



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: ²⁹ 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 skills

What You Need: Bibles, Story Point Poster

What You Do:

- Distribute a Bible to each kid.
- Help kids find Genesis 32–33.
- Ask the kids to tell you how they can find specific books, chapters, and verses in their Bibles.
- Read the Bible passages or review the story using the bolded text of the Bible story script.

What You Say: "Jacob was not a perfect person. He lied, cheated, and stole. Even so, God used him and blessed him. **God changed Jacob's name to Israel, the name of God's covenant people.** Israel's family became a great nation. God used them to send the Messiah, Jesus, many years later to save the world from sin."

2. Discussion Questions:

- Why was Jacob afraid about going back to Canaan? (*He feared Esau would still be angry and want to kill him, Gen. 32: 7*)
- Who did Jacob wrestle with? (*Jacob wrestled with God, and God blessed him; Gen. 32:28-30*)
- Was Esau still angry with Jacob? (*No, he was happy to see his brother; Gen. 33:4*)
- Who did Jacob trust when he faced a situation he feared? Who can we trust when we are afraid? *Guide kids to see that Jacob prayed to God for help and asked Him to protect his family. Jacob reminded God of His promises and asked Him to be faithful. Tie that to the fact*



that we can pray when we are afraid and ask God to help us be bold for His glory.

- What are ways that God blesses people? *Guide kids to think about more than just material possessions or wealth. Lead kids to see that salvation, given by grace through faith, is the best blessing God gives.*
- God changed Jacob's name to Israel; what are ways we are changed by God when we trust Jesus? *Guide kids to see that we receive new hearts that love God, we receive the Holy Spirit who helps us obey God, and we receive forgiveness for sin so we no longer need to be afraid of God's judgement.*

3. Memory Verse Activity

What You Need: Memory Verse Poster, tennis ball

What You Do:

- Allow volunteers to say the memory verse from memory.
- Praise each kid for his effort, and encourage kids to keep working on memorizing the verse.
- Then invite the kids to sit in a circle and pass a tennis ball around.
- Each time a kid catches the ball, she must say the next word of the memory verse.
- Play until the memory verse has been said at least once, or until each kid has had a chance to catch the ball and toss it to another.

What You Say "Our key memory verse is a wonderful reminder that God always keeps His promises. God promised to be with Jacob and to bring him back to the good land He had promised Abraham. In a similar way, Jesus promised to be with us and to give us eternal life with God. Jesus keeps that promise for everyone who believes in His death and resurrection for salvation.

Pray and Dismiss

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

What You Do:

- Distribute journal pages one to each kid.
- Ask the kids to write about or draw a picture to answer the following questions:
 - What does this story teach me about God or about the gospel?
 - What does this story teach me about myself?
 - Whom can I tell about this story?
- If time remains, take prayer requests or allow kids to complete the Bible story coloring page provided with this session.
- Pray for your group.

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