



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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Vayelech

Parsha Summary:

- Moshe is one hundred and twenty years old and knowing that it is the last day of his life, bids farewell to the Jewish people.
- Moshe summons Joshua and charges him with leading the Jewish people into the Land of Israel.
- Moshe then wrote the entire Torah and gave it to the Kohanim.
- Moshe and Joshua are commanded by God to write the song that He would tell them and to teach it to the Jewish people. God says that a time will come when the people would abandon God and He will at that time hide Himself from them. They will then be subjected to troubles and will claim that these misfortunes are happening to them because God has abandoned them. This song will be a reminder to them that these events are as a result of their own behaviour.
- Moshe gives the commandment of Hakhel, whereby every seven years at the end of the Sabbatical year, on the first day of Chol Hamoed Sukkot, the entire nation was commanded to assemble at the Bet Hamikdash. There the King would read selected sections of the Torah.
- Moshe took the freshly finished Torah scroll and gave it to the Levi'im. He instructs them to put it next to the Ark.
- Moshe gathers all the people together to hear the song. The song is narrated in the parsha next week.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

Activity 1:

This game and the one following it, emphasise leadership skills and taking the initiative. The group leaders should observe the children during the game to see which child / children show evidence of these skills as it will be relevant later.

Place plastic bags on the ground, enough for one per child. The children should run around until you say "Stop!" At this point each child should stand on a bag. Continue to do this, but each time taking away one bag. The children are allowed to share bags and are to be encouraged to think of clever and innovative ideas to enable the maximum number of children on each bag. For example, they could stand on each other's feet or change the shape of the bag.

Activity 2:

Stand your participants inside a circle of chairs (Please ensure that the chairs are facing outside the circle to avoid injury.) Make sure the circle is large enough for all the kids to lie down in it at the same time. Begin the game by having children stand inside the circle, then toss a balloon or light ball into the air. Kids must work together to keep the balloon in the air, inside the circle. If the balloon goes outside the circle or touches the ground, the kids must all kneel on their knees and play the next round from there. Each time the balloon touches the ground or goes outside the circle, kids must assume a new position. The positions, in order, are: standing, kneeling, sitting and lying down.

Once both these activities have been completed, bring the children back together. Discuss the challenges they faced and the solutions they came up with. If any specific child displayed

leadership qualities, try and steer the discussion round to why this child was so helpful. Did he / she show awareness of other people's needs? Did they contribute good ideas?

In this week's parasha, Moshe hands over the leadership to Joshua/ Yehoshua. Yehoshua was a brave, wise and responsible man. What other qualities did you learn from the above games that are important for someone in charge of others, for example a teacher?

Children's Service: Years 3-6

These games, emphasise leadership skills and taking the initiative. The group leaders should observe the children during the game to see which child / children show evidence of these skills.

Activity 1:

Rock Paper Scissors (with a difference...)

Check all the children know how to play *rock/paper/scissors*. Decide with them a definitive way that you are all going to play the game so that they are all playing it in the same way. When you say, "Off you go", the children should walk around the room. When you say, "Stop", they should stop and find a partner to play *rock/paper/scissors* with, three times. The person who scores least in this game should walk behind the winner and chant their name aloud. The two of them should walk around the room looking for another pair to play against. The pair that loses this competition should stand behind the winning pair and chant the name of the person at the front. There should now be four people in this group. They should walk around the room chanting the name and looking for another group to play against.

In the end you should end up with one long line of children chanting the name of the person at the front.

Activity 2:

Place plastic bags on the ground, enough for one per child. The children should run around until you say "Stop!" At this point each child should stand on a bag. Continue to do this, but each time taking away one bag. The children are allowed to share bags and are to be encouraged to think of clever and innovative ideas to enable the maximum number of children on each bag. For example, they could stand on each other's feet or change the shape of the bag.

Activity 3:

Stand your participants inside a circle of chairs (Please ensure that the chairs are facing outside the circle to avoid injury.) Make sure the circle is large enough for all the kids to lie down in it at the same time. Begin the game by having children stand inside the circle, then toss a balloon or light ball into the air. Kids must work together to keep the balloon in the air, inside the circle. If the balloon goes outside the circle or touches the ground, the kids must all kneel on their knees and play the next round from there. Each time the balloon touches the ground or goes outside the circle, kids must assume a new position. The positions, in order, are: standing, kneeling, sitting and lying down.

Discuss:

- In the parsha this week we are told that Moshe appointed Joshua/Yehoshua as the next leader of the Jewish people. What do the children know about Yehoshua that would make them think he was the right candidate to become the next leader of the Jewish people?

Explain:

- Yehoshua was one of the twelve spies who were sent on a mission to assess Eretz Yisrael. There were twelve spies sent and all of them, except two men, gave negative reports of the Land. One of these men was Yehoshua. It surely must have been very difficult for Yehoshua to withstand the peer pressure from the other spies, yet he bravely remained loyal to Hashem and did not criticise Eretz Yisrael. The other spy who also stood up for the truth was Calev. In fact if we look at the episode of the spies in the Torah we see that it was the passionate Calev who stood up to the other spies first – before Yehoshua. Yehoshua only spoke later when the Jewish people were really worked up and wanted to return to Egypt. Why didn't Yehoshua stand up for Eretz Yisrael right at the start of the spies feedback like Calev did? Was he swayed by the opinion of others?

Our rabbanim tell us that Yehoshua only spoke out later because he was a realistic and reflective person who knew how and when to lead. He knew that the spies would not change their mind and so at first he did not speak up – he realised there was no point. Only when the Jewish people began to speak about changing God's plan by wanting to go back to Egypt did Yehoshua speak up, as that for him was one step too far.

We also learn that before Yehoshua goes on the mission to spy out the Land, Moshe changes his name. Previously he was called Hoshea but Moshe adds letters from God's name to this name so that he is now called Yehoshua. This addition of letters signifies protection from God. Yehoshua was the only spy singled out to have his name changed as Yehoshua was Moshe's personal assistant and advisor.

Moshe knew that Yehoshua was the kind of person who would not be swayed by the opinions of others. In order to remain steadfast and strong Yehoshua would need a blessing from Moshe.

So to sum up: We can see from these two points that Yehoshua was a brave, loyal, realistic, sensible, and thoughtful man. He had a very close relationship with Moshe and was an obvious choice as the next leader.

Discuss:

- From the activities you just played, what do you think makes a good leader? What qualities are important to be able to lead people well?
- Have you ever had a leader or a teacher who you thought was excellent and why?