

Lesson 35: JACOB'S DREAM
Genesis 28: 10-22

INTRODUCTION:

First there was Abraham, whom the Lord had called to travel to Canaan. Then, in their old age, the Lord gave a son to Abraham and his wife, Sarah. Do you remember the son's name? (Isaac.) Isaac and his wife, Rebekah, had twin sons. Do you remember their names? (Esau and Jacob.)

When these twin brothers were grown, Jacob did something that made his brother Esau tremendously angry. Do you remember what it was? (He stole Esau's birthright, by taking advantage of Esau's hunger, and later also stole Esau's blessing, by tricking their father into thinking he was Esau.)

When Jacob did these things to Esau, Esau was so angry that he wanted to kill his brother. So Jacob had to flee for his life.

As Jacob was running away from his home, toward an unknown future, something powerful happened to him. Let's read about it from the book of Genesis.

READING:

Now read aloud or have the children take turns reading verses aloud from **Genesis 28:10-22**.

DISCUSSION:

This was a powerful dream! And did you know that powerful things are always happening when we sleep? Our bodies need sleep, because without it we would physically wear out. But our souls need sleep even more. While we are sleeping, our minds take a rest from all of our daily cares and worries. So while we sleep, the Lord can draw especially close and re-energize our souls.

Jacob was full of cares and worries as he ran away from his home. He knew he had done wrong. His brother wanted to kill him, and he wasn't sure what lay ahead. But during the night, while Jacob slept, the Lord came to him and re-energized his soul.

What was the Lord's message to Jacob in this dream? (1. That He was the same God that had led Jacob's grandfather, Abraham, and his father, Isaac. 2. That He would give the land of Canaan to Jacob and his descendants. 3. That Jacob's descendants would be as many as the dust particles of the earth, and would be blessed. 4. That He would be with Jacob, no matter where Jacob went.)

And what did Jacob see in this dream? (A ladder, set upon the earth, whose top reached to heaven. Angels were going up and down this ladder, and the Lord was above it.)

So the ladder was a link between heaven and earth. And do you know what this ladder represents? What is it that makes a link between heaven and earth? The answer is the Word. Every time we read the Word, our thoughts are being lifted up toward the Lord, like the angels that were going up the ladder in Jacob's dream. And when that happens, the Lord's thoughts come down to meet ours, like the angels that were coming down the ladder. The word "angel" really means "messenger," and the thoughts that happen when we read the Word act as messengers between us and the Lord.

What did Jacob do when he woke up from this incredible dream? (He was amazed by the dream, and he set up a monument of stones and anointed them with oil.) Oil represents holy love from the Lord, and on that night long ago, Jacob had felt the Lord's love for him. He marked the place as a holy place, and called it "Bethel," which means "house of God." Though Jacob had made some bad mistakes, he now made a solemn promise to serve the Lord.

When you are full of worries and cares, unsure of what will happen next, try to remember the story of Jacob's dream, and the message that the Lord gave to him that night. The message is for us, too – that the Lord will be with us wherever we go.

ACTIVITY: String Games, Jacob's Ladder

Ahead of time, teacher should cut lengths of string or yarn, one for each student, and tie the ends of each together so that it forms a circle.

Tips on Tying the String

To tie your string you need a knot that won't slip, so a square knot is best. To make a square knot:

1. Lay the right end of the string across the left.
2. Put this right end under the left string to tie the first part of the knot.
3. Lay the new left end across the new right end.
4. Put this new left end under the new right string and tighten the knot.
5. Trim the ends to make the knot neat.

The teacher should teach himself or herself ahead of time how to do the "Jacob's Ladder" string figure. It's tricky, so it's important that you have it down before teaching the kids!

After the lesson on "Jacob's Dream," tell the students that you'll now teach them how to make a string figure that is called "Jacob's Ladder." Give each child a loop of string, and go through the process as follows:

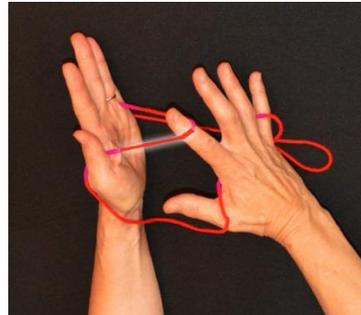
1. Demonstrate the process by doing it yourself as they watch.
2. Group them in pairs, in which one child will follow your step-by-step instructions while the other can help get strings on or off his/her fingers, if needed.
3. Have the second child in the pair now have a turn to try, with the first child helping.

Jacob's Ladder Instructions

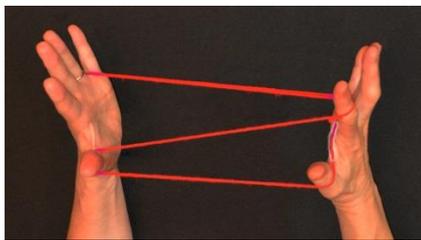
Highlighted strings mean "You will be picking up this string next."



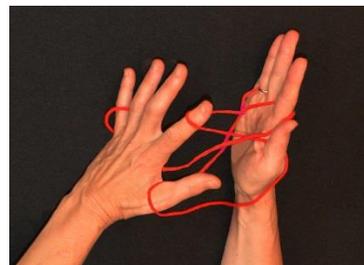
1. Loop the string behind your thumbs and little fingers and in front of your palms.



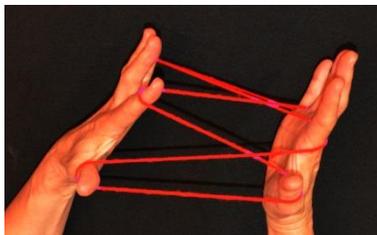
2. Reach the first finger of your right hand across and hook it under the string that is in front of your left palm.



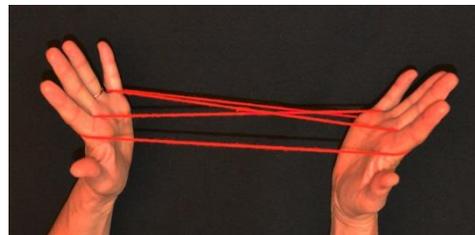
3. Pull your hands apart so the string is stretched tight.



4. Do the same thing with your other hand. Reach across with your left finger and hook it under the string in front of your right palm.



5. Pull your hands away from each other so the string is held tight.



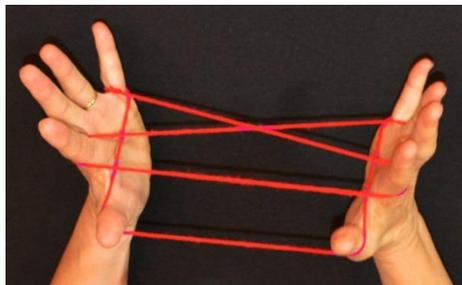
6. Drop the loops that are around your thumbs.

Jacob's Ladder Instructions, continued

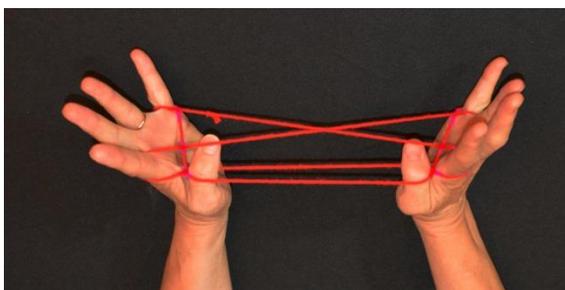
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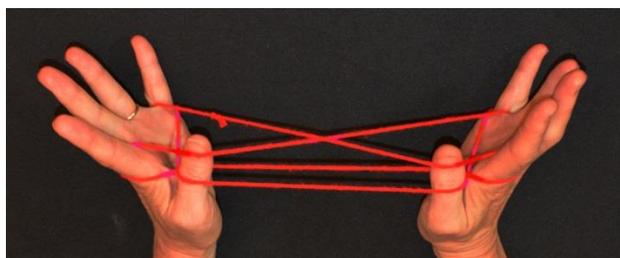
7. Reach your thumbs back under all of the strings and use them to hook the farthest-away string from the outside.



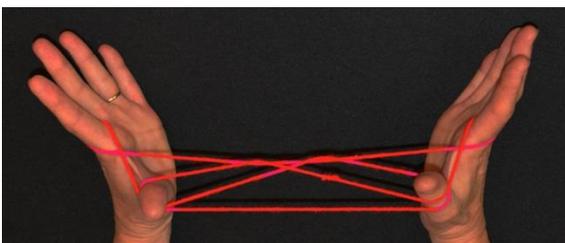
8. Pull the string back under all other strings and spread your hands apart.



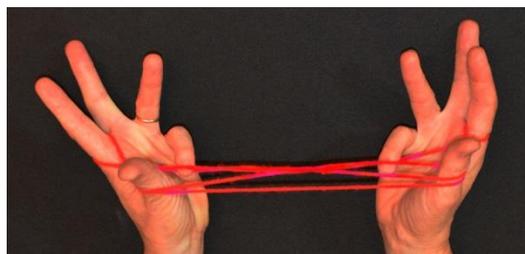
9. While carefully keeping the loop around your thumbs, stretch your thumbs over the second string and hook them under the third string.



10. Pull the third string back. You should now have two loops on each thumb.



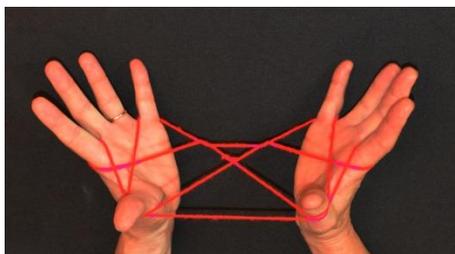
11. Drop the loops that are around your little fingers.



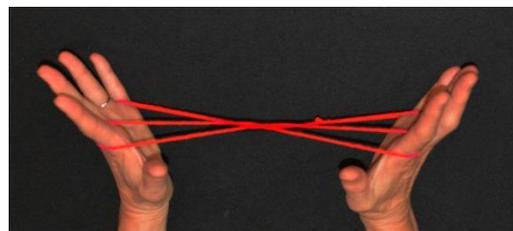
12. Now stretch your little fingers over the string closest to them and hook them under the next string (see highlighted area). Use this picture to carefully identify the correct string.

Jacob's Ladder Instructions, continued

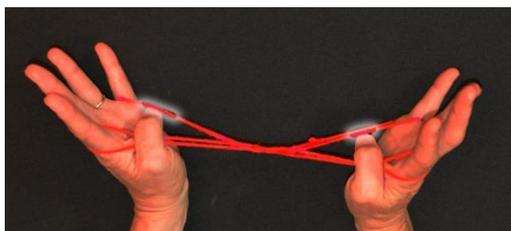
Highlighted strings mean "You will be picking up this string next."



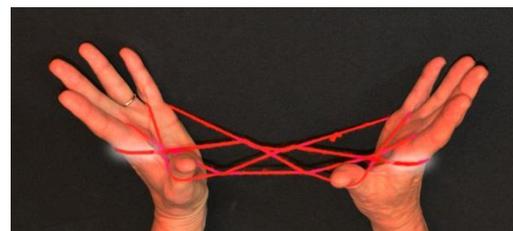
13. Pull your little fingers back into place with this string.



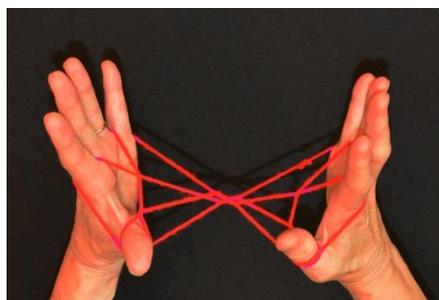
14. Now drop all the loops from your thumbs.



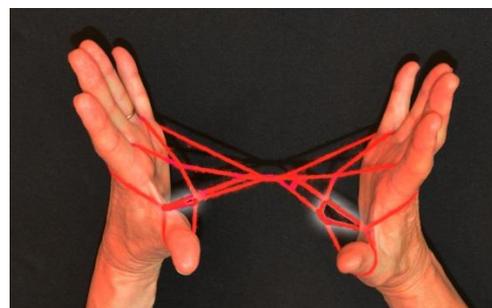
15. Reach your thumbs across the first two strings. Hook them upwards, under the third string away from you. Pull the strings back toward you.



16. Look at the sections of string that are highlighted. Pull each section out and hook it around your thumb so that the strings go around both your first finger and your thumb. Take care not to drop other loops while you are doing this.



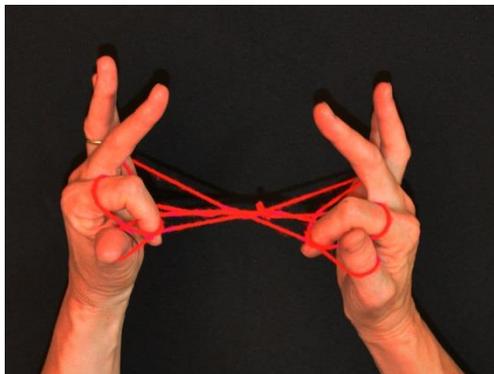
17. You will now have two loops around each thumb. Pull the bottom loop up, over the top loop, and off your thumb.



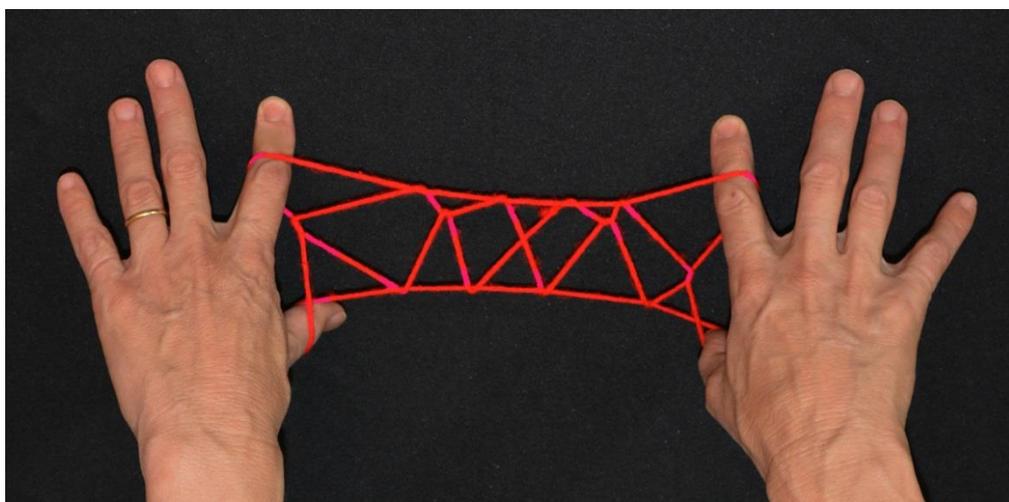
18. Spread your fingers out. Look for the two triangles that are highlighted.

Jacob's Ladder Instructions, continued

Highlighted strings mean "You will be picking up this string next."



19. Poke your first fingers straight down into these triangles without dropping any loops.



20. Turn your palms away from yourself and at the same time drop the loops that are around your little fingers. Spread your fingers apart. Congratulations!! You have just made Jacob's Ladder! This last step is tricky. It can take many tries to get it right.