY THIS:** We've been using a specific big picture question to help us know more about God and what He is like from the Bible stories we've studied. Can anyone remember the question? [*Allow responses.*] Great job. That's exactly right. **Does God keep His promises?** And the answer we've learned is what? Who can tell me? [*Allow responses.*] Good memory! Right again. **God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.** Let's say it all together: **Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.** This is our last week with this question, so it's important to make sure we really understand it.

At the very beginning of the Bible, we learned that **God is our Creator and King.** We learned that when sin came into the world, God already had plans to deal with sin by sending His Son. Then, we learned about Abraham and his family, including his son Isaac. We learned that **we can trust God because He is faithful and does everything for His glory and our good.** We have seen these truths continuing through the life of Isaac's son Jacob. God's promises to Abraham had passed on to Jacob. This week we will see more of God's faithfulness in our story. It's called "Jacob's New Name."

### WATCH VIDEO

**SAY THIS:** When we think back to the other stories we have learned about Jacob, it seems that Jacob really struggled to trust God's timing. God made some wonderful promises to Jacob, but Jacob kept trying to trick people and twist things to make God's promises come.

From stealing his brother's birthright and blessing to marrying a second woman after God provided him with a wife, Jacob always seemed to be working on his own plans instead of resting in the good plans God had for him. That's one of the reasons his physical wrestling match with God is so interesting. It was, in some ways, a physical picture of the way Jacob had treated God his whole life.

Now here's a question for you: do you think God's plans can ever be stopped or changed? [*Allow responses.*] Of course not! Even when we try to follow our own plans, God can work out His plans. He can use us whether we trust Him and obey, or try to go our own way. Jacob learned this the hard way, as God touched his hip and gave Jacob an injury that would last the rest of his life. It would serve as a



reminder that struggling against God is never the right choice.

However, even though Jacob struggled with God, God still kept His promises to bless Jacob. God had worked in Esau's life to heal that relationship. God had given Jacob many sons who would eventually be a great nation. Now, **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.**

### 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. (2 Corinthians 5:17) Jesus' death and resurrection provided sinful people the way to be adopted into God's family. When we are adopted into the family of God we also receive a new name—children of God. (John 1:12)

Jesus died on the cross for us and rose again on the third day, defeating sin and death. If we trust Jesus, we don't have to struggle against God. We can rest in His love and trust His plans for our lives and His plans for the world. Jesus promised to come again and fix everything broken in the world and make all things new. ***Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.***

### Groups: Creating a Safe Place to Connect (Small Groups, 40 minutes)

Create a safe place to connect and learn how the Bible story applies to real life experiences, through interactive activities and discussion questions.

#### 1. Bible Story Review/Skills

**What You Need:** Big Picture Question Poster, Bibles

**What You Do:**

- Distribute Bibles and guide kids to find Genesis 32–33.
- Choose a volunteer to read aloud Genesis 32:28.
- Invite kids to share what they have learned about Jacob from Genesis 25–33.

**What You Say** "From these stories, we have learned that 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, the Savior of the world."

#### 2. Discussion Questions:

- How does God change us when we trust in Jesus? *Lead kids to understand that when a person trusts in Jesus, that person goes from being God's enemy to being God's child. He or she is no longer a slave to sin but is counted as righteous.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 1:21-22.)
- 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.*  
(Option: Choose a volunteer to read 2 Cor. 1:8-9.)
- What are some ways God has blessed you? How can you be a blessing to others? *Allow kids to consider physical blessing, but ultimately point them toward the love and grace God*



*shows us in providing Jesus as our Savior. As we live for God, He calls us to show this same love and grace to others.*

(Option: Choose a volunteer to read Col. 3:12-14.)

### **3. Memory Verse Activity**

**What You Need:** Memory Verse Poster, index cards, markers or colored pencils

**What You Do:**

- Display the memory verse poster.
- Lead the kids to read the memory verse together.
- Then distribute index cards and colored pencils or markers.
- Instruct kids to spend a couple of minutes writing out the memory verse and decorating it as a bookmark.
- Collect all of the cards and mix them up.
- Give each kid a card that is not his own.
- Encourage kids to keep the cards somewhere they will see them often.

**What You Say** “ Genesis 28:15 tells us about God’s promise to Jacob. God promises to be with us too. *Does God keep His promises? God always keeps His promises because He is faithful.*

### **Pray and Dismiss**

**What You Need:** Prayer journals, Journal page (1 for each kid), markers/crayons, Bibles

**What You Do:**

- Distribute journal pages and pencils.
- Guide kids to think about and answer the questions listed on the page:
  - 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 any 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?
- As kids journal, invite them to share their ideas and write in your small group journal.

**What You Say:** Pray, thanking God for adopting us into His family when we believe in Jesus.

As adults arrive to pick up, tell kids to recite the memory verse to them.