



Welcome to Spark2, the Tribe weekly parsha activity sheet for Children's Service Leaders across the United Synagogue communities.

Thank you for offering to run a service. 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.

Spark2 gives you an overview of the weekly parsha, a song, activity or Dvar Torah linked to the parsha 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 hope you and the children at your service will benefit from Spark2. Please be in touch if you have any queries, feedback or if I can be of any help.

With best wishes,
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Please note: There is a double parsha this week.

Acharei Mot

Parsha Summary:

- The parsha opens with God speaking to Moshe after the death of Aharon's two sons. Hashem instructs Aharon about the Yom Kippur service in the Bet Hamikdash.
- We are commanded to observe Yom Kippur, to fast on it and not to work.
- The Torah talks about the prohibition against eating blood.
- The parsha ends with Hashem instructing the Jewish people not to copy the habits of the nations around them and we are told of forbidden relationships.

Kedoshim

Parsha Summary:

The parsha begins with God saying that He is holy and that we should be holy like Him. The parsha continues by giving us many mitzvot.

Here are some of them:

- Honour your parents
- Keep Shabbat
- When gathering your crops from your field ensure that you leave a corner for poor people to reap for themselves
- Do not steal
- Do not lie
- Do not cheat
- Do not withhold your worker's wages
- Do not place a stumbling block in front of a blind person
- Don't gossip
- Don't take revenge
- Love your fellow as you love yourself
- We are given a list of forbidden mixtures such as wool and linen together in a garment
- Stand up when an elderly or respected person enters a room
- Do not have a tattoo
- Make sure that you have proper weights and measures in business so as not to deceive people
- We are given a list of forbidden relationships and the penalties for them

Children's Service: Tots – Year 2

Activity 1:

The parsha explains the service that would be performed by the Kohen Gadol on Yom Kippur in the Bet Hamikdash. Today, because we no longer have the Bet Hamikdash some of our teffilot on Yom Kippur are about the service of the Kohanim. Our Chazzan takes the place of the Kohen Gadol and the shul is in place of the Bet Hamikdash. Usually the Kohen Gadol would wear clothes of many colours but on Yom Kippur he would only wear four special white garments made out of linen. The four garments he wore were a tunic, trousers, a turban and a belt.

It would be a nice idea to print off some pictures of what a Kohen Gadol would wear during the year and what he would wear on Yom Kippur for the children to compare the two. You can find some on 'Google images.'

Ask the children if they wear different types of clothes for different occasions? How do they make them feel?

Activity 2:

Parshat Kedoshim talks about lots of mitzvot / commandments from God. One of the mitzvot mentioned is the mitzva of "Loving your neighbor as you love yourself." Ask the children:

- How can we love someone else as we love ourselves?
- What kind of things should we do or not do to another person?
- What do we like and not like being done to us?

The parsha also tells us that we should stand up when an elderly person walks into the room. You can ask the children to act out various scenarios when they might see an elderly person and how they should behave. For example, standing up for an elderly person on a bus or helping an elderly person with their shopping.

It would be a good idea to arrange to have some props such as a walking stick available for the children to use.

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Activity 1:

The Jewish people had been slaves in Egypt and were shortly going to enter Canaan. Rashi writes that Egypt and Canaan were the most morally corrupt nations in the world at the time. In Acharei Mot, God instructs the Jewish people not to become influenced by these nations.

Do not discuss the above yet but go straight into the activities. You will be able to discuss the above at the end. Prepare in advance, three or four complex words that the children at your service would not know. Write each word on a slip of paper. Next to one word write the correct definition of the word and on the other two papers, make up and write a meaning that is incorrect. Choose three children and give them a slip of paper each. Do not let them know who has the correct meaning of the word. Ask them in turn to present the word and the meaning to the rest of the group and convince the group that the meaning they have been given, is the correct one. They can embellish it to try and make it sound true if they wish. The rest of the children will need to discuss and vote which child has the correct definition. The children you have chosen can try and argue their case.

Activity 2:

Choose a child to be the 'anchor'. The anchor gives two choices. For example, hot or cold, dry or wet, football or tennis, etc. Each child has to quickly choose between each choice. Divide the room in advance into two parts. Once the anchor has given the two choices, they should assign one to each side of the room. So, for

example, if the anchor chooses sweets or chocolate, the children in support of chocolate run to the part of the room on the left and the children who choose sweets will run to the right side of the room.

This activity needs to move fast so that quick decision making will happen. It will be plain to see which children move to a side because their friends have chosen to move there.

Discuss:

- Ask the children who were given a word in activity 1, how they felt when they had to convince everyone that they were right?
- How did they feel when everyone rejected what they said?
- How would they feel if they had the right explanation but no one had accepted it?
- Would they have kept arguing and said they were really correct or given in to peer pressure?
- Ask the children what made them choose a different side of the room in activity 2?
- Was it their own choice or did they go there because their friends were going in that direction?
- Ask the children if they have ever felt that they needed to do something that they were not comfortable with because their friends were doing it? How did it feel?

As mentioned above, in the parsha this week God instructs the Jewish people not to become influenced by the nations of Egypt where they had just been slaves, or by the people in Canaan where they were shortly to go. Rashi writes that Egypt and Canaan were the most morally corrupt nations in the world at that time. We can learn from here to make sure we stay true to our beliefs and not bow to peer pressure. In the book of Mishlei (13.20) it says:

"He who goes with the wise will become wise, but he who befriends the fools will be broken."

The Midrash tells us a parable. When a man walks into a spice seller's shop, even if he buys nothing, never the less, when he leaves, he carries the smell of spices with him. When a man walks into a bad smelling tanner's shop, even if he leaves empty handed, the bad odour will linger on him.

It is easy to become influenced by the actions of those around us. We must be careful only to be influenced by positive values. Peer pressure may compel you into certain actions which are contradictory to our personal values and beliefs. Therefore it is important to be careful while choosing our friends.

Activity 3:

Hand out the following texts that you have prepared in advance:

"...You shall not lie to each other." Vayikra 19.11

"And Sarah laughed to herself saying, 'Now that I am withered, am I to have enjoyment with my husband who is old?' Then God said to Abraham, "Why did Sarah laugh saying, "Shall I in truth bear a child, old as I am?" Bereshit 18:12-13

- Ask one of your group to read the first quote aloud. It is from the parsha this week.
- Ask another participant to read the next quote from the parsha of Vayeira.
- Explain that it is the part of the Torah when Hashem tells Sarah, who was very old, that she was going to have a baby.
- Ask: What is the difference between what Sarah says and what Hashem reports back to Abraham?
- Do you think God 'tells a lie' in this text?

- If so, for what purpose? (Our Sages explain that Abraham might have felt pained to hear his wife describe him as old.)
- How do we reconcile these two parts of the Torah? One tells us not to lie and in the other it seems God relates the story differently to how it happened!
- Do you think there is ever a time when we should not tell the truth?
- Is there in fact a lesson we can learn from God's behavior here?
- Ask if any of the participants have any personal stories when they needed to tell a white lie in order to save someone from hurt, embarrassment or to make peace? (Make sure they don't use real names.)

Explain, and if possible, hand out, the following text from Ketubot 17a

"Our Rabbis taught how does one praise the bride?
 Bet Shammai says, "Praise be the bride exactly how she is."
 Bet Hillel says, "Beautiful and graceful bride"

Bet Shammai says to Bet Hillel: But if she is ugly can one still call her 'beautiful and graceful?' Doesn't the Torah tell us to stay away from false matters?"

Bet Hillel replies and says: "According to your words if a person has made a bad purchase in the market should one praise the purchase or make him feel bad about it? Surely one should praise it?"

Explain, we can see from here that according to Bet Shammai one may not lie and tell the bride she looks nice if she doesn't. According to Bet Hillel, in order to get on with other people, which is also one of the commandments, we are at times, allowed to tell a little white lie.

Ask: Is it possible that someone who says white lies to protect other people too often, will become accustomed to lying, even in situations where it is not justified?