

Love that Disrupts

Today's readings show us ways in which God enters the world and disrupts it – an elder child will serve his younger sibling, those who value the ways and wealth of the world will have nothing. These texts turn the world upside down and demonstrate that God calls us into a new way of being in relation with God and one another.

Focus scripture: **Genesis 25:19–34**

Genesis 25:19–34 opens with Rebekah and Isaac, who had struggled with barrenness, conceiving twins. The siblings wrestle with one another in their mother's womb, foreshadowing the struggle they will have throughout their lives. Like Cain and Abel, the two children possess opposite character traits. Esau becomes a hunter and Jacob a quiet man of the field. Their parents each gravitate towards a different son. The author highlights these oppositional features and the division of the family to set up a plot twist, a reversal.

In **Psalm 119:105–112**, we hear the psalmist's devotion to the Law. Like a lamp lighting the way, God's statutes provide guidance. While there are adversaries and obstacles in the world that seek to distract and entrap the faithful, the psalmist calls on God to teach and guide according to God's law.

In **Romans 8:1–11**, Paul contrasts life in the flesh and life in the Spirit. Jesus invites us into life in the Spirit. Paul describes a tension between "flesh" and "spirit," not to designate two parts of human nature, but two ways of living. Living "in the flesh" is to focus on the material world. To dwell "in the Spirit" is to focus on God's ways. God's Spirit empowers people to live in harmonious relationships with God and neighbour.

God's generous and surprising and disruptive ways are addressed in Jesus' parable of the sower, found in **Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23**. In this discourse on the reign of God, Jesus opens with a series of agriculturally based parables. In this parable, the yields reaped from seeds sown on varying types of soil illustrate the number of ways people experience receiving God's word. The seed is sown generously among all people. The work of God's realm will yield a certain harvest, despite the tensions and struggles among those who received the word.

Jesus' image of God's bountiful harvest not only attests to the power of God's reign but also stands in stark contrast to the Roman Empire and its agricultural and ecological practices. Rome's unquenchable desire for goods and exotic luxuries led to exploitative practices resulting in barren land, deforestation, animal extinction, and environmental devastations still felt today. God's way produces an abundant harvest, while Rome must use violence and exploitation to secure its harvest.


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The texts this week highlight how God challenges the ways of the world. They ask us to be open to seeing and doing things differently to live more fully into our life with God. How can we lead lives that disrupt injustice and open space for God's love to enter the world?



Focus scripture
Genesis 25:19–34

Additional scriptures
Genesis 25:19–34
Psalm 119:105–112
Romans 8:1–11
Matthew 13:1–9, 18–23

 *Seasons of the Spirit*
is based on semi-
continuous readings of the
Revised Common Lectionary.

**Disruptive God,
your ways are
not the ways of
the world. Chal-
lenge us to see the
world according
to your plan. Help
us to seek justice,
instead of resting
in the comfort of
tradition. Guide us
so that we too may
disrupt the world
with your love.
Amen.**

Lection Connection
links current events
with this week's
scriptures. Go to www.seasonsonline.ca and
click on the link.

The Focus for Ages 3–5

Of all the feelings and emotions that children can and will experience, angry feelings are the most powerful and difficult for young children to control. For example, the birth of a new baby can bring out strong feelings of jealousy and rivalry. It is not uncommon for a young child to feel as though a parent gives more time and even love to that new child. Or they may feel that parents favour one sibling and wonder if they are still special.

Learning to recognize and express these feelings in acceptable ways is one of the important parts of growing. When children

find it hard to say how they feel, a trusted adult can be a great help, recognizing and naming those feelings, making them more manageable. There are other ways children can express their feelings. Some may be able to draw their feelings, or make up a song, or engage in imaginary play to work through their feelings. This week's session offers an opportunity to encourage the children to talk about those feelings and affirm them, and assure them of God's love no matter what happens. Pray that children may grow to know the healthy fullness of their emotional lives as a place where God is always present.

Prepare

Before the session

- ❑ Read and prayerfully reflect on this week's focus scripture, Genesis 25:19–34, and [biblical background material](#) (p. 33).
- ❑ Set a worship space with green cloth, candle, offering basket, Bible with bookmark placed in focus passage.
- ❑ Bring [basic supply kit](#) (p. 2) and, if possible, *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Songbook*, *Seasons Growing Faith (SGF) Music CD*, and CD or MP3 player; downloadable sheet music and MP3 recordings are available at www.seasonsonline.ca.

Gather

- ❑ Bring "Welcome Song" (on resource sheet "[Additional Songs and Poems](#)," p. 82) or "Hello Everybody!" (p. 10 in *SGF Songbook*; #6 on *SGF Music CD*).
- ❑ Bring a paper circle with a "happy face" on one side and an "angry face" on the other; option: bring a puppet (see information on p. 2).

Engage

- ❑ Bring story figures of Isaac and Rebekah from last week.
- ❑ Bring resource sheet "[Esau and Jacob](#)," figures of Esau and Jacob from poster [Storytelling Resources #1](#), and reusable adhesive.

Respond

Choose from the options provided. Prepare and bring the materials.

- ❑ **Prayer circle:** several paper "Child" shapes for each person (see [pattern](#) on p. 83)
- ❑ **Drawings:** copies of resource sheet "[My Special Picture for You](#)"; trim edges around the frame.
- ❑ **Torn paper art:** different colours of construction paper, drawing paper

Bless

- ❑ Bring "Blessing Song" (on resource sheet "[Additional Songs and Poems](#)," p. 82) or "A Little Peace Song" (p. 5 in *SGF Songbook*; #1 on *SGF Music CD*).

For groups consisting mostly of three-year-olds, supplemental resources can be downloaded from the Library at www.seasonsonline.ca.



July 12, 2020

Love that Disrupts

Scripture

Genesis 25:
19–34

FOCUS To hear a story of two brothers and wonder what we can learn from them

Gather

Welcome each child, saying “Hello, *(child’s name)*, we’re happy you’re here.” Invite them to share experiences from the past week.

Opening ritual

Gather around the worship space. Light the candle, saying, “This candle reminds us of God’s love which is all around us.”

Pray Thank you, God,
for the stories in the Bible,
that help us learn about your love.
Thank you that we can be
with our friends here today. Amen.

Sing “Welcome Song” (p. 82 or “Hello Everybody!” (p. 10 in *SGF Songbook*, #6 on *SGF Music CD*).

Extinguish the candle to signal that the opening ritual has ended.

Moving into the theme

Choose one of the following:

❑ Puppet conversation

Priscilla: Hi, everybody. Something bad happened. My friend took my favourite toy and she won’t give it back.

Leader: I’m sorry to hear that, Priscilla. It sounds like you might be angry with your friend.

Priscilla: I sure am. And I don’t know what to do. Children, what do you do when you feel angry with your sister, or brother, or friend? (*Encourage responses.*)

Leader: Sometimes people do things that make us feel angry. Our story from the Bible today is about two brothers who didn’t always get along. (*Say goodbye to Priscilla.*)

❑ **Happy and angry** Show a paper happy face and invite children to talk about things they like doing with a sibling or a friend. Then show the paper angry face and talk together about some of the things that happen between siblings or friends that make them feel angry. What can we do when that happens? (*Encourage responses.*) Explain that this week’s story from the Bible is about two brothers who didn’t always get along.

Engage

Before the story

Invite children to look at the figures of Rebekah and Isaac and remember last week’s story about Rebekah leaving her home to go and marry Isaac. Explain that this week we will hear a story about their two sons. Invite children to help you make an outline on the floor with masking tape, explaining that this will be one of the tents where the family lived.

The Bible story

Gather inside the “tent space” and invite a child to bring the Bible from the worship table and use the bookmark to open it to the book of Genesis. Use the resource sheet “[Esau and Jacob](#),” and the figures of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob (from the poster [Storytelling Resources #1](#)) to tell the story based on **Genesis 25:19–34**. At the end of the story invite four volunteers to place the fig-

ures of Rebekah and Isaac, and Jacob and Esau, ton the worship table.

After the story

Faces Sometimes, like Jacob and Esau, brothers and sisters, or friends, don't get along. Invite children to talk about what kinds of things make them angry (such as when someone breaks a favourite toy, when another child hits them, when another child refuses to play with them, when a brother

or sister gets more attention). Encourage them to demonstrate what an angry face looks like. Then talk about ways to show angry feelings in an appropriate way (such as saying "I'm angry!" or telling a parent). Explain that even when they are feeling angry or sad, God is always with them. God knows that they are special. Encourage children to show happy faces.

Respond

Choose from the following activities.

- ☐ **Prayer circle** Even when siblings or friends do something that makes us angry we can still care about them. Give children a paper shape for each brother or sister, or for several friends. Print the names of their siblings or friends on the backs of the shapes. Provide a variety of materials to decorate these shapes. Then gather in a circle, holding the shapes, and take turns saying a simple prayer: "Thank you, God, for (name siblings or friends)." The rest of the group can join in saying, "Please bless them. Amen."
- ☐ **Drawings** We can choose to strengthen relationships by creating gifts for our siblings or friends. Distribute copies of the image from



the resource sheet "[My Special Picture for You](#)" and encourage children to draw a special picture of something they like to do with their sister, brother, or friend. Fold the frame along the dotted lines to create a three-dimensional frame.

- ☐ **Torn paper art** Invite children to think about how it feels to have a disagreement with a sibling or friend. Have them choose some colours of construction paper, tear the paper into shapes, and glue the shapes onto papers to make an abstract "angry" picture. Then have them think about how it feels to get along with their siblings or friends and tear different colours of paper to make "happy" pictures.

Bless

Gather in the worship space. Light the candle again and remind children that God loves them very much.

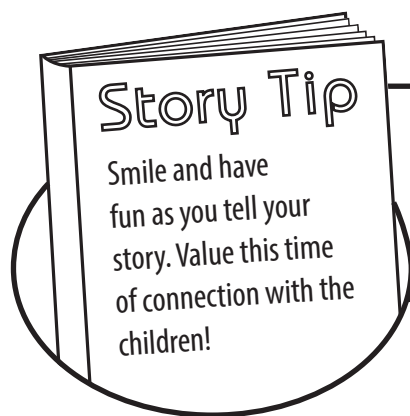
Pray Thank you, God,
for your BIG (*stretch arms wide*) love.
Thank you that you are
always with us,
no matter what happens. Amen.

Sing the "[Blessing Song](#)" (p. 82) or the song, "A Little Peace Song" (p. 5 in *SGF Songbook*, #1 on *SGF Music CD*).

Send each child out with the words, "(Child's name), God promises to always be with you."

Reflect

Consider the relationships you may have with the children. In what ways do you see their relationship with God and each other growing and changing?



Esau and Jacob

(Genesis 25:19–34)

(Have figures of Isaac, Rebekah, Esau, and Jacob nearby.)

Isaac and Rebekah wanted a baby. *(Show Isaac and Rebekah.)* They wanted a baby to love. They wanted a baby to kiss and hug. One day, Isaac and Rebekah were very lucky. Two babies came to them. *(Show two fingers.)* Two babies came to them at almost the same time. Isaac and Rebekah had twin boys! First Esau was born. *(Point to one finger.)* Then Jacob was born. *(Point to the other finger.)* The two boys were twins but they were not exactly alike. Esau had dark curly hair while Jacob had little hair. Esau had darker skin and Jacob had fairer skin. Esau was born first and that meant that one day Esau would be the family's leader. Esau would be the one who would make the decisions for the family. Esau would also be given most of the things his father, Isaac, owned.

When Esau grew up, he became a good hunter. *(Show Esau.)* He used a bow and arrow to find food for the family to eat. Esau liked to be outdoors. Isaac, his father, was very proud of his big, strong son, Esau.

When Jacob grew up, he liked to stay around home and care for sheep. *(Show Jacob.)* He liked to cook good food for the family. Rebekah, his mother, was very proud of her quiet, helpful son, Jacob.

One day, Jacob was cooking some bean soup when his brother, Esau, came into the room.

"Give me some of that soup, Jacob. I am very, very hungry," demanded Esau in a gruff voice. *(Pause.)* You see, Jacob and Esau didn't always get along and they didn't always speak nicely to each other.

Jacob stopped stirring the soup. He angrily looked at Esau. *(Pause.)* Now, Jacob wanted something that Esau had. Jacob wanted it very badly, so he decided to trick Esau.

"Yes, I can see that you are very hungry. I will give you a big bowl of this delicious soup and some bread," said Jacob, "but first you have to make me a promise. Promise me that one day I can be the family's leader."

Esau smelled the soup. He was hungry. All he could think about was getting food to eat. "Who cares? I need to eat. Yes, I will promise. You can be the leader of the family. Now give me some soup!"

Jacob smiled. He *had* tricked Esau. Now Esau would not be the family leader. Esau would not get more of his father's gifts than Jacob.

Jacob knew he would get something that didn't belong to him. Jacob wanted to be the family leader. He wanted to get most of his father's gifts. And Jacob didn't care that he had been unkind to his own brother.

I wonder how his brother Esau felt when he later found out that he was tricked.



My Special Picture for You

ADDITIONAL SONGS AND POEMS

WELCOME SONG

(tune: "London Bridge")

Gather round with us today,
to sing and pray, to learn and play.
Gather round with us today,
God loves us in every way.

BLESSING SONG

(tune: "London Bridge")

God is with us as we go,
as we go, home today.
God is with us as we go.
God loves us in every way.

GOD'S LOVE

(tune: "The Wheels on the Bus")

God's love for me goes on and on,
on and on, on and on.
God's love for me goes on and on,
everywhere I go.
(Repeat song using the words "you" and
"us" instead of "me.")

I CAN SING AND PRAY

(tune: "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star")

I can sing and pray and grow.
I can draw and laugh and throw.
I can push and pull and lift.
I can choose to share my gifts.
I can sing and pray and grow,
all because God loves me so.

I'M LOVED

(tune: "Head and Shoulders")

Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
knees and toes, knees and toes.
Head and shoulders, knees and toes,
all of me is loved!
(Other verses: Wiggly fingers, wiggly
toes... Eyes and ears, and mouth and
nose... Neck and elbows, hips and
feet...)

LISTEN, LISTEN

(tune: "London Bridge")

Listen, listen, God loves us,
God loves us, God loves us.
Listen, listen, God loves us,
God helps us to be friends.

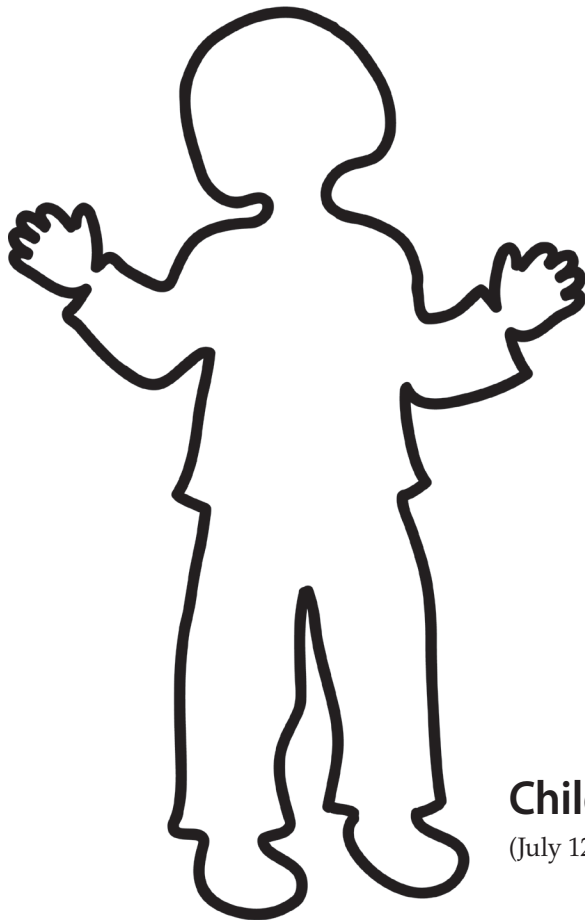
SLEEP LITTLE BABY

(August 23)

Sleep little baby (close eyes and lay
head on folded hands),
safe in my arms (hug arms around
self).
I'll hug and rock you (cradle arms and
rock back and forth),
and keep you from harm (pretend to
hug a baby).
Hush little baby (put finger to mouth
and say "Shhh"),
don't start to cry (wave finger back
and forth and shake head),
I'll hug and rock you (cradle arms and
rock back and forth),
'cause I love you, that's why! (Fold
arms over heart.)



PATTERNS

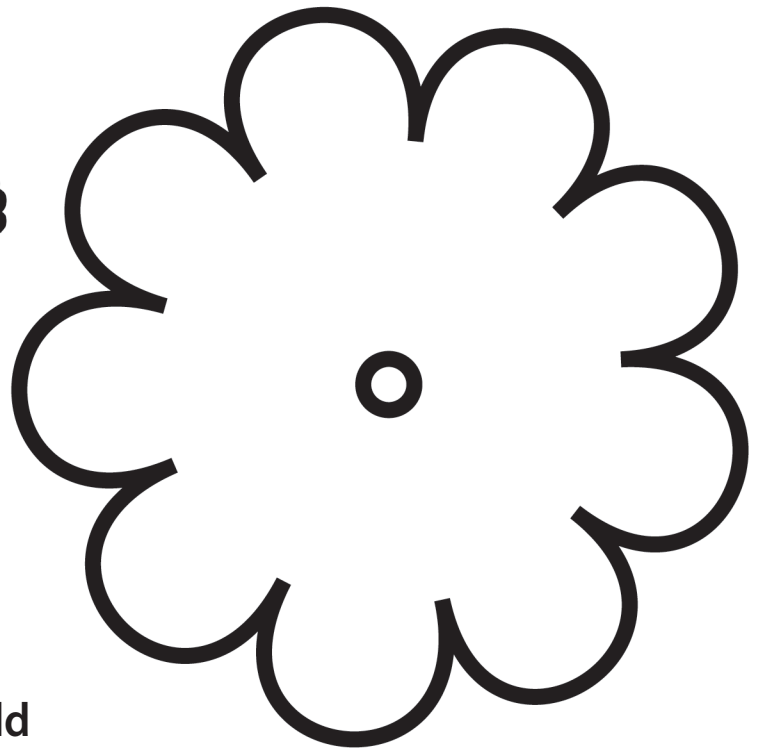


Child

(July 12, August 23, 30)

Flower

(June 28)



PAPER DOLLS

(August 16)

1. Use half a sheet of paper that has been cut lengthwise.
2. Fold paper in half and in half again in the same direction.
3. On the top section, draw a person whose hands extend to the folds of the paper (or trace pattern on this page).
4. Invite the children to do the unfolding to reveal four people.

