

THEME FOR UNIT 10: God Loves Us
UNIT BIBLE MEMORY VERSE: 1 John 4:8

1

GOD WATCHES OVER JACOB

BIBLE BASIS

Jacob dreams of a stairway reaching to God (Genesis 28:10-22).

BIBLE TRUTH

God is always with us.

BIBLE MEMORY VERSE

God is love. 1 John 4:8

LESSON AIM

That your students will know that God is watching over them wherever they are.

1

LIFE NEED (3-5 MINUTES)

- Take a pretend trip



Materials: Masking tape; *Optional*—suitcase or duffel bag

2

BIBLE LEARNING (10-15 MINUTES)

- Teach with pictures the story of Jacob's dream about God
- Review the story with an activity

Materials: Bible, "God Watches Over Jacob" Teaching Aid 2

3

BIBLE APPLICATION (10 MINUTES)

- Teach the Bible memory verse with a poem
- Color a picture of Jacob and angels

Materials: *Preschool Make-It/Take-It* for Lesson 1, crayons

4

LIFE RESPONSE (10 MINUTES)

- Read a story about a child learning that God is watching over her
- Children remember that God is always with them, and thank Him



Materials: *My Sunday Pictures* Lesson 1 Family Card A, *Preschool Make-It/Take-It* page, crayons



This symbol means extra preparation or supplies are needed.



Understanding the Bible

John 1:51 is based upon the story of Jacob's ladder in Genesis.

Jacob in the Old Testament had been a trickster. By deceiving his father, Isaac, Jacob obtained the blessing that was due Esau, his older twin brother. Seeing Esau's anger, their mother, Rebekah, persuaded Isaac to send Jacob to Haran to find a wife.

Haran was some 450 miles north of Jacob's home in Beersheba, a ways to travel in Bible times. Beersheba in Genesis 28:10 is usually thought of as the southernmost point of Israel. For later Israelites, north to south was said to be "from Dan [in the north] to Beersheba [in the south]" (1 Kings 4:25).

Much of the journey was through dangerous land. However, his father had prophesied that the "blessing given to Abraham" would belong to Jacob if he walked in the ways of the Lord (Gen. 28:4).

One night when Jacob was some 50 miles from home, he was sleeping outdoors and began to dream.

Jacob dreamed about angels of God moving on a stairway reaching to heaven. In the dream, God promised to watch over Jacob and give him the land he was lying on. God also promised to give Jacob many descendants, and He renewed the promise made to Abraham and Isaac that one day all nations would be blessed through their families (Gen. 26:1-5; 28:14).

When Jacob awoke, he was so moved by God's communication with him and the evidence of God's presence that he put up a stone pillar to mark the spot as holy and named the place Bethel, meaning "house of God" (Gen. 28:18-19). The stone was a permanent reminder of Jacob's personal commitment of his life, as well as a promise to give God a tenth of his possessions.

Years later, Jacob and his family settled in this same area, where he wanted to "build an altar to God, who answered me in the day of my distress and who has been with me wherever I have gone" (Gen. 35:3).

Nathanael, in the New Testament, was told by Jesus that he would see "the angels ascending and descending on the Son of Man [or Jesus Himself]" (John 1:51). In other words, just as Jacob's ladder extended up to heaven, so Jesus is our way up to heaven. One hymn says, "So seems my Savior's cross to me a ladder up to heaven." Jesus is the ladder or "one mediator [or go-between] between God and mankind" (1 Tim. 2:5).

Understanding Your Students

Remember that the old song "We are climbing Jacob's ladder" is based upon this Scripture. In this lesson, Jacob, afraid and far from home, dreams about God. Many of your preschoolers may experience some of the same feelings that Jacob had.

Children visiting your class may be fearful of new people and places and afraid to join in group activities. In other instances, family members must leave home as they are victims of divorce, incarceration, death in the family, or relocation.

This is an age at which you have a God-given opportunity to build children up in faith by helping them learn to trust.

CLASSROOM TIPS

Here are ways you can help your preschoolers feel at ease with classmates. Visitors will especially appreciate your concern.

- Call all the children in your class by name, and express happiness that each child is present.
- Gently encourage new students to participate in activities, but don't force them.
- So that your children know it is okay to be afraid, mention times when you have felt fearful. Teach a Bible verse that you say when you are afraid or uncomfortable in a new situation.

WORSHIP ACTIVITIES

- Play the instrumental or song track of "God Loves Me" from the DiskIt CD in your Creative Teaching Aids packet while students gather for worship. Singer Scat Springs leads a children's choir in singing this mellow song about God watching over us and loving us. This music will capture the children's attention, prepare their hearts to receive today's lesson on God's care, and help them feel that the lesson you will teach them is important.
- Have a child helper collect offerings. Then thank God for the Sunday school offering the children gave.
- Pray with your students. Have them bow their heads and close their eyes. **Lord, thank You for watching over us each day. We love You. In Jesus' name. Amen.**



BEFORE CLASS

Give each child a personal greeting as they arrive. **Today we will learn about how God is always with us.** Write the children's names on the Summer Attendance Chart (Teaching Aid 1) found in your Creative Teaching Aids packet.

Put the chart on a wall at the children's height. Ask each child to put a sticker or color a square in the appropriate spot.



Summer Attendance Chart

A simple basket can be used for an offering. Explain that we share God's love when we give our offering money to help others in His name. Then lead children to the first activity of the day.

GETTING STARTED

The following activities will prepare the children for the lesson that God is always with us.



Bulletin Board: Use the pattern on page 3 of

Preschool Make-It/Take-It to help your class remember that God has promised to watch over them everywhere they go. This will help prepare them for the Bible story when God promised to be with Jacob. Let your children color the footprints. See page 3 for bulletin board ideas.



Moving and Doing:

Line up chairs to make an airplane. Have the children pretend to take a trip on an airplane. This pretend trip will help the children relate to Jacob's trip in today's Bible story. **We can go to places that are far away. God is with us wherever we go.**

1

Life Need

5 minutes

Objective: That your students will pretend to take a trip and talk about trips they have taken.

This activity will prepare your students for the Bible story about how God watched over Jacob.

If you are not using the optional suitcase or duffel bag, make a rectangle out of masking tape in the middle of your circle area. The rectangle should be the size of an average suitcase. If you are using the suitcase, place it in the middle of the circle.

Once the children are seated in a circle and ready to listen, introduce the imaginative activity of packing a suitcase. Pretending to pack and talking about trips helps the children understand today's Bible story about Jacob's trip and dream.

Today we're going to play a game where we need to pretend. Let's pretend that we are going to take a trip. Point to the rectangle. **This is our pretend suitcase. We need to pack our suitcase so that we have what we need for our trip. What do we need to put in our suitcase?** (Children may talk about a variety of items. Encourage them to talk about practical items such as clothes, toothbrushes, and combs. Some children may also want to pack books and toys.)

Now let's pretend to pack all those things. I'm going to pack _____. Act out putting your object in the rectangle or suitcase. **What else do you think we need to put in our suitcase so we can take a trip?** Give each child an opportunity to name something he or she would like to take on a trip and act out putting it in the suitcase.

Pretend to close the suitcase. If you are using a real suitcase, close it at this time. **We packed many things for taking a trip. Let's talk about trips we've taken.**

Where have you gone on a trip? (This question allows for a wide variety of answers. A trip to a preschooler could be anywhere. They may talk about going to a park, a playground, church, a store, a friend's house, Grandma's house, or a trip on a plane.)

Who went with you on your trip? (Most preschoolers travel with their families. Encourage all the children to tell one person they have traveled with. Keep in mind that some preschoolers may talk about imaginary trips they have taken with a favorite stuffed animal or a television character.)

Different people are with us when we go places. Today we are going to learn that God is always with us, when we take a trip and when we are at home. In our Bible story, a man named Jacob takes a trip. Listen for what God tells Jacob on his trip.

2

Bible Learning

10 minutes

Objective: That your students will learn what God told Jacob in his dream.

Assemble "God Watches Over Jacob" Teaching Aid 2. Fold the poster on the broken line to show Picture 1 of Jacob walking. Have the die-cut strip ready to insert in Picture 2 when indicated in the Bible story. Open your Bible to Genesis 28 to begin.

Bible Story

Today's story comes from the Bible. It comes from the book of the Bible called Genesis. (Show the children where Genesis is in your Bible. Keep your Bible open to Genesis as you tell the story.)

The Bible tells us about a man named Jacob. This is Jacob. (Show Picture 1 of Teaching Aid 2. Point to Jacob.) **Walk, walk, walk.** (Pat your knees.)

Jacob was on a long trip. He was all alone. He had to walk many, many miles. (Have the children pat their knees.) **Some parts of the land were scary. He had to walk over rocks and climb hills.** (Have the children move their arms up and down as if they are climbing.) **He had to walk through bushes. Crunch, crunch, crunch.** (Pretend to walk.) **Once in a while he had to cross a river. Splash, splash, splash.** (Pretend to swim.) **Sometimes Jacob was afraid.**

One night Jacob was very tired. (Yawn and stretch.) **He stopped near a town named Luz to rest. But Jacob didn't stay at a motel or a house. Instead, he found a stone lying on the ground. He used that stone for a pillow and lay down on the ground. His coat was his blanket.** (Show



"God Watches Over Jacob"
Teaching Aid 2
(front & back)



Picture 2.) In Bible times, people were used to sleeping on the ground and using stones as pillows. Jacob fell asleep. (Tilt your head and close your eyes for a brief moment.)

While he was sleeping, Jacob had a dream. In his dream, there was a stairway reaching from the ground all the way up to heaven. The angels of God were going up and coming down the stairway. (Place the strip through slits A and B so that the angels show. Pull the strip up and down.) **God was standing at the top of the stairway.**

In the dream God said, "I am the Lord. I am the God of your grandfather Abraham. I am the God of your father Isaac. I will give you and your children the land where you are sleeping. Your children will have many children. I am always with you. I will watch over you wherever you go. I will bring you back to this land."

When Jacob woke up from his dream, he remembered what God had told him. Jacob said, "God is here! How great this place is!"

Jacob picked up the stone he had used as a pillow and put it in a special place. Then he poured oil over it. (Pretend to pour.) **This was Jacob's way of telling God that he would remember what God told him.**

(Show Picture 1.) Jacob continued his trip. God watched over him and kept him safe. Jacob knew God was always with him. God is always with us, too.

Bible Story Review

This activity reviews today's Bible story by having the children act out the Bible story. If your church has a staircase, you may want to use it for this activity.

The children may enjoy dressing in Bible-time clothes. A blanket could be the stone pillow.

Choose a child to be Jacob. The rest can be angels. Pause after each idea for children to act.

- Show me Jacob going to sleep.
- What did the angels do?
- Hear what God said.
- Show what Jacob did in the morning.

Bible Application

10 minutes

Objective: Students will learn that God is always with them.

Bible Memory Verse

This month's action rhyme helps in practicing the Bible memory verse, "God is love." You may wish to say the words and act out the movements for the children and let them repeat each line as you pause. If you can, go through the rhyme more than once. The children will probably imitate your words and actions. Some younger children may simply watch.

God is watching when I jump.

(Jump.)

He listens when I pray.

(Fold hands as if praying.)

God is love; I know it's true.

(Hug self; open arms wide.)

He's with us every day.

(Join hands.)

There are some special words in our rhyme that come from the Bible. They say that "God is love." Let's say this Bible verse together: "God is love" 1 John 4:8.

Our new Bible verse tells us that God loves us. God is always with us because He loves us.

Handcraft

Let's make a little booklet to help us remember the Bible story about Jacob.

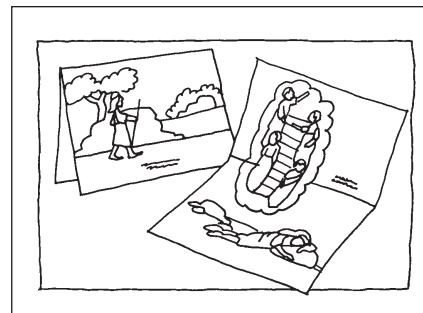
Before class, remove the Lesson 1 project from Make-It/Take-It. You may want to fold each project on the broken line to make a booklet. Then unfold it, so your students can follow the crease later.

Give one project to each child during class. Let your group color the outside and inside pictures. **The front page shows Jacob walking. Remember how the Bible tells us that he went on a long trip?**

Show how to fold the sheet back on the broken line to make a booklet. Then open the booklet. **What happened after Jacob walked a long, long way?** (He grew tired and needed to rest.) **Jacob is sleeping and dreaming in this picture. Who did Jacob see in his dream?** (Angels.)

Who loved Jacob and promised to be with him as he traveled? (God.) **God loves you very much. He promises to be with you and watch over you.**

Jacob knew God was always with him. God is always with us, too.



Make-It/Take-It for Lesson 1



4

Life Response

10 minutes

Objective: That your students will remember that God is always with them, and thank Him.

Read aloud to your students “Grandpa and Kiara’s Walk” from *My Sunday Pictures* Lesson 1, back.

Present-Day Story

Kiara went to visit Grandma and Grandpa Elam. She loved to visit her grandparents. Grandpa said, “Let’s go for a walk, Kiara.” They walked down the stairs of Grandpa’s house and began to walk in the neighborhood. Grandpa held Kiara’s hand.

“Grandpa! Look at the squirrels.” Kiara said.

“Yes, they are playing on the oak tree. It is very old. I used to climb that tree when I was little like you,” he smiled.

“I swing in that tree on the tire swing, Grandpa. I try to climb the tree, too, but it’s hard.” Kiara said.

“God has watched over me my whole life, from the time I was a little boy until now,” Grandpa said.

Kiara asked Grandpa, “Is God watching over me too?”

“Yes, He is. God is always with us,” Grandpa said. “Let’s pray and thank God for always being with us,” Grandpa said.

Grandpa Elam and Kiara stood in front of the oak tree, bowed their heads, and prayed.

Closing Activities

Kiara learned that God watched over Grandpa Elam all his life. She learned that God watches over her, and He is always with her.

Show children the Bible picture story on *My Sunday Pictures*. In our Bible story today, we learned that God told Jacob something special in a dream. What did God tell Jacob? (God would always be with him.) Wherever Jacob went, God was always with him. Who is always with us



My Sunday Pictures
Lesson 1 (back)

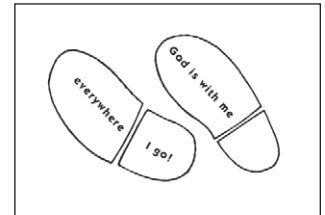


My Sunday Pictures
Lesson 1 (front)

wherever we go? (God.)

If your children colored the footprint patterns from page 3 of Make-It/Take-It during Getting Started, take those out now. Otherwise be sure each child has a set of footprints. Read the words on the footprints.

These footprints can help us remember that God is always with us—just like He was with Jacob.



Make-It/Take-It for Lesson 1

Where could you put these footprints to help you remember that God is always with us? (Children may say a bedroom, on the refrigerator door, in the car, and so on.)

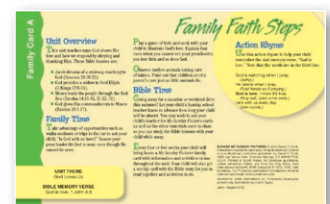
Give each child time to color, if needed. **Think of a place you could put your footprints to help you remember that God is always with us.**

When the children are done coloring, gather them together in a circle on the floor or on chairs. Let each child share where he or she will put the footprints. You may want to go first to model the sharing time for the children. **I am going to put my footprints (name where you have chosen) to help me remember that God is always with us.**

Close with a prayer. **Dear God, You were with Jacob on his trip. And You are with us wherever we go. Thank You for watching over us and always being with us. In Jesus’ name. Amen.**

Be sure children have their Make-It/Take-It projects and *My Sunday Pictures* Lesson 1 card. You will also send home the *My Sunday Pictures* Family Card A. Explain to parents that the Family Card gives them information on what their child will be studying in Sunday school, the action rhyme they are learning in class to help them memorize the verse, as well as ideas for activities to do with their child.

Say a personal goodbye to each student. **Remember that God is always with you.**



My Sunday Pictures
Family Card A