

# Small Group Leader Guide

Materials Needed that are Not included in the activity bags:

1. **Bible Story Review: The Story of Jacob**
2. **Application Activity: Faith Stone**
  - permanent markers
3. **Memory Verse Activity: Stepping Stones**
4. **Prayer Activity: Pray and Dismiss**

Pray for your group before they arrive.

Pray for those who might visit your group for the first time. Recall a time in your life when you experienced uncertainty, but you knew that God was with you. Ask God to give each child courage when they face uncertainty.

Pray they will trust God even when they don't know what's next. Ask God to help the kids see that God is always working in their lives!

✧ Need activities for a K-5th group? Check out the 2nd-3rd guide.

THIS MONTH



Today's Bible Story

## Jacob's Dream Genesis 28:10-22

Supporting: Genesis 25:19-34; 27

Bottom Line

**You can trust that God is with you.**

Memory Verse

**Faith is being sure of what we hope for. It is being sure of we do not see. (Hebrews 11:1 NIV)**

Inclusive Pro Tips



This leader guide is designed to be inclusive of children with a disability who attend a group with their peers. See highlighted sections below for additional inclusive pro-tips. Check out the Special Needs Resource Kit for more ideas for adapting each segment.

# The Story of Jacob

## Bible Story Review

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

☐ "Jacob's Story Images"


## What You Do

1. Divide kids into five groups.
2. Give each group one card from the "Jacob's Story Images" Activity Page.
3. Encourage kids to discuss their pictures and recall what they learned in Large Group.
  - If the kids are stumped, walk around and give them a few hints.
4. Bring all the groups together and arrange them in the correct story order based on the numbers on the pages.
5. Add details as needed using these prompts.
  - #1: Jacob was sneaky! First, he convinced his older brother Esau to give up his birthright (the right to a certain position and wealth because of being the oldest) for a bowl of stew. Later, he tricked his father Isaac into giving him the family blessing instead of his brother by pretending to be Esau! Jacob was dishonest in both situations.
  - #2: Because of his dishonesty, Jacob was forced to flee from his home and take a very long journey—hundreds of miles—leaving behind everything he'd ever known.
  - #3: Jacob slept, using a rock as a pillow. He dreamt of a stairway, reaching all the way to heaven with angels traveling up and down. God was beside the staircase. God made a promise to give Jacob and his family the land he was resting on, the same promise he made to his grandfather Abraham. God also made another awesome promise to Jacob—God promised to be with him.
  - #4: Jacob lived in Haran for many years. While he was away from home, he married and had thirteen children.
  - #5: Eventually, Jacob returned home, just as God had promised.

## What You Say

"Wow! Jacob's story was full of ups and downs. He made some sneaky choices to take away the birthright and blessing from his brother. Yikes. But even though Jacob messed up, God still kept His promises! God promised to be with Jacob always, and to make his family grow into a great nation.

"And guess what? God kept His promises to Jacob, but He also was working on His great rescue plan. God did grow Jacob's family—Jacob had thirteen children! And many, many, many generations later, from that same family, would come Jesus. And Jesus would rescue us all.

"God also kept His promise to always be with Jacob too! And God makes us that same promise—He promises that He is always with us. And it's true! He always is!

"But God is not just with us, He's in us! After Jesus returned to heaven, God sent the Holy Spirit to live inside each of His followers. If you are a follower of Jesus, you are never alone! God's very Spirit lives inside of you! God is closer than close! So just like Jacob, [Bottom Line] you can trust that God is with you."



### Inclusive Pro Tips

Consider the needs of your group. Some kids might prefer to listen rather than speak for the group. Adapt and adjust as needed.

If sitting still is tough for your group, let the kids stand or move around while reviewing the Bible Story pictures.

# Faith Rocks

## Application Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- ☐ Small Flat Stones
- ☐ Small Paper Plates
- ☐ "Bottom Line Labels"
- ☐ Completed Rock Example
- ☐ Permanent Marker
- ☐ tablecloth

### Inclusive Supplies

- ☐ Various Stickers



### Inclusive Pro-Tips

Some kids might need extra time to process the questions. Be patient, pause frequently, and repeat the questions as needed.

If kids don't like the feeling of paint, provide stickers for kids to decorate their rock.

## What You Do

1. Cover the floor or table in your small group area with the tablecloth.
2. Display the completed rock example to the group.
3. Give each kid a rock and a label from the "Bottom Line Labels" Activity Page.
4. Read the label together: [BOTTOM LINE] you can trust that God is with you.
5. Repeat it again.
6. Instruct the kids to place the label on the rock, and decorate the rock using the permanent markers.
7. While they color, engage the kids with these prompts:

- Do you ever doubt that God is with you?
- Why do you think we sometimes doubt that God is with us? (Because we can't see God with our eyes; because sometimes we face hard things, and we wish God would fix them.)
- Is God still with us when we make bad choices? How do you know this is true? (Yes, God promises to be with us—even when we make bad choices. We know this is true because God always keeps His promises. We can look back at all the times God was with us in the past when we made bad choices. We can also read stories from the Bible about people like Jacob who made bad choices and God was still with him.)

8. Once the kids finish, instruct the kids to place the rocks on the small plates to dry for pick up.

9. Write the kid's names on their plates with a permanent marker.

## What You Say

"Can you imagine using a stone as a pillow like Jacob did? Not sure I'd get much sleep if I tried that! I love your colorful rocks and how they're all unique. I want you to take these home and place them somewhere as a reminder that [BOTTOM LINE] you can trust that God is with you."

# Stepping Stones

## Memory Verse Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

- ☐ Bible marked at Hebrews 11:1
- ☐ "Hebrews 11:1 Puzzle" Activity Page

### Optional

- ☐ Floor Tape



### Inclusive Pro-Tips

Consider the needs of your group. If any kids are overwhelmed by scissors or the noise, offer an alternative, like coloring the puzzle instead of cutting it out.

## What You Do

1. Select a kid to open the Bible marked at Hebrews 11:1.
2. Read the verse out loud to the group.
3. Lead the group to repeat the verse together several times.
4. Discuss any unfamiliar words with the group.
5. Share with the kids that faith is trusting in God when you can't see because of what you CAN see!
6. Place the "Hebrews 11:1 Stones" Activity Page cards on the floor in verse order.
  - Allow kids to help put the cards in verse order by looking at the numbers on the cards.
  - Place the cards close enough together so that kids can hop from one "stone" to the other.
  - Optional: Use floor tape to secure the "Hebrews 11:1 Stones" Activity Page in place.
7. Give each kid a zip-top bag so they can take their puzzle home.
8. If possible, invite the kids to take off their shoes.
9. Lead the kids to repeat the Memory Verse as they hop along the stones, one kid at a time.
10. Assist the kids as needed by reciting the verse with them as they hop.
11. Gather the kids to discuss.

## What You Say

"Amazing hopping, friends! When Jacob used a rock for a pillow, he had a crazy dream with a staircase that went all the way to heaven! In the middle of a tough situation when he was on the run, God reminded Jacob that He was with him, even when he'd made so many bad decisions.

"In some ways, we aren't much different than Jacob. In fact, we all make bad decisions. But I'm so glad that God sent Jesus to pay for sin and defeat it once and for all so we could be close to God again. See, that awful curse of sin would separate us from God without Jesus. BUT God loves us so much, and wanted us to be close to Him, so Jesus gave His life to pay for sin.

"And guess what? God wants to be even closer to us! When Jesus returned to heaven, God sent us the Holy Spirit to live inside of His followers! When you decide to follow Jesus, the Holy Spirit comes to live inside of you! He is closer than close, friends. Not only that, but the Holy Spirit leads and guides us to be more like Jesus every day!

"Should we try to do better? Of course! But God's love for us doesn't change because of something we've done wrong. When you make a wise or a not so wise choice, when you follow God well and when you don't, God's love for you stays the same! We can hope and trust in a God we cannot see because we can see all the wonderful things He has done. No matter what happens, [BOTTOM LINE] you can trust that God is with you."

NOTE: Be sensitive to kids who might have questions about following Jesus. Follow your church's policy for having conversations with kids about salvation. Involve families with this discussion or decisions as well.

# Pray and Dismiss

## Prayer Activity

### Faith Skills

Hear from God

Pray to God

Talk about God

Live for God

### What You Need

#### Optional

☐ Rocks from Application Activity

MADE TO  
↓  
Reflect

## What You Do

1. Gather kids in a circle.
2. Option 1: If you painted rocks from the Application Activity:

- Invite the kids to hold up their rocks.
- Lead the kids in saying together: [Bottom Line] You can trust that God is with you.
- Close in prayer.

3. Option 2:

- Ask the kids if they'd like you to pray for anything specific.
- Lead the kids in saying together: [BOTTOM LINE] You can trust that God is with you.
- Close in prayer

## What You Say

"Dear God, thank You for Your constant love for all of us! Just like You were with Jacob, You are with us. You don't hold our bad choices against us, and we are so grateful for that. Instead, You offer forgiveness when we turn to You through Your Son, Jesus. Thank You for being a good, good God who we can trust, always. Teach us to listen to Your Holy Spirit and follow You. We love You, and we pray these things in Jesus' name. Amen."

Transition -> As adults arrive to pick up, encourage the kids to show off the label on their painted rocks and talk about how just like God was with Jacob that [BOTTOM LINE] you can trust that God is with you.



### Inclusive Pro-Tips

When you're praying with the kids, speak slowly and clearly, and give the kids time to say "Amen" with you at the end.