



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



Vayeitzei – ‘The Parasha in a Nutshell’:

Parashat Vayeitzei is the seventh Parasha (Torah portion) in the book of Bereishit and continues with Yaakov’s (Jacob’s) journey from Be’er Sheva (Ber Sheba) to Charan.

Yaakov reached the mountain of Moriah and slept there overnight. While he slept, he had a dreamlike vision, with God promising him that the land he was sleeping on would be given to him and his descendants and he would one day return home, protected by God. When Yaakov (Jacob) awoke, he promised that he would give a tenth of all he owned to God.

Yaakov (Jacob) arrived at a well on the outskirts of Charan. He noticed that three flocks of sheep and their shepherds had gathered around the well and Yaakov (Jacob) asked them if they knew Lavan (Laban). At that moment Rachel, one of Lavan’s (Laban’s) daughters was approaching with her sheep.

When Rachel came close to the well, Yaakov (Jacob) rolled the stone off the top to allow her sheep to drink. Yaakov (Jacob) then informed Rachel that he was related to her and Rachel went back to tell her father Lavan (Laban) about their visitor.

Lavan (Laban) welcomed Yaakov (Jacob) and Yaakov (Jacob) agreed to work for Lavan (Laban) for seven years in order to marry Rachel. But Lavan (Laban) deceived Yaakov (Jacob) and substituted Rachel for his older daughter Leah. Soon after marrying Leah, Yaakov (Jacob) married Rachel, on condition that he would work another seven years for Lavan (Laban).

Leah gave birth to four sons, but seeing that she was not having any children, Rachel told her husband to marry her maidservant Bilhah. She also gave birth to children. When Leah saw that she was not having any more children, she too gave her maidservant Zilpah to marry Yaakov (Jacob).

With God’s help, Yaakov (Jacob) became very wealthy and he decided the time was right to leave Lavan’s (Laban’s) home. He began the journey homeward, along with his wives and children. But, Rachel took her father’s idols before they left.

The Parasha - In a Nutshell!

Three days later, Lavan (Laban) was told of Yaakov's (Jacob's) departure and he chased after them, catching up with them at the mountains of Gilad.

Lavan (Laban) accused Yaakov (Jacob) of cheating him and stealthily running away with his daughters and grandchildren. He also accused Yaakov of stealing his idols. Lavan (Laban) went on a search for his idols, but Rachel hid them and he did not find them.

After completing a peace treaty, Lavan (Laban) and Yaakov (Jacob) part company. Yaakov (Jacob) met Malachim (angels) during his journey home and he named the place in which he met the angels, Machanayim.

In this week's Parasha (Torah portion), we read about the birth of the Shevatim (the 12 tribes), namely; Reuven (Ruben), Shimon (Simeon), Levi, Yehudah (Judah), Yisachar (Issachar), Dan, Naphtali, Gad, Asher and Yoseph (Joseph). The birth of Binyamin (Benjamin) is mentioned in next week's Parasha (Torah portion).



Parasha Overview – In a Little More Detail

- On his journey from Be'er Sheva (Ber Sheba) to Charan, Yaakov (Jacob) reached the mountain of Moriah, gathered stones on which to lie down and slept. During his sleep he had a dream in which he saw angels ascending and descending a ladder which went right up to the heavens. God then appeared to Yaakov (Jacob) in the dream, telling him that the land he was lying on would be given to him and his descendants and that he would return home under God's protection.
 - Upon waking up, Yaakov (Jacob) anointed and consecrated the stone he had placed under his head, as an altar to God. He vowed that when he returned safely home, he would give one tenth of everything he possessed to God and he would pray at the altar he had just consecrated.
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- Yaakov (Jacob) arrived at a well of water in a field on the outskirts of Charan and he noticed that the shepherds of three flocks of sheep were sitting idly by the well. Yaakov (Jacob) approached them and asked them where they were from, to which they replied they were from Charan.
 - Yaakov (Jacob) asked the shepherds whether they knew Lavan (Laban) to which they answered positively, before pointing out that his daughter Rachel was approaching with her flock.
 - Yaakov (Jacob) then asked the shepherds why they were sitting idly, rather than rolling the stone off the top of the well and watering their flocks. The men replied that they had to wait for a number of shepherds to gather and only then, roll the stone off together. As the shepherds were talking, Rachel approached the well with her sheep and Yaakov (Jacob) went over to her and rolled the stone off the well singlehandedly.
 - Yaakov (Jacob) really wanted to marry Rachel and agreed to work for Lavan (Laban) for seven years. But Lavan (Laban) being a swindler, tricked Yaakov (Jacob) and under the wedding canopy, put Leah (Rachel's sister) instead of Rachel. Lavan's (Laban's) excuse for this behaviour was that Leah was older than Rachel and should therefore get married first.
 - Yaakov (Jacob) had no choice but to accept the situation and he soon married Rachel and worked for another seven years.

- God saw that Leah was not as well liked as Rachel and He consequently caused Leah to have children, while Rachel remained without children. Leah gave birth to Yaakov's first four sons, Reuven (Ruben), Shimon (Simeon), Levi and Yehudah (Judah). Seeing that she was not having children, Rachel followed Yaakov's (Jacob's) grandmother's (Sarah) example and gave her maidservant Bilhah to marry Yaakov (Jacob). Bilhah gave birth to Yaakov's (Jacob's) next two sons, Dan and Naphtali.
- Leah saw that she had stopped having children and she also gave her maidservant Zilpah to Yaakov (Jacob) as a wife. Zilpah bore to Yaakov (Jacob) his next two sons, Gad and Asher. Leah herself then gave birth to two sons, Yissachar (Issachar) and Zevulun (Zebulun). She also gave birth to a daughter named Dinah.
- Then God heard the prayers of Rachel and she gave birth to a son called Yoseph (Joseph). Having become very wealthy, Yaakov (Jacob) decided it was time to leave Lavan (Laban). While Lavan (Laban) was away, he took his wives, children and flocks and began the journey home to Canaan.
- Before they left Charan, Rachel stole her father's idols without Yaakov's (Jacob's) knowledge, hoping to prevent her father from worshipping them.
- Three days later, Lavan (Laban) was told of Yaakov's departure and he pursued Yaakov (Jacob), overtaking him at the mountains of Gilad. But God appeared to Lavan (Laban) in a dream, warning him not to make Yaakov (Jacob) return to Charan.
- Lavan (Laban) accused Yaakov (Jacob) of stealing his idols. Yaakov denied the theft and unwittingly declared that anyone who had taken the idols would die. Nevertheless, Lavan (Laban) began to search for his idols but Rachel hid them and Lavan's (Laban's) search proved fruitless.
- Yaakov (Jacob) and Lavan (Laban) then parted company, after completing a peace treaty and Yaakov (Jacob) and his party headed homewards. He met angels of God on his travels and he named the place in which he saw these angels, Machanayim, meaning 'Groups'.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

Activity

Go Fishing for Honesty

In this week's Parasha (Torah portion) we see how much of a swindler and trickster Lavan (Laban) was and yet, despite all the lies, Yaakov (Jacob) remained the epitome of truth and honesty.

For this activity you will need a pack of playing cards. Give out the cards to the children but keep the matching pair for yourself. This game should be played in a circle and requires the children to be honest about having the correct matching card. When you show the children a card (for example the ace of hearts), the child with the matching card stands up and takes the card from you. But, the children don't have to show you their card! Tell the children you are relying on their honesty!

Say to the children, 'Now imagine, someone wasn't honest. Would we be able to play the game? So, why is it so important to be truthful?' Explain to the children that by being honest, games can be played fairly and therefore enjoyed much more.





The Boy who Cried Wolf

A young boy was looking after his daddy's sheep in a big field not far from the village. After a while, he found life in the field very boring. He would have to sit in the field all day long and all he could do was to talk to his dog or play on his shepherd's pipe.

One day, as he sat watching the sheep in the big green field, he suddenly thought about what he would do if he saw a wolf. A big smile appeared on his face and he thought of a mischievous plan to amuse himself. His daddy had told him to call for help if a wolf attacked the sheep and the villagers would come running immediately and drive it away. So now, although he had not seen anything that looked like a wolf, he ran toward the village shouting at the top of his voice, "Wolf! Wolf!"

As he expected, the villagers who heard the cry, dropped their work and ran in great excitement to the field. But when they got there, they found the boy doubled up with laughter at the trick he had played on them. A few days later, the boy again shouted, "Wolf! Wolf!" Again the Villagers ran to help him, only to be laughed at again.

Then one evening as the sun was setting behind the forest and the shadows were creeping out over the field, a wolf really did come into the field where the sheep were grazing.

Terrified, the boy ran towards the village shouting "Wolf! Wolf!" But although the villagers heard the cry, they did not run to help him as they had before. "He cannot fool us again," they said.

The wolf really was in the field this time, but because the boy had lied so many times, they just didn't believe him.

Moral: If you keep lying, no one will believe you even if you are speaking the truth. Always speak the truth.

Activity

The following activity will allow children to role-play scenarios and determine the correct path which should be taken. The truthful path!

Divide the children into pairs and tell them they are going to act out a situation, where one of the pair must make a choice between telling a lie and telling the truth.

Show the children an example to begin with, where 2 adults pretend to be two children who are friends. One of the adults drops their watch (or pretends to drop something valuable) without realizing it and the other one picks it up and doesn't say anything. The adult who drops the valuable item asks the other adult if he saw it, but he lies and says 'no'. After acting out this scene, ask the children to describe what happened and how s/he would feel if s/he had lost the valuable item.



Give different scenarios to different pairs (see below for scenarios) of children and ask them to act them out one pair at a time, but this time, only acting out the correct and honest way to behave.

- 1. You accidentally spilt a glass of water on your friend's homework when she was outside the room. But when your friend came back, she asked you how it happened.**
- 2. You forgot to close the freezer door and the meat and fish started to defrost. Your mum and dad were asking who did it.**
- 3. You had a whole load of washing up because you had made a cake but didn't have time to finish washing up everything. When your parents came home, they asked who had left so much washing up.**
- 4. You and 6 other children visited a friend's house for a play date and your friend said to all of you not to leave the garden gate open as the dog would run out and might get lost. By accident, you left the gate open and the dog did run away. Your friend asked all 7 of you who left the gate open.**
- 5. Your family bought a pizza. You thought your brother had gone out for the evening and ate his slice. He hadn't gone out. When he came into the room, he wondered who had eaten his slice.**
- 6. You borrowed your friend's sharpener without telling him/her and accidentally broke it. You quickly put it back in the pencil case and when your friend saw the broken sharpener s/he asked if you had broken it.**



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 really great lesson that we can learn from the Parasha (weekly portion) of Vayitzei.

Going to great lengths so as not to embarrass someone.

You'll need a few copies of the Tribe Scribe with you; give the children copies of the Tribe Scribe (perhaps one between two) and read the story with the children, pointing out the captions and the illustrations.

Dan and Dina tell us a story about Rabbi Tzaddik, who visited Communist Russia. The Jewish community were very poor and had very little money. When Rabbi Tzaddik ate the cholent (stew) he was given on Shabbat, although it tasted absolutely awful, he did not want to embarrass his hosts and made out as if the cholent was extremely tasty.

Ask the children why it is wrong to embarrass someone?

How is this story related to the Parasha, Vayitzei?

Ask the children how far they have gone so as not to embarrass someone.

How does it link with our Parasha (Torah portion), Vayitzei?

What do Dan and Dina Teach
us this Week?



What does this Story Teach us?

A story is told in the Talmud, of Rabbi Pinchas the son of Yair, a Rabbi known as a Tanna, who lived during the times of the Mishnah, most probably in Lod in the second Century.

Two poor men who were travelling from town to town to try and find a job, stopped at Rabbi Pinchas' house and left some barley seeds with him. The two men left the town and didn't come back for their seeds. So, Rabbi Pinchas planted the seeds. He reaped the barley year after year and stored all the proceeds in the barn.

Seven years later, these same two men happened to be passing the home of Rabbi Pinchas and they suddenly remembered the seeds. Knocking on the door, they asked Rabbi Pinchas if he still, by any chance, had their barley seeds.

Instead of giving them a few seeds, Rabbi Pinchas led them to the barn and opened its doors. Noting their surprise, he told them, 'It is all yours. Now go and bring donkeys and camels and take away your treasure!

1. **What does this story teach us about honesty?**
2. **What would you have done with the seeds?**
3. **Do you think Rabbi Pinchas would have been wrong if he has thrown the seeds away after a while?**
4. **Do you think Rabbi Pinchas could have used some of the Barley for himself, after all, he had put a lot of work into it?**
5. **Has anyone ever given you something to look after? How did you look after it?**

What does this Story Teach Me?

Tefillah

This prayer is usually sung when the Sefer Torah (Torah Scroll) is back inside the Aron Hakodesh (The Holy Ark) and is about to be closed.

Eitz chayim hi lamachazikim bah,
v'tom'cheha m'ushar. D'racheha
darchei noam v'chol n'tivoteha
shalom. Hashivenu Adonai eilecha
v'nashuva, chadesh yameinu k'kedem.

עץ חיים היא למחזיקים בה. ותמכיה מאשר:
דרכיה דרכי נעם וכל נתיבותיה שלום:
השיבנו ה' אליך ונשובה. חדש ימינו בקדם:

It is a tree of life for those who hold fast to it, and those who uphold it are happy. Its ways are pleasant, and all of its paths peaceful. Return us to you, God, so that we shall return, renew our days as of old.

In this prayer, we compare the Torah to a tree of life. A tree is firmly rooted to the ground and similarly, the Torah is firmly rooted in the hearts and minds of the Jewish people.

A tree often gives pleasant fruit for us to eat, in the same way as the Torah is a source of nourishment to the soul.



https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/519449/jewish/Vayeitzei.htm

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

As Yaakov travelled the sun went down
He fell asleep on the ground
In his dream was a ladder so high
With malachim climbing to the sky

Yaakov heard Hashem's voice
For my bracha, you are the choice
Yaakov travelled to Charan
He asked the shepherd, "where is Lavan?"

Rachel said, "Lavan is my father
I'll take you to him it is no bother,"
Yaakov stayed for twenty years
For Lavan's sheep, Yaakov cared

Yaakov married Leah and Rachel
Their children became the B'nei Yisrael
Lavan tricked Yaakov, he didn't pay
Hashem told Yaakov, "Go away!"





Shabbat Shalom