

Today's Bible Verse: Then Jacob gave Esau some bread and some lentil stew. He ate and drank, and then got up and left. So Esau despised his birthright. Genesis 25:34 (NIV)

Last week our story was about Abraham and Sarah and God's promise that their family would grow to be as many as stars in the sky. In our downstairs time, we made paper plate dioramas of Abraham and Sarah, their tent, and baby Isaac, under a starry sky.

Isaac, the son of Abraham and Rebecca grows up. Isaac and his wife Rebekah have twin sons- twin brothers- named Esau and Jacob. And our story today is about these brothers. The Bible tells us that these two looked and acted very differently from each other. Esau is hairy and wants to be outdoors hunting. Jacob is quieter and prefers to stay near their tents.

Now even with twins, there is one who is a little bit older. Esau was a little bit older than Jacob.

In those days, every father gave a special blessing and special gifts to his oldest son. When the father dies, the oldest son becomes the owner of his father's household. But Isaac's wife Rebekah wants her younger son Jacob to get the special blessing and gifts from Isaac. As Isaac gets older, Rebekah and Jacob look for ways to get the special family blessing for Jacob.

One day, as usual, Esau and Jacob are doing the different kinds of work that they each prefer. Esau hunts outdoors and takes care of their animals. Jacob cares for the area near the tents and prepares dinner. When Esau comes home from hunting and working outdoors all day, he is very hungry. He sees that Jacob has made a delicious stew. Esau demands to eat right away. He will promise anything for that yummy stew!

Jacob says that he will feed him if he promises his oldest-son gifts to Jacob. Esau decides that food right now is more valuable than the special first-son blessing. Esau agrees and takes Jacob's food. But now Jacob needs to get that blessing from his father Isaac.

Isaac is getting even older now, and he can't see very well. Rebekah helps Jacob with a tricky plan. Jacob puts on Esau's clothes and covers himself with animal fur so that Jacob feels and smells like his brother Esau. Isaac is fooled and he gives his special blessing and gifts to Jacob. Esau is angry when he realizes what has happened, and he threatens Jacob. Now Esau understands that stew isn't as important as the promise of God's family.

Jacob is afraid. He runs far away to Rebekah's brother.

Years later, he returns home and Esau forgives him. But no matter where he goes, Jacob is the next father in God's great family of Isaac and Abraham.

Wonder Question: Why was the birthright so important to Jacob and not so important to Esau?

