

Icebreaker:

Growing up, did you ever fight or have sibling rivalry with a brother or sister or even a cousin or friend?

Read scripture and discuss:

1. In this new home group winter session, what are you most anticipating? Building community and friendships, studying the sermon scripture together, or something else?
2. How familiar are you with the story of Jacob and Esau? If you are familiar, what parts of Jacob's story stands out to you and why?
3. Isaac prayed to God on behalf of his wife (in verse 21) to have children. However, she was barren for 20 years after she was married. Can you think of a time when you prayed for something over a long period of time and it was finally answered? Is there something you have been praying for a long time now and are still waiting for the answer?
4. Often we would like to know the future. Do you think Rebekah was pleased to know the future of her two sons? Why or why not? How do you think she inquired of the Lord, and how might he have answered her?
5. Either as a mother or a father, have you shared in a difficult pregnancy and birth? If so, what was that like? What are the feelings that attend such an experience?
6. What does the name "Jacob" mean? (Many think it means "heel grabber") What might it mean to live with this name?

Prayer:

As you pray for one another, please pray for the following needs in our church family:

- > Prayers of comfort for the McDonald family in the death of Glenn's dad and Mark's grandfather, Wick.
- > Prayers for ZPC Youth Inquirers, our covenant children, as they learn more about their relationship with God and the church.
- > Pray that ZPC Home Groups are a place for connection and growth.

Info for your group:

> Home Group Leader Meeting | Sunday, February 25 | Noon

> Winter session | the weeks of January 14-March 18, 2018; Spring session | the weeks of April 8-May 20, 2018

Leader's notes:

Thanks again for accepting the role of being a Home Group leader at ZPC! This is a vital role in the life of the church for making a large church feel smaller, building friendships, studying scripture, and to pray and serve together. If you have somebody new in your group, welcome them and make sure everyone introduces themselves well.

We will study the life of Jacob this winter as he wrestles with God in Genesis chapters 25-36. Jacob is intriguing because he is a schemer. If God can use Jacob, we assume God can use us too.

[Question 1] Use this first question to catch people up with home groups again or to welcome in new members. Feel free to let people chat here a bit as you meet for the first time since November.

[Question 2] Jacob gets Esau to sell him his birthright and deceives his father Isaac to get the blessing of the older son. He flees ahead of the wrath of his brother. Later, he works to increase his flocks of sheep and goats and sneaks away from his father-in-law Laban with his livestock and family.

[Question 3] We know Rebekah was barren for 20 years because Isaac was 40 when they were married and 60 when she gave birth to Esau and Jacob. Bearing children for her husband was part of a wife's identity. Having sons meant a man's name was carried on into the future. Isaac must have prayed for a long time for his wife to be able to have children. When have you prayed for a long time?

[Question 4] Read Genesis 25:22-23 again. Rebekah is told her two boys will be two nations, one will be stronger, and the older will serve the younger. This could be confusing or disheartening news. How do you think Rebekah felt?

[Question 5] Allow your group members to share as openly as they are able here. You may take the lead and share an experience you have had. Be sensitive to those in your group who are not married or don't have children.

[Question 6] You might read briefly about the name Jacob in the notes of a study bible. His name probably means heel grabber; the root of his name shares the root of the Hebrew word for heel. Some think heel grabber means supplanter, one who takes the place of. What would it be like to have this name?

As group leader, close in prayer by taking prayer requests or praying as you feel led.