

**WELCOME (15 minutes)**

- **Ice Breaker:** What is the significance behind your name? Why were you named whatever your parent's named you?

**WORSHIP (10 minutes)**

- Sing together #4, "Lord I Need You" from the **2015 Worship CD**.

**WIN (15 minutes)**

- **PRAY** for your list of unsaved friends, neighbors, co-workers, and family!
- The holidays are coming – Be sure to **PLAN** an upcoming fun event you can do together to reach out to these people.

**WORD (25 minutes)**

**Read:** In this session, we follow the story of how Jacob received a new name from God. His old name meant "deceiver" and was an apt description of his life. But after a mysterious encounter with God, Jacob was never the same. He received a new name that reflected God's grace to him and his descendants.

***Have everyone open their Bibles to Genesis 32***

Point #1 – Jacob's old name reflected his flawed character - Have someone read aloud Gen. 32:24-27.

**Discuss:** Jacob encountered an unusual "man" who would change Jacob's life forever. Later on in the text, it is revealed that this man is God Himself (32:30). God wanted to use Jacob, but He would have to change him first. How have your sinful or foolish decisions hindered you in your service to the Lord? What are some ways God has confronted you about your sin?

**Discuss:** Before the blessing could be carried forward, this sinful man – Jacob – had to be broken. Perhaps that is why the man asked Jacob about his name, which meant "cheater." Jacob's life up to this point had been in line with his name. In what ways do our past mistakes haunt us? Why is it difficult for us and for others to forget them?

Point #2 – Jacob's new name reflected the grace God showed him - Have someone read aloud Gen. 32:28-32.

**Read:** Tim Keller states, “It often takes an experience of crippling weakness for us to finally discover [God’s blessing]. That is why so many of the most God-blessed people limp as they dance for joy.”

**Discuss:** Jacob’s life reveals how gracious and patient God is. For years, Jacob schemed to manipulate people and outcomes, and he lied to the people closest to him to get what he wanted. He did not care whom he trampled or hurt along the way. But through it all, God showed kindness and compassion to Jacob. God’s disciplining hand is a sign of His kindness to lead us to repentance and change. What difficult circumstances in your life has God used to lead you to repentance?

**Read:** Anyone who is in Christ is a “new creation” in whom the old, sinful self is passed away and the new, redeemed self is alive and progressing, becoming more and more like Christ. Thus, our IDENTITY is no longer wrapped up in our sin, but rather, our identity is that of beloved children of God!

Point #3 – Jacob’s new name reflected the task God gave him - Have someone read aloud Gen. 35:9-15.

**Discuss:** In Scripture, we see that God’s purpose in blessing His people is not so they will hoard the blessing to themselves. No, God blesses His people so that they will be a blessing to others. God changes people so that they can be agents of change for others. What are some areas in which we ask for the blessing of God without giving thought to how God might want us to bless others?

**Discuss:** God had changed Jacob, but He did not do so in order for Jacob to keep the blessing to himself. Rather, God intended for Jacob’s offspring to bring God’s saving blessing to the world. The same is true for us as well! Have someone read aloud Psalm 67:1-2. God’s gracious blessing in our lives through Jesus Christ is intended for the salvation of the world. In what ways has God blessed you so that you can use that blessing on mission with Him?

**For next time encourage your people to read: Genesis 37-39.**

## **WORKS (25 minutes)**

- Break into smaller groups of 2 or 3’s of the same gender to pray for each other!