LESSON 7: WRESTLING WITH AN ANGEL

AIM: To show that when we come to God in true repentance, He is able to change us.

MEMORY VERSE: Commit your way to the Lord ... Psalm 37:5(a)

ACTIVITY: Photocopy the memory verse puzzle below for each child or make a large post for the group. Cross out all the Xs to reveal the verse.

STORY: Genesis 32

After 20 years with Laban in Haran, Jacob was finally going home. Yet he was afraid. To get back to Canaan, Jacob had to pass by the land of his brother Esau. Esau had established his own nation in Edom and was a powerful man now. Jacob remembered the death threat that Esau made so long ago and decided to send some men to Esau to ask him for mercy. But the messenger returned saying, “Esau was coming for battle, and in great fear and distress he called on God to help him. But this did not stop Esau from coming, and Jacob knew that he could not run away this time.

Jacob sent a large gift of goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys to Esau, and then sent all of his family away to safety and waited at the camp alone. During the night a Man sent from God visited Jacob and together they wrestled. But Jacob would not give up and when daylight was breaking, the Man asked Jacob to let him go, but Jacob refused.
WRESTLING WITH AN ANGEL (continued)

“I will not let go of you until you bless me.” The Man asked him, ‘What is your name?’ “Jacob, the trickster,” he answered. It was then that Jacob realized and admitted the kind of man he had been in the past. He was truly sorry deep in his heart for what he had done to Esau.

The Man from God told him that he was no longer to be called “Jacob the trickster” but “Israel” which means “contender with God”. He then blessed Jacob. Jacob’s thigh joint was dislocated from wrestling with the Man from God and from that day on, Jacob walked with a limp. He would never forget his encounter with God.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:
• What was the cause of Jacob’s fears?
• Why couldn’t Jacob run away from his fears?
• Why did God send the angel to Jacob?
• Why was it important that Jacob’s name be changed?
• In what ways had Jacob changed from the person he was in Lesson 4?
• What things cause us to be afraid?
• How can we best deal with our fears?
• In what ways does God want us to change?

GAME: Arm Wrestling Competition
Line up the children from youngest to oldest. Start with the first two children, lying on the floor facing each other. They must both put their right arm forward with elbows resting on the floor at all times. Clasping each other’s hand they must attempt to force the opponent’s hand down on the floor. The left hand must not be used. Continue until there is a winner. Make sure that the children understand the comparison between the winner of the competition and Jacob not giving up with God until he received the blessing of becoming a new person.
JACOB AND ESAU
WRESTLING WITH AN ANGEL

Genesis 32

MEMORY VERSE: Psalm 37:5a, ‘Commit your way to the Lord…’

After 20 years with Laban in Haran, Jacob was finally going home. Yet he was afraid. To go back to Canaan, Jacob had to pass by his brother’s land. Esau had established his own nation in Edom and was a powerful man. Jacob remembered the death threat that Esau made so long ago and so decided to send some men to Esau to ask him for mercy.

The men returned with a message: ‘Esau is coming to meet you with 400 men.’ Jacob immediately thought that Esau was coming for battle, and in great fear and distress, Jacob called on God to help him. This did not stop Esau from coming and Jacob knew that he could not run away this time.

Jacob sent a large gift of goats, sheep, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys to Esau, and then sent all of his family away to safety and waited at the camp alone. During the night, a man sent from God in the form of an angel visited Jacob and they wrestled with each other until daybreak. As Jacob struggled with God, he realized that he had wrestled with people all his life for selfish reasons. As the new day dawned, the angel asked Jacob to let him go, but Jacob refused. “I will not let you go until you bless me”, said Jacob. The angel asked, ‘What is your name?’, Jacob answered, ‘Jacob, the trickster’. It was then that Jacob admitted the kind of man he had been in the past and he was truly sorry deep in his heart for what he had done to Esau.

The angel from God told him that he was no longer to be called ‘Jacob, the trickster’ but ‘Israel’ which means ‘contender with God’. He then blessed Jacob and left. Jacob’s thigh was put out of joint through wrestling with the angel and from that day on, Jacob walked with a limp. He would never forget his meeting with God.

When we truly repent of our sins, God is able to change us.
After _____ years working for his Uncle Laban, Jacob was going home. He was a__________ to face his brother, E_________. Jacob remembered the death threat long ago when he cheated Esau out of his father's b__________. Jacob called on G____ for help. Now Jacob was truly sorry deep in his heart and wanted God to bless him. Jacob sent a large g_______ to his brother, then sent his family away to safety. Jacob waited alone at camp. During the night God sent an a__________ to Jacob. They wrestled until daybreak. Jacob realized he had been wrestling with people all his life for s ___________ reasons. So Jacob's name was changed to I_______. The angel of God blessed Jacob and left. Jacob was left with a limp to remind him of his meeting with G____.
Colour in all the crosses in the box below to reveal the words of the memory verse. Write them on the lines below.

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__ __ __ ___ L __________

P __ __ __ __ __ __ v __________
Decode the numbers below to find out what Jacob had to do in order for God to change him.

14+1, 5-4, 22+3, 22+3, 26-5, 1+5

2+9, 10-9, 3+4, 2+2

5+4, 20-7, 12-1

1+5, 7-6

12-6, 14+6, 16+1

14+10, 4-3, 1+3, 20-4

1+1, 3+2, 15-2, 25-1, 20+5

37:5a