

Gem Seeking

LITTLE GEMS STORY

Parent/Teacher Preparation:

Please see the [Instructions for the Little Gems Story](#) on the YMTOI website. This will help you to understand how to prepare for the story.

Outsmart, Outwit, Outplay

Shalom, children! This week we will learn about how Yahweh helped Ya'aqob outwit his crafty father-in-law, Laban. **(Place Ya'aqob and Laban on board.)** How many of you remember the way Laban fooled Ya'aqob by making him work 7 years to marry his daughter Rahel? When the 7 years were up, he tricked Ya'aqob into marrying his oldest daughter Le'ah instead. Then he made Ya'aqob promise to work another 7 years to get Rahel. Who can hold up enough fingers to make the number 14? **(Place #14 on board.)** You'd have to use some toes, wouldn't you? Ya'aqob had to work 14 years to get his 2 wives, and when those years were up, he had 11 sons and a daughter, and also some flocks and servants. **(Place children, animals and servants on board.)** So, he asked Laban to let him take his family and move farther away, so all their animals would have enough grasslands to feed them. Now, Ya'aqob's hard work had made Laban quite wealthy. Do you think Laban wanted to let Ya'aqob go? No way! He nicely asked Ya'aqob what he could pay him to stay and keep working for him.

Now, Ya'aqob wanted to be fair about what he asked for, so why not just ask Laban for some of his sheep and goats? Laban had mostly plain-colored animals, so Ya'aqob asked only for the ones that happened to be speckled, streaked or spotted, plus the black-colored lambs. **(Place speckled, streaked, spotted and black lambs on board.)** Well, Laban thought this was a cool deal, because Ya'aqob would just keep making him richer, right? But Laban had forgotten what a smart farmer Ya'aqob was. Most of all, Laban forgot that Yahweh was with Ya'aqob in everything he did. You see, Yahweh had already given Ya'aqob a clever plan—something you'd never think of in a million years. Let's talk about it.

(Remove all characters from board.)

First, can anyone tell me what you get when a speckled or spotted ram or billy-goat mates with any other sheep or nanny-goat? The baby goat will have some spots or speckles, right? So, since Laban had left some of his flock for Ya'aqob to watch over, Ya'aqob got busy at the watering-place, cutting off tree branches and peeling away strips of bark until the branches looked all speckled and streaked and spotted. **(Place peeled branches on board.)** Then he laid the branches right in front of the water-troughs, where his flocks and Laban's flocks all came together to drink. **(Place water trough on board.)** He knew that when the first animals were done drinking, they would breed with each other while they waited for all the rest to finish. So, he made the strongest animals drink first, while looking at the branches, then the strong males and strong females would breed while they waited for the weaker animals to drink last. **(Place speckled, streaked, spotted and black lambs on board next to water trough.)**



Tell me: do you think that a ram or billy goat who'd been staring at spotted and speckled branches might look for a spotted or speckled girlfriend? Sure, why not? Later, she would give birth to a nice, strong, spotted or speckled kid. And who did that kid belong to? Ya'aqob, of course! **(Place Ya'aqob on board next to animals.)** And that's how Ya'aqob ended up with colored flocks that were all stronger than Laban's plain ones. Now it was Ya'aqob who was getting rich. When Laban found out about this, do you think he was happy? Noooo! **(Place angry emoji on board.)** He kept changing Ya'aqob's earnings this way and that way. For another 6 years, the 2 men tried to get the best of each other. But Yahweh was blessing Ya'aqob with more flocks and servants and camels and donkeys than ever!

At last, Laban's sons got mad. They were losing all their father's wealth to their brother-in-law, and began talking about doing harm to Ya'aqob. But Yahweh appeared to him in a dream. He said it was time to pack up his family and his flocks and journey back to his homeland in Kena'an. **(Place dream scene on board.)** Yahweh reminded Ya'aqob that He would be with him, just as He had promised many years before. His 2 wives, Rahel and Le'ah, were behind him 100 percent. **(Place Rahel and Le'ah on board.)** They knew how selfish their father was, and agreed that their whole family would be better off back in Kena'an.

Of course, Ya'aqob obeyed Yahweh, but he was pretty sneaky about it. He watched until Laban went away for several days to do his sheep-shearing. Ya'aqob's wife Rahel did something sneaky, too. She crept into her father's house and secretly stole his little household idols. **(Place household idols on board.)** We aren't told why she did this... But I wonder why Laban had idols in his house. Was he behaving like one of Yahweh's true worshippers? He sure didn't act like one, did he?

Well, 3 days went by before Laban heard that Ya'aqob had taken off for the mountains with his daughters and his grandkids. Boy, was he mad! He grabbed his brothers and they all went chasing after Ya'aqob. **(Place Laban and 3 men on board.)** It took them 7 whole days to catch up, but Yahweh protected Ya'aqob once again. He came to Laban in a dream and sternly warned him not to threaten Ya'aqob or try to deceive him anymore. Maybe Laban wasn't a true worshiper, but we all know that Yahweh can talk to anyone He wants to!

(Move Ya'aqob, Le'ah and Rahel next to Laban.) So, when Laban reached Ya'aqob's camp, he only spoke of how disappointed and angry he was that Ya'aqob had slipped away without letting him throw a farewell party, or even kiss his daughters goodbye.

Then Laban wanted to know why on earth Ya'aqob had snatched his household gods. Ya'aqob had no idea that Rahel had taken her father's idols. He told Laban to search the whole camp and swore that if anyone was found with the stolen idols they would be killed. Laban searched every tent, but Rahel fooled her father so that he would not check out her secret hiding place. **(Remove Rahel from board and place Rahel sitting on idols on board.)** When no idols turned up, Ya'aqob finally lost his temper. He shouted at Laban for accusing him falsely, and for dealing with him unfairly all those years when he'd been so hard-working and honest. He pointed out that without Yahweh's help and protection, Laban would have sent him away empty-handed!

(Remove all characters from board.)



At last, the 2 men made a solemn agreement not to harm one another, and Ya'aqob promised to be kind to his 2 wives, who were Laban's daughters. They set up a tall rock and a heap of stones as a sign of their agreement. **(Place meal scene on board and point to stones.)** Then they sacrificed to Yahweh and ate a meal together. When they got up early the next morning, Laban blessed his daughters and their families, kissed them goodbye and went on his way. **(Remove meal scene and place Laban, Ya'aqob, Rahel and Le'ah on board.)** Isn't it wonderful how Yahweh kept His promises to Ya'aqob, even though Laban kept scheming against him? When we trust Him and do all that He says, nobody can stop Him from blessing us. **(Place blessing emoji on board.)**

Well children, we have come to the end of our story for today. We will see you next week for another exciting Little Gems story!

