

Year A, Week 30 (June 22, 2008)
Genesis 27: 1- 34 Esau Gets Blessed

Hymn suggestions: *Father Abraham* (calmy!); *Shout to the North and the South*

Items Needed:

- grown Jacob figure
- grown Esau figure (suggestion: the “giant” figure with strange clothes)
- Rebekah figure
- Isaac figure

We’ve been talking about how God made a promise with his people. We learned that God chose Abraham and his wife Sarah. He sent them to a new place called Canaan, and he made a promise – or a covenant – with them. He told Abraham that one day he would have as many descendants as there are stars in the sky or grains of sand at the beach.

God told Abraham, “This is my covenant. I will be your God, and you will be my people.”

Even though Abraham and Sarah were old when God made these promises, they did have a boy, whom they called Isaac. Later, Isaac had two boys, Jacob and Esau.

The boys were very different. Esau was very hairy, and he was always outside hunting. His father loved him – and the meat that he hunted – very much. (*Show Esau and Isaac figures.*) Jacob preferred to be inside in a tent and lived quietly. His mother loved him very much. (*Show Jacob and Rebekah figures.*)

Last week we talked about how Esau was supposed to receive special blessings and privileges because he was the oldest. But one day when he was hungry, he traded these blessings for some stew that Jacob had made.

In today’s story, their father Isaac was about to die. He was old and could not see well. So he called Esau in to give his oldest son his blessing. (*Place Isaac and Esau together.*) He told Esau to go hunt for some fresh meat to make his father one last pot of stew that he liked so much. He told Esau, “After I eat that stew, I will give you my blessing, and then I will die.”

So Esau obeyed his father and went hunting. (*Place Esau figure a distance away.*)

But Rebekah had been listening, too. So she called Jacob to her side. (*Place Rebekah and Jacob figures together.*) She told him what she’d heard Isaac say. But she said, “Now listen to me and do what I tell you. Go find two young goats and bring them to me. Then I’ll make a stew with them like your father likes, and you can take it in to him. Then *you* can receive the blessing.”

Jacob said, “But Mom – Esau’s so hairy! If Dad feels my smooth skin, he’ll know it’s me.”

She said, “Just do what I tell you.”

So Jacob went to get the goats, and his mother prepared them. Then she gathered some of Esau's clothes for Jacob to wear, and she tied the hairy hide of the goats over Jacob's arms and around his neck so that if Isaac were to touch him or hug him, Jacob would feel hairy. Then she gave Jacob the stew and some bread and sent him in to see his father. (*Place Jacob near Isaac.*)

Jacob said, "I'm here, Father."

Isaac said, "Who are you, son?"

Jacob lied and said, "I'm Esau, here with the stew you wanted. Now eat it and give me my blessing."

But Isaac said, "How did you get it ready so quickly?"

Jacob said, "The Lord helped me."

Isaac said, "Come closer so I can feel you."

Jacob did as his father told him. His father touched him and was confused. Isaac said, "The voice sounds like Jacob! Yet the skin feels like Esau."

Isaac said, "Are you really Esau?"

Jacob lied, "I am."

So Isaac said, "Bring me the stew so I can eat and give you my blessing."

Then Isaac hugged Jacob to him and he felt the hairy goat skin and smelled Esau's clothes, and he gave Jacob Esau's blessing. He asked God to bless his son and gave him his wish that he would be the boss of the family, the boss of his brother. (*Remove Jacob figure.*)

Jacob left, and a few minutes later, Esau came in with the stew. (*Add Esau figure.*) He told his father, "Here I am father. Eat my stew and then offer me your blessing."

But Isaac trembled and said, "Esau? But then who was here a minute ago?"

And they knew that Jacob had stolen the blessing.

Esau said, "Bless me, too!"

But Isaac said, "I have only one blessing to give." And they were both upset.

Questions without Response:

- I wonder ... why there's only one blessing to give?

- I wonder ... if someone's ever stolen something from you?
- I wonder ... why Isaac and Rebekah, Jacob, and Esau are so divided from each other that they would even play tricks on each other?
- I wonder ... if God can bring this family back together again?