

## GOD CALLED OUR FATHERS

## UNIT TWO: Isaac, Jacob, Joseph

**Lesson 2:****Jacob and the House of God**

## CONTENT:

1. Isaac and Rebekah had twin sons, Esau and Jacob. Esau was a hunter and Jacob was a quiet man. When Isaac was old he became blind. He wanted to give his blessing to Esau, but Rebekah tricked him by dressing Jacob like his brother. Jacob received the special blessing from his father. Esau was so angry that Jacob had to run away from home.
2. That night, Jacob had a dream out in the countryside. He dreamed that there was a stairway going up to heaven from that very place. Angels were walking up and down it. God appeared to him and blessed him. When he awoke he named that place 'Bethel' which means 'House of God'. He worshipped God there.
3. A church is a 'house of God' because at Mass the host becomes Jesus. This consecrated host is kept in the tabernacle. A lamp is always lit showing that Jesus is present. The altar is the table where the bread changes into Jesus. It takes the place of the cross, where Jesus offered himself.
4. At every Mass angels and saints come down and worship God with us. Although we can't see Jesus we know he is present in the church. We must remember that he is there and pray to him, love him and bow down to him.



REFERENCES: Genesis 25:19-28; chapters 27 & 28. CCC 1090, 1137-1139; 1180-1184.

MATERIALS NEEDED: Handouts.

CLASS PROJECT (OPTIONAL): Make a large model of a church and stick angels and people bowing to Jesus. Each child could stick one angel and a cut-out of himself/herself.

**I. STARTER:**

- Hands up those who have a sister or brother! [*Show of hands*] Do you sometimes get angry with each other, or jealous of each other? What do you fight about? [*Allow children to share.*]
- Most brothers and sisters 'fight' sometimes, though they really love each other! Today I'll tell you about two brothers who were jealous and had a big fight.

**II. DEVELOPMENT:****[Story of Esau and Jacob]**

Isaac and Rebekah had two sons, Esau and Jacob. They were twins, but they were very different. Esau was big, strong and hairy. He liked to hunt and kill animals. But Jacob was quiet and mostly liked to stay indoors. Isaac liked Esau better, but Rebekah liked Jacob.

When Isaac was old, he became blind. One day he called his son Esau and said, "I may die at any time, because I'm very old. Go hunt and kill a deer and cook it for me. Then I will give you my special blessing."

Rebekah heard this and she felt bad. She wanted Jacob to get the special blessing. So she tricked her husband. While Esau was out hunting, she got two young goats from the flock and cooked a tasty mutton dish. She dressed Jacob in Esau's clothes and put the skin of the goats on his neck and hands. Then she sent him in to his father with the food, pretending to be Esau.

Isaac enjoyed the food and then called his son near for the blessing. He said to himself, "The voice sounds like Jacob, but he feels like Esau and smells like Esau!" So he gave his special blessing to Jacob.

When Esau came home and found out what had happened he was very very angry. He was about to kill his brother, but Rebekah heard about it and ran and told Jacob, “Go away quickly, or your brother will kill you!” So Jacob had to run away from home.

Jacob travelled all day, and by night he was very tired and sad. He put a stone under his head and went to sleep out in the open. That night he had a very real dream which he never forgot. He dreamed that a stairway appeared from that very place and went up and up, right into heaven. As he looked at the long, long stairway, angels appeared on the stairs; some were going up and some were coming down.

Suddenly Jacob realised that there was someone standing next to him. A voice said, “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac! I will bless you and give this land to you and your children. I will bless the people in the whole world through you! Remember that I am with you and will never leave you!”

Then Jacob woke up. He opened his eyes and looked all around. He couldn't see the stairway, or the angels or God, but he knew they were there. He said, “How wonderful this place is! God is here and I didn't even know it! I will call this place ‘Bethel’ because it is the house of God.”

Jacob took the stone which he had used as a pillow and poured oil on it and prayed to God.

[Give out handouts and read the top half of the page. The children colour the picture of Jacob's dream.]

#### NEXT CLASS:

- Do any of you remember what you dreamed last night? [Allow one or two children to share] Mostly we forget our dreams, but sometimes God sends a very real and special dream to show us something. Can you remember the dream Jacob had when he had run away from home? What did he dream? [That a stairway appeared from that place, going up to heaven. There were angels going up and down. God appeared and blessed him.]
- What did Jacob say when he woke up? [“God is here and I didn't even know it! I will call this place Bethel.”]
- What does Bethel mean? [House of God.]
- Do you know any place where God is specially present? [God is present in a church.]
- God is everywhere. So why do we say that he is specially present in a church? [Because at Mass the host becomes Jesus.]
- This special host is kept in a beautiful box called a tabernacle. [Draw a tabernacle and write TABERNACLE on the blackboard.] The table right in the centre of the church where Father prays is called the altar. This is where the bread becomes Jesus. [Draw and write ALTAR on the board.] [Read the rest of the handout. The children fill in the church outline with their pictures as instructed.]

#### III. REFLECTION & PRAYER:

[If possible take the children to a chapel/church. Explain to them the relevance of the sanctuary lamp and the altar as follows:]

- The tabernacle is made so beautiful because Jesus himself is here. This lamp is always burning to show that God is present. Though we can't see them, there are angels and saints all around bowing down to him. Let us also bow to Jesus.
- In the olden days people used to offer animals to God on an altar. (Remember Noah and Abraham?) Jesus offered himself on the cross. So the altar stands for the cross. When Father prays at Mass, the bread and wine become Jesus and we offer Jesus to God the Father.

[Allow the children to pray silently before the tabernacle for a few minutes.]

**Home assignment:** Read the handout.