



Welcome to Spark, the Tribe Parasha activity sheet that will help you bring Judaism to life in a varied and exciting way. I'd like these activities to enthuse the children and show them how the Torah given almost 3500 years ago is still as relevant and as exciting in our lives today.

Thank you for offering to run a Children's Service, for all the hard work you put into it and for making a real difference to so many young people. The US is very proud of the numerous Children's Services that are run every week across the UK and this would not happen without you.

Spark gives you an overview of the weekly Parasha, songs, an activity, discussion questions or D'var Torah linked to the Parasha or important event that week. Every Children's Service will be different, in terms of how many participants there are, their age range, its length and the varying abilities of the children. Please read through the document and find the activities that will best suit the needs of your group. It is advisable to read it before Shabbat in case there is some preparation that may be needed in advance.

I am sure the children at your shul will benefit from Spark. Please be in touch if you have any queries, feedback or if we can be of any help. Thank you again for the work you do in enabling so many young Jews to access their heritage and traditions in such an exciting way.

All it takes is a small spark of interest, to ignite a flame of passion for Judaism.

With kindest regards,

Rabbi Nicky (Goldmeier)
Spark Editor and Education Consultant

Welcome

Vayeishev – ‘The Parasha in a Nutshell’:



Parashat Vayeishev means ‘And he settled’ and refers to Yaakov (Jacob) settling in the land of Canaan.

Yaakov’s (Jacob’s) favourite son was Yoseph (Joseph) and he made a beautiful coat for his son as a sign of distinction and lordship. The brothers became so jealous of him that they actually came to hate Yoseph (Joseph).

Yoseph (Joseph) dreamt 2 dreams which had the same obvious message and when he relayed these dreams to his brothers, they hated him even more.

When Yoseph’s (Joseph’s) brothers were away, tending their father’s flock, Yaakov (Jacob) sent him to see how they were faring. As Yoseph (Joseph) was approaching, the brothers plotted to kill him. Reuven (Reuben) the eldest brother, managed to convince the brothers not to kill him and instead throw him in to a nearby pit.

A caravan of Yishmaelim (Ishmaelites) came by and the brothers thought of a new plan, whereby they would sell him to the travellers. The brothers took Yoseph’s (Joseph’s) coat and dipped it in the blood of a goat and brought it to their father Yaakov (Jacob), who concluded that Yoseph (Joseph) must have been eaten by a wild beast.

Meanwhile, Yoseph (Joseph) was being sold and resold many times until he ended up in the house of Potiphar, an officer of Pharaoh.

The next episode in the Parasha (weekly Torah portion), is, in my experience, rarely related to children. However, I felt it was important to include so that you are aware of the entire content of this week’s Torah portion.

At this point in the Parasha (Weekly Torah portion), a seemingly unrelated episode is told about Yaakov’s (Jacob’s) fourth son Yehudah (Judah). One of Yehudah’s (Judah’s) sons married a woman named Tamar but died shortly afterwards. A second son of Yehudah (Judah) then married Tamar, but he too died shortly afterwards. Yehudah (Judah) did not want his third son marrying Tamar, but she disguised herself and deceived Yehudah (Judah) himself so that she could have his child.



Back to the narrative about Yoseph (Joseph); God was with Yoseph (Joseph) and he was successful in all his endeavours. Potiphar appointed him as head of his house, until Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Yoseph (Joseph) and because he rejected her daily advances, she falsely accused Yoseph (Joseph) of hurting her and he was sent to prison.

But even in prison, God was with Yoseph (Joseph) and he was put in charge of the whole prison. Whilst in prison, Yoseph (Joseph) met Pharaoh's chief butler and chief baker, with each one asking him to interpret their dream. Yoseph (Joseph) correctly explained their dreams and asked the chief butler, upon his release from prison, to remind Pharaoh that he was still there. However, the chief butler forgot about Yoseph (Joseph).

The Parasha - In a Nutshell!

Parasha Overview – In a Little More Detail

- Out of all his sons, Yaakov's (Jacob's) favourite was Yoseph (Joseph), his 'Ben Zekunim', 'son of old age'. Yaakov (Jacob) made for him a fine woollen tunic, with strips of different colours and this made the brothers extremely jealous. They were so jealous of their brother Yoseph (Joseph) that they began to hate him.
- Their hatred increased when Yoseph (Joseph) had 2 dreams, which he subsequently told his brothers. In the first dream the sheaves belonging to his brothers bowed down to his sheaf which was standing upright.
- In the second dream, the sun, the moon and eleven stars bowed down to Yoseph (Joseph). The implication of these dreams was that all the members of Yoseph's (Joseph's) family would one day become subservient to him.
- One day, Yaakov (Jacob) asked Yoseph (Joseph) to go to Shechem and see how the brothers were getting on with the shepherding of Yaakov's (Jacob's) flock. As Yoseph (Joseph) approached, the brothers discussed a plan to kill him, throw his body in a pit and then pretend that he had been eaten by a wild animal.
- Reuven (Reuben), the eldest brother, knew that this plan was wrong and wanted to save Yoseph (Joseph) from their terrible plan. But Reuven (Reuben), knowing that the brothers would not listen to him, managed to convince them to throw Yoseph (Joseph) into a nearby pit, instead of killing him. Reuven (Reuben) reasoned silently, that later he would return after the brothers had left the area and save Yoseph (Joseph), returning him safely to his father.
- When Yoseph (Joseph) finally arrived, the brothers took his fine woollen tunic and as Reuven (Reuben) had suggested, threw him alive into a nearby pit.
- A caravan of Yishmaelim (Ishmaelites) bearing spices to Egypt approached and the idea occurred to Yehudah (Judah) to sell Yoseph (Joseph) as a slave rather than to directly cause his death. The brothers accepted this new plan and sold Yoseph (Joseph) to the travelling Yishmaelim (Ishmaelites) for twenty pieces of silver.
- Reuven (Reuben), away while all this was happening, returned to find no trace of Yoseph (Joseph), much to his grief. The brothers then dipped the woollen coat in to the blood of a goat and brought it to show their father Yaakov (Jacob). Yaakov (Jacob) mourned the loss of his beloved son for many days.



- Eventually Yoseph (Joseph) was sold to Potiphar who was an officer of Pharaoh. Yoseph (Joseph) was so successful in all his work which he did for his master, Potiphar, that he was appointed as head of the household. Potiphar's wife tried to seduce Yoseph (Joseph), but each time this happened he adamantly refused. Nevertheless, Potiphar's wife wanted to get Yoseph (Joseph) in to trouble and made up lies about what he had done. Potiphar believed these lies and subsequently threw Yoseph (Joseph) into prison.
- Whilst in prison, Yoseph (Joseph) found favour in the eyes of the prison warden. The warden placed Yoseph (Joseph) in charge of all the prisoners and everything that took place in the prison was controlled by Yoseph (Joseph).
- Whilst in prison, Yoseph (Joseph) came in to contact with two royal officials, Pharaoh's chief butler and baker. They had offended Pharaoh and were in prison awaiting word of their fate.
- One night, the chief butler and baker each had a dream which they revealed to Yoseph (Joseph). The chief butler dreamt that he was standing in front of a grapevine and on the grapevine there were three tendrils (thin, curled vines) which bloomed and turned in to clusters of grapes. Pharaoh's cup was in his hand and the chief butler took the grapes, pressed them into Pharaoh's cup and placed the cup in Pharaoh's hand. Yoseph (Joseph) interpreted the dream to mean that the butler would be pardoned by Pharaoh.
- Then the chief baker told Yoseph (Joseph) his dream, explaining that there were three wicker baskets on his head and in the very top basket there were all kinds of baked foods from which birds were eating. Once again, Yoseph (Joseph) interpreted this dream, but this time, he explained the dream to mean that the baker would be executed in three days' time.
- Indeed, the chief butler was given his old job back and the chief baker was hanged, just as Yoseph (Joseph) had said would happen.
- At the very end of the Parasha (Weekly Torah portion) Yoseph (Joseph) asked the chief butler, upon his release from prison, to remind Pharaoh that he was still in prison. However, the chief butler forgot all about Yoseph (Joseph) and didn't remember to tell Pharaoh.

This week's activities and stories focus on various character traits that can be found in the Parasha (Torah portion). It focuses on what is wrong with 'jealousy and envy', as the brothers are jealous of the favouritism which appears to be shown to Yoseph (Joseph). Another focus is the importance of 'judging people favourably'. The commentators on the Chumash (5 Books of Moses) teach us that Yoseph (Joseph) exacerbated the brother's hatred as he accused them of all sorts of wrongdoings, when he should have judged them more favourably.

Activity

Why do they say that...?

Focus the children on things their parents and teachers ask them to do. Sometimes they may not feel that what they are being asked is fair. Through this activity, the children are encouraged to think favourably about what they are being asked to do.

Give the children a slip of paper (see below) on which there is a particular instruction. Help the children to read it out and then they should explain why they think they are being asked to do that. There is always a good reason, even if we sometimes can't understand it.

1. Please brush your teeth as it's almost bedtime (Example of what child could say, '...because I don't want the dentist to find holes in my teeth.')
2. 'Please stop watching TV and do your homework'
3. 'It's time to come in from the garden now'
4. Please be sure to put your school bag by the front door before going upstairs to bed'
5. 'No, you can't have all those sweets now...'
6. 'Please have one piece of chocolate now and you can have the rest tomorrow'
7. 'I'm not moving the car until you have your seatbelt on'
8. 'Please don't eat that whole packet of crisps all at once'
9. 'I know that you want me to buy you that new computer game, but I can't buy it today'
10. 'Be sure to wear your coat when you go outside'
11. 'Please underline the date'
12. 'You'll have to stay in at break time to finish your work'

Story Time – The Two Towers

A long time ago, in an Italian city, they built a beautiful tower which was admired by everyone who saw it. A little further down the road, in a neighbouring city, they had built a tower of similar beauty. The two towers were equally well known.



The people of the second city, jealous and filled with pride, planned to destroy the neighbouring tower so it wouldn't take attention away from their own tower. One dark night, they came to the tower, with picks and shovels, and began to quietly dig up the tower.

The next morning, the tower was leaning slightly, but nobody seemed to notice. The same happened for the following few days, until a little girl who was passing by pointed up at the tower and said: "I think that the tower is going to fall down." And everyone around looked closely and could see that she was right.



Nervousness spread through the city. They tried to find solutions to straighten the tower, but the days passed, and nothing seemed to work. That was, until one day when the same little girl was walking by again, she leant her arm on the side of the tower, to rest. She felt the tower trembling slightly, amid the sound of creaking and groaning. When she took her hand off it, the movement and the noises stopped. When she put it back on again, the same happened.



The girl spent a while doing this, until she was completely certain of what she had discovered: "The tower is ticklish!!"

She ran to get some flowers and plants, and she planted them right next to the tower.

Now if the tower leaned over any further it would be tickled by the petals and leaves of those plants. Being a ticklish tower, it would then have to return back to where it had been. In this way, the girl managed to make sure that the tower didn't collapse, but still kept it leaning a little.

The fact that it was leaning made it even more famous, and this taught a fine lesson to the jealous people of the neighbouring city. Being jealous types, they tried to copy the lean of the first tower, but they couldn't do it, and the tower ended up collapsing, leaving the city not only without a tower, but also without a city hall.

Story Time

Children's Service: Years 3- 6

Activity –

Role-play Against Jealously!

At the beginning of this activity, pair up the children. Ask the children to act out a scenario where one of them has just been given a new jacket, whilst the other one is wearing their old jacket. The pair should first act out the wrong way to act, such as being mean, trying to ruin it or whining about it not being fair. Then, each pair should act out the correct way to act, such as complimenting the person's jacket, saying how good it looks on them. You could give the pairs of children other scenarios such as; one of them has got a new watch, a new games console, a new bike etc.



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What do Dan and Dina Teach us this Week

In this week's Tribe Scribe at the back of the Daf Hashavua, you'll find another really great lesson that we can learn from the Parasha (weekly portion) of Vayeishev.

'I know I've got some dreaming to do – what about you?'

In this week's Parasha, we are told about a number of dreams. Joseph had dreams and the chief butler and the chief baker had dreams.

This week's Tribe Scribe focuses on the dreams of a number of well-known personalities.

Give out to the children a few copies of the Tribe Scribe and ask them to work in groups. Each group can choose one of the personalities in the Scribe and they should discuss the particular dream their chosen personality had. Then they should also talk about their own dreams for the future.

The children should be given the opportunity to tell each other their personal dream for the future.



What does this Story Teach us?

(A true story from a naval officer)

Two battleships which were assigned to the training squadron had been at sea on manoeuvres in heavy weather for several days. I was serving on the lead battleship



and was on watch on the bridge as night fell. The visibility was poor with patchy fog, so the captain remained on the bridge keeping an eye on all activities.

Shortly after dark, the lookout on the wing of the bridge reported, "Light, bearing on the starboard bow."

"Is it steady or moving astern?" the captain called out.

Lookout replied, "Steady, captain," which meant we were on a dangerous collision course with that ship.

The captain then called to the signalman, "Signal that ship: We are on a collision course, advise you change course 20 degrees."

Back came a signal, "Advisable for you to change your course 20 degrees."

"I'm a seaman second class," came the reply. "You had better change course 20 degrees."

By that time, the captain was furious. He spat out, "Send, I'm a battleship. Change course 20 degrees."

What does this Story Teach Me?



Back came the flashing light, “I’m a lighthouse.”

We changed course!

- **What did the captain think was ahead of their ship?**
- **Why do you think the captain didn’t want to change course?**
- **Do you think he should have been the one to change course? Why?**
- **What did the ‘other ship’ turn out to be in the end?**
- **What lesson can we learn from this story?**

What does this Story Teach Me?

Song – The link has been included for you to watch before Shabbat and if you so wish, to teach the children this song.

Vayeishev Song

https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/519463/jewish/Vayeishev.htm

Yoseph (Joseph) and his brothers took care of Yaakov's (Jacob's) sheep

Yoseph (Joseph) had two dreams while he was asleep

The brothers saw Yoseph (Joseph), in the coat Yaakov (Jacob) made

They recalled his dreams and they were afraid

That Hashem's bracha (blessing) would go only to him

The brothers knew there must be Twelve Sh'vatim (Tribes)

So they took Yoseph (Joseph) and threw him in a pit

There were many snakes, but no water in it

They saw a wagon coming and Yehudah (Judah) said

"Do not kill him, let's sell him instead."

So down to Mitzrayim (Egypt), Yoseph (Joseph) did go

He was sold to Potifar, a captain of Paroh (Pharaoh)





Shabbat Shalom!