

Individual Learning Packet

Teaching Unit

*Jacob Have I Loved*

by Katherine Paterson

Copyright © 1999 by Prestwick House Inc., P.O. Box 658, Clayton, DE 19938. 1-800-932-4593.  
www.prestwickhouse.com Permission to copy this unit for classroom use is extended to purchaser for his or her  
personal use. This material, in whole or part, may not be copied for resale. Revised December 2002.

ISBN 13: 978-1-58049-135-8

Reorder No. 300554

# Jacob Have I Loved

## Objectives

By the end of this unit, the student will be able to:

1. discuss the ways in which this novel is a “coming of age” novel by tracing the protagonist’s growth.
2. recognize the following uses of language and point out examples of each in the novel:
  - metaphor
  - simile
  - local color
  - pun
3. define a literary symbol and discuss what, if any, symbols may be present in this story.
4. identify the following literary devices as they appear in the story:
  - foreshadowing
  - allusion
  - irony
5. relate the Biblical story of Jacob and Esau to *Jacob, Have I Loved*.
6. discuss the details of the life of a waterman, and show how these descriptions and descriptions of nature create local color.
7. discuss the relationship, both positive and negative, between the young and old:
  - Louise and her grandmother
  - Louise and the Captain
8. point out examples of personification in the story and discuss what they add to the story.
9. infer ideas about characters and events when these meanings are not explicitly stated.
10. support or refute that the following as a major theme in the book by referring to events or comments in the novel: Everyone’s life has a purpose, and everyone must seek out an individual path in life to be happy.
11. detail the impact that geography and weather have on the lives of the people who live on Rass Island.

# Jacob Have I Loved

## Questions for Discussion and Essay

1. In what way is Louise's grandmother a living reminder to Louise of what she will become if she does not leave Rass Island? In what way may the island be a symbol?
2. Why does Louise decide to help her father on his boat instead of attending school? Why do her parents allow this sacrifice? Comment on the relationship between Louise and her father.
3. Compare the characters Call and Caroline. What personality traits do they have in common? What evidence is there in the story that Call is better suited as a husband for Caroline than as a husband for Louise?
4. Why is a blue crab sometimes labeled a buster, a pink, a white, or a red? Describe the difference between oyster fishing with tongs and oyster fishing using the dredge method.
5. Discuss the definition of a coming-of-age story. In what way does Louise change and grow over the course of the novel?
6. Review the Bible story of Jacob and Esau. Comment on the significance of the title of the story. Does Louise's belief in the Bible story of Jacob and Esau help or hinder her search for happiness?
7. How does the setting of this story on an isolated island, battered by the ocean, add interest to the story and create challenges for Louise and her family?
8. Discuss the extent to which Caroline is actually mistreated by the others in the story.
9. Define literary symbol, and discuss what the mountains may symbolize in this story.
10. "I thought I could just make out across the water a tiny lump of fast land, my old refuge now cut off from the rest of the island, orphaned and alone." (Pg. 149)  
The above quotation is an example of which literary device? How does it clarify for the reader Louise's feelings about her life on the island?
11. Find examples of personification and other descriptions that contribute to the local color in the story.
12. Write character profiles for Call, Caroline, the Captain, Father, Mother and Louise.

# Jacob Have I Loved

## Study Guide Student Copy

### Rass Island

1. What does the narrator love about Rass Island?
2. Why is she returning to the island? What is sad about this visit home?

### Chapter 1

1. Why does Call go fishing with a girl? Why does Wheeze (Louise) like to fish with Call?
2. What defect in Call's character does Wheeze try to correct? How does he respond to her attempts at humor?
3. From this introductory chapter what do we know of the person who is the narrator?
4. What is indicated by the following: "I love Rass Island, although for much of my life, I did not think I did"? (Pg. 4)

## Chapter 4

1. How would you characterize Louise's relationship with her grandmother?
2. Why is Louise disappointed when she reaches the dock?
3. Briefly describe the stranger who gets off the ferry.
4. Find an example of foreshadowing at the end of this chapter.

## Chapter 5

1. How does Louise use the appearance of the orange-colored tomcat to scare Call?
2. The captain turns out to be Hiram Wallace. Why does young Hiram Wallace leave the island? After returning, what happens to make him leave again?
3. In what way is the character of Call a foil to the character of Louise?
4. Why do you suppose Louise does not find the captain's jokes funny? Why are they funny to Call?

## Chapter 10

1. What precautions does Truitt Bradshaw take to protect his boat during the storm? Why does he awaken Louise?
2. Find an example of a simile describing the power of the storm.
3. Why is it significant that the captain calls Grandma “Louise” when he tries to comfort her during the hurricane? Why is young Louise determined to see a mountain?

## Chapter 11

1. Why does Louise insist on going to look at the captain’s house?
2. Why does Louise hug the captain? What does she feel? Why do you suppose the author includes this item which may seem inappropriate?
3. What is Louise feeling that makes her want to “cry and scream and throw things”? (Pg. 138) Do you think Louise is overreacting?

5. How does Louise's grandmother shock the girls? What does Caroline say to make Louise angry?
  
6. What changes take place in Call after he begins working with Louise's father?
  
7. What reasons does the captain give for wanting to use Trudy's money to send Caroline to boarding school?
  
8. Explain the allusion at the end of this chapter: "Jacob have I loved, but Esau have I hated." (Pg. 178)  
Why do you think Grandma decides to quote this passage to Louise? What is she trying to tell Louise?

## Chapter 15

1. Why is Louise's heart hardened after reading the Bible passage and realizing that God is the speaker?
  
2. Earlier, Louise wanted to go to Crisfield. Why does she turn down her mother's offer to send her to school there?

## Chapter 20

1. Why does Louise not attend her father's funeral? What does Caroline do that irritates her?
2. How is Louise's adult life similar to her mother's on Rass Island?
3. Note the following paragraph spoken by Louise:  
"Where is the other twin?" I asked, suddenly stricken. I had forgotten him. In my anxiety for his sister, I had completely forgotten him. "Where have you put him?" (Pg. 243)

Why does she say, "suddenly stricken"? (Pg. 243) What does the phrase imply?

4. In reflecting on the thought above, what must Louise's conclusion be?
5. Why does Louise insist Essie hold and nurse the first twin?
6. Provide support for the following statement: Louise knows she is living the life God planned for her all along.
7. What may we infer from the last paragraph of the story?
8. Why do you suppose that the novel ends with a line from a song that appears in Chapter 3? (Pg. 35)