

Exploring Torah: Yaakov's Dream

Text Study, Analysis, Art History Survey, Investigation,
Drawing, Painting, Creative Writing

HO 16b

Visual Midrash

SAMPLE OF DESCRIPTIVE NARRATIVES

Midrash is an interpretive act seeking the answers to religious questions both practical and theological by plumbing the meaning of the words of the Torah. It is a literary genre that uses allegory and imaginative narrative to fill in those places in the text where the stories do not feel complete.

Visual *midrash* uses the visual arts medium as a tool to create a *midrash*.

Fifth grade students read and analyzed Torah text, surveyed and dug into art historical examples of visual *midrashim*, and answered the following questions in literary and visual arts form to augment their understanding of Yaakov's Dream.

What message not in the text does your visual *midrash* show? What question does it answer? Describe how your visual *midrash* shows/extends the story of Yaakov's dream found in the Torah.

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BB – 5th grade student

Yaakov's dream is so important that every creature can see it if they go by. The reason there are cacti instead of a ladder, and flies instead of angels is because if a creature goes by and sees the dream they might freak out if they saw angels going up a ladder. Only Yaakov can see what God is trying to show.

JB - 5th grade student

My picture brings up the question, why did the angels have to climb if they have wings? My picture shows that some angels were punished and to get to G-d they have to climb a rocky and sharp cliff to get back to G-d. G-d is showing this to Yaakov because it means if Yaakov disobeys G-d, he will suffer too.

AM – 5th grade student

Yaakov is sleeping and he has an amazing dream. There are angels walking up and down a ladder, but the angels are walking up first. They are not going down first. So, why aren't they going down first? It's because they have completed their mission of protecting Yaakov so they are going up. Then new angels are going down.

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IB - 5th grade student

What I tried to show in the picture is that the dream was his mind's act of juggling problems. The angels going up show his relaxed side because they don't need to hold on so much. The ones going down represent his stressed side since they all have to hold all the way on. Also it has God because he represents his brain, and that he doesn't know what to do. The reason angels and God are used as the symbols is because his Dad and Grandpa thought they saw God.

RC - 5th grade student

My visual *midrash* shows Yaakov dreaming about the ladder. The ladder has 18 steps which symbolize *Chai* (life), and Yaakov knows his brother won't kill him. There is an angel with it's hands on Yaakov's head, like it is giving him a blessing.

JC - 5th grade student

This picture explains what happened in Jacob's dream. The angels are climbing Jacob's mental ladder. G-d gloats beside Jacob and blesses him for his journey across the desert. Some of the angles reach G-d's cloud and called for more angels to take their place.

RZ - 5th grade student

Jacob is sleeping on the ground with a stone and the angels are going up and down giving a message to Jacob.

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GR - 5th grade student

In my visual *midrash* I made G-d on top of my ladder because when the angels go up they will be refreshed (and see who the angels will protect). G-d told Yaakov that He will always protect him and he will return home and he will not die.

ZR - 5th grade student

I created my *midrash* for younger kids to understand the dream of Yaakov. The crown represents G-d. The compass means that G-d will protect Yaakov from the North, South, East, and West. The shape of Israel represents he will return to the land. The people and the dust represent Yaakov's descendents.

PG - 5th grade student

In Jacob's dream there are 6 angels, 1 G-d, and 3 steps. The numbers 6-1-3 represent the 613 *mitzvot* and show that Yaakov is a good person. At the very top is a shining star to represent the light of G-d.

JW - 5th grade student

Adonai is coming to the realization that *Adonai* is everywhere. When Yaakov has the experience of *Adonai*, it shows Yaakov that he will never be alone. This experience causes Yaakov to feel both more protected and also more willing to take responsibility for doing good. In my visual *midrash* I wanted to show a formless awesome *Adonai* having eyes everywhere and all colors flowing and disappearing from a center.