The Birthright Stew

WE CAN HAVE CONFIDENCE IN GOD TO LEAD US.



MEMORY VERSE

"In the fear [respect] of the Lord there is strong confidence" (Proverbs 14:26).

Word of the Week—Confidence:

Trust that someone will act in the best possible way or that an outcome will be good. Think about who has confidence in whom in this Bible story.

This week's lesson is based on Genesis 24; 25:19-34 and *Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 171-179.
Extra Reading: *The Bible Story*, vol. 1, pp. 177-190; *The Bible Story,* vol. 2, pp. 9-12.

SUNDAY

Baby Isaac Grows Up

The promised baby, whom Abraham and Sarah prayed and waited for, for so many years, didn't stay a cuddly baby for long. Isaac grew up to be a kind and gentle boy who loved to worship God with Father Abraham. He was like a warm ray of sunshine to his parents.

Father Abraham shared with Isaac the beautiful story of his miracle birth and how God had a very special purpose for his life. Remember God's promise to Abraham when He showed him the twinkling stars? He told Abraham, "Look at the sky. There are so many stars you cannot count them. And your descendants will be too many to count" (Genesis 15:5, ICB). God had promised Abraham again and again that he would be the "father of many nations" (Genesis 17:4). From this family God planned to bless the world with Jesus! God had fulfilled His promise and given him Isaac. Now the promise would be for Isaac and his family to come.

Isaac must have thought about this wonderful promise many times as he grew into a teenager and then a young man. Abraham also taught Isaac that he could be close friends with God, just as Abraham was. He could have confidence in God to help him make choices and to lead him.

What does God say children will have when they are taught about Him? **Read Isaiah 54:13.** God wants to teach you, just as Father Abraham taught Isaac. He promises to give you peace as you learn to trust Him.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *How well do you trust God as a friend who will always be with you? Why can you trust Him?*

Pray: Thank God that He is a friend you can have confidence in.



☐ MONDAY

Isaac's Beautiful Bride

As Isaac grew into a young man, Father Abraham grew very, very old. Abraham had trusted God, and He had "blessed Abraham in all things" (Genesis 24:1). Now Abraham wanted Isaac to start his own family. Old and frail, Father Abraham called his faithful servant Eliezer to him. What did Abraham ask him to do? *Read Genesis 24:4-9.*

This may have seemed like a strange request, but Abraham trusted God to find the right woman. Isaac trusted his father's wisdom. And they all had confidence that God would lead. So Eliezer loaded 10 camels with expensive gifts and supplies and set out on the long journey.

Bouncing along on a plodding camel, Eliezer prayed. Stopping by the village well, he prayed again. This time he prayed for a sign—that the woman God had chosen to be Isaac's wife would kindly give him and his camels a drink.

And that is exactly what happened! Before he had even finished praying a beautiful woman called Rebekah came to the well. She took the time to draw water for him, and all his camels too! He showered her with rich gifts and thanked her for her kindness. His smile grew bigger when he found out Rebekah was the daughter of Abraham's nephew and a believer in the God of heaven.

What did Eliezer do next? *Read Genesis 24:26, 27.*

Grateful Eliezer went to meet Rebekah's family. He explained the mission Abraham had sent him on, and how Rebekah was the answer to his prayer.

Rebekah's father and brother said, "This is clearly from the Lord. We cannot change what must happen. Rebekah is yours. Take her and go. Let her marry your master's son as the Lord has commanded" (Genesis 24:50, 51, ICB). Rebekah also trusted God's leading. So when she was asked, "Will you go with this man?" she gladly answered, "I will go" (Genesis 24:58).

At the end of the long journey home, Isaac and Rebekah met, had a beautiful wedding, and loved each other. God is the best leader. We can have confidence that He will lead in our lives, just as he did in Isaac's.

PARENT FAITH TALK: Share a time you had confidence in God's leading in your life.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *What might have happened if Eliezer hadn't had confidence in God?*
- *What will you do when you have to make an important decision?*
- *How important was it that Rebekah be asked if she was willing to go?*

PRAY: Thank God for showing you how He led in Isaac's life. Pray for confidence to let Him lead in your life too.



TUESDAY

Twin Baby Boys

Isaac and Rebekah were very happy, aside from one thing: 20 years had passed, and *still* they had no children. They trusted God to keep His promise and give them a child. But Rebekah sometimes found it hard to wait for a baby. "So Isaac prayed to the Lord for her. The Lord heard Isaac's prayer, and Rebekah became pregnant" (Genesis 25:21, ICB).

When the time came for Rebekah to give birth, great excitement filled the camp. The cries of not one but *two* babies rang out. Rebekah had just given birth to *twin* baby boys!

The surprising news spread quickly. *Twins! Twins!*

This double blessing was no surprise to the happy parents. Rebekah had felt something very strange while she was pregnant. Her tummy had wiggled and wobbled all the time. The Bible says, "the children struggled together within her" (Genesis 25:22). *What was going on?* She had asked God, and He had told Rebekah that "two nations are in your womb" (Genesis 25:23). Two babies would grow up to lead two separate nations! God then explained that the "older shall serve the younger" (Genesis 25:23).

The boys were quite different, right from the start. What was the firstborn like? READ GENESIS 25:25, 26.

Isaac and Rebekah loved them both. They were so grateful to God! He had done what He said He would do. His promise to Abraham, "You shall be a father of many nations" (Genesis 17:4) had continued to be fulfilled through them.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *Read your memory verse. What helped Isaac and Rebekah have "strong confidence" in God in today's story?*
- *What helps you have confidence in God?*

DO: If you know someone who has just had a baby, consider planning and preparing to visit them on Sabbath with some cooking, flowers, or a small gift.

FAST FACT: An average of 250 babies are born in the world every minute. Eight of these babies are twins; that's four sets of twins born every minute.

PRAY: Join hands with your family and each pray a prayer of thanks for answers to prayer.

WEDNESDAY

A Hunter and a Shepherd

Covered in thick, red hair, baby Esau grew up to be a loud and active boy. He enjoyed his freedom out in the wild, becoming "a skillful hunter, a man of the field" (Genesis 25:27). Father Isaac admired Esau's daring and fearless nature. He loved hearing about Esau's exciting adventures out in the mountains and deserts. Esau no doubt came home from hunting trips with birds and animals to share with the family.

Unlike his older twin, Jacob was quiet and gentle. He loved to stay close to home, working in the vegetable patch and caring for the flocks of sheep and goats. Mother Rebekah appreciated his soft, peace-loving heart. Gentle Jacob spread his love, like a warm ray of sunshine.

Jacob and Esau were different because God created them unique and special. Imagine: what would the world be like if God created everyone identical?

The Bible tells us, "God has shown you his grace in giving you different gifts" (1 Peter 4:10, ICB). Our loving God made us unique so that we can share our different gifts. Esau had a gift for fearless hunting and sharing what he caught. Jacob had the gift of gentle kindness. As long as they remained good friends with God and let Him guide their choices, their lives would be a blessing to others.

DO: Brainstorm the different gifts you and your family have and how you could share these with others.

FOR YOU, PARENTS: "Talents, mingled with love, are all precious endowments" (Ellen G. White, *Testimonies for the Church*, vol. 6, p. 84). God has blessed your child with unique and precious gifts. Take a moment to ponder and praise God for them.

THINK . . . THEN TALK ABOUT IT:

- *Read **1 Corinthians 12:4, 5**. What different gifts has God given members of your family? Thank God for giving them these gifts.*
- *What gifts has God given you?*

Our wise God created us different and special so that we can bless others in different ways.

WALK: Plan a Sabbath walk, either to an environment Esau loved or to a place where Jacob would have felt at home.

PRAY: Thank God for making us all different and special.



THURSDAY

Birthright Blessings

Esau dashed out the tent door on another hunting adventure. The older he got, the more he chose to do just as he pleased, without much thought for the future. Jacob chose to help the shepherds with the sheep and his mom with the chores. His choices made him kind and thoughtful. The boys were different by birth; now they were even more different because of the choices they made.

They grew to think about God differently too. Faithful Father Isaac had always told his boys wonderful stories about God and their relatives from long ago. He also taught them about God's special blessing for the eldest son, called a birthright. It meant inheriting a double portion of the father's wealth, leading the family in worshipping God, being the family's decision-maker or judge, and teaching them to love and obey God as their friend.

Esau wasn't the slightest bit interested in such things. Sure, he'd like the riches but not the things of God. He just wanted to keep on having fun. The birthright was very important to Jacob; he loved God and treasured the stories about His promises. He wished that he was the eldest son so he could have the birthright!

One day Rebekah told Jacob what God had said before the boys were born. What had God told her? **Read Genesis 25:23.**

Rebekah was confident that God's words meant the birthright was for Jacob. Now he was confident too. And it filled his heart with joy. *The birthright would be his! He would get to talk with God the way Grandfather Abraham did! He would offer sacrifices for his family! And best of all the promised Savior would come from his family.*



Think . . . Then Talk About It:

• *Why do you think God planned to give Jacob the birthright?*

Our awesome God loves everyone, but different people respond differently to His love.

Do: Write down three words to describe Jacob; three words to describe Esau. Which characteristics would you like to have?

Pray: Ask God to put a strong love for Him in your heart.



FRIDAY

Birthright Bargain

Jacob's brain constantly buzzed with dreams and schemes about how to get the birthright blessing from Esau. He didn't trust God to give it to him when the time was right. He just had to get it from Esau himself—and soon!

Then one day it happened. While Jacob was boiling a pot of stew, Esau trudged into camp, tired and hungry. Smelling Jacob's cooking, he asked, "Please feed me with that same red stew, for I am weary" (Genesis 25:30). How did Jacob reply? **Read Genesis 25:31.**

Then Esau said, "Look, I am about to die; so what is this birthright to me?" (Genesis 25:32).

Wanting to be sure Esau wouldn't change his mind, Jacob said, "First, promise me that you will give it to me" (Genesis 25:33, ICB). And as easily as that, Esau did! Treating the precious birthright as something worthless, he carelessly traded God's special gift for a bowl of stew. He ate and drank then went on his way, thinking nothing more about it.

But Jacob thought about it. What he desperately wanted was finally his, and he was very happy. He had made things happen himself, instead of trusting that God would work things out His way, in His time. He had forgotten, "It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" (Psalm 118:8).

Maybe one day he would learn this important lesson. In the meantime God would always love him and bless him, for Jacob was His precious child.

Think . . . Then Talk About It:

- *Why was the birthright blessing so important to Jacob?*

Friday Night

Share and Praise

- Invite family members to share when they have had *"strong confidence"* in the Lord.
- As a family, sing "Leaning on the Everlasting Arms" (*The Seventh-day Adventist Hymnal*, no. 469), then say or sing your memory verse.

Family Journal

- What lessons does this story teach about confidence?
- Think of a good title for this story.

Pray

Thank God that He is always with you, and that you can have confidence in His leading.



SABBATH SPECIAL

A Delay From Heaven

Lila wheeled the suitcase slowly to the car, while her brother Arlo, trailed behind. Every few steps they stopped to breathe, then wobbled forward. Their parents walked slowly too. The whole family was sick; terribly sick.

Just a few hours earlier, the doctors had left the family's hotel room in Thailand. All their medicines and IV drips were packed away. The family was due to fly home to Australia in the morning, but they had decided to stay until they were better. They could hardly move, let alone travel!

Mom had called the airlines, but there were no flights home together for 10 days. They would just have to somehow pack and make the long journey home—with three different flights.

Piling into the rental car, everyone took a deep breath. Dad adjusted the air conditioning to full blast. He had been the sickest with a tummy bug. Could he now drive the winding, crowded road for an hour up the island to the airport? Mom was worried. She checked her phone. Oh, no! They were running very late. They would miss their first flight!

She took a big, deep breath. The trip seemed impossible on their own. But not with God!

With their faith and confidence growing, the family all closed their eyes and began to pray. "Dear Jesus. Please help us! We're so very sick. Please help Dad to drive safely and help us catch all our flights. Amen."

Then . . . "Bing," went Mom's phone. She opened her eyes and looked down. "Wow! Our plane has been delayed by 45 minutes!"

"Thank You, God!" cried Lila and Arlo. It was a miracle delay from Heaven!

Dad calmly and safely sped to the airport, and they all made it to their first flight. They knew God cared so much for their family. He helped each one of them to get through each flight without being sick.

The family arrived in Singapore—their last stop. Here, God had another caring surprise. Singapore is a very big airport. On the way to Thailand, the family had walked a long way and taken a little train to get from one airplane to another. But not this time! As they stumbled slowly off one plane, hardly able to walk, they discovered that their next plane was right next door. "Thank You, God!"

"In the fear of the Lord there is strong confidence" (Proverbs 14:26).

