

# When Choosing Sides Breaks Hearts

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## FAITH STORY:

Genesis 27

## MATERIALS AND ADVANCE PREPARATION:

- The Squid and the Whale DVD
- TV, DVD Player
- Bibles
- Decide if you are going to show segments of the movie, or watch the entire movie as a group. If watching the entire movie, you need to know that it is rated R for strong sexual content, graphic dialogue and language. Also, due to copyright laws, you will need to watch it in a private home, not a public building like the church.

## SESSION OUTLINE

### FOCUS:

Open up your session time by asking youth to choose teams. You can set this up any way you want to. Examples:

- Two freshmen are the captains. They each choose one person, and then the person they chose chooses the next person, etc.
- Two seniors are the captains. They must choose someone from every age group (as much as possible in your class)
- Two girls are the captains. They must choose two boys. The boys must choose girls, etc.

No matter how you set up the choosing of teams, the important thing is that you do not tell them what these teams are for.

When the teams are chosen, ask them to gather in their teams and discuss some examples in life when they choose sides—such as among friends, when there are arguments, in theological or political beliefs, in school sports, etc.

**Say:** *Choosing teams, or sides, can be fairly easy and non-threatening, but often, it involves pain and hurt. When a family goes through a divorce, sides are often chosen and there's a lot of hurt in that process.*

**Option 1:** If you are just watching excerpts of the movie, give them short description:

*"The Squid and the Whale" is a movie about a family that is going through a divorce. It shows the painful, hurtful things that happen when parents split up. The parents are both writers, the father more devoted than the mother. And the kids are growing up in an unstable environment, switching between homes up to three times a week. Pay close attention to the different clips, and try to think of a family in the Bible that goes through some of the same struggles as this family."*

**Option 2:** If you are watching the entire movie, do that at this time.

## **CONNECT:**

Watch the movie or show the following clips:

- Father favors the older child: 21:55-22:10
- Mother favors the younger child: 53:10-54:05
- Wife deceives her husband: 20:20-21:50 (Some rough language)
- Son turns against father to stay on his mother's good side: 27:28-28:15
- Son lies to get father's attention: 6:00-7:10
- When brothers take different sides of parents, tension builds, splitting them apart: 17:40-18:35 (Some rough language)

After viewing the clips, ask youth what Biblical family might have some similar issues.

## **EXPLORE THE BIBLE:**

Ask youth to turn to Genesis 27. Split the reading up between the youth. After the chapter is read, ask:

- What similarities do you see between the movie and the story?
- What type of tension do you think was built up by the sides that were taken?
- Have you ever been able to fool your parents?
- How did that make you feel, especially when you got your way?
- Do you think that God should've blessed Jacob since he didn't honor his father?
- How would you've reacted if you found out that your sibling got all of your money, opportunities, even your future?
- Has anyone ever gone through anything like this? How does it feel?

- Is it possible not to choose sides?
- How can we remain neutral?

## **RESPOND:**

Get youth back into the original teams they formed at the beginning of the session. Each team should discuss some family situations that they want to act on and/or pray about. For example, if one of the students in the group is experiencing family challenges, and they are willing to share about it, the group could discuss ways that young person can relate to those problems, and they can promise to pray for him/her. If no one in the group wants to share, the group can name other situations that they are aware of, and commit to praying for those situations.

Bring the groups back together and say something like the following:

*At the beginning, when you were asked to choose teams, I didn't say what those teams would do. Maybe if you'd known that the team would be doing certain activities—like sports, or singing, or Bible quizzing—you would have chosen people based on that. While some of us have gifts in different areas, we all have the ability to pray. So let's keep the people and situations in mind this week that we have shared today, and let's remember to pray for them.*

Close with a prayer.

## **INSIGHTS FROM THE SCRIPTURE AND MOVIE:**

“The Squid and the Whale” is a very real, raw movie that shows the truthful, painful side to divorce. There are scenes that you may not want your youth to view—scenes of masturbation, nudity, and inappropriate sexual behavior and dialogue. However, the movie makes very good points and shows true emotions of what choosing sides can do to a family. There are many similarities between this movie and Jacob and Esau, though it might not seem like it at first.

The story of Jacob and Esau is a great story about how choosing sides can tear apart families for generations to come. When there are favorites that are shown through the parents, the children feel neglected as well as the other parent. This story shows how, when the younger brother lies to his father, it creates a tension that will tear apart the two brothers for many years to follow.