


the
Jesus 
Storybook
Bible
Curriculum

The girl no one wanted

The story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, from Genesis 29–30

☉ Please see the curriculum Introduction .pdf for more guidance on praying with your group and on Scripture memory.

☉ The total allotted time per lesson is 45 minutes. This is the minimum amount of time it would take to complete the whole lesson. The time can easily be extended to increase the lesson to as much as 1.5 hours. If you have more than the allocated 45 minutes, please use the extra time to extend the time for activities, to learn the memory verse, and to pray.

☉ The “Notes for Teachers on the Text” section is intended as explanation of the Bible text and advance preparation for you only; it is not expressed in terms or language the children could understand.

The Jesus Storybook Bible Curriculum
By Sally Lloyd-Jones and Sam Shammas

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Recap of the Previous Story

3 min. 

☉ Welcome the children and ask them to sit in a circle.

☉ Briefly recap the main points of the previous stories: “We have been reading about Abraham. God promised Abraham that he would give him a very big family and that God would rescue his people though Abraham’s family. God kept his promise to Abraham and he had a son, Isaac. Last time we read that Abraham loved God more than anything else. We also memorized a verse about Abraham.”

☉ Ask them to recite together the verse they learned at home about the story. “Genesis 15:6 – ‘Abraham believed the LORD.’”

☉ To lead into the theme of today’s story, say: “Abraham’s son Isaac also had sons. Their names were Jacob and Esau. Abraham’s family was growing just as God had promised. In our story today, Jacob is going to get married. Have you ever been to a wedding? Raise your hand. Thank you, hands down.”

Activity Introducing the Story

10 min. 

Aim: To expend energy and learn about choices.

Materials: 4 small items/gifts, e.g., piece of jewelry, box of crayons, etc.; 1 small item/gift that looks worthless but is very expensive, e.g., a first-edition book, a silver spoon, etc.; a folded index card for each item on the inside of which is written the actual price of the item and on the outside of which is written \$5.

1. Say: “When you go to a wedding, you are supposed to take a gift. I have some gifts here, but I don’t know which one to take to the wedding.”

2. Display the five items in the center of the circle with all the index cards showing \$5.

3. Say: “You need to help me choose the best gift. When I point to a gift, if you think the real price is higher than \$5, stand up and run in place; if you think the real price is lower than \$5, stay seated.”

4. Point to the first gift; have the children decide if the actual price is higher or lower than \$5. Tell the children running to run faster if they think the real price is much higher or jog if they think the real price is just a little bit higher. Once they have made their choice, ask one of the children to run to the center of the circle and turn over the card to show the actual price. Announce who got it right.

5. Do the same for the rest of the items, one by one. You can make it more fun by acting like a game-show host, elaborately describing each item, asking the children if they want to change their minds, etc. Try to help them expend energy by having as many of them running as possible and by keeping them running while you talk game-show host style.

6. Leave the expensive item until the very last and describe it unenthusiastically; e.g., “This is an old thing I found lying around the house; it’s a bit dirty. Is the real price higher or lower than \$5?”

7. Once they have made their choice, ask one of the children to run to the center of the circle and turn over the card to show the actual price. Announce who got it right, saying with surprise that it is worth much more than you thought. Comment that some things may be worth more than we realize.

8. Put all the rest of the items away and, displaying the last item, announce that you will take it as a wedding gift. Say: “Even though it doesn’t look like it is worth a lot, even though I would not have chosen it because it looks old and dirty, it is the best wedding gift. Now that I have the gift, we are ready to hear about the wedding in our story today. But first let’s get to know some of the people involved.”

Join the children in the circle and announce the title of the story. Read aloud pages 70–75 from *The Jesus Storybook Bible* or listen to CD1 track 8.

Notes for Teachers on the Text

Genesis 29:17 tells us, “Leah had weak eyes, but Rachel had a lovely figure and was beautiful.” The point is clear. Leah was physically unattractive and undesirable and, as a result, it was very unlikely that she would ever be married. Rachel, on the other hand, was beautiful.

Jacob has clearly set his heart on Rachel in an inordinate way. He is willing to do virtually anything to get her. This makes Jacob a complete pawn in Laban’s hands. Later it leads to a favoritism of Rachel over Leah that created enormous pain in the family for years to come. Not only does Leah feel rejected, but Jacob comes to love Rachel’s children far more than Leah’s, which sows poison in the individuals’ hearts and in the corporate life of the family for generations.

In Genesis 29:31–35 we see the most pathetic description of a woman yearning for the love of her husband. Leah was used to being ignored as the unattractive and ungainly older daughter. But being married to a man who did not love her made the rejection far more poignant and traumatic. So she kept having children, saying, “Now, maybe my husband will finally love me!” But she is continually disappointed.

But look at the comfort of Genesis 29:31: “When the LORD saw that Leah was not loved, he enabled her to conceive.” This is more than simply an evidence of God’s merciful compassion. It is that – but much more.

First, it reinforces the biblical theme that God particularly loves the outcast, the rejected, the outsider. God chooses the foolish things of the world to shame the wise, the weak things to shame the strong (1 Corinthians 1:20 and following). God’s own Son came as a poor man, a man who was rejected and killed. He brought salvation in the way of suffering and death, not achievement and power.

But secondly, God gives Leah the most astonishing gift of all. The final child to be born in this passage is her fourth son – Judah. All commentators notice something strange about Leah’s statement when he is born. She stops singing songs of lament and gives an undiluted note of praise, almost defiantly so: “This time I will praise the LORD” (29:35).

The writer of Genesis knows that Judah is the one through whom the King will come. Not beautiful, loved Rachel, but unattractive rejected Leah becomes the “mother” of our Lord. Why? Because even at this early stage, God is foreshadowing the true nature of his salvation. It is the way of the cross, of repentance, humility, unselfishness, sacrifice.

So here we have the birth of the royal line through the rejected wife. In this way Genesis continues the pattern of inversion. In this generation, it is the son not loved (Jacob) and the wife not loved (Leah) who bear the messianic seed into the world. The gospel turns things upside down. The weak are really the strong. The repentant are the righteous. The people who think they are righteous are rejected. The cross is a victory.

Understanding the Story

15 min. 

Aim: To understand that God chooses those whom others may not choose.

Materials: 2 large cards, one with the word “Rachel” and the other with the word “Leah” written on them; a way of taping the cards to the walls; crayons; copies of the handout (the last page of this document).

1. At the end of the story, say: “In this story we have two sisters. I am going to hang Rachel’s name on this wall and Leah’s name on the opposite wall.”
2. Tape the names to opposite walls in the room.
3. Say: “I am going to call out a description and then say ‘Go!’ If you think the description is about Rachel, run to the wall with the name Rachel on it. If it is about Leah, run to the wall with the name Leah on it. Ready?”
4. Call out the descriptions below, saying “Go!” after each one. When the children have picked a wall, use the comments/questions to check their understanding. After commenting, ask them to sit back down in the circle. Say “Ready?” and call out the next description.

DESCRIPTION	ANSWER	COMMENTS/QUESTIONS
The younger sister.	RACHEL	Yes, it is Rachel. Sit down.
The beautiful sister.	RACHEL	Yes, Rachel is the beautiful younger sister.
The older sister who no one noticed.	LEAH	Yes, it is Leah.
The sister Jacob wanted to marry.	RACHEL	What did Jacob have to do in order to marry Rachel? Yes, he had to work for his uncle Laban for seven years.
After seven years the sister Jacob first married.	LEAH	Correct, Jacob thought he was marrying Rachel, but actually it was Leah. Laban played a nasty trick on Jacob.
The second sister Jacob married.	RACHEL	Jacob had married both sisters.
The sister Jacob loved.	RACHEL	How did Leah feel knowing that Jacob loved Rachel best? Yes, not loved, not attractive, and not wanted.
The sister God chose to set his love on.	LEAH	Even though Leah was not wanted, not attractive, and not loved by others, God chose to set his love on her.
The sister with a son named Judah.	LEAH	The name Judah means “this time I will praise the Lord.” Which is exactly what Leah did!
The sister through whose family God would rescue his people.	LEAH	Yes, one of Judah’s children’s children’s children would be Jesus. Isn’t that amazing! It is through Leah’s family that Jesus would one day come.

5. At the end of the activity, ask everyone to sit back down in the circle and give each child a copy of the handout and a crayon. Say: "You can see some thought bubbles on your paper. Circle the correct words. Look at **bubble number 1**. Jacob is thinking about Rachel. Let me read his thoughts to you. Circle the correct words. When Jacob thinks about Rachel, is he thinking 'I love you' or 'I don't love you'? Is he thinking about Rachel, 'You are very ugly' or 'You are very beautiful'?"
6. Give the children 5 seconds to circle their answer, and then ask them what they circled, commenting appropriately. You may want to allow them to work together in pairs.
7. Say: "Look at **bubble number 2**. Jacob wakes up after his wedding day and sees he is married to Leah instead of Rachel. What is he thinking about Leah? Circle the correct words. I will read them to you."
8. Read the options aloud and give them 5 seconds to circle their answer; then ask them what they circled, commenting appropriately.
9. Say: "Look at **bubble number 3**. What is Leah thinking when she knows Jacob loves Rachel best? Circle the correct words. I will read them to you."
10. Read the options aloud and give them 5 seconds to circle their answer; then ask them what they circled, commenting appropriately.
11. Say: "Last, look at **bubble number 4**. Leah finds out that God has chosen her family to be the family through whom he would rescue his people. What is Leah thinking now? Circle the correct words. I will read them to you."
12. Read the options aloud and give them 5 seconds to circle their answer; then ask them what they circled, commenting appropriately.

For larger groups: You may want to divide the group into smaller circles, each with a teacher and a section of the walls assigned to them. Each teacher can then ask the questions in the table and then help their circle understand the story and fill in the thought bubbles.

Drawing the Story to a Close

1 min. 

Say: “Leah’s son Judah would have children and they would have children and they would have children and one of those children’s children would be Jesus. God had chosen Leah’s family to be the family through whom he would rescue his people.”

Say: “God often chooses people we would not. God often sets his love on and does amazing things through people who are not loved, not wanted, not attractive, and not popular — just like Leah and just like Jesus.”

Jesus in the Story

2 min. 

Ask: “What did we discover about Jesus from today’s story?”

Get a few children to share their answers aloud, commenting appropriately, then ask everyone to write an answer in the space on their handout.

Praying about the Story

5 min. 

Pray aloud, thanking God that he often sets his love on and does amazing things through people who are not loved, not wanted, not attractive, and not popular — just like Leah and just like Jesus.

Ask the children to think of a way in which God has shown that he loves them and then to pray, thanking God for the way he loves them.

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

2 min. 

☉ Introduce the verse: “The amazing thing about God is that he can bring good out of things that seem to us very bad. There is a verse in Genesis about that.”

☉ Announce the verse: “The verse to learn at home is Genesis 50:20 — ‘You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.’”

☉ Read the verse out loud together as a group. Explain any unfamiliar words.

☉ Remind the children to give the handout to their parents and to memorize the verse for next time.

The girl no one wanted (The story of Jacob, Rachel, and Leah, from Genesis 29 – 30)



1
I
love/don't love
you!

You are very
ugly/beautiful!



3
Everyone/no one
loves me!

Everyone/no one
wants me!



2
I
love/don't love
you!

I
want/don't want
Rachel!



4
God
loves/doesn't love
me!

I will
not trust/praise
the Lord!

Jesus in the Story



What did you discover about
Jesus from this story?

Jesus

A Verse from the Story to Learn at Home

You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good.
(Genesis 50:20)



Notes for parents: From the story we learned about how God often sets his love on and does amazing things through people who are unloved, unwanted, unattractive, and unpopular – just like Leah and just like Jesus. Please help your child to memorize the verse and the Scripture reference for next time. Please review with them the place of the book of Genesis, using the diagram above.

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