



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

Vaetchanan – 2019/5779

Parasha Summary:

This week's Parasha (Weekly Torah portion) begins by describing Moshe's (Moses') fervent prayers to God for permission to cross the River Jordan and go into the land of Canaan. However, as we know, Moshe's request was denied and instead he was told to view the land from the top of a mountain. Moshe (Moses) continued his speech by reminding the people to stay true to God and not to worship graven images of any kind. If they disobeyed God, they would be scattered among the nations, but if they truly repented they would be forgiven and returned to the Land of Israel.

Moshe (Moses) then designated 3 Cities of Refuge on the east of the River Jordan and 3 Cities of Refuge on the west.

He continued speaking to the B'nei Yisrael (Children of Israel) by reminding them of the Asseret Hadibrot (The Ten Commandments), the foundation of God's covenant with Israel, after which he expounded the 'Shema', affirming God's unity.

Moshe (Moses) cautioned the people not to forget God even after they had settled in the Promised Land.

The Parasha (Weekly Torah portion) continues by instructing future generations of Jews not to forget the wonders and miracles performed by God when taking the B'nei Yisrael (Children of Israel) out of Egypt.

This Shabbat is also known as 'Shabbat Nachamu' (The Sabbath of Comfort) and this is the first of 7 Shabbatot (Sabbaths) between Tisha B'Av (The fast of Av), the saddest day of the year, when we remember the destruction of the 2 Batei Mikdash (Holy Temples in Jerusalem) and Rosh Hashana (The Jewish new year). Despite all the sadness leading up to the fast of Av, God reassures the Jewish people that he will indeed comfort them and one day, rebuild the Temple in Jerusalem.





- The Parasha begins with Moshe (Moses) entreating God to allow him to enter the Promised Land (The Land of Canaan), but God tells Moshe (Moses) he will not be allowed to enter the Land. God instructed Moshe (Moses) to go to the top of a nearby mountain, Mount Pisga and view the Land from there.
- Moshe (Moses) appeals to the people to adhere meticulously to God's commandments and by doing so, they would be recognised by other nations as a great nation.
- Despite being a small nation, the Jewish people would prevail and they would be helped by the memory of the 'Mount Sinai experience', when they heard the Asseret Hadibrot (The Ten Commandments) from God and Moshe (Moses).
- Moshe (Moses) reminds the people that God did not appear on Mount Sinai in any shape or form and this should remind them of the prohibition against forming graven images of any kind.
- The B'nei Yisrael (Children of Israel) were reminded that if they disobeyed this law in the future, they would be exiled and scattered among the nations.
- Moshe (Moses) designated the 3 cities of Betzer, Ramot and Golan, in the East of Jordan, as Arei Miklat (Cities of Refuge) for whoever killed someone accidentally.
- The people were then reminded of the Asseret Hadibrot (The Ten Commandments) they received at Har Sinai (Mount Sinai) and how the people, terrified by the wonders they witnessed had pleaded with Moshe (Moses) that he and not God, tell them the Commandments.
- Moshe (Moses) then expounded the Shema, confirming the unity of God, Whom all should love and Whose commandments should be transmitted to the next generation. God's commandments are to be remembered by a sign on one's head and hand (Tefillin – Phylacteries) and written on the doorposts of one's house (Mezuza).
- The Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) concludes with Moshe (Moses) reminding the people that they are a holy nation whom God showed His love by redeeming them from slavery in Egypt and it is their duty to observe God's commandments.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

This activity will teach children about the Mitzvot (Commandments) of Tefillin (Phylacteries) worn by men and boys each morning, (except on Shabbat and Festivals) and Mezuzah (Affixed to the door post) which are both mentioned in the Shema prayer, the first paragraph of which comes from this week's Parasha.

Instructions

The children should start by sitting in a circle. Pass pictures of Tefillin and Mezuzot around the circle for children to look at carefully (see the bottom of this Spark edition). Give the children a few minutes to look at the pictures and then ask each child what they see in the pictures. For example, they may tell you that the Tefillin are black, that there is a Hebrew letter 'Shin' on one of the Tefillin. They may tell you there is a Hebrew letter 'Shin' on the Mezuzah and they may tell you that there is unusual writing on a piece of paper (it is actually parchment) that goes inside the Mezuzah and the Tefillin.

Then collect the pictures and tell the children you are going to test their memory, by asking the following;

Am I a Mezuzah or Tefillin?

- I have straps **(Tefillin)**
- I am a cubed shape **(Tefillin)**
- I am fixed to a door post **(Mezuzah)**
- People touch and kiss me as they walk through the door **(Mezuzah)**
- I have a funny shaped Hebrew letter 'Shin' on me **(Tefillin)**
- I have a regular looking Hebrew letter Shin on me **(Mezuzah)**
- I am worn with a Tallit **(Tefillin)**



- People say the Shema while I am worn **(Tefillin)**
- Strange looking Hebrew writing goes inside me **(Tefillin and Mezuzah)**
- I am always painted black **(Tefillin)**
- I can be lots of different colours **(Mezuzah)**

The command to affix a Mezuzah on every doorpost of our home (except a toilet and bathroom) is the 7th Mitzva at the end of the first paragraph of the Shema, which is in this week's Parasha (Weekly Torah portion).

This 'Little Red Rabbi' story will highlight the special Mitzva of Mezuzah.



The Little Red Rabbi

One day, as the Little Red Rabbi was leaving the Shul (Synagogue) after the Shacharit service (Morning Service), he reached out to kiss the Mezuzah. As he drew his hand away from the Mezuzah, it came off the wall and the Little Red Rabbi had to quickly catch it!

'Phew, that was close' said the Little Red Rabbi. 'I'll have to fix it back on to the doorpost, but I may as well check that the special Hebrew writing inside the Mezuzah case is all okay and hasn't faded.' In fact, the Little Red Rabbi thought that while he was checking that this Mezuzah was all okay, he decided that it would be a great opportunity to check all the Mezuzot (plural for Mezuzah) in the Shul (Synagogue).

So the Little Red Rabbi went to each door post and very carefully took each Mezuzah off the doorpost it was attached to.

Now the Little Red Rabbi had to take all the Mezuzot to a Sofer (Scribe) who is specially trained to check the special writing inside the Mezuzah to see that it hasn't rubbed or faded over time. Once they were all checked by the Sofer (Scribe) The Little Red Rabbi would have to put them all back

on to the doorposts of the Shul (Synagogue).
'I could do with a bit of help' the Little Red Rabbi said to himself. 'I know, I'll phone my three good friends.'

So the Little Red Rabbi called Michael first. 'Hi Michael, would you be able to help me take the Mezuzot from the Shul (Synagogue) to the Sofer (Scribe) to be checked? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I have an important meeting at work and I simply can't miss it.' So the Little Red Rabbi called his friend Michaela, 'would you be able to help me take the Mezuzot from the Shul (Synagogue) to the Sofer (Scribe) to be checked? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I have to pick my son up from the airport.' Then the Little Red Rabbi called his friend Morris, 'Hi Morris, would you be able to help me take the Mezuzot from the Shul (Synagogue) to the Sofer (Scribe) to be checked? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I'm not feeling too good and I'm going to go straight to bed.'

So the Little Red Rabbi took the Mezuzot all by himself and gave it to Rabbi Srulik the Scribe. 'Thank you so much Little Red Rabbi. These Mezuzot will be ready in a few days.' Thanks so much Srulik', said the Little Red Rabbi and he drove home.

A few days later Srulik the Scribe called the Little Red Rabbi. 'Hi Little Red Rabbi, the Mezuzot were all fine except one, where the writing was slightly rubbed. But no need to worry, I've replaced it. The writing on the other parchments inside each Mezuzah was lovely and they were kosher!' 'That's fantastic, thank you and I'll come and pick them up.'

So the Little Red Rabbi called Michael first. 'Hi Michael, would you be able to help me collect the Mezuzot from the Sofer (Scribe)? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I have a friend coming over for dinner and I really can't let him down.' So the Little Red Rabbi called his friend Michaela, 'would you be able to help me collect the Mezuzot from the Sofer (Scribe)? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I have to take my son back to the airport.' Then the Little Red Rabbi called his friend Morris, 'Hi Morris, would you be able to help me collect the Mezuzot from the Sofer (Scribe)? 'Oh, I'm so sorry, but I've got so much work to catch up with, as I wasn't feeling very well for the last few days and missed lots of work.'

So the Little Red Rabbi Collected all the Mezuzot from Srulik the Scribe by himself and took them back to the shul (Synagogue). The Little Red Rabbi put all the Mezuzot back on the door posts in the Shul (Synagogue).

The following Shabbat, Michael, Michaela and Morris walked around the shul (Synagogue) building, feeling so proud of the Mezuzot that had all been checked and the three friends walked up to the Little Red Rabbi in the Kiddush (after the service) and thanked him for making everyone in shul feel so proud of their newly checked Mezuzot.

Children's Service: Years 3- 6

Activity – 'Ten Commandments – Word Association Game'

The children should sit in a circle. The adult starts by saying any word associated with the Ten Commandments (The Ten Commandments are listed at the foot of the Spark). The child on their left then says the first word that pops into their mind which is associated with the first word (for instance, 'honour' after hearing the word 'parents' or 'Challah' after hearing the word 'Shabbat'). The person on their left then says the first word they think of, and so on. You may find that the associated words start going way off topic, but that's part of the fun and once it has been around the circle once, you can start it off with another word associated with one of the Ten Commandments.

A Story about the Mezuza (From the Tractate of the Talmud *Avoda Zara*)

Onkeles the son of Kalonymos was a close relative of the Roman Emperor and was not, originally Jewish. He was attracted by the beauty of Judaism and decided to convert.

The Emperor looked upon this act as a threat to his own paganistic religion and so sent a garrison of Roman soldiers to bring Onkeles to Rome. The soldiers went to Onkeles and demanded that he come with them to Rome and talk to the Emperor.

Onkeles started praising Judaism, telling the soldiers what a great religion it is, but his words had no effect on the soldiers and they almost dragged him out of his house.





Suddenly, Onkeles insisted they stop. He went over to the doorpost of his house, raised his hand and placed it on a small box attached to the doorpost. He then removed his hand and kissed it.

The soldiers gazed at him in disbelief. Onkeles said to the soldiers, 'do you see the difference between your human ruler and my God. A human emperor stays inside his house and his guards stand outside to watch over him. But my God stays at the door of the house and guards all the people inside. For this box is a Mezuzah and God's holy words are inside it, protecting the people who live in the house.'

These words had a dramatic impact on the soldiers and the Emperor's command went unfulfilled.

Onkeles became one of the great names in Jewish history, known to this very day as the author of the 'Targum Onkeles' (an Aramaic commentary which appears on every page of a Chumash - Five Books of Moses).

Points for Discussion

The First of the Ten Commandments is 'I am the Lord your God who brought you out of the land of Egypt...'



- In your opinion, does this sound like a commandment?
- How does it differ from the other 9 commandments?
- Why do you think it is called 'The first of the Ten Commandments'?
- What is God asking the Jewish people to do in this statement?

In the first paragraph of the Shema, it says '...and you shall love your God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.'

- How can you show God that you love him?
- Give some examples of how you can love God with your heart, soul and might?

Songs – The links have been included for you to watch before Shabbat and if you so wish, to teach the children these songs.



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PZeTHhYTn18>

I HAVE A MEZUZAH- (To tune of Frere Jacques)

I have a Mezuzah
I have a Mezuzah
On my door
On my door,
And now it will tell you
And now it I will tell you
What it's for
What it's for.

To kiss the Mezuzah , to kiss the Mezuzah
Is our aim, is our aim
For on it is written, for on it is written
Hashem's name, Hashem's name

'Just One Shabbos' – Song by Mordechai Ben David

This is a long song which tells a story. It would be worth while teaching this song over a few weeks. I would recommend teaching the chorus at first.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RDJ5dWg3QAw>

Western Wall on Friday night his first time ever there
Strapped into his knapsack with his long and curly hair
He stood there for a while then broke out with a smile
Emotion overwhelming joy with tears
The men were dancing there the hearts so full of love
They sang such happy tunes to thank the One above

For showing them the way for giving them the day
To rest rejoice with peace of mind to pray

**Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
Just One Shabbos come and join with me
Let's sing and dance to the sky
With our spirit so high
We will show them all it's true let them come and join us too**

**Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
Just one Shabbos come and join with me
Let's sing and dance to the sky
With our spirit so high
We will show them all it's true let them come and join us too**

I said hello my friend you seem to be amused
He said much more than that I am a bit confused
I know I am a Jew I was bar mitzvah too
But Shabbos in our home who ever knew?
He asked to join with us to understand and see
He spent some time with us in total ecstasy
Next Shabbos came along his feelings grew so strong
He first began to feel that he belongs

**Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
Just one Shabbos come and join with me
Let's sing and dance to the sky
With our spirit so high
We will show them all it's true let them come and join us too**

**Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
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He found his treasure made some changes in his life
A brand new family with children and his wife
They learn new things each day to live the Torah way
The message of the Shabbos they relate
Now every Friday night they go down to the Wall
Invite some people home and they will tell them all
We'll teach you this new song to join and sing along
And soon we'll all be free it won't be long

Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
Just one Shabbos come and join with me
Let's sing and dance to the sky
With our spirit so high
We will show them all it's true let them come and join us too

Just one Shabbos and we'll all be free
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שמיץ ישראל יהוה אלהינו יהיה אחד ואהבת את
יהוה אלהיך בכל לבבך ובכל נפשך ובכל מאדך והיו
הערים האלה אשר אנכי מצוין היום עד לבקר ישננה
לבניך והגרתם בה בשבתך בביתך ובכנסתך בדרך
ובשכרך ובקומך וקשרתם לאות על ירך והיו לטעפת
ביץ עיניך וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך ובשעריך
יהיה אם שמיץ תשימיצו אל מצותי אשר אנכי
מצוה אתכם היום לאהבה את יהוה אלהיכם וכעבדו
בכל לבבכם ובכל נפשכם ונתתי מטר ארצכם בערתי
יורה ומלקוש ואספת דגנך ותירשך ויצהרך ונתתי
עשב בשדה לבהמתך ואכלת ושבעת השמרו לכם
לפתח לבבכם וסרתם ועבדתם אלהים אחרים
והשתולליתם להם ולזרה אף יהוה בכם ועצר את
השמים ולא יהיה מטר והאדמה לא תתן את יבולה
ואבדתם מהרה מעל הארץ הטבה אשר יהוה נתן לכם
ושמתם את דברי אלה על לבבכם ועל נפשכם וקשרתם
אתם לאות על ידכם והיו לשונות ביץ עיניכם ונמדתם
אתם את בניכם לדבר בהם בשבתך בביתך ובכנסתך
בדרך ובשכרך ובקומך וכתבתם על מזוזות ביתך
ובשעריך למען יראו ימיכם וימי בניכם על האדמה
מיצור נשבע יהוה לאבותיכם לתת להם כימי השמים
על הארץ





The Ten Commandments

1. I am the Lord your God.
2. You shall not make for yourself any idol.
3. You shall not misuse the name of the Lord your God.
4. You shall remember and keep the Sabbath day holy.
5. Respect your father and mother.
6. You must not commit murder.
7. You must be married to only one person.
8. You must not steal.
9. You must not give false evidence against your neighbour.
10. You must not be jealous of what your neighbour has got.