

## **Theme: Jacob Wrestles with God**

**Scripture:** Genesis 32:22-31

We surrender to God's Will

*Prepare ahead of time; a small table for arm wrestling on.*

*Bible, ice cubes, all roughly the same size (1 per child and 1 for leader); bowl; straws; salt; paper towels; a hair dryer and access to electricity*

*Put the ice cubes in a bowl and keep them frozen until you're ready to use them. Set out the rest of the supplies. Keep the hair dryer out of sight until you use it. You'll need to be near an electrical outlet.*

Have you ever watched a wrestling match on TV? Two strong people compete to see who is the strongest. Wrestling is a popular sport all over the world. Wrestlers have to be strong and determined to win. Wrestling isn't a modern invention, though. It's one of the oldest sports in the world, and it dates back thousands of years.

Would someone like to try to arm wrestle with me? It is a way to see whose arm is the strongest.

In today's Bible lesson, Jacob spent an entire night wrestling with an angel of God. After an entire night of wrestling, God's angel told Jacob to walk away. Jacob left the wrestling match with a new name and a limp from his hurt hip. Who do you think was the strongest? God's angel or Jacob?

We sometimes struggle with God, too. We may want to do things our way instead of God's way. Do you remember what God's rules are? (*to love God with all your heart and to love one another.*) When is it hard for you to obey God? (Allow time for responses.)

*Give each child a paper towel. Explain that they're in charge now. They'll each have to choose how they think they can most quickly melt an ice cube. They can use a straw to blow hot air on it, sprinkle salt on it, or hold it in your hands to try to melt it most quickly. Pass around the supplies so kids can choose, then distribute the ice cubes.*

*Give kids one minute to try to melt their ice cube using their chosen method. Meanwhile, turn on the hair dryer and blow hot air on your ice cube.*

*Call time, then compare everyone's efforts.*

How did your way compare to my way of melting the ice cube? Why was my way more effective?

My ice cube melted much faster because I had more power. And with God's power, we can do greater things. We can stop doing things our way. We can surrender to God's will and trust that He knows best.

Dear God, please help us remember that You are the One who knows what's best for us. We can surrender to Your will and trust You. In Jesus' name, amen.

Lets Sing ; or repeat as a poem

**My God is so great so strong and so mighty** ( *bend your arms and show your muscles!*)

**There's nothing my God cannot do** ( repeat ) *Wag your finger back and forth*

**The mountains are His** ( *put your hands together to form a mountain and hold them up high*)

**The valleys are His** ( *point your hands downwards touching your fingers together*)

**The stars are His handiwork too** ( *wiggle your fingers up in the sky*)

**My God is so great, so strong and so mighty** ( *bend your arms and show your muscles!*)

**There's nothing my God cannot do** *Wag your finger back and forth*

**For you and you and you and me.** ( *point to everyone*)

## Summary of the Story so far.....: Genesis 32:22-31

You'll Need: ●6-foot length of yarn - 1 for every two children

**Say;** You might be surprised to find out that there's a wrestling match in the Bible. That's what our Bible lesson is about today: wrestling.

Remember, Jacob was the son of Isaac and Rebekah.

He had a twin brother named Esau, and he was born second, holding onto Esau's heel.

When they were older, Jacob thought it was unfair that Esau, as the older brother, should get all his father's riches and he get nothing! Even though he was born only seconds after his brother .....So he cheated Esau out of his entire birthright.

After that, Jacob had to run away to avoid his brother's rage.

. Still, after many years had passed, Esau called for Jacob to return home.

Hmmm.Jacob didn't know if he was coming home to be killed by his brother or to make up with him. He was probably pretty worried about what would happen.

: What do you think Jacob may have been thinking or feeling when he thought about going back to his brother?

Did I mention that Esau was still very angry with him? Jacob and his two wives, his servants, and his 11 sons were traveling to finally meet Esau.

One night of the journey, they came to a river. Jacob wasn't sure what might be waiting for him with Esau, so he helped everyone else across to the other side of the river to continue on the journey. But Jacob stayed behind, all alone.

What happened next was unusual, even by biblical standards. The Bible tells us that a man appeared and all night long, this man wrestled with Jacob. The man was an angel of God.

Imagine—all night! How exhausting would that be?

Let's try something to get a small idea of what that might be like.

Form pairs. *Give each pair a 6-foot length of yarn. Have kids play Tug of War for three rounds.*

You just had a very quick Tug of War that lasted a short time. But Jacob had a whole-body wrestling war with an angel of God for an entire night! That would be really difficult. Just imagine a Tug of War that lasted all night!

Jacob wrestled with God all night. And he walked away with a new name, blessings, and **a limp**.

It seems strange, but if you think about it, sometimes we get into wrestling matches with God, too. Tell about a time you wrestled with God and finally surrendered to His will.

Say: We might want to do things our way, but God wants us to surrender to His will because He is in control. It's hard for us to let go, and that struggle can feel like an exhausting wrestling match. But no matter what, we can trust that what God wants for us is far better than what we can imagine for ourselves.

Lets Sing Again ; or repeat as a poem

**My God is so great so strong and so mighty** ( *bend your arms and show your muscles!* )

**There's nothing my God cannot do** ( repeat ) *Wag your finger back and forth*

**The mountains are His** ( *put your hands together to form a mountain and hold them up high* )

**The valleys are His** ( *point your hands downwards touching your fingers together* )

**The stars are His handiwork too** ( *wiggle your fingers up in the sky* )

**My God is so great, so strong and so mighty** ( *bend your arms and show your muscles!* )

**There's nothing my God cannot do** *Wag your finger back and forth*

**For you and you and you and me.** ( *point to everyone* )

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**Be careful little eyes what you see. X2 For the Father up above is looking down with love. Oh be careful little eyes what you see.** ( repeat using ears, mouth and hands )

## Wrestling with God

Group Activities; Choose the one or more activities that you like and are able to do in your home circumstances.

Sermon Title: ["Jacob Wrestles with God"](#)

Scripture Reading: Genesis 32:22-31

### WRESTLE FOR BLESSINGS:

The teacher can place many slips of paper around the room, under and over things in the room, with BLESSINGS written on each slip of paper. Children will run to find a blessing and bring back to the WRESTLE FOR BLESSINGS poster board and tape onto the board and run out around the designated area to find another blessings. Play for as long as time allows. Let children stand at the board and read the blessings out loud to each other, taking turns. Encourage children to raise their hands if THEY have received ONE of the blessings that is read out loud.

( Anything good is a blessing; mother, father, siblings, food, money, a bed to sleep in, toys, school, play grounds, swimming pools. When we have been deprived of so much during Covid 19 we can be more aware of our blessings.)

### DOMINO WRESTLING: [Wrestle also can mean challenge](#))

Divide the children into two teams. Give each team the same amount of dominoes and have each team stand their dominoes all up next to each other and the teams will *wrestle* against each other to see who can stand all the dominoes up the quickest and then at the same time, each team will touch the first domino and watch them all fall! Tell children there will be a wrestling match in our Bible story today.

### WRESTLING TUG OF WAR: [A skipping rope works well.](#)

Let children takes turns at playing tug of war, in pairs. They can keep asking the other side of the rope if they GIVE UP? Continue to play, giving all children a chance to TUG against another player, as time allows.

### GIVE UP?

Let children take turns doing something that they think the other children can't do. All the other children will attempt to do that activity. The child that is leading them

will keep saying, GIVE UP? Let other children be the leader if desired to give their classmates something to try and do together. ( eg Can you walk on your hands? Put hands under your feet and walk a few steps )

### JACOB BINGO:

The teacher can make up a "bingo" game board (with stickers and the letters for J-A-C-O-B for each child to play JACOB "bingo". When the children have covered all letters for J-A-C-O-B with a button or another small object, they will call out JACOB!! Have little prizes for the winners. (This can be very simple if the teacher just puts 12 squares on each board/paper

### JACOB AND ANGEL LOLLIPOPS:

Provide each child with 2 lollipops to dress as Jacob and the Angel. Different colored tissue papers cut in circles and string or bread ties, etc can be given to the children, to place one tissue paper circle over the top of the lollipop and tie around the neck. Use markers to draw a face on each figure and tie or glue on a craft stick under the tissue paper to be the arms. Darker colored tissue papers could be used for the Jacob figure and yellow and white tissue paper could be for the angel. Children will enjoy telling the story to each other with their "figures" and then eating the lollipop at another time if desired! Make sure to have a lollipop for the children to eat as well!!

### JACOB AND ANGEL MAZE:

Give children a piece of paper and a pencil. Tell children they'll have just 15 seconds to draw BIG squiggly lines around the paper. The child will take a color crayon or marker and will write JACOB (at the beginning of the squiggly lines) Then hand the papers to the child to their right. The next child will try to follow the lines around to the end of the squiggly lines to find the ANGEL. When they have completed the following of the lines of the maze, they can write ANGEL at the end of the lines.

### PANTOMIME WRESTLING:

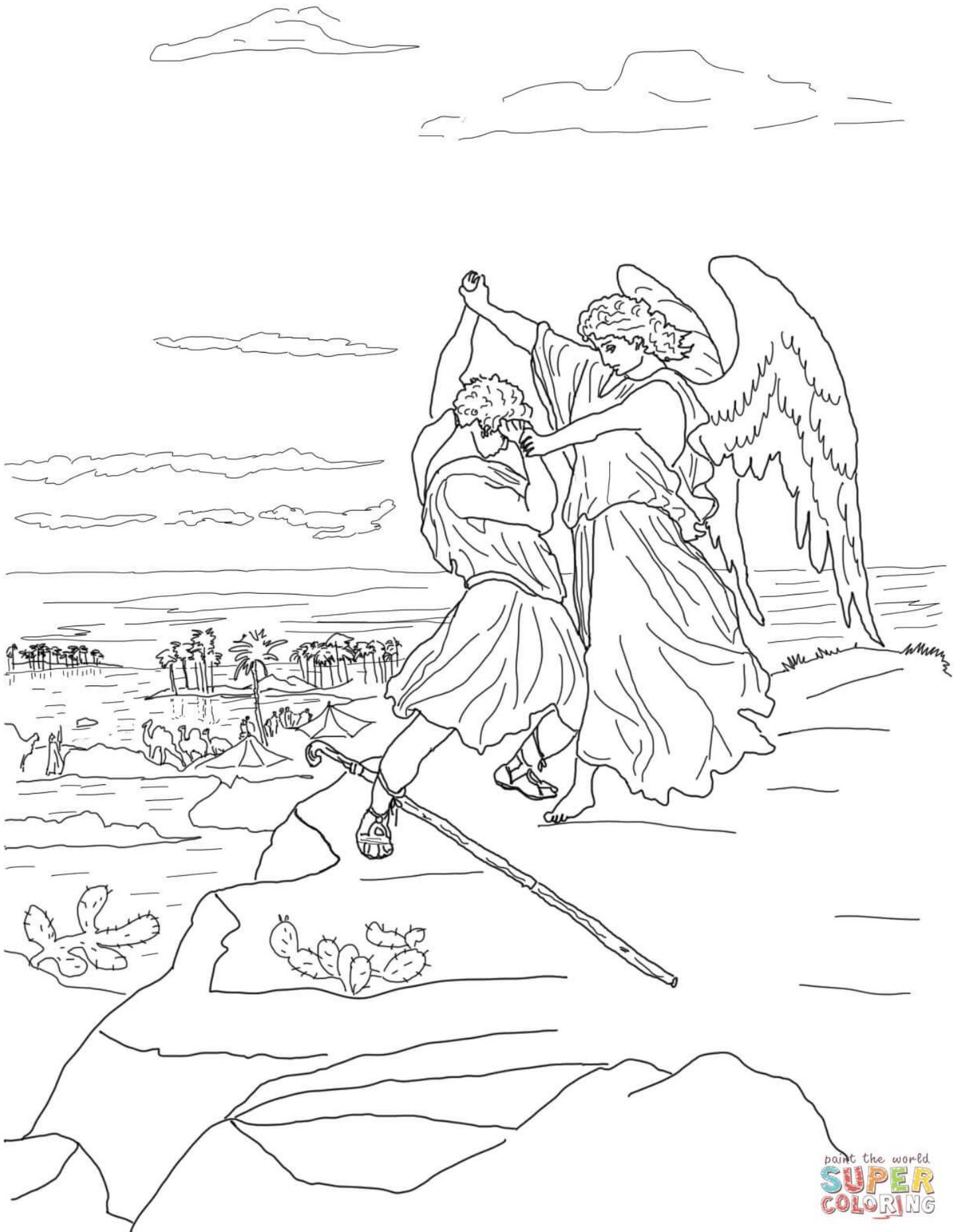
If children need to get some energy worn off and if there is time at the end of class, children can stand apart from each other and take turns doing a pantomime that they are wrestling with the angel like Jacob did. When the teacher says NEXT, the next

child will do the same and give all children an opportunity to wrestle an angel like Jacob did in our story today.

### SURRENDER MATCH GAME:

The teacher can type up short stories or incidences where we should surrender to God's will. Then the children can go to a bulletin board and choose a slip of paper that would be the answer to the "situation" that the Teacher read to them. One side of the poster board will have the short story and the children will match it up with the correct answer on the other side of the board. Examples: Two children want the same toy - the SURRENDER to God's will slip of paper would be - Share the toy or find each child a toy to play with; or A child sees money on the floor that does not belong to that child - the SURRENDER would be a slip that says... Do not keep the money but give to an adult to find the owner of the money; A child is told to clean his room but he wants to play outside instead - SURRENDER slip of paper would say .. Obey mother and then play outside;, etc...

More activity pages follow .....



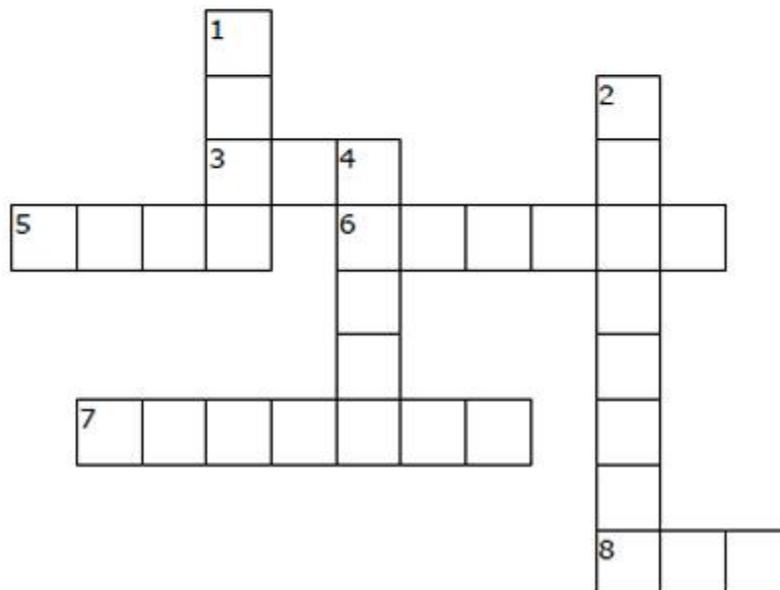
## Jacob Wrestles with God

### Crossword

# Jacob Wrestles with God

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. Genesis 32:24 (NIV)

Puzzle is based on Genesis 32:22-31



#### ACROSS

3. An adult male human
5. The part of the body where the mouth, nose, and eyes are
6. The new name that God gave to Jacob
7. To struggle and try to throw an opponent to the ground
8. The creator of heaven and earth

#### DOWN

1. What a person is called
2. To give wealth or happiness upon someone (I'm not sure if this is the right form of the word to use)
4. The dark part of day from sundown to sunup

NAME	GOD	WRESTLE	MAN
ISRAEL	FACE	BLESSING	NIGHT

## Jacob Wrestles with God

### Decoder

# Jacob Wrestles with God

So Jacob was left alone, and a man wrestled with him till daybreak. Genesis 32:24 (NIV)

Each number represents a letter of the alphabet. Substitute the correct letter for the numbers to reveal the coded words.



A	O	E	C	V	H	F	J	K	G	U	W	S	T	N	D	P	L	Z	B	X	M	Q	Y	R	I
1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26

1. 15-26-10-6-14 \_\_\_\_\_

2. 15-1-22-3 \_\_\_\_\_

3. 20-18-3-13-13-26-15-10 \_\_\_\_\_

4. 22-1-15 \_\_\_\_\_

5. 12-25-3-13-14-18-3 \_\_\_\_\_

6. 10-2-16 \_\_\_\_\_

7. 7-1-4-3 \_\_\_\_\_

8. 26-13-25-1-3-18 \_\_\_\_\_

WRESTLE	MAN	FACE	ISRAEL
NIGHT	BLESSING	GOD	NAME