



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,
Sharon Radley
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Beshalach

Parsha Summary:

- God leads the Israelites through the desert with a pillar of fire by night and a pillar of cloud during the day. The Egyptian army pursues after them and corners the Israelites by the Red Sea.
- God instructs Moshe to stretch out his hand over the sea and divide it. The sea divides and the Israelites walk on the sea bed, on dry land. The Egyptians continue to pursue them into the sea.
- Moshe stretches out his hand over the sea and the waters that had been standing upright like walls now come crashing down on top of the Egyptians. Moshe leads the Israelites in a song of praise to God for the wondrous miracle. Moshe's sister Miriam leads the women in song and dance with musical accompaniment.
- The Israelites continue on their journey through the desert and travel for three days without water. When they arrive in Marah the water there is bitter. Moshe miraculously sweetens it.
- The Israelites complain about the lack of food and nostalgically mention the 'fleshpots of Egypt.' God responds that he will rain down food from the heaven in the mornings and that meat will be provided every night.
- The meat, in the form of quails appears in the evening and in the morning bread called, 'manna', falls from the heaven. The Israelites are commanded to gather one 'omer' of manna each day and not to leave any over until the next

day. On Friday two portions are to be collected as the second portion was to be for Shabbat when no manna would be picked. God instructs Moshe to take a jar of manna which would be placed in the tabernacle.

- The Israelites continue to travel and when reaching Rephidim their water once again dries out. God instructs Moshe to hit a certain rock with his stick. Water comes out of the rock and the people drink.
- The Amalekites attack the Israelites. Moshe instructs Joshua his student to assemble an army and battle against Amalek. The Israelites are victorious – aided by Moshe's prayers at the top of a mountain.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 2

Discuss:

In the parsha this week we read that God split the Red Sea so that the Israelites could cross it and escape from the Egyptian army. When the Israelites reached the other side they were so happy, relieved and grateful to God about the amazing miracle that He had performed that they sang a special song to Him. This song is written in the Torah and we say it in Shacharit every morning. It is known as 'Shirat Hayam' – the 'Song of the Sea.'

- If you have the green Tribe Siddur for Children and Families, show the children Shirat Hayam on page 14.
- Ask the children what song they would sing if they were happy?
- How would they show someone that they were happy with them?

Activity 1:

The 'ABC Gratitude' game.

Sit the children in a circle. Someone starts with the letter "A" and says something they are grateful for that starts with an "A", then the next person has to say something they are grateful for that starts with a "B", and so on until all the letters are used up. For an extra challenge, play it once the correct way, and then play another round starting with the letter "Z" and going back down to "A".

Tu B'Shevat

- The 15 of Shevat is the 'New Year for the Trees.' It is the New Year for determining the Torah's agricultural laws.
- It is a custom to eat fruits of the 'Shivat Haminim' – the 'Seven Species of Israel'. These are: wheat, barley, olives, dates, grapes, figs and pomegranates.
- Other customs include holding a Tu B'Shevat Seder created by the kabbalist Arizal, eating fifteen fruit, praying for a beautiful etrog on the following Sukkot and eating a 'new' fruit after saying the blessing Shehechyanu. A 'new' fruit is a seasonal fruit that one has not tasted yet this season.
- In Israel Tu B'Shevat is a day of environmental awareness. Trees are planted in celebration.
- The Torah, Deut 20:19 compares people to trees. 'A person is like the tree of a field.'

Activity 2:

Please find below a Tu B'Shevat snap game based on the Shivat Haminim. Before Shabbat print out as many copies of the cards as you will need, cut them out and give them to the children to play in pairs. Link the Shivat Haminim to Tu B'Shevat.

Snap Rules:

The dealer deals out the whole deck of cards face-down, one card at a time to each player, in a clockwise rotation. Each player, starting with the player to the left of the dealer, takes a turn flipping over the top card of his pile and putting it face-up in front of him. After a few turns, each player has a little pile of face-up cards.

When you turn over all the cards into the pile in front of you, you pick up the pile and use it again without shuffling them. The flipping process continues until one player turns over a card of the same rank as the top card on another player's pile. As soon as the matching card is revealed, the first person to call out "Snap!" takes the two piles with matching cards and puts them face down under his own pile.

Frequently, two players make the Snap call simultaneously. In this case, you put the two piles with the same card together, face-up, in middle of the table. Everyone continues to turn over the top cards on their piles until someone turns over a card that matches the card on the pile in the middle of the table. The first person to shout "Snap pool!" wins the middle pile. The new piles that are being created are still up for grabs in the usual way, of course. Whenever a pairing is created, the first to shout "Snap" wins them.

When a player mistakenly calls out "Snap!" her pile goes into the centre of the table; the first player to call "Snap pool!" at the relevant moment gets her pile. You have to operate with what you have left, and if you run out of cards, you are out of the game. The player who ends up with all the cards wins the game.

Set rules about the proper way to turn over your card. You can't turn over the card so that you see it first, which means that you must flip over the card in a continuous, fast motion onto your pile.

Get an impartial witness to decide on all close calls. If you can, choose someone who isn't playing the game.

Activity 3:

As Tall as a Tree!

TuB'Shevat is a time when deep below the cold earth, the plants are starting to awaken and grow again. Have all the children stand in a circle...

- everyone should fold their bodies as little and balled up like a seed as possible...
- tumbling a bit as you, the seed, are put in the ground....
- pushing up a first little shoot out of the seed and out of the earth...
- stretching up more bits in the sun...
- drinking up the fresh rain, digging your roots (toes) more deeply in the ground for a nice drink...
- quickening your growth...
- getting taller!
- swaying and dancing in the wind...
- enjoying the music of the birds...
- shading a tired hot visitor....
- feeding a hungry visitor...
- frowning at someone's leaving litter, like a plastic bag stuck on your branch and waiting for help from the wind with that...
- losing leaves in autumn...
- feeling weighted by snow in winter...
- sprouting happy flowers and new leaves in the spring...
- growing fruit to give through summer and fall...
- getting taller and older and stronger!

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Discuss:

In the parsha this week we read that God split the Red Sea so that the Israelites could cross it and escape from the Egyptian army. When the Israelites reached the other side they were so happy, relieved and grateful to God about the amazing miracle that He had performed that they sang a special song to Him. This song is written in the Torah and we say it in Shacharit every morning. It is known as 'Shirat Hayam' – the 'Song of the Sea.'

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Discuss

After the Torah recounts that Moshe and the Israelites sang Shirat Hayam we are told that Moshe's sister, Miriam:

“Took her drum in her hand and all the women went forth after her with drums and with dances.” Beshalach: 15: 20

How did Miriam and the women find instruments in the middle of the desert?

Activity 2:

Play the following game and then link it to the answer of the above question:

You will need a blindfold, a big bowl, 20 to 30 cotton wool balls (this will depend on the size of your children’s service) and a large plastic serving spoon.

Sit the children in a circle and place the bowl on the floor in the middle. Scatter the cotton wool balls randomly around it. Choose one child to be blindfolded and ask him to sit or kneel on the floor in front of the bowl. Hand him the spoon and ask him to put his other arm behind his back. Explain that he has one minute to scoop up as many cotton wool balls as possible with the spoon and put them in the bowl. After one minute count how many balls are in the bowl. Repeat the process again with a few children.

The game is not a competition so watch that it doesn’t turn into one.

Discuss

- When one of the participants ‘blindly’ scooped the cotton wool balls into the bowl he couldn’t feel if he was doing any good or not. He didn’t know if his efforts would be productive or not. However, he kept on trying, trusting that some of his efforts would be rewarded.

- Miriam and the women had trusted from the very beginning that God was going to save them. So much so that they had taken instruments with them from Egypt, so they could celebrate when it happened! God wants us to learn from these great women, to trust Him by being optimistic and focusing on positive outcomes.
- Ask the participants when are there times in their life when they need to trust or have faith in other people or God. Some examples could be listening to parents when they say that you can't ride your bike in a certain area, trusting your doctor if he tells you not to go swimming if you have an ear infection, praying to Hashem if someone is not well. We trust that Hashem will make the outcome be the one that He knows is right.
- Does trust in God mean that we always expect that He will make things turn out the way we want? (No. Trust in God means just that we trust that He will do what's ultimately best for us. We should do our best to do what we think is correct but if things don't work out we should trust that God knows what is really right for us.)

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גֶפֶן

Grapes

שְׁעָרָה

Barley

חֹטָה

Wheat



זֵית

שָׁמֶן

Olive Oil

רְמוֹן

Pomegranate

תְּאֵנָה

Fig



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דָּבָשׁ

Date -
Honey

