

# Jacob Wrestles with God

GRADE 6, LESSON 7

## Genesis 32:24-31

<sup>24</sup> Jacob was left alone; and a man wrestled with him until daybreak. <sup>25</sup> When the man saw that he did not prevail against Jacob, he struck him on the hip socket; and Jacob's hip was put out of joint as he wrestled with him. <sup>26</sup> Then he said, "Let me go, for the day is breaking." But Jacob said, "I will not let you go, unless you bless me." <sup>27</sup> So he said to him, "What is your name?" And he said, "Jacob." <sup>28</sup> Then the man said, "You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed." <sup>29</sup> Then Jacob asked him, "Please tell me your name." But he said, "Why is it that you ask my name?" And there he blessed him. <sup>30</sup> So Jacob called the place Peniel, saying, "For I have seen God face to face, and yet my life is preserved." <sup>31</sup> The sun rose upon him as he passed Peniel, limping because of his hip.

### MEMORY VERSE:

Psalm 37:23-24

<sup>23</sup> Our steps are made firm by the Lord,  
when he delights in our way;

<sup>24</sup> though we stumble, we shall not fall  
headlong, for the Lord holds us by the hand.

### THEME:

You're about to read and witness the most epic battle in history! Seriously, the one-on-one showdown that all WWE, MMA, and other initialed fighting championships base their 'fights' on- Jacob (a.k.a. "Israel") vs. Mystery Man (a.k.a. "God"). Whoa... they even have stage names!

Your creative juices are flowing, and you just gotta make this fight come to life! But what do you do when the skeptics get a hold of your creation, and start questioning the authenticity of this B.C. skirmish?



# Student Introduction

You may remember the story of Jacob as the brother who tricked Esau into selling his birthright. And stealing his brother's blessing. And running away from home. And.... you get the idea. Well, now Jacob's past comes back to haunt him, as he's all grown up and forced to return to his home land and face his brother. But before he gets there, he gets into a wrestling match with none other than God! God has bigger plans, and it involves Jacob learning how to toughen up a bit!

## Vocabulary

Prevail: To be victorious, or to prove to be more powerful than others.

Striven: To make an effort to achieve something.

Skeptic: A person who questions or doubts all accepted opinions.

Activity: *The Comic Genius*

# Bible Exploration

V. 24 - Jacob... wrestled... daybreak

V. 25 - ...hip socket...

V. 26 - ...Let me go...bless me.

V. 27/28 - ... Jacob....Israel...

V. 29/30 - ...Please tell me your name...

V. 31 - ... sun rose...limping...

# Extra, Extra: 'Jacob Wrestles' comic is a sensation!

Artist extraordinaire \_\_\_\_\_ (your name) has created a thought-provoking comic strip that is bound to make you reconsider your stance on the best wrestling match of all time!

Our artist, who has based their work off of the well known Genesis 32:24-31, managed to capture many of the big issues that we, as average people, deal with every day! We here at Bible News 101 are here to help our readers understand the genius behind the art and the Bible portion.

The heart of the Genesis 32 story is one of transition, or of change. The easiest one to notice is clearly highlighted in window 4 of our artist's drawing, which is when Jacob's name is changed to Israel. This is big news, faithful readers: the only time God changes someone's name is when something grand is in store for that person!

Another big transition (one that involves a bit of research) is that Jacob goes from being a 'cheater' (Genesis 27:21) to a person of God (Genesis 35:7). What a miraculous personality change! Local witnesses that we interviewed never would have thought that Little Lying Jacob would ever turn around and be able to live a life of honesty.

But a life of honesty is just what God prescribed, and he did that through teaching Jacob that he should stop trying to 'win' (over his brother), and instead 'lose' to God's plan. Need convincing on that loss? Check out window 2 for our artist's rendition of the secret move that God pulled!

But the biggest change of all, and one that our intrepid artist has completely captured, is the fact that Jacob, despite having all of the material possessions in the world, still submitted himself completely to God for a blessing. The fact that he placed zero value on his

objects, and 100% of faith in God's blessing proves to us everyday people that Jacob really can change.

Perhaps that is what our artist was trying to convey— that only by understanding, submitting, and receiving blessings from God will we grow to greatness.

And for our readers who are confused— Jacob, in fact, goes on to have 12 sons... who become the 12 tribes of, you guessed it, Israel. So Jacob, a.k.a. Israel, is literally one of the Fathers of a Nation!

So, our faithful readers, next time God puts you in a difficult position, give it your best shot and don't hesitate to ask God for help. He might be putting you there to prepare you for something greater!

For more cutting edge Bible artwork, contact your local 6th grade Mar Thoma Sunday School!

Some of your art subscribers are skeptics who do not appreciate your high art! Discuss and answer each as best as you can. "Why not?" is not a good enough answer!

V. 24 - "Uh... a stranger just attacked you! Why are you fighting back?"

V. 25 - "If the 'man' had special hip displacement powers, why only use it at the end??"

V. 26 - "Who asks for a blessing after getting his hip joint messed with?"

V. 27/28 - "What's in a name? Why did God change his name? Jacob seems good enough..."

V. 29/30 - "Why be so secretive, strange man? Oops.. I mean God?"

V. 31 - "So God never healed him, in the end? Why not?"

## Values for My Life

In our Bible story, when faced with a wrestling match, Jacob committed himself 100%. Even after losing, he had the grace to ask for a blessing from the winner.

As a comic book artist, you just had the chance to fend off some tough criticisms by our skeptics- a fight that exists purely in words.

It's this second type of battle that is, in many ways, harder than a simple wrestling match. When people come and question who God is, why He did something, or why He didn't do something... what do you say? Will you run away, like Jacob of the past, or will you stand your ground and give it your best, like Israel?

And don't forget- even if you walk away with a scar or two of your own, know that God will always support and guide you. And those scars are just there to help toughen you up for the next big fight!

## Faith in Action

I will choose to stand my ground and to accept the challenges placed before me. I will also remember to always rely on God, and to never be ashamed to ask Him for help!

## Let's Review!

### Fill Ins

1. Jacob wrestled with a man until \_\_\_\_\_.
2. Jacob called the place that he wrestled \_\_\_\_\_.
3. When Jacob left, he walked \_\_\_\_\_.

### Short Answers

1. Who wrestled with Jacob and how did the fight end?
2. What is his new name and what does it mean?

### Closing Prayer:

*Dear Lord, thank you for teaching us about your love and fairness through the story of Jacob. Teach us to stand firm in the face of danger, and to accept any challenges that come our way. Also, help us to rely on You in everything we do. In Your precious name we pray, Amen.*

**Remember!** "God will **always** win the wrestling match; if we were smart, then the sooner we submit, the better."  
~Relevant Magazine

## Teacher Guide for Lesson 7

### Jacob Wrestles with God

**Aim:** Students will understand how God places us in challenging situations to help us grow and understand our faith better.

**Bible Passage:** Genesis 32:24-31 (NSRV)

**Teacher Preparation:** This lesson curriculum is 'student-centric'. This means that the lesson is intended for the student to lead the conversation, and for the teacher to be a guide, helping the students in discovering the right answer(s), and redirecting any side stories back to the task at hand.

Student-centric lessons are typically the most challenging for teachers, because it requires the most amount of prepwork! Start by re-reading Genesis 25, and skimming the subsequent chapters to refresh your memory of Jacob's story. Also, read ahead of chapter 32, to see where Jacob/Israel's life takes him after this lesson.

Next, take a look at the student work, and plan out how you want your lesson to go. The students will be drawing and writing; do you want the students to draw one verse, then answer the 'skeptic'? Or, draw all verses, then tackle the skeptic with the completed work? Ultimately the decision is up to you. (Or your students, if you want to be radical!)

The goal of the "skeptic" part is to really make the students think and defend the Bible portion. If they give up, try nudging them with a possible answer. If they are really stumped, you can provide an answer and keep moving. Make sure that they all write an acceptable answer down, though.

The extension of the "skeptic" is for them to feel what their own 'battle' feels like. God might not be throwing out their hip socket, but He will lead your students into situations where their faith is questioned at some point in their lives. Let this lesson be a practice ground for them.

### **Bible Exploration (For teacher)**

Good morning! Pretend that you are a genius comic book artist. You are so inspired by our Bible portion today that you just HAVE to draw it out!

You have the next 12 minutes (which is 2 minutes per box) to re-create what you just read. Comic book artists work under tight deadlines, so this should be easy enough for you!

(Encourage the students to use stick figures, if needed.)

(Spend some time sharing each other's artwork, and commenting on the details that are included/left out, due to time/size of the box/etc.)

Let's read the news article, "Extra Extra", for some insight on the art that you just created. **See Student Book.** (Note— use this article as a place for students to re-hash and discuss the actual CONTENT of the lesson. This is the 'Bible Exploration' time. Let it be student driven!)

You have published your amazing comics, and are getting rave reviews! BUT... then the other comments start filtering through. You know. The ones that question everything you just did!  
The questioner is called a “skeptic”- someone who is skeptical, or questions everything because they don’t believe it. Obviously, the skeptic doesn’t appreciate your High-Art!

Let’s discuss and answer each of these skeptics as best as we can.

And remember, “why not?” is not a good answer. We need to meet these skeptics head on, not give up!  
You can answer right under the bubble, or create a web and list multiple answers.

*(If students are giving up- point them to Jacob, who didn’t give up on the wrestling match for an entire night, AND didn’t give up even after the excruciating pain of a popped joint. Who also got up and limped home.)  
(If your students have silly answers, accept them and laugh along with it! But then encourage them to try and come up with a more serious one. It’s the only way to get the skeptics to listen!)*

**Possible answers:**

V 24- Maybe Jacob was sick and tired of running away, and decided this was his chance to stand up and fight!

V 24- Maybe Jacob really enjoyed wrestling with strangers. Wrestling back then was, like, a pickup game of basketball!

V 25- Maybe the “man” wanted to prove a point to Jacob- he could have utterly destroyed Jacob from the beginning. But he held back, to see what Jacob would do- run away, or stand and fight.

V 25- Maybe the “man” didn’t want Jacob to keep on wrestling him throughout the day... people are busy!!

V 26- Jacob clearly understood that this stranger could’ve finished the fight right away, but was giving him a ‘chance’ by fighting fairly and at his level. Who else would give him a ‘chance’ other than his God?

V 26- If someone was strong enough to fight you for hours, and still pop your joint out... that’s the person you should receive a blessing (and possibly start learning) from!

V 27/28- If a name changes in the Bible, it’s a giant red flag that something big has or is about to happen! Example: Old Testament: Abram – Abraham. New Testament: Simon - Peter, Saul – Paul.

V 27/28- God didn’t like the name Jacob. (Which means, “grasping at the heel.” God needs his Chosen ones to have big names!)

V 29/30- Maybe God could tell that Jacob had figured out who He was, and decided that the vague reference to “God” in the Israel name change was enough of an answer.

V 29/30- Maybe it’s God putting Jacob in his place. Sort of a, “I don’t need to tell you everything! I’ll tell you what you need to know.”

V 31- God gave Jacob far more than a limp. He taught Jacob that it’s good to face up to the challenges placed before him. The limp serves as a constant reminder of his struggle with God. (In case he forgets his new name!)

V 31– Because... He’s God. Next question!

**Note to 6<sup>th</sup> Grade Teachers:**

**As you teach the 5 trial lessons, please be aware that they have been designed with the intention of seeing which curriculum style works best for your Sunday School classroom.**

<i>Lesson 1 (Abraham)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity is separate from content</i>
<i>Lesson 3 (Micah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 5 (Elijah)</i>	<i><u>Teacher Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, the students follow</i>	<i>Activity supplements content</i>
<i>Lesson 6 (Boaz)</i>	<i><u>Teacher and Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The teacher leads, but there are built in elements of student independence</i>	<i>Activity is built into the content</i>
<i>Lesson 7 (Joseph)</i>	<i><u>Student Centered</u></i>	<i>The students lead, the teacher facilitates</i>	<i>Activities are built into the content</i>

At any point during the trial 5 lessons, please e-mail [AnissaKurian@gmail.com](mailto:AnissaKurian@gmail.com) with your feedback, including:

How is the length of the Bible portion?

How appropriate are the Bible lessons and Memory Verse?

What lessons worked best for your class? What lessons were easiest to teach? (And vice versa)

Based off of question 4- do you prefer a Teacher centered or a Student Centered curriculum?

Do you prefer a paper-based activity, or an 'out of the box' activity (like Lesson 1)?

STUDENT FEEDBACK- what did your students like or dislike about the new lesson format?

Ultimately, it is your talent and your willingness to donate your time, energy, and love that will impact the 6<sup>th</sup> grade students the most. This curriculum is simply a tool to aid you in your vital ministry. Any and all feedback (good and bad) will help us to make the curriculum as beneficial as possible to our Mar Thoma children.

Thank you, and God Bless!

Anissa Kurian and George P. Babu

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