



## What's in a Name?

### Genesis 32:22-31

Welcome to 'Together Apart', free intergenerational resources to help us be church together while we are apart.

All the sections explore the same Bible passage in a range of creative ways. Choose whichever parts work best for you, and remember that 'All Age' does not mean 'only for the kiddies'!

You can find lots more free resources like this at [www.reflectionary.org](http://www.reflectionary.org), including [this post](#), upon which some of these pages are based.

Here is what you will find in each resource pack:



#### A Word in Your Ear

A Bible passage that we can all learn from together, whatever our age.



#### Food for Thought

Aimed at adults and teens, some thoughts and questions on the passage. Occasionally there might even be some Greek or Hebrew!



#### Inner Space

A blank space for you to record your thoughts, whether that is worries, dreams or a shopping list.



#### Looking Closer

A creative and interactive look at the Bible passage. Great for older children and anyone who likes a creative approach.



#### I Wonder...

An imaginative style of Bible study, perfect for younger children and those who like to immerse themselves in the Bible world. Based on Lectio Divina and Godly Play wondering.



#### Take a Break

A chill-out zone, with meditative colouring for adults and children, and links to audio recordings of the passage so that you can listen while resting your eyes.



#### Creation Station

A craft for children (or young-at-heart adults!) to help us think about the passage. Glue sticks at the ready!



#### High 5

Some creative prayer ideas for helping us to spend time with God. Five minutes, or as long as you want.



## A Word in Your Ear

Take your time reading this extract from our Bible passage. Ask God to help you hear. You can decorate the space around the words if you like.

### Genesis 32:26-29

Then the man said,  
"Let me go, for the dawn is breaking."  
"I will not let you go," Jacob replied,  
"unless you bless me."  
The man asked him, "What is your name?"  
He answered, "Jacob."  
"No longer will your name be Jacob," the  
man told him, "but Israel,  
because you have fought with God and with  
men and have prevailed."  
Then Jacob asked, "Please tell me your name."  
"Why do you ask my name?" the man replied.  
Then he blessed Jacob there.  
(NET)



## Food for Thought

Back in chapter 27, Jacob had marked his big brother Esau, by stealing their father's blessing. Esau vowed to kill Jacob and Jacob legged it. Alone in the desert with nothing but the clothes he wore, Jacob dreamed of his father's God. When he woke, Jacob made a deal with God that if he could return in peace, then the Lord would be his God. Wheeler-dealer? Del-boy could have learned a few tricks!



Twenty years later, and Jacob has married both of his uncle Laban's daughters, had eleven sons and grown very rich at Laban's expense. His uncle gets fed up of the tricks, so Jacob gathers all that he has and does a runner again. This time he heads back home.

**Q: What does Jacob's story tell you about him? What do you think of his relationship with God at this point in his life? How does this encourage us? What warnings can we take?**

Jacob's life was dodgy dealing until people couldn't stand him, then scarper and start again. But this time his past, in the form of Esau, was catching up with him. Jacob sends a greeting to his brother. Will Esau reply, "Great to hear from you, bruv. All is forgiven"? Or will there be a stony silence and an intimidating army of 400? (Spoiler Apert! It's the army.)

So Jacob sends everyone and everything he owns to safety, and that night we find him alone again, in the desert, fearing for his life. All his scheming, all his cheating has got him nowhere. He finally turns to God and makes maybe the one honest prayer of his life. He asks God to save him from his furious brother, he admits that he does not deserve the least amount of God's favour, but he asks for it anyway. And that's where we come in

**Q: It's sometimes said that 'there are no atheists in foxholes'. While that's not strictly true, times of stress and uncertainty do make us re-evaluate our priorities. What is important to Jacob in this story? What would be important to you in that kind of situation?**

So Jacob wrestles with a mysterious man, whom he identifies as God by the end of the encounter. We sometimes talk about 'wrestling' in prayer, like the persistent widow in Luke 18. Is that's what's going on here? Jacob wrestling with God to get a blessing?

I don't think so, no. And I don't think that's what Jesus meant in his parable either. Do we really think that God has to be nagged at until he gets sick of hearing and finally gives in? No, the point of Jesus' parable is that if even that mean judge will (eventually) listen, how much more readily will God?

So why is Jacob wrestling for his blessing? Perhaps he wants to be given what he had, in the past, stolen. Perhaps he needs to know who is in charge. Twenty years earlier, Jacob had asked that God stay with him. Israel found that he had.

**Q: Jacob did not win his blessing, but he was blessed anyway, after God changed Jacob's name. What is significant about the order of these event? How does this apply to us?**



## Inner Space

What's going round your head? Here is a space for you to put your thoughts on paper. You can write, draw ... whatever you like. What will you put here?

A large, empty, rounded rectangular frame with a double-line border, intended for writing or drawing.

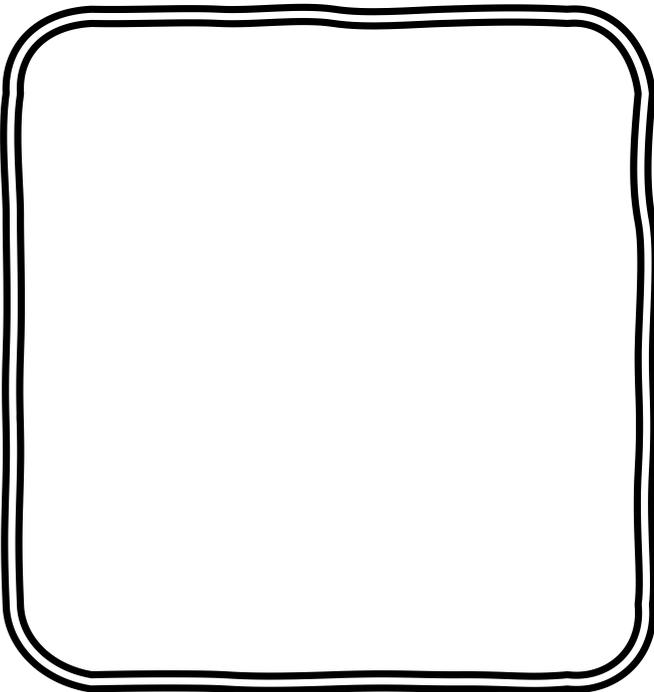
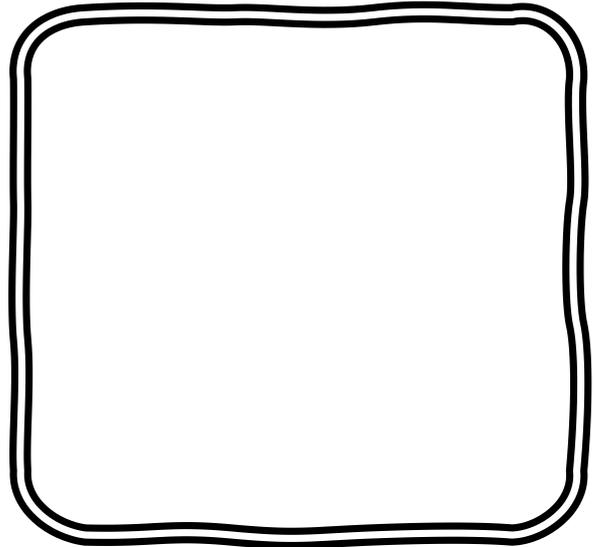


## Looking Closer

Some parts of the Bible are pretty straight forward. Others make us go "Huh?" This is one of those.

Jacob is alone in the desert at night, and a mysterious stranger comes and wrestles with him. The story describes him as a man, but in many pictures he's shown as an angel, and in the end, Jacob reckons he's seen God!

**What do you think? Who was this stranger?  
Would you have wrestled with him?**



The stranger touches Jacob's hip, and the fight is over. He does not want to hurt Jacob, but Jacob needs to know who has won. Then Jacob asks a strange question. He asks for a blessing. And he gets an even stranger answer, "What is your name?"

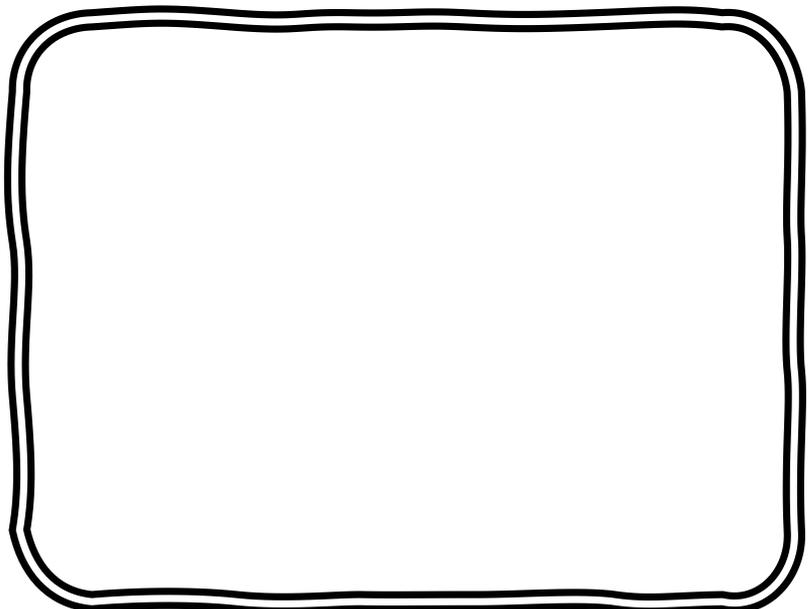
A few chapters earlier Jacob (whose name means 'cheater') had stolen his older brother's blessing from their father. Now Jacob asks for a blessing that is his by right. But what he gets is a new name.

**Why do you think the stranger gave Jacob a new name? What would it be like to hear everyone calling you 'Cheater' all the time? What name would you like to have?**

The next morning, Jacob wakes up to carry on with his journey. "Boy, that was a weird dream," he thinks. "Perhaps eating kippers and custard just before bed was not such a good idea."

But then, just like in a film where you wake and find under your pillow some object from your 'dream', Jacob starts to walk, and he's limping!

**What do you think Jacob said when he noticed the limp?**





## I Wonder...

Read or listen to the passage a few times and let it sit in your mind.

Which words, phrases or ideas do you notice? Does anything stand out for you? Hold that in your heart and listen to what God might be saying.

**I wonder which words seem important or special.**

**I wonder what you will carry with you through the day.**

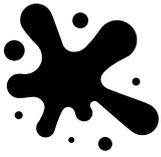


## Take a Break

Put on some music, or listen to the passage being read out while you simply sit and be. You can colour the picture below, or fill it with zentangles, or you can just spend the time breathing.

Genesis 32 on Bible Gateway audio [ESV](#) – [Message](#) – [NIV \(Dramatised\)](#) – [NIV \(Suchet\)](#)

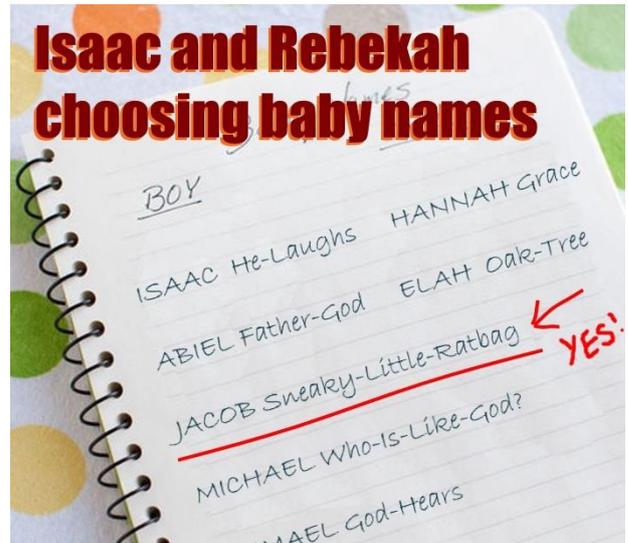




## Creation Station – What's in a Name?

God gave Jacob a new name, and a much nicer one. Jacob meant 'sneaky cheater', but his new name, Israel, means 'he wrestles with God'. What a great reminder of that special (if rather strange) meeting!

Many names have meanings. Pocahontas means 'playful girl', Andrew means 'manly' and Fay (my name) mean 'fairy'. Lots of Bible names have meanings. You can look them up online or check out the list on the next page. What name would you like to have?



### You will need:

- Thick card
- String
- Glue stick
- Silver foil
- Permanent marker pens

### What to Do

1. Choose either a name with meaning (see the list on the next page for suggestions) or your own name and write it on the card in big letters. If you like, you can make the name out of one continuous line. How about a swirly border, too?
2. Cut your card into a groovy shape around your letters. You could cut the top into a hook shape if you want to use your name plate as a door hanger.
3. Stick the string carefully along the line with plenty of glue. If your string is not very thick you can use two or more layers on top of each other. Try to keep the lines thin.
4. Now spread glue over the rest of the card and cover it with silver foil.
5. Tuck the foil tightly around the string so that the lines show up well. You can cover the back of the card with foil as well if you like.
6. Now get busy with the pens! Permanent markers will write on the foil when normal felt-tips won't, and they'll shine like jewel colours because of the foil.



## What's in a Name?

... wondered Juliet, thinking about Romeo's problematic surname. "That which we call a rose by any other name would smell as sweet." Perhaps, but names can have a big influence. We tend to live up to (or down to) the names we are called or call ourselves.

Here are some Bible name, with their meanings. Which would you choose for yourself?

**Abdeel**, servant of God

**Abihu**, God is my father

**Adriel**, God is my helper

**Amaziah**, the strength of the Lord

**Amnon**, faithful

**Ariel**, lion of God

**Asahel**, made by God

**Azaniah**, the Lord listened

**Aziel**, help of God

**Bethel**, house of God

**Bethesda**, house of grace

**Caleb**, bold

**Clement**, merciful

**Coniah**, established

**Daniel**, God is my judge

**Darda**, pearl of wisdom

**David**, beloved

**Eleazar**, God has helped

**Eliel**, God is my God

**Elimelech**, God is my king

**Elizabeth**, God has sworn

**Eve**, source of life

**Eunice**, true victory

**Felix**, fortunate

**Gabriel**, God is my strength

**Hannah**, grace

**Hosea**, salvation

**Ibhar**, God chooses

**Igdaliah**, may God be glorified

**Immanuel** God is with us

**Isaac**, he laughs

**Ishmael**, God hears

**Ithai**, God is with me

**Jaanai**, Jehovah answers

**Jaaziah**, God consoles

**Jada**, wise

**Jadau**, friend

**Jesse**, God's gift

**Joel**, the Lord is God

**John**, God is gracious

**Joshua**, God rescues

**Kadmiel**, (kneels) before God

**Kemuel**, God has raised

**Kehath**, I obey

**Lois**, agreeable

**Luke**, light-giving

**Malachi**, messenger

**Matthew**, gift of God

**Michael**, who is like God?

**Naaman**, pleasantness

**Naomi**, lovely

**Onesimus**, useful

**Othniel**, God is my strength

**Peniel**, face of God

**Peter**, rock

**Phoebe**, bright, pure

**Rephael**, healed of God

**Ruth**, mercy

**Salem**, peace

**Samuel**, asked of God

**Shemaiah**, God heard

**Simon**, hearing

**Syntyché**, fortunate

**Thaddeus**, courage

**Tobias**, goodness of the Lord

**Uriah**, God is my light

**Uzziah**, God is my strength



# High 5

Spend five minutes talking and listening with God. Here is one way:

## Prayer Pegs

These pegs help us to pray. You will need wooden spring pegs and a printout of this sheet.

1. Start by decorating your pegs with felt pens or paints, then sit quietly with God, thinking about which people, places or situations to put in the boxes below.
2. Cut out the prayer boxes, fill them in, and cover both sides of the paper with sticky tape (or you can use a laminator). Cut around the plastic a bit bigger than the paper.
3. Stick the prayer boxes to the pegs with glue dots or double-sided tape. (Of course, you can always just write the prayers on the pegs, if you want to keep it simple.)
4. Where will you keep your pegs? Perhaps on the edge of a mirror, or curtain. You could even hang them on a washing line! Make sure you will see them often.
5. When you see the prayer pegs, take one off and pray about what it says, then put the peg on the *other* side. When you have moved all the pegs, you can start again.
