LESSON 2: ‘CHEATED!’

AIM: To show that greed and selfishness can cause much trouble in families.

MEMORY VERSE: “Create in me a clean heart, O God.” Psalm 51:10(a)

PRESENTATION: Write each word on a heart shape and hide them around the room for the children to find.

ACTIVITY: Write the verse on red, heart shaped card and have the children glue lentils or pasta or noodles around the edge as a border.

STORY: Genesis 25:27-34, 26:34-35 (This part of the series lends itself to drama. To increase child participation, you could tell the story first, then using some simple props, have the children re-enact the story in mime or drama).

(Introduce the story by asking the children to describe one person in their family—preferably a sibling. Then compare themselves, noting their similarities and differences in personality, etc.)

As Jacob and Esau grew, they became quite different people, even though they were twins, born of the same parents and living in the same household.

Jacob was a very quiet man. He loved to stay around the house, which was possibly a group of tents. He dressed very plainly and spoke quietly. He made sure the tents were kept in good order as his father was getting old and frail. Jacob also liked to cook and would spend a lot of time with his mother preparing food and cooking meals for the family. He was his mother’s favourite child.
But Esau was quite different. He was strong and boisterous and loved the outdoor life. He had red hair and probably a fiery temper as well. He would often spend days away hunting for animals. His father loved Esau the most and used to look forward to him coming home with some delicious meat to eat.

Now, because Esau had been born first, he was considered the elder and therefore, he automatically owned the family birthright. This meant that the firstborn son became the family priest, representing God to the family and the family to God. This was a highly respected position in any family, and it also meant that when the father died, the firstborn was entitled to a double portion of the family inheritance.

Jacob wanted to own his brother's birthright and day after day, as he worked around the tents, he thought of ways to steal the birthright from Esau. One day, Esau came back home after being out hunting for a long time and he was absolutely starving. He was so hungry and cold and tired that he felt dizzy and weak in his knees. As he came around the side of the tent, he smelt the aroma of food. It made his mouth water and his tummy rumble. He stumbled up to Jacob who was cooking red lentil stew and begged him for some. Scheming Jacob had been waiting for just such an opportunity to steal Esau's birthright.

"Give me some stew," demanded Esau. But Jacob refused. "No, I will not give you anything to eat unless you give me your birthright in exchange." Now Jacob probably thought he was making a fair deal. He considered it a sale—the birthright for some food. But he was taking unfair advantage of Esau at a time of weakness. Esau thought it through briefly. "What use is the birthright if I die of starvation?" he reasoned. So he foolishly agreed to give over his special place in the family for just one bowl of stew to satisfy his all-consuming hunger.

After Esau had eaten and felt strong again, he decided that he didn't care about his birthright anyway. He wasn't particularly interested in God or his family. Soon after this, Esau disobeyed God's rules and married some women who didn't worship God and this made life very unhappy for his mother and father.

DISCUSSION STARTERS:

- Why did Jacob want the birthright?
- How do you think God felt about Esau selling his birthright and why?
- How can we guard against giving up God's best for things that don't really matter?
- What should we do when tempted to get things that don't belong to us?
- What would be the equivalent of a birthright today?
JACOB AND ESAU
CHEATED!
Genesis 25:27-34, 26:34-35

MEMORY VERSE:  Ps 51:10a:
‘Create in me a clean heart, O God’

As Jacob and Esau grew older, they became quite different personalities, even though they
were twins, who were born of the same parents and living in the same house. Jacob was a quiet
man. He liked to stay around the tents. He made sure the tents were kept tidy and in good
order as his father was getting old and frail. Jacob also liked to cook and would spend a lot of
his time with his mother, preparing and cooking food. He was his mother’s favourite child.

Esau was very different. He was strong and loved hunting and the outdoor life. He had red
hair and probably a fiery, impatient temper as well. He would often spend days away hunting
for animals to keep the family supplied with meat to eat. His father loved him the most and
used to look forward to Esau coming home with some delicious meat to cook up for the
evening meal.

Because Esau had been born first, he was the elder son, and it was the custom in ancient times
that the firstborn would receive the family birthright which was passed down from father to
firstborn son in each generation. This meant that the firstborn would receive a double portion
of the family inheritance, and would also become the family priest, representing God to the
family and the family to God. This was a highly respected position in any family.

Jacob, the second son, wanted to own the birthright. Day after day as he worked around the
tents, he thought of ways to steal the birthright from Esau. One day Esau came back after a
long time hunting, and he was absolutely weak with starvation. As he came up to the tents he
smelt the delicious aroma of hot food and his tummy rumbled. He went up to Jacob who was
cooking red lentil stew and begged him for some. This was the chance Jacob had been
waiting for!

‘Give me some stew’, demanded Esau. Jacob refused. ‘No, I will not give you anything to eat
unless you give me your birthright’. Jacob thought this was a fair deal, but he was really
taking unfair advantage of Esau at a time of weakness. Esau thought, ‘What use is a birthright
if I die of starvation!’ So he foolishly agreed to give over his special place in the family for
just one bowl of stew.

After Esau had eaten and felt strong again, he decided he didn’t care about his birthright
anyway. He wasn’t particularly interested in God or his family. Soon after, Esau disobeyed
God’s rules and married some women who didn’t worship God. This made life very unhappy
for his mother and father.

Selfishness and greed can cause much trouble in families.
We need to ask God to make our hearts clean.
Complete the story:

As Jacob and Esau grew up, they became quite different people, even though they were twins, born of the same parents and living in the same house.

Jacob was ______________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

Esau was ________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________
________________________________________________________________

One day Esau came home after hunting and __________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________
_______________________________________

_______________________________________
Start at the red arrow and write every second letter on the lines below:

Psalm 51:10a
E _ _ _ s _ _ _ his

b _ _ _ _ _ _ _ _

for a p _ _ of s _ _ _.

_Birthright_ = the rights of the firstborn son to a double share of the family’s land and animals and wealth, the head of the home when the father is away.
Write the words of the memory verse around the edge of the pot as many times as you can.

Create in me a clean heart, O God. Psalm 51:10a.