

Jacob's New Name

Genesis 32:1-32

Level C | Lesson 6 | Teacher Overview



Then Jacob was left alone; and a Man wrestled with him until the breaking of day.... And He said, “Let Me go, for the day breaks.” But Jacob said, “I will not let You go unless You bless me....” And He said, “Your name shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel; for you have struggled with God and with men, and have prevailed.”

Genesis 32:24,26,28

For Teachers

This lesson has several activity options. You may wish to choose 2-3. Reading through all of the options will help you identify the activities that are best suited to your group's size, student mix, available supplies, and the time you have to prepare. You may also want to mix and match activities from other age levels.

Activity Options

1. Talk About It
2. Illustration: Jacob Wrestling
3. Explore: What's in a Name?
4. Make: Until the Break of Day Ornaments

Talk About It

Reading: Genesis 32:1-32

Jacob sends a messenger telling Esau that he is coming. The messenger returns reporting that Esau is already on his way and has 400 men with him. Fearing Esau's intentions, Jacob prays and makes plans for protecting his family. He divides this family into two groups, and sends Esau herds of animals as gifts. After sending his family on ahead of him, Jacob spends the night alone. During the night he wrestles with a man—a spiritual being—who touches him, causing him to limp. Jacob will not let Him go, and begs for a blessing. In response, the man gives him a new name: Israel.

1. How does it feel to see someone that you have not seen for a long time? (e.g. aunt, uncle, cousin, grandparent, friend) What kinds of things might you wonder about? (Will you recognize each other? Will it be different than the last time you were together? Will they remember you? Will you still have the same relationship that you used to?)
2. In our story today, Jacob was thinking about seeing his brother Esau. He had not seen Esau for twenty years—not since he had stolen Esau's blessing and then run away to save himself from Esau's anger. What might you be thinking if you were Jacob?
3. What would be the likely implication of Esau coming to meet Jacob with 400 men? How do you think it made him feel? Why?
4. What did Jacob do? (he first divided his family into two groups and then prayed)
5. How can prayer help when we are frightened? (invites the Lord's presence; helps us remember true ideas that can help us, can strengthen us to do our part)
6. What gifts did Jacob send Esau? (groups of animals; sheep, goats, cattle, camels, donkeys and foals)
7. What did Jacob tell his servants to say when they met Esau? ('They are your servant Jacob's. It is a present sent to my lord Esau.' Genesis 32:18) What does this tell you about Jacob's attitude towards Esau?
8. Jacob sent his family on ahead across a stream and was left alone. What happened during the night? (he wrestled with a man)
9. What name did the man give Jacob? (Israel. Israel means "one who perseveres"—Jacob wrestled all night and did not give up!)
10. Have you ever persevered with a hard task and not given up? (e.g. run a long race, given a speech, completed a difficult assignment, etc.) How did you feel when you finished? Would you have felt the same about your accomplishment you had been able to do it easily?
11. Why did Jacob limp? (because the man touched him and his tendon shrank) [Note: translations vary. Some translations refer to a muscle that shrank.]

Explore:

What's in a Name?

At a Glance:

Jacob wrestled with a mysterious spiritual being all night, refusing to stop until he had received a blessing. The blessing he received was the name Israel. Students will explore a variety of cultural traditions associated with naming and explore what it means to receive a new name. Students will choose a name for a fictional hero or heroine based on the spiritual qualities they recognize as important.

Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- *What Determines a Name?* page
- *What's in a Name?* page
- blank paper
- pen or pencil



Directions:

1. Count the number of letters in your first name and find a partner whose first name has the same number of letters as your own. You may use a short version of your name or a nickname (e.g. Nathan (Nate), Katherine (Katie, Kate), etc.).
2. With your partner, discuss the following question: If you could change your name, what would you choose? Allow a few moments for discussion.
3. Gather students as a group. What new names did you choose? Is there a special reason why you chose your new name?
4. Do you know why your parents choose the name they gave you? (special meaning? relative? role model? friend?)
5. Distribute *What Determines a Name?* page to students and ask them to spend a few moments looking at the table on names in various cultures individually.
6. What stood out for you?
7. Read the “Christian Names” and “The Lord’s Name” sections aloud with the group.
8. What does it mean to have the Lord’s name added to your name? Some of our names come from the Lord’s name, for example Christian, Christina, Jesus, etc. Can you think of examples of other names that have –el at the end or Jo- at the beginning? (e.g. Nathaniel, Josiah, Jonah)

Explore: What's in a Name? continued

9. Distribute *What's in a Name?* page. This list provides a sample of names that represent virtues or have special a meaning and come from the Word.
10. Pretend that you are going to write a story about a spiritual hero or heroine. Choose a first name and middle name for your main character that tells others the kinds of qualities that person has. You may choose names from the lists or other names you are familiar with. You can even make up your own unique name, using qualities that give it special meaning. The “Reasons for Naming” section suggests a variety of ways to approach this.
11. Distribute blank paper and pens or pencils.
12. Write the name of your hero or heroine and illustrate the qualities he or she would have and that you could aspire to in your own life.

What Determines a Name?

Each culture has its own naming customs. Here are some examples.

<p>Native American</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names are earned. A person may rename themselves or be renamed several times during their lifetime Names give power and responsibility. Names are so precious that they are only used during ceremonies. There are six classes of names: birth order, honor, special deed, nicknames, secret and spirit names. 	<p>Chinese</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Names always have one or two syllables. No new names can be created. Each name is represented by an existing Chinese character. Names are physical objects (mountain, rain) or concepts (happiness, wisdom). Siblings often have related names e.g. “water” and “river”. Everyone in the same generation of a family has the same middle name.
<p>Jewish</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A name is a statement of character and path in life. Giving a child a positive name means that the name will have a positive effect each time it is used. Naming a child after a relative who has died forms a bond between them. Babies receive their names during naming ceremonies. The Lord’s name is too holy to be spoken. 	<p>Ghanaian</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Most first names reflect the day of the week on which a child is born. Akan, one Ghanaian language, has only 14 names: 7 for each day of the week for boys and 7 for girls. Names reflect birth order in a family. Some names reflect the circumstances of a child’s birth, e.g. in a field, during a war, happy circumstances, after the father has died, premature.

Christian Names

In Christian cultures babies receive a Christian (first) name at birth. In the New Church and other churches it is customary for the minister to state a baby’s name when he or she receives the sign of the cross on the forehead and chest during a baptism service. This act is a sign of the baby’s initiation into the acknowledgement and worship of the Lord (*True Christian Religion* 682).

When we hear a name we think of the qualities of a person who has that name. This is not surprising because saying a name brings the whole person to mind. This is why ‘name’ in the Word means ‘the nature of’ (*Arcana Coelestia* 2009). When we enter the spiritual world after death we will be given a new name. This name will be a unique expression of our qualities of love and faith (*True Christian Religion* 682).

The Lord’s Name

Babies are baptized “into the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, Father, Son and Holy Spirit.” Just as our names embody our qualities, the Lord’s name embodies His qualities—which are everything having to do with religion (*Apocalypse Revealed* 81). We walk in the name of the Lord when we worship Him and follow His commandments. The prophet Isaiah tells us that honorable and faithful people will be given a new name by Jehovah (Isaiah 62:2). The new name stands for the changes a person makes along their path towards life in heaven (*Arcana Coelestia* 2009). This is the reason that Genesis tells us that Jacob was blessed with the name Israel. The –el at the end of Israel means “God”, indicating that the quality Jacob represented had changed and that Lord was now part of that quality.



What's in a Name?



MALE		FEMALE	
Virtue Names		Virtue Names	
Victor	Liberty	Amity	Honor
Clement	Loyal	Charity	Hope
Concord	Ernest	Chastity	Mercy
Constantine	Noble	Faith	Prudence
Justice	Will	Felicity	Purity
Truman	Justin	Grace	Verity
Samples of Names in the Word		Samples of Names in the Word	
Adam—red	Jacob—supplanter	Anna—gracious	Leah—weary
Daniel—God is my judge	John—mercy of the Lord	Bethel—house of God	Miriam—bitter
David—loved	Luke—white	Dinah—judgment	Naomi—beautiful
Ethan—strong	Mark—shining	Eden—delight	Rachel—sheep of God
Ezekiel—strength of God	Matthew—reward	Elizabeth—fullness of God	Sarah—princess, mother of many
Gideon—destroyer	Nathan—gift	Hannah—gracious	Susanna—joy

Reasons for Naming	
Special deed	Physical object
Characteristic	Special meaning
Birth order	Belonging to Family
Day of birth	Concept
After a relative	Hope for future life
Where you come from	Positive effect

Adding the Lord's Quality to a Name
-el—means God, e.g. Beth <u>e</u> l, Isra <u>e</u> l, Nathani <u>e</u> l
-h—spirit or breath of God, e.g. Abram to Abrah <u>a</u> m, Sarai to Sarah <u>a</u>
Jo—indicates Jehovah, e.g. <u>J</u> ohn, <u>J</u> oanna, <u>J</u> onathan
-yah- or -yeh—indicate the presence of Jehovah, e.g. Alliyah <u>y</u>
-sha—saves e.g. Elisha <u>a</u>

Make: Until the Break of Day Ornaments

At a Glance:

Jacob's wrestling from the coming of night until the breaking of dawn pictures the darkness we experience during times of spiritual struggle in our journey along the path to heaven. Just as darkness makes it difficult to see where we are going, lack of spiritual light (truth) obscures the path to heaven. Students will discuss darkness and then use stencils to create a hanging ornament and decorate it with a quote to illustrate the light of truth from the Lord's Word.



Supplies Needed for Each Student:

- *Darkness and Light* quotation page
- Sun Templates (2) printed on heavy paper
- thick paper—watercolor paper or lightweight cardboard will work best
- yellow and orange water-based paint made up in a shallow tray to dip sponges in
- sponge cut into pieces to dab paint
- sharp scissors
- paper clips
- fine felt tip or metallic pens
- *optional*: yellow or orange ribbon and hot glue gun to create a hanger
- *optional*: hairdryer to speed up paint drying time

Teacher Preparation:

- *Optional*: Cut ribbon to good lengths for hanging.
- *Optional*: Heat glue gun.

Directions:

1. Shut your eyes for a moment and experience darkness. What do you notice? What sounds are in the room? How does the air smell? Can you sense anyone close to you?
2. Now without opening your eyes, stand up and walk carefully around the room. What senses can help you “see”?

Make: Until the Break of Day Ornaments continued

3. Open your eyes. Compare your experience of moving through the room with your eyes open with the one with your eyes closed. What was similar? What was different?
4. When there is light, our natural eyes help us see clearly. We can see beauty, ugliness and be aware of dangers around us. As the light becomes dimmer, colors become hard to see and shapes become vague.
5. Our spirit has an inward sight that works in a similar way to our natural sight. We walk in the light of heaven when our spiritual eyes are open to what is true. We have an accurate perspective on the beauty of genuinely loving thoughts and actions and the ugliness of selfishness. When selfishness clouds our thinking instead of true ideas, we focus only on what we want and lose the perspective of the light of heaven.
6. Distribute *Darkness and Light* student pages. Read the paragraphs on darkness with the students.
7. In today's story Jacob wrestled during the darkness of night. This pictures "temptations" that people experience when they follow the path towards heaven. It is only through this process that we see what is false and harmful, reject it and try again.
8. Jacob held on all night until the sun rose. The rising sun pictures the new light that we receive from heaven when we have overcome in temptation.
9. We will be making a hanging ornament in the shape of the sun and decorating it with a quote from the Word about light.
10. Invite students to select a quote on light and one of the sun stencils.
11. Have them cut out the stencil they chose
12. Place the stencil over blank paper and use a paperclip to keep the template from moving.
13. Lightly sponge paint through the template on to the paper.
14. Remove template carefully.
15. Allow the paint to dry. *Optional:* Use hairdryer to speed up drying time.
16. Cut out the painted sun shape using sharp scissors.
17. Using a fine tip or metallic pen, copy the quotation about light on to the sun shape. Consider writing the quote in creative ways e.g. spiral, sun rays, around the edge, etc.
18. *Optional:* Use the pens to decorate the quotation.
19. *Optional:* Fold a piece of ribbon to create a loop. Glue to the back of the ornament using a hot glue gun.

DARKNESS

'Darkness' occurs when false ideas exist in place of truth, and 'thick darkness' when evil desires exist in place of good ones, or what amounts to the same, when hatred exists in place of charity. When hatred exists in place of charity the darkness is so thick that the person is not even aware of its being an evil, let alone of its being so great an evil as to thrust him down in the next life into hell. People who are steeped in hatred find delight and life in it. This delight and life have the effect that a person thinks that hatred is good. Whatever favors a person's pleasure and desire, because it favors his love, he feels as good—so much so that when he is told it is from hell he can hardly believe it. (see *Arcana Coelestia* 1860).

When a person experiences temptation he is besieged by false ideas and evil desires which block the flow of light from the Divine, that is, of truth and good loves; and that person is so to speak in darkness. Darkness in the next life is nothing other than being besieged by false ideas, for these take away the light and so take away from the one undergoing temptation any sense of consolation gained from truths. But when the person comes out of temptation light appears together with the spiritual heat that goes with it, that is, truth together with the good that goes with it. This brings the person cheerfulness after his distress; and that cheerfulness is the morning that follows night in the next life. The reason why good love is perceived then and truth appears is that after temptation truth and good penetrate more deeply within and become firmly rooted. For while a person undergoes temptation he hungers for good and thirsts for truth, and so when he comes out of temptation he takes in good like one hungry for food and receives truth like one thirsting for drink. In addition to this, when the light from the Divine appears false ideas and evil desires are removed; and once they have been removed there is a means of access for truth and good to penetrate more deeply within. These are the reasons why after temptations the good of love appears together with the light from the Lord that goes with it (*Arcana Coelestia* 6829).

Light

And God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light (Genesis 1:3).

And he shall be like the light of the morning when the sun rises, a morning without clouds, like...clear shining after rain (2 Samuel 23:3-5).

The Lord is my light and my salvation (Psalm 27:1).

Oh, send out Your light and Your truth! Let them lead me (Psalm 43:3).

Unto the upright there arises light in the darkness (Psalm 112:4).

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path (Psalm 119:105).

Come and let us walk in the light of the Lord (Isaiah 2:5).

The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light (Isaiah 9:2).

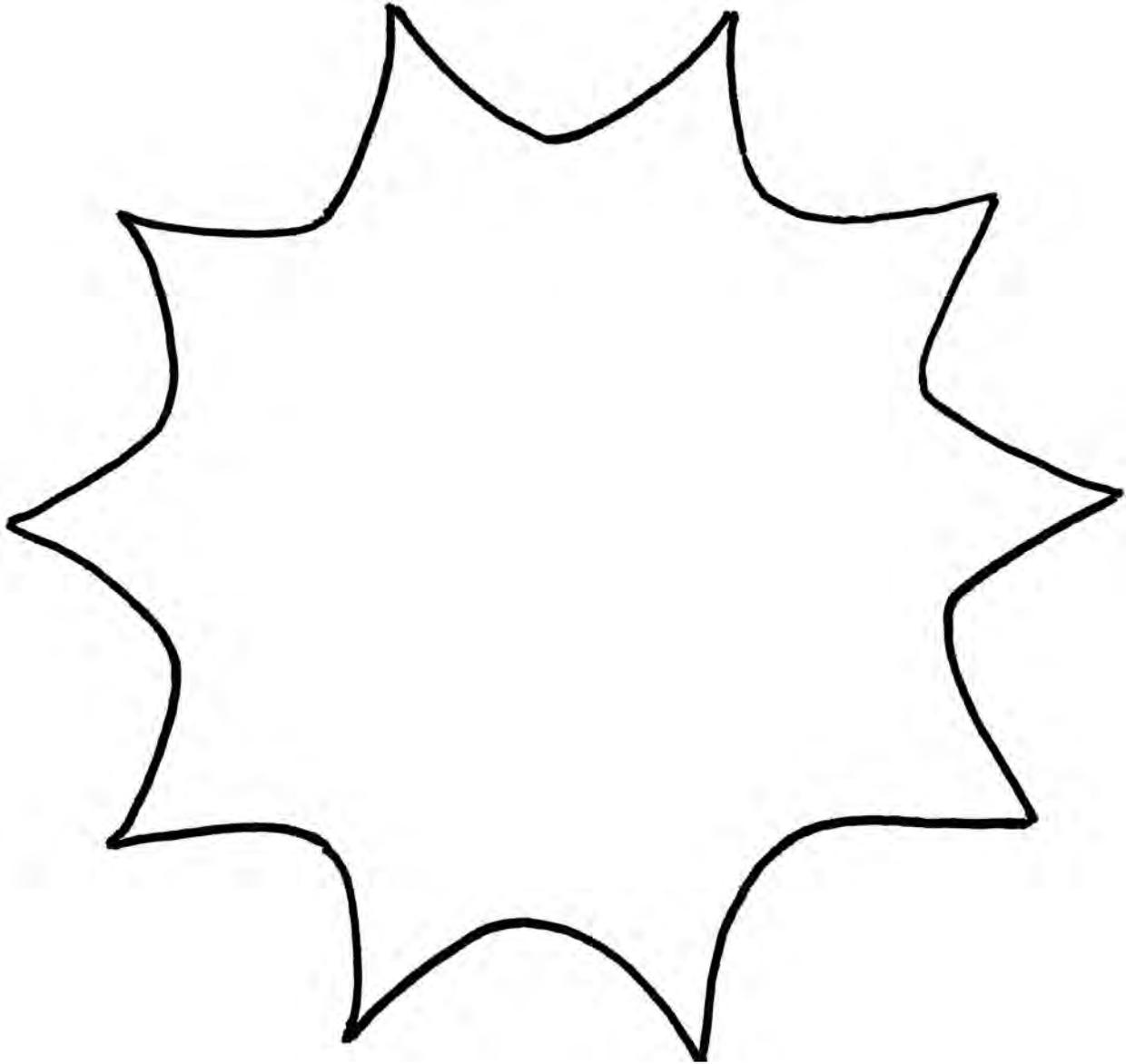
If you extend your soul to the hungry And satisfy the afflicted soul, Then your light shall dawn in the darkness, And your darkness shall be as the noonday (Isaiah 58:10).

Arise, shine; for your light has come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon you (Isaiah 60:1).

Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works and glorify your Father in heaven (Matthew 5:16).



Sun Template



Sun Template

