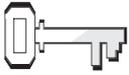


Angels on a Ladder



References

Genesis 28:10-22;
Patriarchs and Prophets,
pp. 183–188



Memory Verse

“I am with you and
will watch over you
wherever you go”
(Genesis 28:15, NIV).



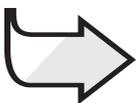
Objectives

The children will:

Know that no matter
what happens in our
earthly families, we
still belong to God.

Feel assured that we
are members of God’s family.

Respond by asking God to
help us and our families
in good times and bad.



The Message

I belong to God’s
family no matter
what happens.

Monthly Theme

We belong to God’s family.

The Bible Lesson at a Glance

Because Jacob tricked his father into giving him the birthright, Esau is so angry that he threatens to kill Jacob. Following Rebekah’s suggestion, Jacob leaves home to live for a while with his mother’s family. On the way, Jacob dreams of a stairway with angels walking up and down, reaching from earth to heaven. From the top of the stairway God promises to bless Jacob. Jacob names the place Bethel, which means “the house of God.”

This is a lesson about community.

Sometimes trouble disrupts our happy families, and may even cause us to separate from family members. Jacob’s story helps us realize that God continues to watch over us even in unpleasant circumstances. God promises to bless us wherever we are, and we, like Jacob, are inspired by His continuing presence, which assures us that we belong to His family.

Teacher Enrichment

“Jacob felt that God had claims upon him which he must acknowledge, and that the special tokens of divine favor granted him demanded a return. So does every blessing bestowed upon us call for a response to the Author of all our mercies. The Christian should often review his past life and recall with gratitude the precious deliverances that God has wrought for him, supporting him in trial, opening ways before him when all seemed dark and forbidding, refreshing him when ready to faint. He should recognize all of them as evidences of the watchcare of heavenly angels. In view of these innumerable blessings he should often ask, with subdued and grateful heart, ‘What shall I render unto the Lord for all His benefits toward me?’ Psalm 116:12.

“Our time, our talents, our property, should be sacredly devoted to Him who has given us these blessings in trust. Whenever a special deliverance is wrought in our behalf, or new and unexpected favors are granted us, we should acknowledge God’s goodness, not only by expressing our gratitude in words, but, like Jacob, by gifts and offerings to His cause. As we are continually receiving the blessings of God, so we are to be continually giving” (*Patriarchs and Prophets*, pp. 187, 188).

Room Decorations

See Lesson 10.

Program Overview

Lesson Section

Minutes

Activities

Materials Needed

Welcome

ongoing

Greet students at door; hear pleased/troubled

none

1

Readiness Options

up to 10

A. *What's the Time?*
B. *Peeking Into Heaven*

none
stepladder, screen, large picture of Jesus, picture of heaven, chalkboard/whiteboard

Any Time

Prayer and Praise*

up to 10

Fellowship
Songbook
Mission
Offering
Prayer

none
Sing for Joy
Children's Mission
well from Lesson 10
none

2

Bible Lesson

up to 20

Experiencing the Story

Bible-times costumes, blankets, man with deep voice, tape recorder, small container of olive oil. Optional: A-frame stepladder, white sheet, spotlight, white Christmas lights or large paper angels

Memory Verse
Bible Study

none
Bibles, stepladder, tape, paper, marker

3

Applying the Lesson

up to 15

A. *Family Portrait*

B. *Climbing Jacob's Ladder*

bulletin board, family portrait, large picture of Jesus, glue, thick yarn, scissors, heart shapes (one per child) (see p. 140) or camera stepladder

4

Sharing the Lesson

up to 15

Jacob's Angels

two paper angels per child (see p. 144), scissors, glitter glue, markers

***Prayer and Praise may be used at any time during the program.**

TEACHING THE LESSON

Welcome

Welcome students at the door. Ask how their week has been—what they are pleased/troubled about. Listen to last week’s memory verse and encourage the children to share any experiences from last week’s lesson study. Have them begin the readiness activity of your choice.



Readiness Activities

Select the activity most appropriate for your situation.

A. What’s the Time?

This activity is best done outdoors, but it can be done indoors if there is enough space. It is based on the children’s game “What’s the Time, Mr. Wolf?”

Have the children line up against one wall. Choose one person to be “it.” “It” starts walking to the other end of the room, with his back to the rest of the children. The children follow and ask, “What’s the time, Mr. Wolf?” “It” calls out a time. Every so often “it” says, “Time to come after you.” Then “it” turns around and chases the others. If a child is caught, they join “it” in the pursuit of others.

Debriefing

Ask: **Did you like it when you were being chased? How did it feel when you were caught? After he lied to Isaac, Jacob had to leave home. As he traveled, he was afraid of being caught and killed by his brother. He probably felt as if he were being chased. But God sent him a special message. And Jacob learned something important that we want to remember too. That’s what today’s message is about.**



I BELONG TO GOD’S FAMILY NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Say that with me.

B. Peeking Into Heaven

In advance, set up a picture of heaven and one of Jesus beside the words “I will be with you wherever you go.” Put a high screen in front of the pictures. Put a stepladder in front of the screen. Ask: **Who would like to peek over the screen and see what is there?** Invite volunteers to climb the ladder and look. Say: **Don’t say anything until everyone has looked. When all have had a turn, ask: What did you see?** (picture of heaven, picture of Jesus, and a message)

Debriefing

Ask: **How would you feel if you really could climb a ladder to see Jesus, and peek into heaven?** (It would be wonderful.) **What would you want to tell Jesus?** Allow answers. **What would you like to hear Jesus say?** (He loves me. I can stay in heaven, etc.) Allow discussion time.

In our story today Jacob had a peek into heaven. He saw angels, and learned something very important. Today’s message tells us that he learned . . .

You Need:

- stepladder
- screen
- large picture of Jesus
- picture of heaven
- chalkboard/whiteboard



I BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.

Say that with me.

Prayer and Praise

Any Time



Fellowship

Report the students' joys and sorrows (pleased and troubled) as reported to you at the door (as appropriate). Allow time for sharing from last week's lesson study and review last week's memory verse. Acknowledge any birthdays, special events, or achievements. Give a special warm greeting to all visitors.



Suggested Songs

"Come and Praise the Lord Our King" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 5)

"Psalm 66" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 11)

"Praise Him, Praise Him" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 12)

"In His Time" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 42)

"O, How He Loves You and Me" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 28)

"We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 126)



Mission

Share a story from *Children's Mission*. Emphasize that we all belong to God's family in both good times and bad. God never leaves us alone.



Offering

Have the children put their offering in the container at the well. Explain that our offering goes to help people living in (name the world field receiving the 13th Sabbath offering).

You Need:

- well from Lesson 10



Prayer

Ask the children to think of people who are separated from their family. It may be for a short trip or because of something more serious. Pray that they will feel God's presence and know that they are not alone.

2

Bible Lesson

You Need:

- Bible-times costume for each child
- blanket for each child
- man with deep voice
- tape recorder
- large stone
- small container of olive oil

Optional items:

- A-frame stepladder
- white sheet
- spotlight
- white Christmas lights or large paper angels

Experiencing the Story

In advance, have a man with a deep voice tape the words of God, or read them from behind the screen.

Put the ladder in the corner. Wrap the Christmas lights around it and loosely cover with a white sheet. When you get to Jacob's dream, light the ladder from behind with the spotlight and turn on the Christmas lights. If Christmas lights are not available, you may want to pin large angels on the sheet.

Let all of the children play the part of Jacob. Have them dress in Bible-times costumes and give each a rolled-up blanket. Have an adult or one of the older children stand at the front and have the others follow their actions.

Read or tell the story.

Esau and Jacob had never liked each other very much. But now the situation was much worse. Esau was so angry at Jacob that he wanted to kill him. So Rebekah decided to send Jacob away to his Uncle Laban's house. "Stay with him for a while, until your brother's anger cools and he forgets what you have done," she said sadly.

[Children take up bedrolls and begin to walk. Look around, look scared, and occasionally jump as if startled.] Jacob started out on the very long trip. It was almost 500 miles (830 kilometers) through strange and dangerous country to Uncle Laban's home. Jacob was frightened. He was all alone. He had no servants to protect him from wild beasts or robbers. And he wasn't used to sleeping on the hard ground. He traveled as fast as he could because he was running from his angry brother.

[Children look weary. Roll out bedroll, look for a place, and lie down.] In a day or two, Jacob arrived at a special place. It was a place where his grandfather Abraham had once built an altar to worship God. Jacob was so tired that night that he may not even have known he was in such a special place. He just lay down and went to sleep with his head on a rock.

That night Jacob had a dream. Not an ordinary dream. A special dream from God. *[Have adult helper turn light on behind ladder as you point in direction of ladder.]* In his dream, Jacob saw a huge ladder or stairway. It reached all the way from the earth up to heaven. Jacob saw angels going up and coming down on it. And at the very top, Jacob saw the Lord!

The Lord smiled at Jacob and said, *[taped voice]* "I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac. . . . I will be with you and protect you wherever you go, and I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you" (Genesis 28:15, ICB).

[The children sit up, look excited.] Jacob woke up when his dream ended. "The Lord is here!" he exclaimed. "He is in this place, and I didn't know it!"

[All stand up and move arms and legs as if trying to warm up.] Jacob got up very early the next morning. It was still cold. The stars were fading away and the sun was just beginning to light up the eastern sky. Jacob wanted to do something special to mark this place—the place where the Lord Himself had spoken to him. *[One child takes the stone, pours oil on it, and kneels as if to pray.]* He took the stone he had used for a pillow and set it upright in the ground. He poured olive oil over it and dedicated it to God. And then he named this special place Bethel, which means "The House of God."

[All look happy and walk away from that place.] So Jacob continued on his journey, feeling much better. He was no longer afraid of his brother. He was not afraid of wild beasts or robbers. He knew for sure that the Lord was with him. The Lord was protecting him. God had told him so!

Debriefing

Ask: **What was Jacob thinking when he went to bed?** (He was afraid of his brother; sad because he had to leave home; wondering what would happen when he reached his Uncle Laban.)

What did God say to Jacob? (God would be with Jacob and protect him.)

How do you think Jacob felt when he woke up? (happy, relieved, grateful to God, no longer afraid)

Even when bad things happen in our earthly families, we are still part of God's family. He has promised always to be with us and take care of us. We can say with Jacob . . .



**I BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

Memory Verse

Read the verse together. Be sure the children know that this was God's message to Jacob, and that it is His message to them also. Repeat the verse several times, using the following actions:

- I am** Point upward.
- with** Put arm around an imaginary person.
- you** Point to others.
- and will watch over** Shade eyes with hand.

you Point to others.

wherever you go. Walk fingers of right hand up left arm.

Genesis 28:15 Palms together, then open them.

Bible Study

Attach one or more of the references listed below on each rung of the ladder. Say: **God promised to be with Jacob and protect him. Let's discover some of God's promises to us.**

Have volunteers choose a reference from the ladder, find it in their Bibles, and read it aloud. Talk about each verse and be sure the children understand its meaning. Have adults help as needed. Add other promises as desired.

- Psalm 91:14, 15
- Joshua 1:9
- Proverbs 3:5, 6
- Psalm 119:105
- John 3:16
- Matthew 7:7, 8
- John 14:1-3

You Need:

- Bibles
- ladder
- tape
- paper
- marker

Debriefing

Ask: **How does reading God's promises make you feel?** (happy, encouraged, confident)

Sometimes things go wrong in our families or in our communities. We make mistakes, or people do things that hurt us. No matter what happens, we can always be sure that God loves us, and that we are still part of God's family. Let's remember our message for today:



**I BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

3

Applying the Lesson

You Need:

- bulletin board
- family portrait
- large picture of Jesus
- glue sticks
- thick yarn
- scissors
- heart shapes, one per child (see p. 140)
- camera

A. Family Portrait

Show the family portrait to the class. Tell them about the people in the picture and when it was taken. Say: **This morning we are going to make a family portrait of part of God’s family.**

If possible, take a picture of each child and let them glue it to the bulletin board. Or give each child a paper heart (see page 140) and have them write their names, draw a picture of themselves, and glue their heart near Jesus. Connect the hearts/pictures to Jesus with yarn.

Debriefing

Ask: **Have you ever had a family portrait taken?** Allow discussion time.

How do we feel when everything is going well in our families and communities? (OK, content, no worries)

There are times when things may go wrong in our families or even in our church or school family. However, nothing can keep us from being part of God’s family. He has promised always to be with us and take care of us.

Let’s say our message together:



**I BELONG TO GOD’S FAMILY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

B. Climbing Jacob’s Ladder

Invite the children to stand in a line and, one at a time, climb up a couple of steps on “Jacob’s” ladder and say one good thing about being in God’s family. If they want to say more than one thing, they can join the line again.

You Need:

- ladder

Debriefing

Ask: **What do you think when you hear so many good things about being in God’s family?** (Glad I’m a member; I’m part of a good thing.)

Can anything change so God excludes you from His family? (no) No, unless we choose to tell God we don’t want to be part of His family. Even when we make mistakes, we are still part of His family. Let’s say our message again:



**I BELONG TO GOD’S FAMILY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

Sharing the Lesson

Jacob's Angels

Give each child two paper angels (see p. 144) and have them cut them out and decorate them. Write the memory verse on the back of each.

Ask: **Where did Jacob see angels?** (He saw them on the ladder going from heaven to earth.) **What did God tell Jacob at that time?** (He would be with Jacob and protect him.)

Find a partner and tell them of a time you felt afraid, or when something happened and you felt very alone. When your partner has finished sharing, hold up your angel and read your memory verse to him or her. Then reverse roles.

Debriefing

Say: **God never leaves even one member of His family alone. He is always with us, ready to help.**

This week take one of your angels and share it with someone you think looks sad, is troubled, or needs to be reminded that they can be part of God's family.

And let's share today's message with others. Let's say it together:



**I BELONG TO GOD'S FAMILY
NO MATTER WHAT HAPPENS.**

Closing

Stand in a circle and sing "The Family of God" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 139). Close with a prayer that includes the children's families and the worldwide family of God.

You Need:

- two paper angels per child (see p. 144)
- scissors
- glitter glue
- markers

Angels on a Ladder

References

Genesis 28:10-22;
Patriarchs and
Prophets,
pp. 183–188

Memory Verse

“ I am with you
and will watch over
you wherever you
go’ ” (Genesis
28:15, NIV).

The Message

I belong to God’s
family no matter
what happens.

Have you ever felt lonely? Really alone? Or felt that there was no one you could talk to? That was how Jacob felt when he had to leave home. Then God shared a special time with him. After that Jacob never felt lonely.

Isaac and Rebekah’s twins, Esau and Jacob, had never liked each other very much. But now the situation was much worse. Jacob had tricked their father into giving him a special blessing. It was a blessing that Esau should have received.

Esau was so angry at Jacob that he wanted to kill him! So their mother, Rebekah, decided to send Jacob to his Uncle Laban. “Stay with your uncle for a while, Jacob. Give your brother time to cool his anger,” she said sadly. Little did she know that she would never see Jacob again.

So Jacob started out on the long trip to Laban’s home. His mother’s brother, his Uncle Laban, lived a long way from

Jacob’s parents. It was almost 500 miles through strange and dangerous country. Jacob was all alone, and he was frightened. He had no servants to protect him from wild beasts or robbers. And he wasn’t used to sleeping

on the hard ground. He traveled as fast as he could. He knew he was running for his life. He knew his brother wanted to kill him.

In a day or two, Jacob arrived at a special place. His grandfather, Abraham, had once built an altar there to worship God. Jacob was so tired that night. He may not even have known he was in such a special place. He just wrapped up in his blanket and went to sleep with his head on a rock.

That night Jacob had an unusual dream. Not an ordinary dream, but a special dream from God. In his dream, Jacob saw a huge ladder or staircase. It reached all the way from the earth to heaven. Jacob saw angels going up and down the ladder. And at the very top, Jacob saw the Lord! The Lord smiled at Jacob and spoke to him. “I am the Lord, the God of Abraham and Isaac. . . . I will be with you and protect you wherever you go. And I will bring you back to this land. I will not leave you” (Genesis 28:15, ICB).

Jacob sat up and looked around. “The Lord is here!” he exclaimed. “He is in this place, and I didn’t know it!”

When Jacob got up early the next morning, it was cold. The stars were just beginning to fade away. And the sun was just beginning to light the eastern sky. Jacob wanted to do something to mark this special place. The Lord Himself had spoken to him there. So he took the stone he had used for a pillow and set it upright in the ground. He poured olive oil over it and dedicated it to God. And then he named this special place Bethel, “The House of God.”

So Jacob continued on his journey with happy thoughts. He was no longer afraid of his brother. He was not afraid of wild beasts or robbers. He knew for sure that the Lord was with him. The Lord was protecting him. God had told him so!



Daily Activities

Sabbath

- Jacob walked about 500 miles (830 kilometers) to his Uncle Laban's home. Go for a walk with your family today. Figure out how far you walked. Divide the distance you walked into 500 (or 830). How long would it take your family to walk 500 miles (or 830 kilometers)?
- As you walk, imagine Jacob's feelings. Try to appear happy, anxious, sad, tired. Ask your family to guess what you are feeling.
- Is it always good to run away when bad things happen? Thank God for being with you in good and bad times.

Sunday

- During worship, read and discuss Genesis 28:10-15. Talk about different ways God speaks to you. Then ask God to help you listen to His voice.
- Draw and cut a ladder shape from a piece of paper. Write your memory verse on the rungs. Use this to teach the verse to your family.
- Climb some stairs and imagine that you are climbing Jacob's ladder to heaven.

Monday

- With your family, read and discuss Genesis 28:16-22. Why was Jacob glad? What did he promise God he would do? Ask your family to lie on the floor for a few minutes. Ask: How well do you think Jacob slept on the lumpy ground? Thank God for your bed.
- Survey your family. When does each person usually go to bed? When do they get up? How many hours does each one sleep? Ask God to watch over your family as you sleep.
- Jacob used a stone for a pillow. Feel your pillow, then replace it with a large book. How do you think you would sleep on the book?

Tuesday

- With your family, read and discuss God's

promise in Joshua 1:9. Is it for you and your family? How is God's family different from your family at home? (For example, it's bigger; people choose to belong to God's family.)

- Make a card for a friend. Tell them you are glad they are part of God's family.
- Thank God you belong to His family.

Wednesday

- For worship today, read and discuss Proverbs 3:5, 6. What does this text mean to you and your family? Ask to see your birth certificate. What does it tell you? What do people do when they join the church? What kind of certificate do they get? Ask an adult to show you their certificate.
- Make a model angel to remind you that God sends angels to help us. Show it to your family.
- Sing "We Are Climbing Jacob's Ladder" (*Sing for Joy*, No. 126). Thank God for Bible stories that teach us His promises.

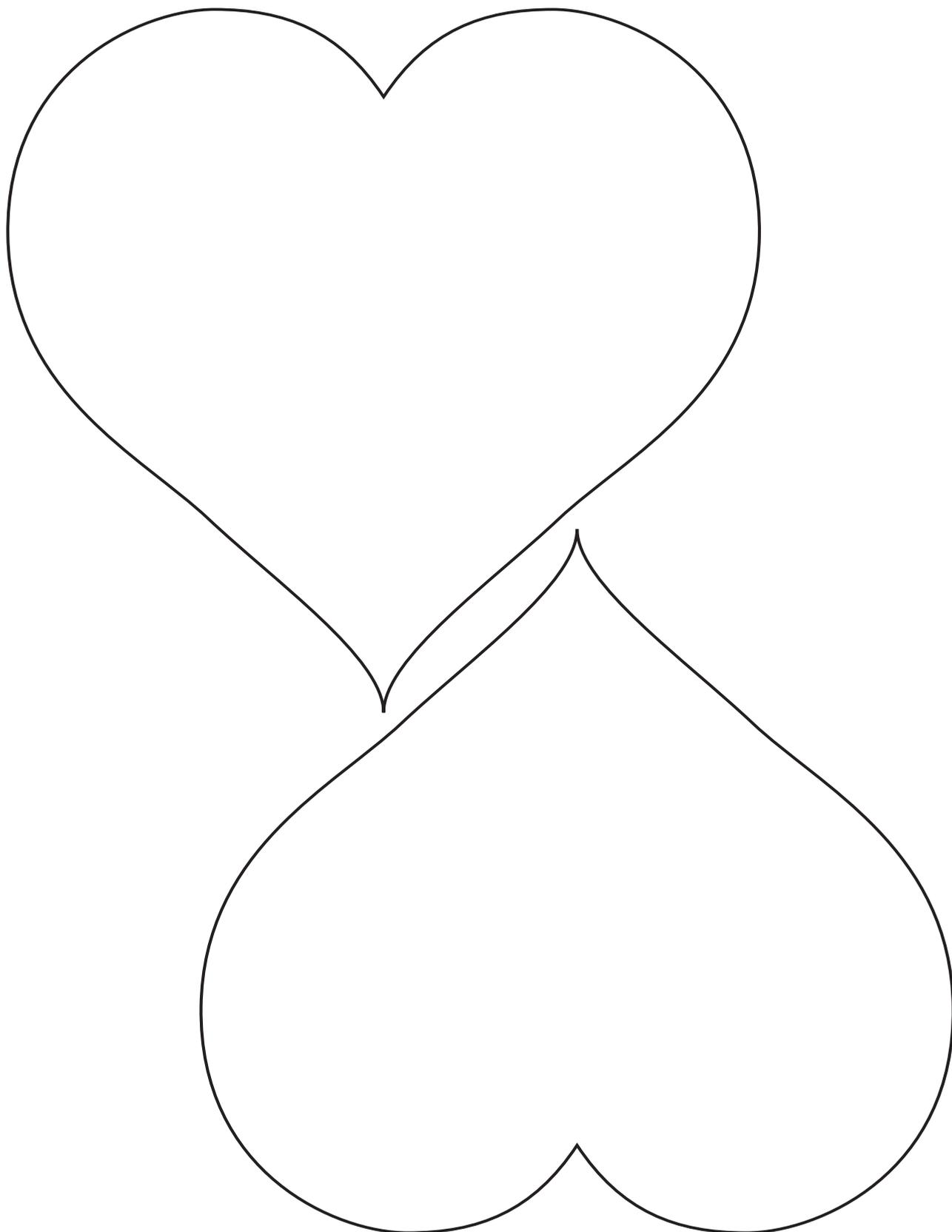
Thursday

- Share the lesson story with your family. How much did Jacob say he would give as a thank offering to God? Discuss how your family can give a thank offering to God. Does it have to be money? What special project could your family do?
- Count the number of steps on the stairs in your house. Imagine there is an angel on each step. Could there be? Why?
- Thank God for His protecting angels.

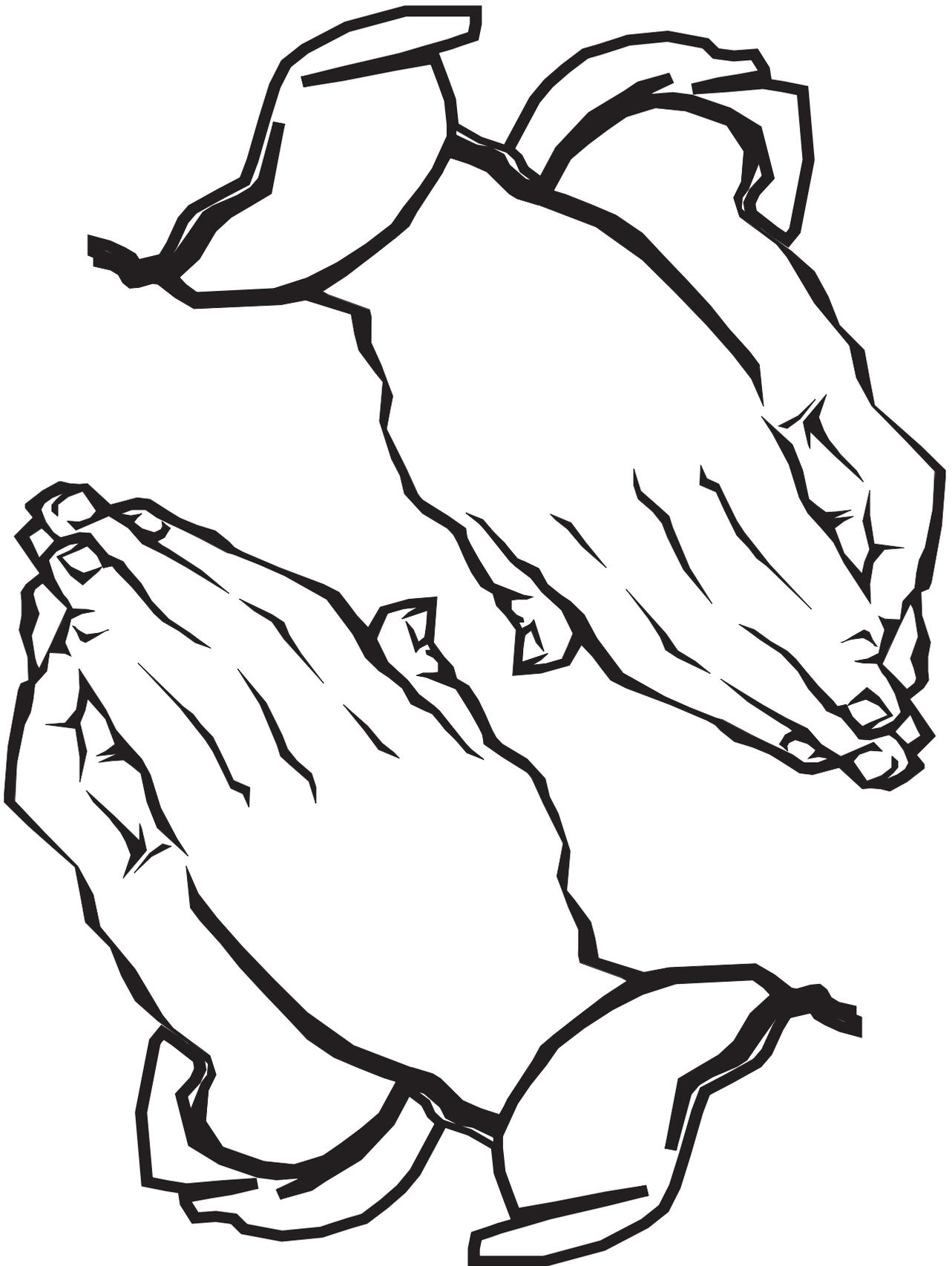
Friday

- Read Genesis 28:10-22 together during worship today. Be Jacob as you act it out for your family. Ask someone to say God's words. Tell three things you have learned from this story. Ask your family to tell something too.
- Sing some praise songs, then say your memory verse together. Thank God for His promises.

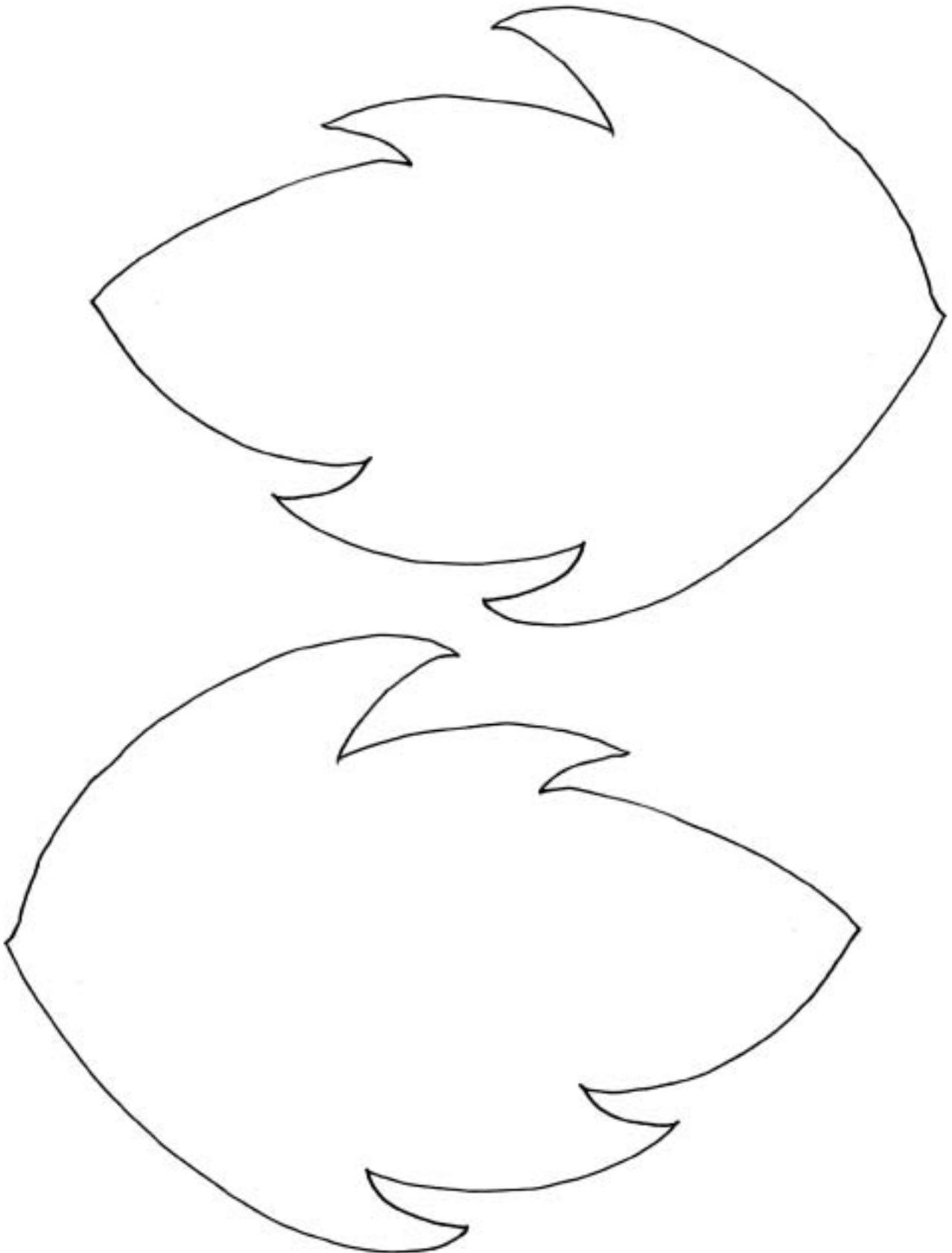
For Lesson 1, page 17—Sharing the Lesson; Lesson 6, page 65—Memory Verse; Lesson 13, page 136—Applying the Lesson.



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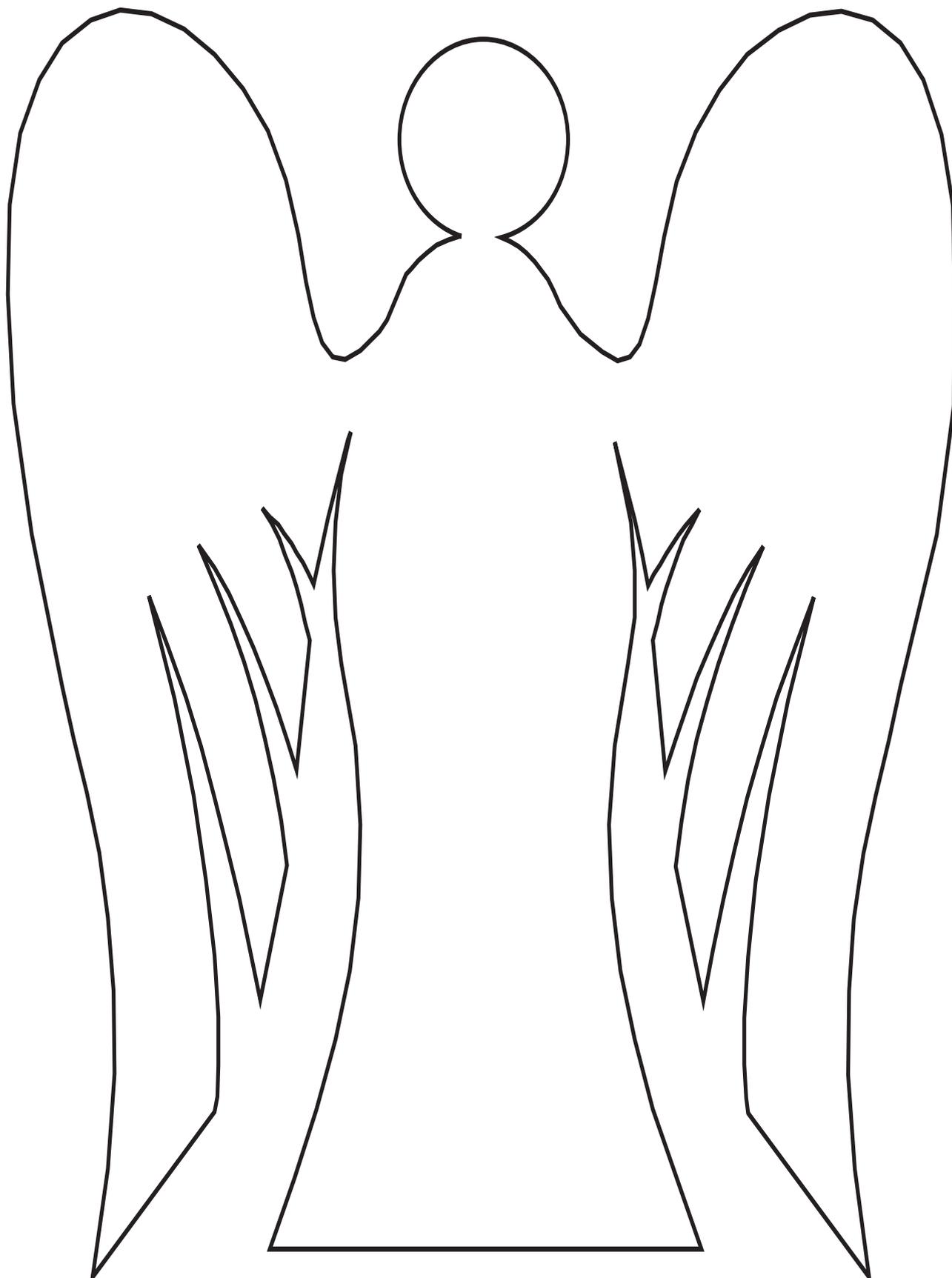
For Lesson 3, page 36. Aplying the Lesson.



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For Lesson 13, page 136. Sharing the Lesson. Make two for each child.



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