



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

Thank you for offering to run a service, for all the hard work that 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 parsha, a song, an activity, discussion questions or D'var 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 Spark. Please be in touch if you have any queries, feedback or if we can be of any help. Thank you again for your amazing work.

With best wishes,  
Sharon Radley

## SHEMINI 5779

### Parsha Summary:

- The parsha begins almost a year after the Exodus from Egypt, on Rosh Chodesh Nissan. After seven days of inaugurating the Mishkan (Tabernacle), Moshe instructs Aharon to bring two special offerings, an elevation offering (olah) and a sin offering (chatat). The people are also told to bring a chatat, two olah offerings and two peace offerings (shelamim). Aharon approaches the altar (mizbeach), together with his sons, and they begin the process of bringing these offerings.
- Aharon and his sons finish the offerings, after which Aharon blesses the people with the priestly blessing. Moshe and Aharon then bless the people that the Divine presence will rest upon them (Rashi).
- A fire comes from heaven and consumes the offerings on the mizbeach. The people fall to the ground in praise to God. Nadav and Avihu, two of Aharon's sons, bring an incense offering (ketoret) in a pan, which they had not been commanded to do. A fire descends from God, killing them instantly. Aharon is silent. Moshe asks two of their cousins to remove the bodies. Moshe tells Aharon and his two surviving sons, Elazar and Itamar, not to display any mourning in public. God relates to Aharon that no one is allowed to do service in the Mishkan drunk.
- Moshe tells Aharon and his sons to eat the remaining parts of a special meal offering (mincha) that they themselves had brought that day, as well as parts of the shelamim offering which they had also brought.
- Moshe criticises Elazar and Itamar for burning one of the chatat offerings instead of eating parts of it. Aharon defends their actions, based on their status as mourners (Rashi). Moshe accepts Aharon's justification.

- God teaches Moshe and Aharon some of the laws of kashrut. Only an animal with completely split hooves and which chews the cud is kosher. Therefore, animals like the camel and pig, which have only one of these characteristics, are forbidden. Fish are only kosher if they have both fins and scales. The Torah lists forbidden birds by name. Flying insects are also prohibited food, with limited exceptions (that are today difficult to identify). Kosher animals which die without proper slaughter (shechitah), as well as dead non-kosher animals, transmit ritual impurity (tumah) to one who touches them.
- The Torah lists some basic laws of how certain utensils can become impure (tameh) and how they need to be treated thereafter. All creeping insects are forbidden to eat.

### Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

- **Tip:** The information in the parsha summary above can be used as the basis of a quiz. Make sure if you do decide to have a quiz that it's inclusive and fair. Think through carefully before your service to decide if a quiz is a suitable activity for the dynamics of your group.
- **Activity : The Chasida bird**

In Shemini we read about the various species of birds that are non-kosher and prohibited to eat. One of these is a very kind bird whose very name in Hebrew, 'Chasida' means kindness. We learn though that the Chasida is only kind to members of its own species – to others it is cruel. It is natural to be kind and help out others that are part of our crowd of friends, people who we think are similar to us but the real test of kindness is if we can extend that same kindness to people who are different to us.

Explain to the children that you are now going to create a recipe for a *kindness cake*.

Go around the circle and give everyone a number. Then call out a random number and whoever has that number should start. Give your starting child a bowl and tell them to act out placing a kindness ingredient for the cake into the bowl. For example, 3 tablespoons of smile, a handful of sharing, a cup of listening and so on.

When the first child has placed their ingredients in the bowl they should call out another number and whoever has that number should then take the bowl and continue as above. When all the children have added their ingredient, take the bowl and pretend to mix it all up and tell them they have created their Children's Service special kindness cake.

**Discuss:**

- How can we encourage ourselves to be kind to people who are not like us?  
(One good way is to try to think of ways they *are* like us, and focus on our similarities instead of our differences. When it comes down to it, every single person in the world is somehow related to each other, as we all have the same ancestors in Adam and Eve. Many times we can think of closer connections too.)
- What do you feel like when someone is kind to you?
- Think about what special talents that you have that you can use to be kind to other people.
- How can we be kind in school? At home? To elderly people?

## Children's Service: Years 3- 6

- Please check the activities written in the age group above as some of them may be suitable for your service too.
- Tip: The information in the parsha summary above can be used as the basis of a quiz. Make sure if you do decide to have a quiz that it's inclusive and fair. Think through carefully before your service to decide if a quiz is a suitable activity for the dynamics of your group.

### **Story: 'And Aharon was silent' (Shemini 10: 3)**

In the parsha this week we are told that when faced with an incredibly difficult situation where he could have been angry, Aharon chose to be silent. Under tragic circumstances he used his power of self- control and didn't speak out. Rashi tells us that as a reward for his silent acceptance of God's decree, Aharon had the next mitzvah in the Torah addressed exclusively to him.

In the story below we learn of a boy who wins the battle of the tongue...

It was a cool, windy day, and rain was drizzling on and off from the grey skies. But Simon White, the goalie for the Ford Day School Lions football team, was feeling pretty hot under the collar.

The Lions were in the middle of a tight game with their main rivals, the Lakeshore School Rangers. But it wasn't the pressure of the game that was bothering Simon; he loved the action. Rather it was this one loudmouthed Ranger fan who had planted himself as close to him as he could. He was barraging the boy with every type of insult and put-down he could think of.

Simon wasn't the type to take insults sitting down, and he soon started giving the noisy kid back some of his own medicine.

It was late in the game and the score was two all. Simon readied himself to prepare for the last twenty minutes. Once again, he heard the now-familiar voice of the loudmouth piping up with some particularly nasty comment. But this time, as Simon turned to answer back, he suddenly heard the whoosh of a speeding football whizzing past his head. He rushed to turn around, but it was too late.

"Goal!!!" cried out the Rangers, and their happy fans.

"Oh no!" cried Simon. "How did I ever let that happen?"

He scanned the crowd and cringed at the smiling face of his tormenter. "I'll bet that's just what he wanted," Simon thought angrily.

The game resumed, and not long after, the Lions scored a goal to tie the score once again.

"Okay, time to really concentrate," Simon told himself as the action resumed. But just a moment later, the horrible fan was calling out to him again, now worse than ever.

Simon was about to answer back. He would really give it to him this time! But then he had a second thought. "Wait a minute ... what am I doing? Last time I turned around, I missed a goal because of it. Should I make the same mistake again?"

Simon kept silent and tried to focus all his attention on the game. But as the loudmouth kept it up even more, Simon felt himself getting ready to turn around.

"No!" he told himself. "Just because this joker wants to annoy me it doesn't mean I have to retaliate."

He decided to ignore the guy, and keep his position. Simon felt good. Not only didn't he let the fan distract him, but he also felt in control. It was as if the loudmouth had lost all the power that he had had over him until now.

Sure enough, at that moment, one of the Rangers took a blistering shot at the goal. But this time Simon was ready. He deftly dove to his right, and blocked the flying ball from reaching the goal.

"Great save!" shouted his teammates, slapping his back with joy.

Simon smiled back. He was glad he had blocked the shot, and even gladder he had learned how to block his mouth.

(adapted from Aish)

### **Discuss:**

- How did Simon feel when he first started getting the insults?
- How did he feel at the end of the game?
- What did Simon gain by keeping quiet?
- Is there ever a time when we should answer back to an insult?

### **Activity: The Chasida bird**

- Challenge One: Give everyone in the group a partner (if possible the children should team up with someone they have not partnered with before.) The pairs sit on the ground with their backs to each other. The partners then reach behind their backs to link arms with each other. When the leader says, "Go," the partners attempt to stand up without separating. You can specify that the partners can't talk to make the activity harder.
- Challenge Two: Divide players into groups of three or four. Again, try and choose new people to join together. Call out a letter and the groups must then form that letter using their bodies. The groups can decide if they want to build the letters standing or laying on the ground. You can have the different groups spell out words as well.

Now bring your participants back together as a group.

Ask them how they found the challenges?

Explain that you noticed that they were ignoring the differences between them and working together in a kind way to achieve their goal.

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