

## Guidance for educators on Shavuot Tribe Time 2019

The Tribe Time booklet will enable children to grasp a good understanding of the Jewish day, week and month. It's designed to be used as a springboard for further discussions and learning opportunities with children.

I would recommend inviting children to read out the information and then it can be explained by the educator leading the session. At the bottom of each page you will find leading questions which will develop a sense of curiosity amongst children and assist the educator in facilitating a meaningful discussion. Here are some ideas on each page which you may find helpful:

### **The Jewish Day:**

#### **Why does the Jewish day begin at night? What does this teach us?**

Ask the children when their day begins? Is it at night? Surely not.... Why would the Torah say that our Jewish day begins at night?

The Jewish people are compared to Ayelet haShachar - the morning star, the star that signals the beginning of the transition from night to day. We begin at night because we feel that we have a mission to accomplish. As a nation, we are on a mission to bring light to this world!

#### **Do any events in the Jewish calendar start in the morning? Why?**

This is an opportunity to explore which fasts begin at dawn. You may also wish to discuss the prohibitions of Erev Pesach which begin in the morning.

### **The Jewish Week:**

#### **How could one prepare for Shabbat on a Sunday?**

There are many ways to prepare for Shabbat. There is always something that can be done by every member of the household throughout the week.

Even great Rabbis in the Talmud stopped learning and helped prepare for Shabbat in their homes.

The Gemara in Masechet Shabbat brings some examples of this: Rav Safra would roast meat. Rava salted the fish. Rav Huna kindled lamps.....Rav Nahman would load objects on his shoulders and carry supplies for Shabbat. He said: If important guests were to arrive in my house, would I not load objects on my shoulders to help with preparations?

All the more so, when it comes to the most important guest of all - Shabbat!



### Bein Hashemashot (1):

#### **A baby is born on Wednesday Bein Hashemashot, Rosh Hashana falls on the following Thursday and Friday, when should the baby have his Brit?**

This is an opportunity to discuss and learn the Mishnah in Masechet Shabbat chapter 19 Mishnah 5. The Mishnah talks about this situation:

An infant is circumcised on the eighth, ninth, tenth, eleventh, and twelfth...

In the normal situation, on the eighth. If he is born at twilight, on the ninth; At twilight on the eve of Shabbat, on the tenth.

If a festival follows Shabbat, on the eleventh. If the two days of Rosh Hashanah [follow Shabbat], on the twelfth.

### Bein Hashemashot (2):

#### **What was the Shamir used for and why?**

As well as discussing the function of this miraculous worm, its worth sharing with the children the story of Ashmedai King of Ghosts and his relationship with Shlomo Hamelech (Gittin 68A). The main theme of this remarkable story is the Shamir. It's also worth continuing the story and talking about Ashmedai King of Ghosts 'replacing' Shlomo Hamelech in Jerusalem. This will be of great interest to children!

#### **What was special about the writing on the tablets?**

Ask the children which letters in the Hebrew Alphabet are shaped like a doughnut?

The final Mem (מ) and the Samech (ס) are shaped like a doughnut.

The Gemara in Shabbat 104A teaches us that the Tablets were engraved all the way through the stone from one side to the other.

One would expect these two letters to 'fall out' of the Tablets but they miraculously remained in place. Additionally, the writing could miraculously be read (from right to left) on either side. These are the two miracles of the Ktav and Michtav.

I would also recommend asking the children about the difference between 'writing' and 'inscribing'. The ten commandments were not only written, they were also inscribed on our hearts as the Passuk reads:

"Write them on the tablet of your heart" (proverbs 7,3).



## Why were these things Created Bein Hashemashot?

Hashem created the world in six days, and we continue to enjoy Hashem's creations every day of our lives. However, we do not regularly benefit from the miracles created Bein Hashemashot as they are rare.

Ask the children: Is this considered to be part of creation? The idea here is to establish that Bein Hashemashot resembles a degree of uncertainty. It's also worth asking the children which miracles are NOT mentioned in this list.

It can be explained that these miracles are covered by mentioning Moshe's stick. Alternatively, the miracles which are not mentioned are those which we continue to benefit from throughout generations of Jewish history.

### The Shabbat debate:

#### Is it possible to make Kiddush with no wine in the desert?

'Shamor' and 'Zachor' are mentioned respectively in the ten commandments. Ask the children what each of these mean and how they are fulfilled?

Are they equally important?

Kiddush is associated with 'Zachor'. We "remember" Shabbat by reciting Kiddush at the start of the Jewish day (Friday night). Note that "Kiddush" literally means sanctification. We sanctify the day by making mention of its sanctity at its onset. Do we essentially need wine to remember and sanctify Shabbat?

Kiddush is ideally done on wine which demonstrates that Shabbat is important. If wine is not available, one may take an alternate food of importance (Pesachim 106a). Ask the children what that may be?

The next most important food of the Shabbat meal is the challah. If Challa is not available and no other beverage is available, one may sanctify and remember the Shabbat on the most important food they have.

If no food at all is available, we can still remember Shabbat in our Davening.

### The Jewish month:

#### Does the Jewish calendar only follow the lunar cycle? How many months are there in the Jewish calendar?

Ask the children what solar and lunar mean? Give examples of calendars which follow solar annual cycles or lunar monthly cycles.

So, which of these should we follow? We follow both!

Ask the children how many months are there in the Jewish calendar? What happens in a leap year? Which month is added?

Conclude that the Jewish calendar connects us to the universe and takes account of solar/lunar cycles which reminds us of Ma'aseh Bereshit.



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### **Witness the New Moon:**

#### **Did the witnesses travel on Shabbat?**

Ask the children what they think? Nowadays we would only permit traveling on Shabbat for a lifesaving situation. However, at the times of the Mikdash, the witnesses were essential for the continuity of Jewish life and they were indeed permitted to travel on Shabbat (Mishnah Rosh Hashana 1,4).

This would be the case even if they thought that other witnesses may have seen the new moon!

### **The International Dateline:**

#### **Would a person be permitted to avoid keeping Shabbat by crossing the International Dateline?**

Ask the children whether a direct answer to this question can be found in the Mishnah or Talmud? Why not?

Given that this is a question of contemporary Halacha, maybe the children can help us answer this question.

Go back to the Mitzvot of 'Shamor' and 'Zachor' in relation to Shabbat. If a person crosses the International Dateline

at sunset, they may be able to fulfil 'Shamor' but have they fulfilled the positive Mitzvha of 'Zachor'?

Given how much we love Shabbat and Chagim we wouldn't want to find a way of avoiding them. We look forward to Shabbat and prepare for Shabat all week!

#### **Why did Rabbi Yechiel consider Jerusalem to be the centre of the world?**

This is a great opportunity to end the session with a special connection to Yerushalayim (we just celebrated Yom Yerushalayim!)

Shavuot is one of Sheloset HaRegalim and as Jews, Yerushalayim will always be central to us. No matter where we live, we will always be connected in our hearts and minds to Yerushalaim.

Please feel free to contact me on [rave@tribeuk.com](mailto:rave@tribeuk.com) if you would like any further assistance with running the programme in your community.

**Hazlacha Raba!**

**Rav Ebrahimoff**



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