Lesson 11

JACOB FLEES TO LABAN

OBJECTIVES

- 1. To understand the concept of deception.
- 2. To understand that without God's help, you cannot prosper by yourself.
- 3. To learn that God protects His children when they are in danger.

MEMORY VERSE

"Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand."

(Isaiah 41:10)

PRAYER

- 1. Thank God for gathering us here so that we can worship and learn more about His words.
- 2. Lord, please guide and protect us every day, just as You protected Jacob.
- 3. Please help us to be righteous and honest in front of You, Lord.
- 4. May God help us focus on this lesson and apply its teachings to our lives.



- 1. Jacob and Rebekah trick Isaac
- Jacob flees Esau's wrath
- 2. Jacob and Laban
 - Laban tricks Jacob
 - The two make a deal
 - Jacob leaves in secret
- 3. Linking to the Ten Basic Belief One true God
- 4. Life Application
 - Protect Me
 - Two Paths
- 5. Activity—"Does It Please Jesus?"

Background Knowledge for Teachers

Marriage in the Old Testament

Jacob married his uncle Laban's daughters, or his cousins, Leah and Rachel. In the time of the patriarchs, marriage among close relatives was acceptable. There were a few reasons why this practice was preferable:

- To keep a family's accumulated wealth among relatives.
- To maintain the customs and religious beliefs of the family.
- To continue the lineage of a brother if he has passed away.
- Certain areas were often occupied mostly by relatives or close family, making it difficult to find any "outsiders" to marry.
- In other cases, sometimes a family would not wish to have ties to unknown foreigners, who they may not have trusted or who had different customs, even if they were nearby.

Isaac married Rebekah, the granddaughter of his father's brother, because Abraham did not want his son to have a Canaanite wife who worshipped idols. Judah's first son Er died, leaving his wife Tamar without a child. Judah made his second son Onan marry Tamar, in the hope that the first child born to them would take up Tamar's first husband's name, thus preserving the family name and property. Later, however, the laws of Moses prohibited the practice of marriage between a man and his aunt, a father and his daughter, a mother and son, or a brother and his sister (Lev 18:12-13; 20:19; 18:7; Deut 27:22). Marriage to other relatives was also forbidden (Lev 18:14-17; 20:12, 14, 20-21; Deut 27:23). The laws also forbade marriage of two sisters to the same man (Lev 18:18). Aside from marrying close relatives, having more than one wife was acceptable back then, and normal for the very wealthy. Sometimes a man could take concubines. A wife might give her husband a concubine, especially when the wife could not have children. Sarah gave her maid Hagar to Abraham. Rachel gave her servant, Bilhah, and Leah gave Zilpah to Jacob. We also know that kings David and Solomon had many wives and concubines. After the period of the exiles, monogamy, the marriage of one husband and one wife, became the general practice. In most cases, parents chose the husbands or wives for their children. That is why we read in Bible stories how fathers gave their daughters to someone in marriage. Sometimes, the Bible records how some parents took wives for their sons.

Jacob's Ladder

Most scholars interpret Jacob's ladder as a connection between heaven and earth, with God taking the initiative to reach out to man. The perfect "ladder" is Jesus Christ, who was God come to earth to save humanity. Jesus refers to Himself as this ladder in John 1:51: "And He said to him, 'Most assuredly, I say to you, hereafter you shall see heaven open, and the angels of God ascending and descending upon the Son of Man.'" In the NIV translation, the term "stairway" is used instead of ladder. Jacob vowed to give one tenth of his income to God's work. This observance, called tithing, is God's heart in giving back to what God has bestowed on us.

Greeting with a Kiss

It was common for the people of that time to kiss each other when they met a family member or a close friend. It is just like giving a hug to a family member to show our affection. They would kiss the other person's cheek. Usually, only members of the same gender would salute each other with this kind of kiss. However, the Bible records an exception when Jacob greeted his cousin Rachel with a kiss (Gen 29:11). Also, Laban kissed his daughters and grandchildren before their parting (Gen 31:55). Today, traditional South Americans, Arabs, and some Europeans still practice this greeting.

Stolen Idols

Laban seems to have worshipped the same God as Jacob (Gen 31:53), and yet it is mentioned that he owned household idols. This suggests that he may have practiced polytheism. Household idols at the time, though, were not simply for the purpose of worship; only the principal heir was even allowed to be in possession of them. Rachel's thievery was possibly not for the purpose of worship, but maybe for the purpose of retaining Jacob's right as first heir.



Reaching Out to Your Students

Although there are many foreign or difficult aspects to this story (marrying close relatives or having more than one wife, to name a couple), you can use this opportunity to teach your students about linking personal, physical sustenance (food, shelter, clothing) to spiritual growth. The closer their relationship with God, the more His blessings will shower down on them. Although they are still young enough that they depend on their parents' livelihood, they should still understand the concepts of having a job in order to sustain the family, and needing money to fulfill their basic requirements. Encourage your students to consider how God has blessed them in their lives (doing well in school, good friends, certain toys that they really like, even having their favorite foods at home, etc.), to take the time to thank Him for all that He has given them, and to draw closer to Him so that He can bless them even more.



5 Minutes

Do Not Be Afraid

In today's lesson, we will learn about how God protected Jacob in all the things he did. Let's take a look at some other examples in the Bible that show how God protected someone from danger or harm.

Teachers: Ask the students to turn to each of the verses, but just briefly summarize each to save time.

- God sent angels to save Lot and his family on account of Abraham (Gen 19:1-22).
- God parted the Red Sea to save the Israelite people from the Egyptian soldiers (Ex 14:5-25).
- God delivered Daniel's three friends from being burned to death (Dan 3:24-27).
- God sent an angel to shut the mouths of the lions in the den so that Daniel was not harmed (Dan 6:16-22).



deceive: to make someone believe in something that is not true; mislead **scheme:** a plan of action or a plot that is usually secret or crooked



Bible Discovery & Spiritual Teaching

30-35 Minutes

For Teachers

Have the students fill out the Bible Discovery worksheet as you teach the story to them. The answers have been underlined.

Let's do a quick review! Name Isaac's two sons! Esau and Jacob were technically twins, but they were so different. Do you remember who was considered the firstborn, from last week's lesson? (Esau; he came out first.) Did you know that in biblical times, the firstborn child always inherited most of the parents' property and money? It seems kind of unfair, but the firstborn also received a lot more responsibility: as inheritors, they had to bear the burden of increasing their family's property and maintaining their financial support. Some children may have wanted the status of firstborn, while others may have disliked it.

Jacob and Rebekah Trick Isaac

Isaac was now old enough that he couldn't see very well anymore. One day, he called Esau to him and asked him to hunt some of his favorite game for him. He knew that he was old, and wanted to bless Esau before he passed away. Esau obediently left to hunt for his father. Unknown to the two of them, though, Rebekah overheard her husband and decided to take matters into her own hands.

You may be familiar with this part of the story. Rebekah hurried to Jacob and told him to follow her plan. First, they took two baby goats from the flock that they owned and cooked something that Rebekah knew Isaac loved to eat. Then, using the skins of the same goats they had just killed, Rebekah wrapped the <u>goat skin</u> around Jacob's hands and neck. Remember, Esau was very hairy, so if Isaac had simply touched Jacob, he would have immediately discovered the deception. As a further precaution, Rebekah also put one of Esau's <u>garments</u> on Jacob so that he would smell more like him. Let's read what happens next in Genesis 27:18-29.

You may think that Jacob and Rebekah's actions are devious and a little mean, but do you remember a certain prophecy that was spoken to Rebekah when she was pregnant? Let's skip back in time and read it in Genesis 25:23. It says that "the older shall serve the younger"! God had already established Jacob's supremacy over Esau, despite Esau being the firstborn, and Esau or Isaac could not have done anything to change this.

Upon discovering their deception, Esau was naturally incredibly <u>angry</u>. He had not only given his birthright to his brother through his own ignorance, he had now also lost the best blessings from his father through Jacob and Rebekah's deception. So, he secretly plotted to <u>kill</u> Jacob after their father passed away. However, Rebekah heard of the plot and convinced Isaac to <u>send</u> Jacob away to his relatives in <u>Padan Aram</u> so that Esau would be unable to act against his brother.

Jacob Flees to Laban

At the beginning of his journey, possibly the first night, Jacob stopped at a place to rest. With only a stone for a pillow, he went to sleep. But as he slept, Jacob had a strange dream. Let's read about it in Genesis 28:12-19.

Do you know what the meaning of pouring oil on the pillar was? In ancient times, people erected pillars as monuments to commemorate an important event for future generations, such as a victory over a battle, or a location where an oath or pact was made. Jacob poured oil on the pillar in order to make it holy and separated for God. Much later, after his descendants escaped Egypt, the Israelites poured oil on the tabernacle and many of the objects inside it, in order to dedicate the tabernacle to God and to signify its holy purpose.

Jacob Meets Rachel

After many days, Jacob came to a well in a field. A large stone covered the mouth of the well. It was the place where all the shepherds came to water their sheep. As he was talking to some of the shepherds from Haran, Rachel came with her flock of sheep. When Jacob found out that Rachel was his cousin, the daughter of his uncle Laban, he quickly ran over, rolled the large stone away from the mouth of the well and watered his uncle's sheep. He told Rachel that he was her cousin from her father's side. Then Jacob kissed Rachel and wept. He must have been so happy and relieved to finally meet one of his relatives after the long and tiring trip. Laban came to meet his nephew right after Rachel ran home to tell her father about Jacob, embracing and kissing him in greeting. From then on, Jacob lived with his uncle's family.

Laban Tricks Jacob

After Jacob had stayed with Laban for exactly one month, Laban offered Jacob wages in return for his work, rather than simply working for free as family. In response, Jacob did not ask for money or other objects, but for a wife. He wanted to marry <u>Rachel</u>, Laban's second daughter. In Genesis 29:18, 20, it says that Jacob truly loved Rachel. So, Jacob told Laban: "I will work for you <u>seven</u> years in return for your younger daughter Rachel." Laban agreed, saying, "It is better that I give her to you than to some other man."

Jacob Agrees to Work for Seven More Years

As agreed, Jacob went to his uncle to ask that Rachel be given as his wife after seven years of labor. Laban prepared a big wedding feast to celebrate his daughter's wedding. However, that night, instead of sending Rachel, Laban tricked Jacob by sending Leah instead. Because it was dark, Jacob did not know until morning. What a horrible trick! Jacob was very angry and demanded an explanation from Laban. As an excuse, Laban told Jacob that it was not their custom for the younger daughter to get married before the older. So he made another offer: he would also give Rachel as his wife, if Jacob agreed to work another seven years for him. Because Jacob truly loved Rachel, he agreed. So, after the traditional 7-day bridal week, Jacob married Rachel as well, and he worked for Laban for seven more years. With this kind of trickery, Laban got to enjoy more and more wealth because of Jacob's hard work.

You may be wondering, why did Jacob not know who his bride was at the wedding? It was tradition that the husband not see the face of their fiancée until the wedding. The Bible records that Rebekah covered herself with a veil before meeting Isaac (Gen 24:65). Although the bride's veil would usually be removed some time during the wedding, it is possible that Leah's veil was not removed until they went into their tent. In addition, it is likely that it was so dark in their tent that Jacob did not get to see his bride's face clearly until daybreak.

Competition Between Two Wives

After their marriage, Jacob's two wives were very competitive with each other. We can see this in the way they each tried to gain favor with Jacob by giving him more children, even to the extent of giving their maids as surrogate wives to bear more children. This would obviously be an unacceptable action today, but in the Old Testament times, this was a common practice, as wives who could not bear children were often abandoned. This kind of practice protected a barren wife from experiencing mistreatment. The competition between Jacob's two wives led to <u>eleven</u> sons and <u>one</u> daughter being born while Jacob was still working under Laban. Imagine how crowded and busy it must have been with so many children!

Jacob Wants to Return to His Parents

After Joseph was born, Jacob saw that his family was getting too big for them to continue living with his fatherin-law. Perhaps he also remembered God's promise to him, or felt that it was time to return to his parents, and to his brother. He went to Laban to request permission to leave. Laban, however, had enjoyed <u>prosperity</u> since Jacob had begun working for him, because God had <u>blessed</u> Jacob in everything he did. Wanting more wealth, Laban convinced Jacob to stay by making a deal. Let's read what happened in Genesis 30:25-34.

Jacob was very smart. Laban's greed made him desperate enough to offer whatever he wanted, so instead of asking for money, Jacob requested some of Laban's flock to keep for his own, knowing that a flock would reproduce and flourish with proper care, resulting in more wealth than if he had simply asked for money.

After making this deal, Jacob took branches from poplar, almond, and chestnu trees, and made white stripes on the branches by peeling sections of the bark and leaving the white inner wood exposed. Then, he put the branches in all the places where the animals came to drink water. When the sheep and goats with one color came to drink water by the branches, they gave birth to lambs with spots, streaks, or speckles; all these animals became Jacob's possession. In this way, Jacob's flocks increased and he became very wealthy.

Laban saw that whatever Jacob was involved in prospered, so he tricked Jacob into staying longer by first offering Leah instead of Rachel, and then by making a deal that Jacob could not resist. However, it was only through God's work that Jacob was able to accumulate so much wealth of his own. Even with his great intelligence, Jacob still would not have received such blessings if God were not with him. Laban in turn continued in his practice of deceit, and changed their deal whenever he saw that there were more of certain colors among the flock. In fact, Jacob mentions in Genesis 31:7 that Laban changed Jacob's wages not once or twice, but <u>ten</u> times in an attempt to gain more for himself!

Jacob Leaves in Secret

As Jacob became very <u>prosperous</u>, Laban and his sons became <u>unfriendly</u> towards Jacob. It was then that the Lord gave a command to Jacob: "Go back to the <u>land</u> of your <u>fathers</u> and your relatives, and I will be with you." Obediently, Jacob packed up his belongings, got his wives and children ready, and left. However, he did not inform Laban of their departure, probably because he remembered that last time, Laban had done his best in convincing Jacob to stay. Rachel and Leah agreed with Jacob's secrecy because they knew their father had been very deceitful even to his own daughters. "Do whatever God has told you," they answered their husband.

Laban Pursues Jacob

On the third day, when Laban heard that Jacob had <u>fled</u> with all he had, he was upset that Jacob had left without telling him. So, Laban took his relatives and <u>chased</u> after Jacob. Laban was angry with Jacob, and would surely have scolded him, or perhaps even harmed him. However, God told Laban in a dream that he should not say anything good or bad to Jacob. After seven days, Laban finally caught up with Jacob and accused him of leaving secretly, and not only that, but also of stealing from his house! As a result of Laban's accusations, Jacob pointed out the many <u>hardships</u> that he had gone through for Laban's sake. Let's read what he says in Genesis 31:38-42. Laban <u>deceived</u>

Jacob many times. It was only natural that Jacob would mistrust Laban enough to want to flee in secret.

In the end, Jacob set up a <u>pillar</u>, and their relatives took stones and piled them in a heap, naming them Mizpah, which means watchtower. This pillar and pile of stones signified a new <u>agreement</u> between Jacob and Laban. Neither of them would cross this location in order to harm the other. After making this covenant, and eating a ceremonial meal to affirm this pact, Laban rose in the morning, kissed his grandchildren and his daughters and blessed them. They said farewell to each other and went on their separate ways.



Linking to the Ten Basic Beliefs

2-5 Minutes

One True God

God always protects his children when they are in danger. A very important verse to remember is Psalm 18:2 – "The LORD is my rock and my fortress and my deliverer; my God, my strength, in whom I will trust. My shield and the horn of my salvation, my stronghold."

When Jacob was with Laban, no matter what Laban did to Jacob or how much he cheated him, God did not let any <u>harm</u> or <u>loss</u> come to Jacob. Our God is still the same today and still <u>loves</u> and <u>protects</u> us the same way. When we encounter danger or need God's help, He is always there to protect us. This is a great blessing. We just have to believe and trust in Him always.



Check for Understanding

5 Minutes

- 1. How did Rebekah and Jacob deceive Isaac? Jacob wore goat skin on his hands and neck, and also wore a garment that belonged to Esau.
- 2. What did Jacob see in his dream? He saw a ladder reaching up to heaven and angels going up and down on it. At the end of the ladder in heaven, the Lord stood by and said to Jacob that his descendants will be like the dust of the earth.
- 3. Who were Jacob's uncle and his uncle's two daughters? Laban, Leah, and Rachel.
- 4. How did Jacob's uncle trick him? By giving him Leah when Jacob had asked for Rachel as his wife.
- **5.** After Jacob completed his fourteen years of service for his wife Rachel, why did Laban not want Jacob to leave? Because Laban enjoyed the prosperity God had given him because of Jacob.
- 6. The first time when Laban offered Jacob wages for his labor, Jacob requested Rachel's hand in marriage. What did Jacob ask for the second time? All the spotted or speckled sheep and goats and all the dark-colored lambs.
- **7.** How did God bless Jacob while he was working faithfully for his uncle? God multiplied the number of newborn spotted or speckled baby sheep and goats.
- 8. When Laban found out that Jacob had secretly run away with his wives, children, and all that he had, what did Laban do? Laban chased after Jacob but did not rebuke him because God had warned him about what to say to Jacob.

$\left| \hat{V} \right|$ Life Application

10 Minutes

1. Protect Me

Objective: To learn that God protects His children when they are in danger.

Verse	What the verse says about God's protection				
Psalm 18:2	18:2 God is our protector.				
2 Timothy 4:17-18	God strengthens us and rescues us.				
2 Thessalonians 3:3	God protects us from evil.				
1 Corinthians 10:13	God protects us while we are being tempted.				
Psalm 56:9	God protects us from our enemies.				
Psalm 91:3-7	salm 91:3-7 God protects us from danger.				
Psalm 57:1	God protects us until disaster has passed.				
Psalm 121:3-8	God is always protecting us.				
Joshua 1:5	God's protection never leaves.				
Isaiah 41:10	God's protection is supportive/reassuring.				
John 10:28-30	God's protection is powerful.				
Psalm 124:1-5	God's protection is necessary.				

2. Two Paths

Objective: To understand that there is always more than one path to choose, but only one correct one.

Scenario 1

What would you do when you want something really bad, but you can't quite have it yet? Lie? Cheat? Steal? Ask? Wait? Answers may vary.

What does the Bible say about honesty? Read Proverbs 11:3, and write it out.

"The integrity of the upright will guide them, but the perversity of the unfaithful will destroy them."

Scenario 2

What does Exodus 20:15 say about this situation? You should not steal. What about Exodus 20:16? You should not bear false witness.

Melissa *snuck* into her mother's purse and her father's wallet. This is stealing! Stealing is a sin and against one of the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, sneaking is lying with your actions. Lying is a sin and against one of the Ten Commandments. Even lying with your actions is a sin in the eyes of god.

It is always better to be <u>straightforward</u> and <u>honest</u>, without hiding anything in either our actions or our speech. As children of God, we shall honor our parents. When we save up and learn how to control our spending, we are indeed growing <u>wiser</u>!



Activity "Does It Please Jesus?"

10-15 Minutes

Objective: To show your students and help them understand what it means to "reap what you sow."

Read Galatians 6:7 to the students. The verse raises a question about the nature of right and wrong.

Demonstrate this concept by playing a common children's game that teaches children about making the right choices.

This game is similar to "Mother May I?", but instead we'll change the name of the game to "Does It Please Jesus?"

Instructions

- 1. Line up the students along a wall. You will stand at the opposite wall.
- 2. Call out a student's name, and tell them what kind of step and how many steps to take forward.

For example:

"Susan, you may take five giant steps." The student who is addressed must then respond with, "Does it please Jesus?" You then say, "Yes, it does." Then the student is allowed to move as instructed. (You may opt to say "No, it does not." In this case, the student is not allowed to move.)

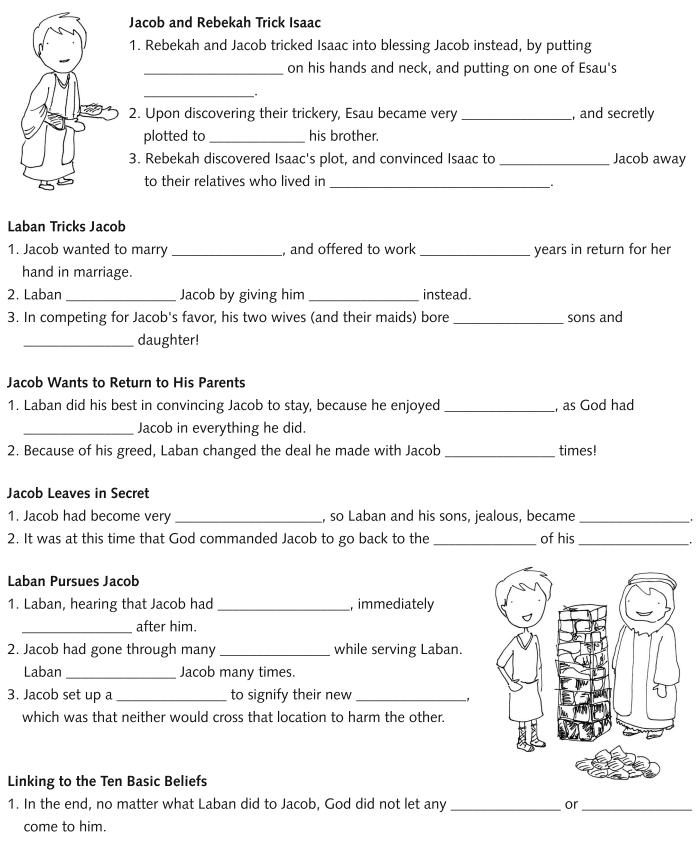
- 3. If a student forgets to ask or begins to fall or tip over because they moved without permission, another student must go to the struggling student and help by giving them a hand or by telling them what they forgot to ask.
- 4. If a student "cheats," which could mean they forgot to ask before moving or they took too many steps, you must say that "cheating" is wrong, but they may continue if they agree not to "cheat" again. They must remain at their original spot. Allow them to step back if needed.
- 5. The first student to get to the opposite wall wins.
- 6. At the end, tell the students that when they "sow" kindness and a helping attitude, they "reap" goodness.

HOMEWORK ANSWER KEY

1. A

- 2. B
- 3. clothes/garments, goat skin
- 4. ladder, angels
- 5. Lord, dust
- 6. Laban, Leah, Rachel
- 7. All the spotted or speckled sheep and goats and all the dark-colored lambs
- 8. God multiplied the number of newborn spotted or speckled baby sheep and goats.
- 9. Laban chased after Jacob but did not rebuke him because God had warned him about what to say to Jacob.
- 10. It teaches us that the one true God always protects His children when they are in danger.

The Lord Protects Jacob



2. God ______ and _____ us in the same way today!

Protect Me

Objective: To learn that God protects His children when they are in danger.

God protected Jacob every part of his way, from Esau's plan to kill him to his time with Laban. Our God is still the same today and will always guide and protect us.

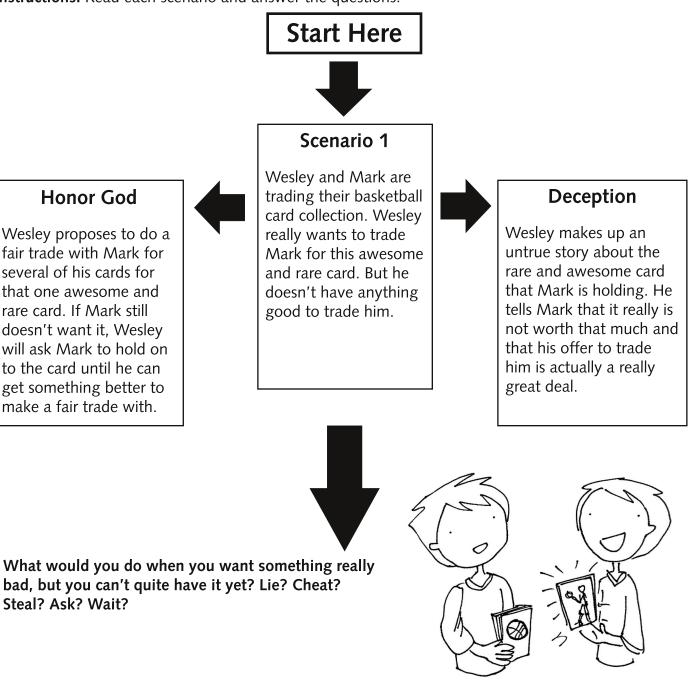
Instructions: Read the verses below and write a brief one-sentence summary.



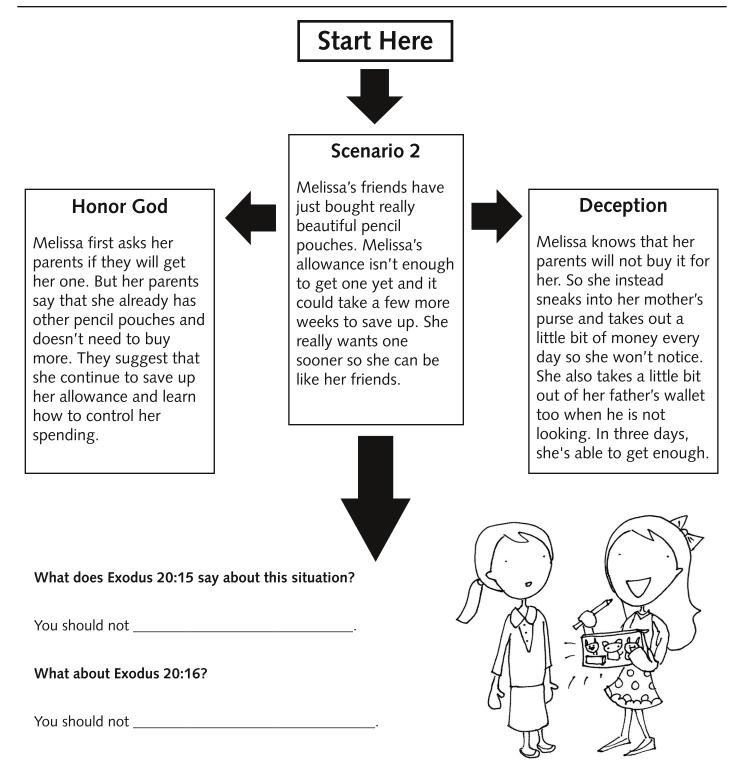
Verse	What the verse says about God's protection
Psalm 18:2	
2 Timothy 4:17-18	
2 Thessalonians 3:3	
1 Corinthians 10:13	
Psalm 56:9	
Psalm 91:3-7	
Psalm 57:1	
Psalm 121:3-8	
Joshua 1:5	
Isaiah 41:10	
John 10:28-30	
Psalm 124:1-5	

Two Paths

Instructions: Read each scenario and answer the questions.



What does the Bible say about honesty? Read Proverbs 11:3, and write it out.



Melissa *snuck* into her mother's purse and her father's wallet. This is stealing! Stealing is a sin and against one of the Ten Commandments. Furthermore, sneaking is lying with your actions. Lying is a sin and against one of the Ten Commandments. Even lying with your actions is a sin in the eyes of god.

It is always better to be ______ and _____, without hiding anything in either our actions or our speech. As children of God, we shall honor our parents. When we save up and learn how to control our spending, we are indeed growing _____!

E2 Year 1 Book 2 Lesson 11—Jacob Flees to Laban Homework Assignment

Name:	Name: Parent signature:						t signa	ature:	Date:
Weekly Bible Reading: Bible Reading: Check each box when you complete that day's reading. Prayer: Check each box after you pray to God that day.						/ou co	mplete	è	What I Learned from the Bible This Week
	Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat		
Read									2
Pray									

Memory Verse

Please write down this week's memory verse. (Isaiah 41:10)

Multiple Choice

- 1. _____ : Isaac blessed Jacob because ____
 - a. He thought it was Esau who had brought him the food.
 - b. He always liked Jacob and wanted to bless him instead of Esau.
 - c. The second son was supposed to get more blessings than the first son.

2. _____: Jacob's uncle tricked him by _____

- a. Giving him half of the money for his work
- b. Giving him Leah when Jacob had asked for Rachel as his wife
- c. Giving him Rachel when Jacob had asked for Leah as his wife

Fill In the Blank

- 3. Jacob deceived Isaac by wearing Esau's ______ and putting ______ on his neck and hands.
- 4. In Jacob's dream, he saw a ______ reaching up to heaven and ______ going up and down on it.
- 5. At the end of the ladder in heaven, the ______ stood by and said to Jacob that his descendants will be like the ______ of the earth.
- 6. Jacob went to live with his uncle, _____, who had two daughters. His first daughter was _____, who had weak eyes, and his second daughter was _____.

Short Answer

- 7. The second time Jacob asked for wages from Laban, what did he ask for?
- 8. How did God bless Jacob while he was working faithfully for his uncle?
- 9. When Laban discovered that Jacob had secretly fled with his wives, children, and all that he had, what did he do?
- 10. What does this lesson teach us about the one true God?