

Lesson 4.11 – Jacob Runs Away: Active Listening

Topic: Peace in a Family

Subtopic:

3E. Reconciliation and Peacemaking

4B. Communication Skills

Class: IV (Grade 4)

Objectives: **Knowledge:** Students will know three kinds of Active Listening statements.

Attitude: Students will want to talk over their problems instead of running away.

Materials Needed:

Blackboard and Chalk

Exercise book

References: Genesis 29:1-28; 31:1-3,17-55

Peace Education Lesson 9

Memory Verse: James 1:19b

Teacher Activities

Introduction: Ask: Have you ever wanted to talk about a problem and the other person wouldn't listen or wouldn't talk about it? Review the last lesson about Jacob and Esau.

Bible Story: Have students do skits to tell the story of Jacob and Laban. Review the parts of covenant-making.

Application: Discuss the importance of talking over problems rather than avoiding or running away.

Explain Active Listening

Evaluation: Try using Active Listening. Is it hard for you to do? It gets easier and more natural with practice. Encourage your students to practice using it when they are listening to each other.

Student Activities

Introduction: Share times when someone would not talk about problem. Answer questions about last week's lesson.

Bible Story: Watch skits about Jacob and Laban. Review covenant.

Application: List the four rules for talking over problems. Try Active Listening with a partner.

Evaluation: Were students able to listen to each other? Were they able to use the Active Listening statements?

Extension Activities:

Writing a Reflection. After the Active Listening exercise, have students answer these questions by writing the answers in their Exercise book. 1) How did it feel to have someone really listen to you? 2) Tell at least two situations where you could try to use Active Listening.

More on Active Listening. For more discussion about Active Listening see Lesson 9 in *Peace Education*.

More of the story. When Jacob was running away from Esau on his way to Laban's home, he stopped to spend the night near Bethel. This was a holy place because Abraham had stopped here on his way to Canaan and built an altar to God. When Jacob fell asleep he had a dream. Read Genesis 28:12-17. How is this promise like the one God made to Abraham? How does Jacob react to this dream? Why was Jacob so afraid? (He knew that he was not God's friend. He knew he had sinned. He wanted to hide from God just like Adam and Eve did when they sinned.) Read Genesis 28:18-22. What promise does Jacob make to God at this time? Eventually Jacob

does come back to that place and by then his heart has changed and he is truly a Friend of God. We learn about that in another lesson.

Notes for Teacher

This lesson continues the story of Jacob. Jacob thinks he will solve his problems by running away. When he finds himself with problems with his Uncle Laban he tries to run away again. Help children understand that avoiding problems does not always make them better.

Let students know, however, that there are situations where the safest thing to do is get away. Help the students understand that in violent situations they may need to get away and wait for the person to calm down or get someone else to help.

This lesson also reviews Covenant, Rules for Talking Things Over and introduces Active Listening.

Key Idea: Running away from problems usually does not help. Talking and listening to each other can help solve problems.

Introduction: *Review the definition of peace with your class.* **“Peace is harmonious living and respect for human life through God’s guidance.”** Have you ever wanted to talk about a problem and the other person wouldn’t listen or wouldn’t talk about it? (Let children give examples) How did you feel? Does avoiding problems create harmonious living? In our story today Jacob tries to avoid talking about his problems.

The last story in Unit I, Peace in the Family, was about Jacob and Esau. What do you remember about the story? Was Jacob a friend of God? (No, because he did not obey God.) In this unit we will learn more about Jacob’s family and the community of Israel. Our first story in this unit starts where Jacob is running away from his brother Esau. Do you remember why he had to run away? (Jacob stole Esau’s blessing by lying to his father. Esau wants to kill him.) Jacob is going to his Uncle Laban’s house.

Bible Story: Have students take parts and read the skit below.

Narrator: When Jacob got to Laban’s home, he saw Laban’s daughter, Rachel, and he wanted her for his wife. He went to Laban to ask for Rachel to be his wife.

Jacob (to Laban): I want to marry your daughter, Rachel. I will work for you for seven years if you will let me marry her at the end of the seven years.

Laban: That sounds good. After seven years of work you can marry Rachel.

Narrator: Jacob worked for seven years and the time seemed to go very fast because Jacob wanted to marry Rachel. At the end of seven years they had the wedding. In Bible times the bride wore a veil so the groom couldn’t see her face until they got home and they were alone. After the wedding Jacob took his bride home, he took off his bride’s veil.

Jacob: You are not Rachel! You are Leah. I married the wrong sister!

Narrator: Jacob was very angry. He went to talk to Laban.

Jacob: Why have you done this to me? You promised I could marry Rachel and you have given me Leah! You tricked me!

Laban: It is the custom that the oldest girl must be married first. Leah is older so I gave her to you. But if you will work another seven years, you can have Rachel, too.

Jacob: Another seven years! That’s not fair!

Laban; Okay, wait until the end of the week when all the celebrating for this wedding is over and then you can have Rachel but you must work for me for seven more years.

Narrator: Jacob agreed to work seven more years for Rachel. He now had two wives, Rachel and Leah. Rachel and Leah were jealous of each other and did not get along together.

Discussion. Ask the students to list words that describe characteristics of Laban's family. Write them on the board. Point out that all the words you wrote that Laban's family is a lot like Jacob's family. They have the same problems: partiality, jealousy, envy, greed, lying, deception, dishonesty, thieving or stealing. These things caused conflict between Jacob and Laban and between Rachel and Leah. Both Jacob and Laban lack integrity and justice.

Continue the story. **Jacob worked for Laban for 20 years. Laban cheated him several times during the 20 years. Then there was fighting between Jacob and Laban's sons so he decided to leave and go back to his home in Canaan. He didn't think Laban would let him go so he didn't tell him he was going.**

Laban was gone to shear the sheep and Jacob decided it would be a good time to leave. He took his two wives, their children, all his livestock and fled back toward his home in Canaan without saying good-bye or telling anyone what he was going to do.

Laban came back from sheep shearing three days later and found that Jacob was gone. How do you think Laban felt? (Laban was very angry. Point out that sometimes we think we will avoid problems by not talking to someone but not talking about it can make people angry and make things even worse.)

Laban took his men and chased after Jacob and might have hurt him but God gave Laban a dream in the night. In the dream he warned Laban that God was protecting Jacob and he should not hurt him in anyway. When Laban caught up to Jacob there was an angry argument. Let's listen to their argument. Let two students be Laban and Jacob and read the parts below:

Laban (with anger): "Why did you deceive me and carry off my daughters like women captured in battle instead of letting me tell them good bye and letting me kiss my grandchildren? Why did you steal my household idols?"

Jacob: I was afraid because I thought you might take your daughters away from me and I promise you no one took your idols.

Teacher: He didn't know it but Rachel had taken them. Laban searched through all Jacob's belongings but he didn't find the idols.

Jacob (with anger): I worked for you for 20 years and you lied to me and cheated me. You changed my wages 10 times. You made me pay for any sheep or goats that were killed by animals or died from sickness. I suffered from the heat and the cold. I was not able to sleep. I would be empty handed except my father's God has protected me and blessed me.

Laban: These women are my daughters and everything you see is really mine but I am ready to make peace with you so let's make a covenant—an agreement.

Do you remember what we learned about covenants? What is usually included in a covenant? (The vows or promises, shedding of blood, exchange of gifts or a sign, eating a meal together.) **Let's see how many of these Laban and Jacob did.** (Let the two students pantomime these steps as you read them.)

- Instead of a gift they set up stones as a sign of the covenant
- Then they made promises to each other. Jacob promised to not mistreat Laban's daughters, to not take any more wives and to be at peace with Laban. Laban let Jacob keep the wives and livestock that he had taken and promised to be at peace with Jacob.
- They killed an animal and roasted it over a fire.
- Then they sat down and ate a meal together.
- Talking it over helped Laban and Jacob make peace with each other.

Application. Running Away. Talk about how Jacob ran away from Laban. Do we ever feel like running away from conflict and problems? What problems did that cause for Jacob? What problems could it cause for us? Is it ever a good idea to run away? (When there is a dangerous situation and you could get hurt if you don't get away; when you are going to get help; when people are too angry to talk) Talking calmly was helpful for Jacob and Laban. What can you do if the other person doesn't want to talk? (Get an adult to help you talk about it; Look for another solution.) Help students understand that there are some situations where there is violence and adults are fighting that they may need to get away to a safe place. Encourage them to try to talk about it if the conflict is with someone their own size and age. Try to find a solution that will help you both be happy. If the other child won't talk, perhaps an adult or older student can help. Avoiding a situation may make it worse as it did for Jacob.

Talking it over. How did Jacob and Laban work things out? They talked it over. They made covenant with each other. Talking things over calmly can help us work out problems. What are the four rules for talking things over?

- a. Stay Calm
- b. Listen
- c. Care about each other.
- d. Think together

Active Listening. Part of talking things over is LISTENING carefully to each other. Sometimes we are anxious to talk but we don't want to listen. Active Listening helps us hear what the other person is saying. Write *Active Listening*. Explain that Active Listening shows that you are paying attention and care about what the other person is saying. In Active Listening you try to reflect back to the person what you are hearing. It is like looking into a mirror and seeing exactly what you look like. You are letting the person see what you hear. You don't try to give your own ideas or tell your own stories. You just listen to the other person and let them know what you hear. You can make three kinds of verbal responses. Write the three kinds on the board and explain each one.

1. **Paraphrase** – summarize what you heard in one or two short sentences.
2. **Clarifying Question** – ask a question to try to understand more clearly what they said. For example, "Can you give me an example of that?" or "How did you feel?"

3. **Encourager**- this encourages the person to say more. For example, "tell me more" or little words that show you are listening and interested like "yes" "um-hum."

Have the students find a partner and take turns practicing Active Listening for one minute. The first partner can talk about a conflict, a problem, a decision or some other situation. The other partner can only listen and use the three kinds of statements. They should not interrupt or give their own ideas. Let the students talk for one minute and then change roles. Discuss with the students what it was like to be listened to and what it was like to listen without interrupting. Ask, how would this kind of listening help solve conflicts?