



Welcome to Spark, the Tribe Parasha activity sheet that will help you bring Judaism to life in a varied and exciting way. I'd like these activities to enthuse the children and show them how the Torah given almost 3500 years ago is still as relevant and as exciting in our lives today.

Thank you for offering to run a Children's Service, for all the hard work 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 Parasha, songs, an activity, discussion questions or D'var Torah linked to the Parasha 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 am sure the children at your shul 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 the work you do in enabling so many young Jews to access their heritage and traditions in such an exciting way.

All it takes is a small spark of interest, to ignite a flame of passion for Judaism.

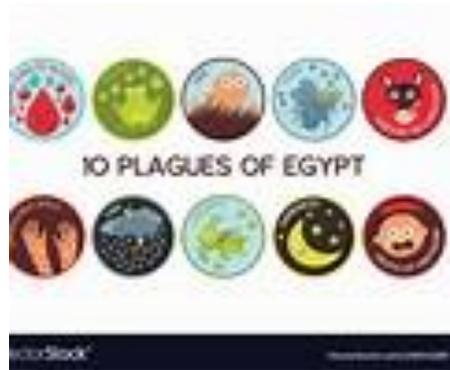
With kindest regards,

Rabbi Nicky (Goldmeier)
Spark Editor and Education Consultant

Welcome

Va'era – 'The Parasha in a Nutshell':

This week's Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) is Va'era which means 'And I appeared' and at the very start of the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) the Torah tells us that God said to Moshe (Moses). 'And I appeared to Abraham, Isaac and Jacob...'. God was telling Moshe (Moses) that it was now time to fulfil the promises he had made to the Patriarchs. The name of the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) is usually a word or words taken from the first Passuk of the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion).



The Israelites were crushed in spirit from the Egyptian slavery and would not listen to Moshe (Moses) as he delivered God's message. Moshe (Moses) was worried that most certainly, Pharaoh would not listen to him. God told Moshe (Moses) that Pharaoh would only let the Israelites go, once He had inflicted severe punishments upon the Egyptians.

Moshe (Moses) and Aharon (Aaron) went to Pharaoh and showed him the miracles God had told them to perform. But Pharaoh remained stubborn and unimpressed.

The first plague of blood was brought on Egypt, but still Pharaoh remained stubborn. A plague of frogs was then sent and Pharaoh told Moshe (Moses) that the Israelites could worship God. Moshe (Moses) prayed to God for the plague to stop and it ceased.

But Pharaoh changed his mind and refused to let the people go, so a plague of lice was brought on the Egyptians, but Pharaoh's heart remained hardened and he would not let the people go.

So, a fourth plague, wild animals, was brought on Egypt and the devastation caused by this plague forced Pharaoh to allow the Israelites to worship God inside the Land of Egypt. But, Moshe (Moses) insisted that they be allowed to serve God in the wilderness, away from the Egyptians. Once again, Pharaoh yielded, but as soon as the plague had stopped, he again refused to let the Israelites go.

A fifth plague was sent, spreading disease and death amongst the cattle of the Egyptians. Still, Pharaoh was unmoved. Next, a plague of boils afflicted humans and animals. But Pharaoh remained stubborn.

Pharaoh was then told that if he did not relent, Egypt would be hit by a torrent of hail which would destroy crops and kill cattle. Pharaoh admitted he had done wrong, but as before, once the plague stopped, Pharaoh's heart turned to stone!

Parasha Overview – In a Little More Detail

- God revealed himself to Moshe (Moses) as the One whose promises to the patriarchs would now be fulfilled. The Israelites would now be freed from the Egyptian bondage and taken to the Promised Land. Moshe (Moses) expressed his fear that because he could not speak properly, Pharaoh would not listen to him. Therefore, God reassured him that his brother Aharon (Aaron) would be his spokesperson.

- Moshe (Moses) was 80 years old and Aharon (Aaron) was 83 years old when they went to Egypt to carry out their mission. When they arrived before Pharaoh, Aharon (Aaron) threw down his rod and it became a snake. However, the Egyptian magicians were able to duplicate this feat and even though Aharon's (Aaron's) rod swallowed the magicians' rods, Pharaoh remained unimpressed.



- The first plague was now brought on Egypt. After warning Pharaoh of what was to happen, Aharon (Aaron) waved his rod over the River Nile, its canals and reservoirs, all of which turned to blood. This plague continued for seven days, with the Egyptians having no fresh water. But Pharaoh remained unimpressed.
- The second plague was then brought by Aharon (Aaron) stretching his rod over the River Nile once again and frogs swarmed over the land. Pharaoh pleaded with Moshe (Moses) to stop the plague and promised to allow the Israelites to leave and serve God. As soon as Moshe prayed to God, the plague stopped. However, Pharaoh refused to keep his promise.
- Aharon (Aaron) then hit the dust of the ground with his rod, turning the dust in to lice which swarmed everyone. The Egyptian magicians tried to do the same, as they had successfully done with the plagues of Blood and Frogs, but they were unable to replicate the plague of Lice. Despite the magicians being forced to admit God's superiority, Pharaoh's heart remained hardened towards the Israelites.
- Moshe (Moses) then warned Pharaoh that wild animals would invade the homes of the Egyptians. The devastation of this fourth plague forced Pharaoh to let the Israelites go and serve God, but as soon as the plague stopped, he once again, refused to let the Israelites go.
- Moshe (Moses) then warned Pharaoh that a disease would break out amongst the cattle, if he did not let the Israelites leave, but Pharaoh was unmoved, even after the death of many cattle belonging to the Egyptians.



- Next, Moshe (Moses) sprinkled ashes towards the heavens, in Pharaoh's presence. The ashes turned in to dust and this caused an epidemic of painful boils to erupt among humans and animals alike. Pharaoh still did not change his mind.
- Pharaoh was then told that if he did not relent, Egypt would be hit by a torrent of hail which would cause devastation for the crops and the remaining animals. Pharaoh was even advised to shelter both people and animals to save them from death. Some of the Egyptians heeded the warning, thus saving themselves and their animals.
- Moshe (Moses) stretched his rod towards the heaven and a terrible storm of thunder, lightning and hail raged over Egypt, killing people and animals and destroying crops. (The hail was of an unnatural composition. It was composed of fire on the interior and ice on the exterior). This time, Pharaoh openly acknowledged his error, but when the storm stopped, his heart, once again, turned to stone.

Parasha Overview
- In a Little More Detail!



Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

In this week's Parasha, the character trait of 'Making the correct choice' is seen, as time after time, Pharaoh simply refused to let the Israelites leave his land. Pharaoh was always given a choice; to let the Israelites go or not and despite utter devastation being brought on the people of Egypt, he chose death and destruction.

This activity will enable young children to think about the choices they are faced with every day.

Activity – 'Making the Right Choice'

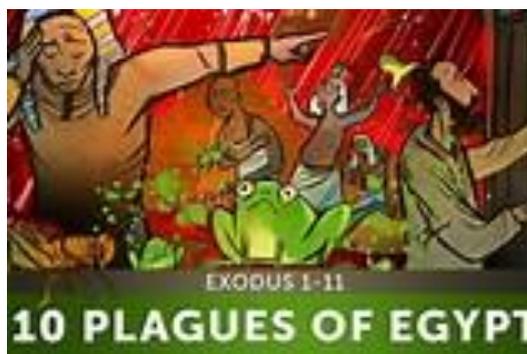
Ask the children to sit in a circle and place the 'Choice Cards' (they are at the end of the Spark) in the middle of the circle. As you will notice, there are good and bad choices among the cards. Ask the children, one at a time, to come to the middle of the circle and choose a card. Help them read their card out to everyone else. S/he must decide whether what they have read out is a good or bad choice.

Activity – ‘Which Plague am I?’

Read out each statement and ask the children to guess which plague you are describing. With the children sitting in a circle, remind them of the 10 plagues. Then, ask them to listen to each statement and guess which plague you are talking about.

10 Plagues: Blood, Frogs, Lice, Wild animals, Cattle disease, Boils, Hail, Locusts, Darkness, Death of firstborn.

1. Oh no! I can't drink this water!
2. Don't those animals belong in the zoo?
3. I feel so itchy. I just can't stop scratching!
4. I don't believe it! My cows are really sick!
5. Help! They're jumping everywhere!
6. I really can't see a thing!
7. All the wheat in my field has been eaten!
8. Those are not rain drops, they are?
9. What is that big blister on your skin?
10. The whole street looks green and sounds like it is croaking!!



Story Time

A little girl walked into a sweet shop with her dad and was amazed by all the amazing sweets on offer.

“What should I choose? What should I choose? What should I choose?” She asked herself.

“Come on, we don’t have all day,” her dad said.

“These are my favourites. No wait, these are my favourites.”

She walked along the aisles, picking up bags and putting them back.

She just couldn’t make up her mind.

“Quick, make up your mind, we have to go,” Her impatient dad said.

Frantically, the little girl ran around the store, her eyes moving from one shelf to another, but all of the options looked so good and she couldn’t make a decision.

Eventually, the dad had enough, took his daughter’s hand and they walked out of the shop with no sweets at all! The little girl started to cry. She wanted them all but ended up with nothing because she couldn’t choose just one.

Her dad looked at her and wiped away her tears. ‘It’s always good to make a definite choice, especially when you have so much on offer in front of you. If you don’t choose something, you may end up with nothing.



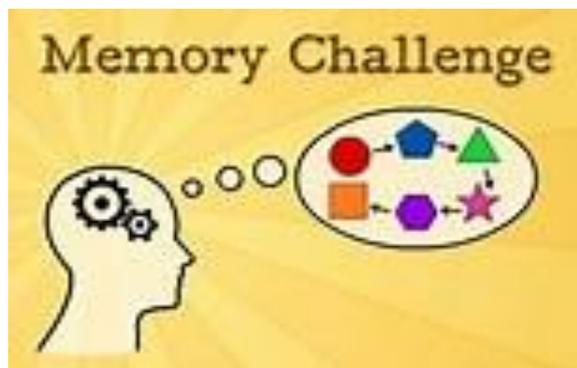
Children's Service: Years 3- 6

In this week's Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) we read about the first 7 of the 10 Makot (Plagues) brought upon Egypt.

Activity – 'The 10 Plagues Memory Game'

Ask the children to sit in a circle and place the '10 Plagues Cards' in the centre of the circle. There are more than 10 cards, which will make the game a bit more challenging. (These are at the end of this week's Spark and I have labelled them for leaders, in case any pictures are not so clear).

As you place each card in the centre of the circle, show it to the children and ask them which plague it depicts. When all the cards are in the centre of the circle, choose a child (you could also pair the children) to go outside the room. Once outside the room, take one of the cards away and invite the child/ren back into the room. They must now guess which plague has been taken away. They must then act out that particular plague. So, for example, if the child/ren think the plague of Lice has been taken away, they must also act out the plague of Lice!!





What do Dan and Dina Teach us this Week?

In this week's Tribe Scribe at the back of the Daf Hashavua, you'll find another important lesson that we can learn from the Parasha (weekly Torah Portion).

Give out some copies of the Daf Hashavua with the Tribe Scribe on the back. You can ask the children to work together in pairs or in groups, to think about a time when all seemed lost and there was no hope. But, in the end, everything turned out fine.

Then, retell the story of the Wild Boars football team and discuss the following points with the children;

1. Do you think anyone in the world expected them to be found alive?
2. How did the boys remain calm?
3. What do you think you would have done to stay calm in that situation?
4. Have you ever found yourself in a scary situation and what did you do to try and calm yourself and others around you?
5. What do you think the Israelites thought when they had been slaves in Egypt for so many years and all hope seemed lost?
6. What lesson does Dan teach us at the end of the Scribe?

What do Dan and Dina Teach
us this Week?

What does this Story Teach us?

This is a story about the importance of being persistent, never giving up and always believing things can get better, no matter how many failures you have experienced in the past.

A man was spending his holiday in Africa. One day he watched a group of elephants passing by. To his great surprise these giant, strong animals were being held only by a small rope, tied to their front leg. Obviously, they could easily run away at any moment. However, they did not.

Then he saw the elephant trainer and asked him, 'how could this happen, that not a single elephant makes an attempt to break free?' The trainer explained: 'When the elephants are very young, we use the same size rope to tie them, and at that time it is enough to hold them. Gradually the elephants grow up, get stronger, nevertheless they never try to get away, as they believe that the rope will still hold them.'

The man was stunned. These strong animals could break free any time, but they did not, because they believed that it was still impossible to do so.

Sometimes people act like elephants, when they give up after the first failure. Remember, that failures are part of learning. If we want to succeed, we should never give up, but try and try again



What does this Story Teach Me?

Song

The link has been included for you to listen to before Shabbat and if you so wish, to teach the children this song.

Va'era Song

https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/549142/jewish/Vaeira.htm

The water is blood, all did shout
Frogs were jumping in and out
Bugs were crawling everywhere
Rrr, wild animals were a scare

Then came Dever (Death of cattle) by and by
All the farm animals died
Sh'chin, boils and pimples too
On the Mitzrim (Egyptians), not the Jews

Chorus:

Ten Makot, Makot ten
The Mitzrim (Egyptians) were punished
Again and again

Barad was fire and hail
In Mitzrayim (Egypt) a loud wail
Grasshoppers flying quick
Then the darkness very thick

Makat B'chorot was the last
Pharaoh ran to Moshe (Moses) fast
He was afraid to die, so...
He said, "let those Jews all go!"

Chorus:

Ten Makot, Makot ten
The Mitzrim (Egyptians) were punished
Again and again



Finish all my lunch	Share my toys	Ask for things without saying please	Run around at dinner time
Leave my puzzle pieces all over the place	Help 1 friend today	Finish all my breakfast	Put dishes in the sink or dishwasher after dinner
Clean up my room	Help mummy with the laundry	Put my IPAD away after using it	Listen when mum/dad asks me to do something
Jumping on the furniture	Snatching a toy out of someone's hand	Tearing a book	Being kind to my pet dog or cat



BLOOD

BLOOD



FROGS

FROGS





LICE

WILD ANIMALS



BOILS

HAIL





HAIL

HAIL



DEATH OF THE FIRSTBORN



DARKNESS



DARKNESS