

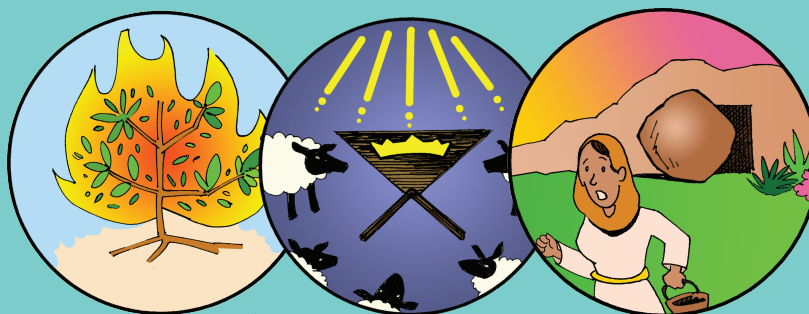
**CROSS + GEN
WORSHIP**

**WORSHIP
GUIDE
#2-3**

**SAMPLE
DISPLAY COPY**

LIVING THE WORD

Narrative Lectionary



**Exploring God's Story Together
CROSS + GEN WORSHIP**

Worship Guide

Contributors

Publisher

Gregory Rawn

Editors

Kari Osmek

Cynthia Fairman Paulson

Elaine Seekon

Writers

Kari Osmek

Rev. Diana Booren

Stephanie Luedtke

Noell Rathbun-Cook

Dr. Jennifer Vasquez

Graphic Designers

Nicholas McDougal

Benjamin Borter

Layout

Nance Keyes

Illustrator

Rev. Tom Pairan

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Living the Word: Exploring God's Story Together, Cross+Generational Worship (Narrative Lectionary, Year 2)

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Lesson #2-3

Jacob Wrestles

Genesis 32:[9-13] 22-30

C+G
Worship

Key Verse:

Then the man said, “You shall no longer be called Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with God and with humans, and have prevailed.”

Genesis 32:28

The Point:

God changes us.

Making Connections:

God Creates Family

Spiritual Practice:

Prayer



Worship @ a Glance

Worship Element

Supplies

Gathering

Welcoming Time: We All Struggle

5 min. † None

Opening Prayer

3 min. † None

Thanksgiving for Baptism

2 min. † Optional: baptismal font

Word

Making Connections:

Family Connections

Learn about ancestors.

10 min. † Optional: Activity Sheet #2-3.A, pens or pencils

Learning the Story:

Jacob Wrestles with God

Tell the story with life-like puppets.

15 min. † Bible
† Mural paper
† Markers

Meal

Offering

5 min. † Small pieces of paper or notecards
† Pencils

Living the Story/Prayers of the People

2 min. † Paper
† Pens or pencils

Eucharistic Prayer

2 min. † None

Worship @ a Glance

Sending

Closing Prayer

2min. † None

Blessing

2min. † None

At Home

1min. † Sharing God's Story @ Home





Cross+Generational Ministry has at its core the concept that faith is passed on from generation to generation (back and forth) through meaningful relationships, and through finding our place in God's story by exploring that story in community.

Effective cross+generational experiences are:

- experiential**
- interactive**
- engaging**
- story-centric**
- home-based**
- equalizing**

all of which promote an **encounter with God**. All of the activities included in this worship guide are intended to engage these principles, through intentional cross+generational interaction and active, creative activities that bring the Bible story to life in our lives.

We pass on the faith through worship, and weaving teaching and learning moments into worship experiences reinforces the understanding that we are an active part on an ongoing story of God's work in the world.

Background for Leaders

This background information is provided for the use of preachers, storytellers, music leaders, and anyone else who has a role in worship planning. It gives a deeper understanding into the context and thematic material found within and behind each text. Feel free to use it to inform your worship material choices.

Making Connections

The narrative of this season's readings reveals a God who is focused on relationship. Genesis is the beginning of the story that is woven throughout the rest of the biblical narrative, demonstrating a God who created humans, set limits for them, made promises to them, and wrestles with them through their struggles. Today's story reveals a new side of the divine-human relationship: one of physical struggle and life-changing blessing.

Story Summary:

Jacob Wrestles

Jacob, the central character in today's story, is the son of Isaac and his wife, Rebekah. This is a very strange story that includes many odd things. While traveling with his family, Jacob is met by a stranger while he is alone. This stranger then proceeds to wrestle with Jacob through the night, striking Jacob's hip and causing it to become disjointed. However, Jacob does not stop fighting.

When it is dawn, Jacob is asked by this stranger to stop wrestling. Jacob refuses to stop unless he receives a blessing. The stranger then changes Jacob's name to Israel, or "one who prevails with God," revealing that Jacob wrestled with God and prevailed. This blessing changes Jacob, and he gives the place where he wrestled God the name Peniel, stating that he has seen God's face and has still lived.

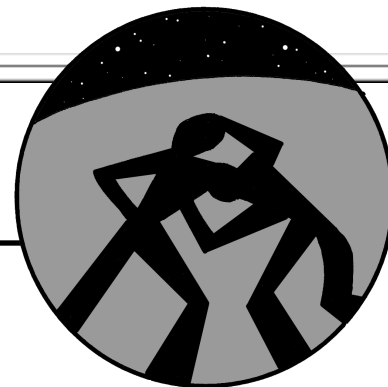
The Point

God changes us. Just as God gave Jacob a special blessing, we receive special blessings from God, too. God provides us with the things we need to survive and live. God heals us when we are sick. God is revealed to us through people and experiences. These blessings change us and help us see the face of God in our lives, just as Jacob saw the face of God.

Spiritual Practice: Prayer

A blessing can be seen as a type of prayer in which we ask God to look upon us with favor and kindness. Jacob wrestles with an angel (God), and in the end, finally asks that the angel bless Jacob. Jacob wanted the favor and kindness of this stranger to be given to him. When we seek God's blessings, we are asking for special gifts from God.

Worship Plan



Gathering

Cross+Generational Worship will look different in each different setting. Some congregations may worship in stationary seating, such as pews. Others may have a more flexible space. These suggestions are offered with these diverse settings in mind. The times indicated are just estimates, and you can take more or less time as you see fit. Feel free to adapt each element to fit your setting, remembering that the more you can engage the principles of Cross+Generational Ministry, the more vibrant and effective your worship can be.

Welcoming Time: We All Struggle (5 minutes)

You will need:

† Nothing

During class:

1. **Greet the people around you. Introduce yourself to anyone you do not know. Discuss the following questions with the people around you, but try to include someone who did not come with to worship with you. Remember to listen to everyone and give everyone a chance to tell their story.**
 - What was the best part of your week last week?
 - What was the worst part of your week?
 - What does it mean to you to struggle?
 - Can you tell of a time when you have struggled?
2. **Our story today is about a man named Jacob, who struggled with God, and who received a blessing—a new name—out of the experience. Our names are important, and tell something about where we come from and where we are headed. Let's celebrate our families and our names.**

Opening Prayer (3 minutes)

Let us pray:

Lord, God, creator of all, you are our parent and guide, our sustainer and provider. You gave Jacob a new name that held depth and meaning, just as we have all been given names full of meaning. We thank you for our names, and how they uniquely describe us as we all call out our names now. Pause to allow congregation to say names. We thank you for our parents: people who gave us life, people who adopted, or people who treated us as their own. Hear their names now. Pause to allow congregation to say names. We thank you for our ancestors, for grandparents, great-grandparents, and those who have gone before. We are humbled by the legacy they have left to us. Hear their names now. Pause to allow congregation to say names. Amen.

Thanksgiving for Baptism (2 minutes)

Lord, God, you know each of our names, and you call us individually into our lives of faith. At our baptisms, you named us and claimed us as your own. Be in our worship today, speak to us in your Word, and feed us in your Meal, so we may be sustained for a life of blessing. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.

Please turn to those around you and, with their permission, make the sign of the cross on their forehead or hand, and remind them of the promises of their Baptism with these words: “_____, Child of God, you have been sealed with the Holy Spirit and marked with the cross of Christ forever. Amen.”

Word

Making Connections: Family Connections (10 minutes)

Learn about ancestors.

You will need:

- † Optional: Activity Sheet #2-3.A, pens or pencils

Before worship:

1. If desired, make copies of Activity Sheet #2-3.A for each family.

During worship:

1. **Last week we talked about how we are connected to one another and to our church family by using yarn to visualize those connections. This week, we will bring it a little closer to home and talk about our own families.**
2. **Last week and the week before, we heard about Abraham and Sarah being promised descendants and humankind created to be in relationship to all of creation. In our story this week, Jacob wrestles with God and gains a new name.**
3. **What are the names in your family? What do they mean, and why were they chosen? Turn to those around you and tell the stories of being named in your family.**
4. If desired, use Activity Sheet #2-3.A as a visual to help guide discussion about relationships. Begin in the bottom oval, with the youngest generation present. Include all siblings in that oval. On the next level up, list parents; then, above them, grandparents.

Learning the Story: Jacob Wrestles with God (15 minutes)

Tell the story with life-like puppets.

You will need:

- † Bible
- † Mural paper
- † Markers

During worship:

1. Choose four volunteers to help you act out the story as you read it. Two will be Jacob and God, the other two will be their puppeteers. The volunteers will need to move each other's limbs or assist in having their limbs moved.
2. **I need two volunteers to play the parts of Jacob and his adversary as I read the story.** Select two people. **I forgot to tell you two that you cannot move on your own. You are puppets, and I need two more people to be your puppeteers.** Select two more people. **You two are the puppeteers. You must move the puppets limbs for them, because they cannot move on their own.** Make sure volunteers understand their roles.
3. Read Genesis 32:22-30, pausing when necessary for the actors and their puppeteers to get in position as they depict the story. When you have finished, encourage a round of applause for the actors and their puppeteers.
4. **What were some strange things that happened during this story? Sometimes we do not understand everything that we read in the Bible, and the stories seem strange. What is important is that we learn something new about God and about ourselves by reading these stories.**
5. **In the story, what does Jacob ask God to do? [To bless him.] Does God do this? [Yes.] How do you think Jacob felt after God blessed him? [Surprised, happy, loved, etc.] Do our encounters with God change us? [Yes!]**
6. **Jacob met God through a strange experience, but that encounter changed him. Not only did his name change, but he also knew that God would be with him and that God would always keep promises. When we meet God, we are changed too, even if our meeting seems strange or unexpected.**
7. Write the word BLESSINGS down the side of the mural paper, each letter in different colors. **Let's write an acrostic poem together. Who can come up with a word or phrase that starts with "B" that describes today's story?** Continue with a word or phrase for each letter, until the acrostic is complete. Read it to the congregation. If there is somewhere to display this acrostic poem, consider posting it in a prominent place in your building so everyone can celebrate our blessings.

8. **Jacob was blessed by God and given a new name. We are blessed by God, too, and are able to say prayers of blessings for the many different situations and places in which we find ourselves every day.**

Meal

Offering (5 minutes)

Provide small pieces of paper and pens or pencils. Instruct participants to write their name on the paper, and the meaning of their name if they know it. Based on the meaning of their name, what can they offer to God (i.e., kindness toward others, bravery in the face of challenges, etc.) Write their offering on the paper and include it at this time.

Living the Story/Prayers of the People (10 minutes)

In today's story, Jacob asks God for a blessing. When we ask God for a blessing, we ask God to look on us with favor and kindness. A blessing is a form of prayer. What are some of the things on which people might pray a blessing? [*Food, family, homes, friends, people who are sick, etc.*]

Assign each group or section of the congregation a category about which to create their blessing, such as those listed above. If you are worshipping in a setting with pews, designate a category for each section and ask worshipers to simply call out words or short phrases as the leader offers the petitions. If you are in a flexible setting or are around tables, have groups create a blessing together.

Share your blessings with each other as prayer petitions. The leader begins:

For the food we eat, we offer this blessing... a group or individual offers the appropriate blessing.

For the homes in which we live, we offer this blessing... a group or individual offers the appropriate blessing.

For those who are sick in body, mind, or spirit... a group or individual offers the appropriate blessing.

For those who are away from home... a group or individual offers the appropriate blessing.

Eucharistic Prayer (2 minutes)

Blessed are you, Lord God, creator of the universe; of earth, stars, sky, and waters; of trees and plants, and animals. You created Abraham, Isaac, Jacob and his brothers, and we are the heirs of this heritage. In the fullness of time, you sent your Son to redeem a fallen world, to bring us back into balance, and to restore relationships and make us whole. We remember the community that gathered in the night in which he was betrayed...

Communion (Optional)

One way to reinforce the connections amongst the community, and our responsibility to each other, is by having the congregation serve communion to each other. This can be done while the congregation is at their seats. It is helpful to have a communion assistant to hold the wine while people offer the bread, and to help the bread and wine move smoothly from one row, section, or table to another.

Sending

Closing Prayer (2 minutes)

Encourage participants to hold hands with those next to them, connecting the entire congregation. Begin and end the prayer, but leave enough silence in the middle for people to participate. You can remind worshippers that even if two people pray at once or someone can't be heard, God hears all our prayers.

Loving God,

Thank you for the amazing stories of the Bible. Thank you for Jacob, our ancestor who struggled with you and was given a blessing. Please be with us in our struggles. Invite participants to add their prayers here. Bless us each day as we seek to bless one another. In your name we pray. Amen.

Blessing (2 minutes)

Turn to the people on either side of you and, with their permission, make the sign of the cross on their hand or forehead, and say, “God created you for community.”

At Home (1 minute)

If your congregation is using the “Sharing God’s Story @ Home” insert, remember to hand them out before they leave worship.

This week:

- ✝ Talk to a member of your family about your family history. Try to learn something new about your history.
- ✝ Find something or someone about which or whom to pray a blessing each day. Write some of your favorite blessings down.
- ✝ Read the daily readings with your family or with a prayer partner, and think about ways in which you struggle with and are blessed by God.

Family Connections

Learn about ancestors.

