**Connected: Created to Belong**

**Module 3: Markers of God’s Family**

**Lesson 4: Gracious to Others [Reconciliation]**

**Spiritual Aims**

Students will hopefully:

* identify God’s grace as the key to reconciliation
* reconcile with others by:
  + receiving grace from God
  + extending grace to others

**Lesson Objectives**

Students will:

* illustrate the Bible story as a storyboard
* reconstruct how Jacob and Esau reconciled

**Materials Needed**

* 1 copy of discussion questions in Appendix E per student (there are 2 copies per page)
* 1 pen or pencil per student
* 3 copies of script in Appendix F
* Bibles
* 4 copies of the Jigsaw questions in Appendix G (1 per Jigsaw group)
* Blank chart paper (1 piece per group of 4 people)
* Blank legal-size paper (at least 1 piece per group of 4 people)
* Coloured markers for each group
* Additional blank paper for students doing the final activity individually instead of in pairs

**Minds On** (approx. 5 min.)

**Prompt:** Today we will be looking at twin brothers who had a very rocky history together. Their names were Jacob and Esau. They were always fighting with each other — they even wrestled in their mom’s womb! Esau was born first, so he had the right to inherit his father’s property and receive his blessing. But he gave up his rights to Jacob over a bowl of stew! Jacob tricked his father into giving him the blessing and when Esau found out he was so angry he wanted to kill his brother. Jacob ran away and built a life far from Esau.

**Leader’s note:** The chain of events that led to Jacob stealing Esau’s blessing can be confusing, so it would be best to familiarize yourself with the story in Genesis 25:19–34 and 27:1–45 in case your students have questions.

Ask your students to raise their hands to answer the following questions.

* Has anybody ever betrayed you?
* How did you react? (If students want to share their stories, they can leave their hands in the air, while students who don’t want to share can drop their hands. Choose 2 or 3 students to answer, or if no student wants to volunteer have a leader do so.)
* What happened to your relationship with that person? (This is a follow up question for students who want to share.)

**Prompt:** When a relationship is broken, the word *reconciliation* means repairing the relationship. It might take years, or it could happen in a short period of time, but it means both people enter back in the relationship and start rebuilding their trust.

**Action** (approx. 45 min.)

**Understanding the Story:** (approx. 15 min)

**Leader’s note:** This section is important because it lays the foundation for your students to successfully complete the storyboard activity.

**Prompt:** It might be hard to believe that Jacob and Esau could ever reconcile, but the Bible tells us they did.

Distribute or have a volunteer hand out to each student 1 copy of Appendix E and a pen. Once everyone has a copy read the questions out loud so students know what details to listen for as you read the story.

Ask 3 volunteers to present the Bible passage (Genesis 32:1–21 and 33:1–11) as a dramatic reading [teaching tip 7]. The script is Appendix F. If students have Bibles, invite them to follow along with the story.

**Jigsaw:**

1. Divide students into groups of 4 people. These are the home groups. If the group does not divide evenly, some groups of 5 are acceptable, and the extra person will go with the 4s for Jigsaw.
2. Give each person in each group a number between 1 and 4. They will then go find others with the same number (all the 5s will join the 4s). These are the expert groups.
3. The expert groups will discuss their assigned questions from Appendix G. Each person will report this group’s answer back to their home groups after 5 minutes of discussion.

**Create a Storyboard:** (approx. 20 min)

1. Give each home group a Bible, a blank piece of chart paper as well as blank legal-size paper to brainstorm and collect ideas on. Each group should have pens or markers.
2. Let your students know that each home group is going to create a storyboard of Genesis 33:1–11. A storyboard visually tells a story panel by panel, similar to a comic strip.
3. Each group should choose a reader to read the story from the Bible and then the group can start brainstorming their storyboard.
4. Students will need to decide as a group what the main events of the plot are and create images to represent them. Let your students know they can use stick figures if they want, they can use speech bubbles if they want, and/or just pictures is fine too.
5. Ask the groups to indicate the emotions of the characters in the storyboard.

**Share Your Storyboard:** (approx. 10 min) Once the storyboards have been created, allow each group to present their interpretation of the Bible story.

**Option for large groups:** If you have 6 or more groups of students, it will take too long for every group to present their storyboards. Instead, have 3 or 4 groups present to one another in different rooms or different areas of the room. These medium-size groups can compile a list of what they agreed upon in the story and share *that* with the larger group.

When the lesson is done, if possible, post the storyboards on the wall as a reminder of the lesson for future weeks.

**Prompt:** Jacob and Esau help us learn what it means to belong in God’s family. When they were reunited after so many years of separation, they could have been bitter or violent, but instead both of them were humble and put the other person first. Jacob could have hoarded his wealth, but he was willing to give it up to protect his family and have the chance to restore his relationship with his brother. He recognized that his wealth had come from God, so he could share it. Esau could have held a grudge about Jacob’s betrayal, but instead he showed him respect by accepting his gift and moving forward in the relationship.

**Consolidate/Debrief** (approx. 10 min)

**Prompt:** In God’s family, we are called to reconcile with one another whenever possible. This does not mean putting ourselves in harm’s way, but letting go of our grudges and being open to rebuilding a relationship. For Jacob and Esau, years had to pass before their relationship could be restored, but when the time came they did it with God’s help.

**Think/Pair/Share:** What would it take for you to reconcile with someone who had betrayed you?

**Option for individuals:** If students prefer not to share, or if numbers are not even, provide paper with pens and markers for students to write their response or draw a picture. Have leaders available to talk through it as needed.

Close by praying for any broken relationships that students have (especially if they have specifically shared them with the group) and ask God to help make a way for even the most difficult relationships to improve.

**Leader’s note:** This debrief could be a powerful time for students to consider reconciliation with someone specific in their life, and it may be helpful to let your students know what resources are available in terms of counselling or other support to help repair relationships [teaching tip 18].

**Appendix E**

How did Jacob feel before he met Esau?

What did Jacob do in case Esau was coming to attack him?

If you are upset with someone, does a gift make it easier to forgive them?

Why or why not?

Do you think Esau forgave Jacob?

Each brother says something like, “I have all I need” (Esau in verse 9 Jacob in verse 11). What changed in their relationship since Jacob stole Esau’s blessing?

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**Appendix F: Script of Genesis 32:1–21 and 33:1–11 (NIV)**

*For 3 readers: narrator, Jacob and Esau*

N: Jacob also went on his way, and the angels of God met him. When Jacob saw them, he said,

J: “This is the camp of God!”

N: So he named that place Mahanaim.Jacob sent messengers ahead of him to his brother Esau in the land of Seir, the country of Edom.He instructed them:

J: “This is what you are to say to my lord Esau: ‘Your servant Jacob says, I have been staying with Laban and have remained there till now.I have cattle and donkeys, sheep and goats, male and female servants. Now I am sending this message to my lord that I may find favor in your eyes.’”

N:When the messengers returned to Jacob, they said, “We went to your brother Esau, and now he is coming to meet you, and four hundred men are with him.”In great fear and distress Jacob divided the people who were with him into two groups, and the flocks and herds and camels as well.He thought,

J: “If Esau comes and attacks one group, the group that is left may escape.”

N:Then Jacob prayed,

J: “O God of my father Abraham, God of my father Isaac,Lord, you who said to me, ‘Go back to your country and your relatives, and I will make you prosper,’I am unworthy of all the kindness and faithfulness you have shown your servant. I had only my staff when I crossed this Jordan, but now I have become two camps.Save me, I pray, from the hand of my brother Esau, for I am afraid he will come and attack me, and also the mothers with their children.But you have said, ‘I will surely make you prosper and will make your descendants like the sand of the sea, which cannot be counted.’”

N:He spent the night there, and from what he had with him he selected a gift for his brother Esau: two hundred female goats and twenty male goats, two hundred ewes and twenty rams,thirty female camels with their young, forty cows and ten bulls, and twenty female donkeys and ten male donkeys.He put them in the care of his servants, each herd by itself, and said to his servants,

J: “Go ahead of me, and keep some space between the herds. When my brother Esau meets you and asks, ‘Who do you belong to, and where are you going, and who owns all these animals in front of you?’then you are to say, ‘They belong to your servant Jacob. They are a gift sent to my lord Esau, and he is coming behind us.’”

N: For he thought, “I will pacify him with these gifts I am sending on ahead; later, when I see him, perhaps he will receive me.So Jacob’s gifts went on ahead of him, but he himself spent the night in the camp…

Jacob looked up and there was Esau, coming with his four hundred men; so he divided the children among Leah, Rachel and the two female servants.He put the female servants and their children in front, Leah and her children next, and Rachel and Joseph in the rear. He himself went on ahead and bowed down to the ground seven times as he approached his brother. But Esau ran to meet Jacob and embraced him; he threw his arms around his neck and kissed him. And they wept.Then Esau looked up and saw the women and children.

E: “Who are these with you?”

J: “They are the children God has graciously given your servant.”

N: Then the female servants and their children approached and bowed down.Next, Leah and her children came and bowed down. Last of all came Joseph and Rachel, and they too bowed down.

E: “What’s the meaning of all these flocks and herds I met?”

J: “To find favor in your eyes, my lord,”

E: “I already have plenty, my brother. Keep what you have for yourself.”

J: “No, please! If I have found favor in your eyes, accept this gift from me. For to see your face is like seeing the face of God, now that you have received me favorably.Please accept the present that was brought to you, for God has been gracious to me and I have all I need.”

N: And because Jacob insisted, Esau accepted it.

**Appendix G**

Discuss the question that matches your group number.

1. a. How did Jacob feel before he met Esau?

b. What did Jacob do in case Esau was coming to attack him?

2. If you are upset with someone does a gift make it easier to forgive them? Why or why not?

3. Do you think Esau forgave Jacob?

4. Each brother says something like “I have all I need” (Esau in verse 9 Jacob in verse 11). What changed in their relationship since Jacob stole Esau’s blessing?