



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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Tetzaveh/ Parshat Zachor & Purim Summary

Parsha Summary:

- Moshe commands the Jews to use the purest olive oil when lighting the Menorah.
- Moshe is commanded by God to sanctify Aaron and his sons by dressing them in special priestly clothes.
- The parsha continues by describing the making of these special clothes.
- The procedure for consecrating Aaron and his sons as Kohanim is discussed. This service was to be repeated for seven days.
- The Jewish people are given instructions about various korbanot that were to be offered daily in the Mishkan.
- Tetzaveh concludes by describing the Incense Altar which stood in the Mishkan. Incense was to be burnt on the altar by the Kohanim, twice a day.

Children's Service: Tots – Year Two

Activity 1:

Discuss:

- Do any of the children have special clothes that they wear for particular occasions? (Shabbat, Chagim, parties, football....)
- Are there any professions that require people to wear special clothes?
- Do you think uniforms are important?
- Why do we keep our nicest clothes for Shabbat and Chagim?

Explain:

In the Mishkan there were people who had special jobs to do and they were called Kohanim. The Kohanim were given special clothes to wear, (for pictures go to Google Images or Amazon.) Our rabbis tell us that the wonderful clothes that the Kohanim wore were to honour them as they were similar to royal clothes. When wearing the clothes the Kohanim would realise the awesome responsibility they had of carrying out the service in the Mishkan. These distinctive clothes would make the rest of the Jewish people respect the Kohanim. We can learn from the uniform of the Kohanim that when **we** pray or perform particular mitzvot **we** should dress and behave in a respectful and fitting way before God.

There were four types of clothing worn by the Kohen Hedyot (ordinary Priest).

1. KETONET - This woven, white linen shirt, stretched from shoulder to the ground.

2. AVNAIT – A sash worn as a belt.
3. MICHNASAYIM - A pair of white linen trousers.
4. MIGBA'AT - This long linen strip was wound around the Kohen's head and shaped into a pointed hat.

The Kohen Gadol / Head Cohen had an extra five garments. These were:

1. MITZNEFET - a turban.
2. EPHOD - The Kohen Gadol wore an apron on his back that was tied around his shoulders and waist with a belt. Each shoulder strap contained a *shoham* stone - a precious gemstone that was engraved with the names of six tribes. These two straps were attached to the chains from which the Choshen Mishpat would hang.
3. CHOSHEN MISHPAT - The Choshen (breastplate) was the holiest of the clothes of the Kohanim. It was a square piece of material that was folded over to make a pocket. In this pocket Moshe placed the "Urim Vetumim," a parchment inscribed with the holy name of God. Twelve precious stones were set against the woven square, each representing a different *shevet* - tribe.
4. ME'IL - A full length coat of blue dyed wool. Hanging from the hemline were golden bells. Between the bells hung ornamental pomegranates.
5. TZITZ - A golden plate worn on the forehead fastened by three blue ribbons.

Activity 2:

Focus on the Choshen Mishpat that the Kohen Gadol wore. Explain that the *Choshen Mishpat* – Breastplate of the Kohen Gadol was the holiest of the clothes that the Kohen would wear. It was made out of a piece of woven material that was folded in half forming a pouch. Into the pouch would be inserted a parchment on which was written Gods holy name. On the front of each breastplate were twelve precious stones with the names of the *shevatim* – tribes, engraved on them. The breastplate was held in place by two gold rings attached to each of its upper corners with gold braided chains threaded through. The rings would be attached to the Ephod (see above). The bottom part of the Choshen was also attached to the Ephod.

Rashi tells us that when the Kohen Gadol had important questions to ask God the letters of the names of the *shevatim* would light up presenting the correct answers.

Sing the song of the names of the *shevatim* with the children.

To the tune of 'Bobby Shaftoe':

'Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehudah,
Yissachar, Zevulun, Dan, Naftali,
Gad, Asher, Yosef and Binyamin
These are the twelve shevatim.

Prepare in advance, coloured jelly sweets (check the allergy information of your service) with at least twelve different coloured sweets. Ask the children to choose twelve sweets each and either lay them out as shown below in a waffle (can be found in kosher shops) or on a piece of material or napkin. You can do this either as an introduction to the Choshen Mishpat or after you have discussed it - as a review. Either way it is an activity which will help the children to remember these special clothes for years to come! When you have finished discussing the special twelve stones the children can eat them as a delicious treat!



Children's Service -Years 3-6

Activity 1:

Discuss:

- Why do people wear clothing? Is there more to clothes than keeping us warm or covered up?
- Do any of the children have special clothes that they wear for particular occasions? (Shabbat, Chagim, parties, football...)
- Ask the children what kind of image they think they create about themselves from the clothes that they wear?
- Are there any professions that require people to wear special clothes?
- Do you think uniforms are important and why?

- Why do we keep our nicest clothes for Shabbat and Chagim?

Explain:

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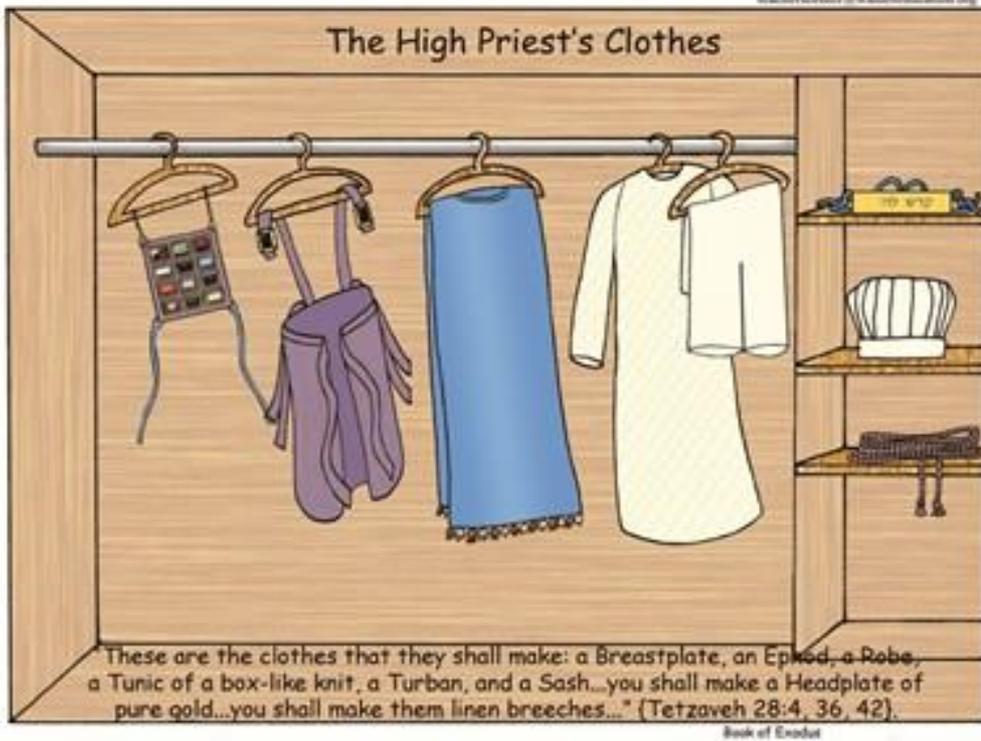
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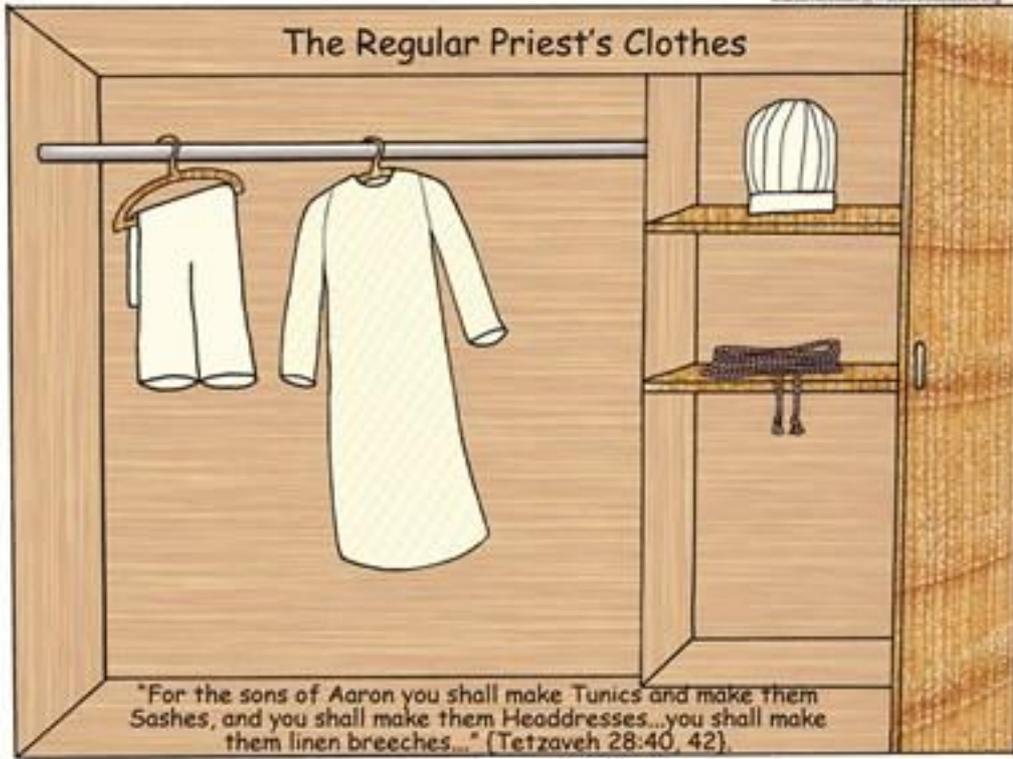




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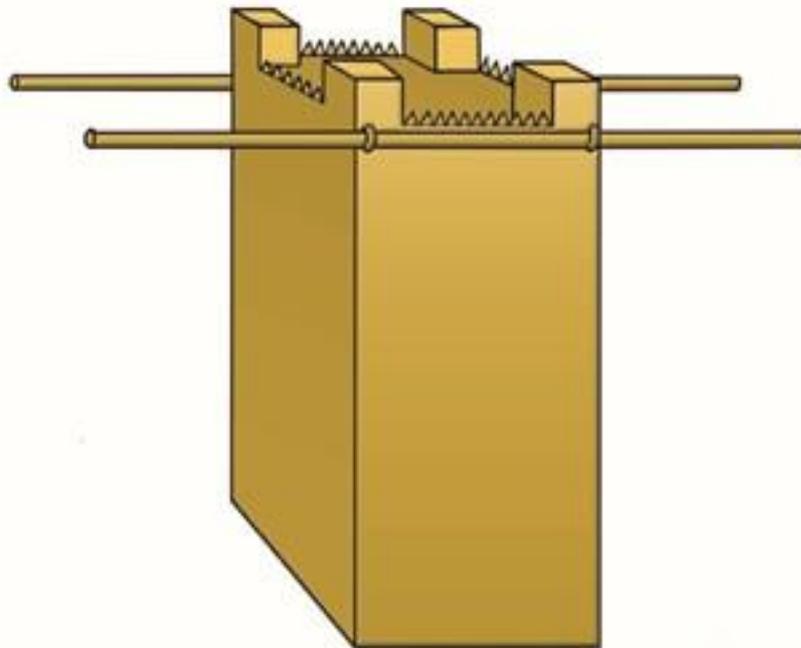


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"You shall make an Altar on which to bring incense up in smoke...of acacia wood...you shall cover it with pure gold" (Tetzaveh 30:1, 3).
Book of Exodus



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Parshat Zachor

This Shabbat is called Shabbat Zachor. The Shabbat before Purim is always called Shabbat Zachor and on it we read from Sefer Devarim 25:17-19 which deals with the commandment to remember how Amalek cowardly attacked us when we left Egypt.

Why do we always read about Amalek on the Shabbat before Purim?

Well, Haman, from the Purim story, who wanted to destroy all the Jewish people, was a descendant of Amalek. 'Zachor' means 'to remember' and because of this connection between Amalek and Haman our sages chose this Shabbat to have this special reading. It is one of the 613 mitzvot - to remember Amalek!

PURIM

Facts about Purim.....

- Purim is the festival that was proclaimed to thank God for the miracles He performed to save the Jews of Persia from destruction. The account of these events is recorded in Megillat Esther, the Scroll of Esther.
- Purim is on 14th Adar and Shushan Purim is on the 15th of Adar.
- The origin of the word Purim comes from the verse in the Megillah which states that Haman cast a 'lot' to determine the date on which he would wipe out all the Jews. Purim is the plural of the word 'pur' which means 'lot'.
- The festival of Purim was ordained by the Rabbis.
- There are several mitzvot of Purim:
 1. Hearing the reading of Megillat Esther twice, once in the evening of Purim and once during the day. Every

- word must be heard clearly. The megillah, must be read from a parchment scroll written by a scribe.
2. Sending Mishloach Manot – gifts of food. At least one gift consisting of at least two ready to eat items of food must be sent. One can send to as many people as one wishes!
 3. Matanot La'Evyonim – giving money to the poor.
 4. Seudat Purim – a festive meal. This special meal should begin after the *mincha* service on Purim when it is still daytime and can carry on well into the evening.
 5. Al Hanissim – an added prayer which summarizes the events which took place on Purim. It is added to Grace after Meals and the silent *Amidah*
 6. Kriat Hatorah – there is a special reading from the Torah.

Customs of Purim

1. It is a custom to dress up on Purim as the mitzvah of Purim was a 'hidden one' and we 'hide 'our true identity. God's name is not mentioned in Megillat Esther and He does not reveal himself. The events in the story can be viewed as a series of coincidences (see more about this later) but in reality it was God who was behind all of these events. It is up to us to recognise the hand of God in our everyday lives.
2. It is a custom to eat hamantaschen, which are a three cornered cake filled with a poppy seed mixture. The origin of hamentasch is a bit of a dispute but the word means 'Haman's pocket'. Many people say that the contents of a pocket are usually hidden and the filling

in the hamentasch are hidden. This alludes to the hidden miracle of Purim. Other people say that Haman wore a three cornered hat as a symbol of his high office. Finally, some say that hamentaschen allude to Haman's ears as it was a custom in Italy to cut off the ear of a criminal before he was hanged. This may be the origin of the calling of hamentaschen – Haman's ears. Italians eat 'orecchie de'Aman' 'Haman's ears.

3. It is a custom to stamp and make a noise when the name of Haman is read out from the megillah.
4. It is a tradition for groups of masquerading players to visit Jewish homes on Purim and entertain them in order to collect money for needy causes. These are known as 'shpielers' and they are often welcomed into homes during the Purim festive meal.
5. It is a custom that when reading the names of the sons of Haman's in the megillah they are read out in one breath with no break in between. This is because they were all hanged at the same time.

The Story of Purim

- The Jews were in Exile after the destruction of the first Temple, living in Shushan, the capital city of the Persian Empire. They were all participating in a feast held by the King, Achashverosh (Xerxes I), when he ordered the death of his wife Queen Vashti for refusing to attend the feast.
- The King searched for a new wife and married Esther, a Jewess, who was in the care of her uncle Mordechai.

- About the same time, Mordechai overheard two men, Bigtan and Teresh, at the palace gates plotting to kill the King. Mordechai reported their attack and his loyalty was recorded in the King's Book of Chronicles.
- Shortly thereafter, Achashverosh appointed Haman as an advisor. Haman was the richest man in Persia and insisted that everyone bow down to him.
- Mordechai refused to bow to Haman as he said he only bowed to God. Haman decreed to kill all the Jews on 13th Adar.
- Mordechai mourned on hearing the decree and convinced Esther to approach the King, asking him to reverse the decree.
- Esther fasted for three days and nights before asking the King and Haman to a private feast for the three of them.
- That night Achashverosh couldn't sleep so he called for his book of records to be read to him. The king noticed that Mordechai had saved his life and that he had never rewarded him for doing so.
- The King called Haman and asked him to suggest a reward for someone the King wants to honour. Thinking that the king wanted to honour him, Haman suggested that this person should be paraded around the city on the King's horse, wearing the royal jewels, led by the king's highest

officials declaring “This is how the king rewards those he wishes to honour!”

- The king liked the idea and then made Haman lead exactly such a parade to honour Mordechai. Naturally this infuriated and humiliated Haman.
- At Esther’s feast, Achashverosh discovered Haman’s true intention of killing every Jew, including Esther and was furious. He ordered Haman’s death, together with his ten sons. They were executed on the gallows that Haman had built for Mordechai and his advisers.
- Achashverosh could not rescind Haman’s decree against the Jews because it had been sealed with his ring. He did however give the Jews permission to organise themselves into an army in order to defend themselves.
- Despite being severely outnumbered the Jews won a rousing victory. On Adar 13th the Jews destroyed their enemies in the provinces and on the 13th and 14th of Adar they destroyed their enemies in the capital city of Shushan.
- These events were recorded by Mordechai and Esther in Megillat Esther and the 14th and 15th of Adar became the festival of Purim commemorating this miraculous victory.

Toddlers' Service Songs:

To the tune of 'Chag Purim'

"Purim day, Purim day
Holiday of fun and play
Sing your song
Loud and long
Mask and dance all day
Turn your gregger round and round
Let it make a jolly sound
Pass the hamentaschen around
Turn your gregger round"

Sing a song of Purim

To the tune of 'Sing a song of Sixpence'

Sing a song of Purim
What a happy time
Boys and Girls enjoy it
Purim cakes and wine

We sing of good Queen Esther
And Mordechai the Jew
Of King Achashverosh
And wicked Haman too.

Games

In the reading of the Megillah we read that in the month of Adar we should be especially happy.

Ask the younger children:

- What makes them happy?

- How do we know when someone is happy?
- How can we make other people happy?

Play some games about laughter:

'Hadoo'

- Two lines stand facing each other and become teams.
- One player from each team, at opposite ends of the line, taunt each other by bowing and calling out "Hadoo"
- The players then walk toward and past each other without laughter or smiling, while the teams attempt to make the passerby from the opposite team burst into laughter.
- If a player should crack a smile, they join the line of their opponents.
- The game ends when there is only one team left.

'Sausages'

Whatever question anyone asks you, you're only allowed to answer: 'Sausages.' If you laugh, you're out.

Jokes

See if any children have a joke to tell. (Make sure they check it with you first!)

Use all the information above about Purim as the basis for a **quiz**.

Drama – The Purim story lends itself naturally to drama activities. Split the children into groups giving each group a section of the story to rehearse and then show to the other groups. You could give each group a random word to insert into their act and ask the other groups to guess what the random word is after

watching the performance. The random word should have nothing to do with the Purim story.

For older children play some games that involve things being hidden or that use clues. For example, before Shabbat get several copies of the same newspaper. Divide the children into teams – the same amount as the number of newspaper copies you have. Ask them to find various things in the paper, e.g. when does the big carpet sale start? Who began a new job this week? What colour was the Queen’s new hat? Etc. The first team to find the answer gets a point. The winning group is the one with the most points at the end. Another ‘hidden’ game could be using the Where’s Wally books. If you have any ‘Where’s Wally?’ books take them to shul and ask the children to find Wally.

After playing a few games such as these ask the children what the games had in common. Explain that all the games were to do with things being hidden. In the story of the Purim things too are hidden. God’s name is not in the story and he hides Himself behind what seem like coincidences.

Ask the children to think of some of these ‘coincidences’.

Examples could be:

- Esther, the Jewess was the one chosen to be the new queen
- Mordechai was the one who heard Bigtan and Teresh plotting to kill the King.
- Haman was at the royal court when Achashverosh couldn’t sleep.
- The gallows that Haman had built for Mordechai were used to hang him and his sons.
- Mordechai is promoted to Viceroy.
- The date designated to destroy the Jewish nation becomes a holiday.

In fact the very word ‘Esther’ has as its root the word ‘haster’ which means ‘hidden’. Megillat Esther could be renamed ‘The Scroll of Hiding’.

During the story of Purim God was like a puppeteer behind the scenes. The events that happened were not coincidences or 'nature'. There is nothing natural about nature! Nature is just God's way of managing the details whilst staying hidden. In reality every little event that happens is part of a grand master plan that has its own goal and logic and yet which responds at the same time to our every move. The fact that these 'hidden' acts of God are more subtle than the sea splitting interventions leaves us with free choice. It is our challenge to find God 'hiding' behind the events in our own lives.

- Ask the children if they have any event happen to them which at first glance may seem like a coincidence...