



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

Vayigash – ‘The Parasha in a Nutshell’:

This week’s Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) is Vayigash and it means, ‘And he (Judah) drew near to him (to Joseph).’

After Binyamin (Benjamin) was accused of stealing Yoseph’s (Joseph’s) cup, Yehudah (Judah) approached Yoseph (Joseph) and presented an eloquent appeal. He explained how he had assured his father Yaakov (Jacob) that he would take special responsibility for Binyamin’s (Benjamin’s) welfare. As the only remaining son of Rachel, Binyamin (Benjamin) was extremely dear to their father and Yehudah (Judah) pleaded to Yoseph (Joseph) to keep him as a prisoner in Egypt and allow Binyamin (Benjamin) to go up to Canaan, back to Yaakov (Jacob).



At that point, Yoseph (Joseph) could no longer contain his emotions and revealed his true identity to his brothers. The brothers were ashamed by what they had done to Yoseph (Joseph) years earlier, but he comforted them. Yoseph (Joseph) urged his brothers to quickly return to Canaan and tell their father to come down to Egypt and live in Goshen.

When Pharaoh heard the news that Yoseph’s (Joseph’s) brothers were in Egypt, he too urged the brothers to gather their belongings and come to live in Egypt. Yoseph (Joseph) also set many provisions for the journey.

When the brothers arrived in Canaan and told their father Yaakov (Jacob) the good news that Yoseph (Joseph) was still alive, Yaakov (Jacob) could hardly believe them. But when he saw all the provisions Yoseph (Joseph) had sent, he realised that Yoseph (Joseph) must indeed be a king.

God reassured Yaakov (Jacob) that He would accompany him down to Egypt. The Torah then lists the names of the people who went with Yaakov (Jacob) down to Egypt, totalling 70 people.



Yoseph (Joseph) went to meet his father as he approached and they both fell on each other's neck and cried.

Yoseph's (Joseph's) brothers then met Pharaoh and told him that they were herdsmen, following which Pharaoh told the brothers to settle in the land of Goshen as the pastures there were very fertile. Yoseph (Joseph) then brought Yaakov (Jacob) to meet Pharaoh and Yaakov (Jacob) bestowed a blessing on Pharaoh.

The Parasha concludes by telling us how Yaakov (Jacob) referred to here as Yisrael (Israel) settled in Egypt, acquired property and multiplied greatly.

The Parasha - In a Nutshell!

Parasha Overview – In a Little More Detail

- Once Yehudah (Judah) realised that Yoseph (Joseph) was going to keep Binyamin (Benjamin) back as a prisoner, having been accused of stealing the royal goblet, he took action!
- Yehudah (Judah) approached Yoseph (Joseph) and firmly, but politely explained how Binyamin (Benjamin) was particularly dear to his father and should Binyamin (Benjamin) not return, his father would surely die of a broken heart. Yehudah (Judah) begged Yoseph (Joseph) to take him as a prisoner in lieu of Binyamin (Benjamin) and that his younger brother be allowed to return to his father in Canaan.
- Yoseph (Joseph) could no longer restrain his emotions and he ordered the departure of all personnel from the room, except his brothers. Yoseph (Joseph), then alone in the room with his brothers raised his voice as he cried, 'I am Yoseph (Joseph)!' He then quickly inquired about his father, 'Is my father still alive!'
- The brothers could not answer Yoseph (Joseph) as they were so ashamed at what they had done to him years earlier, but Yoseph (Joseph) realised this and told them to come nearer to him. He comforted his brothers by explaining that God had sent him to Egypt for a reason and he told the brothers to go back to Yaakov (Jacob) his father and tell him to come to Egypt to live and to bring his children and grandchildren and all his possessions.
- Indeed, Yoseph (Joseph) reassured the brothers that their father and his family would live in Goshen where the pasture was the finest in Egypt and that for the remaining years of the famine, Yoseph (Joseph) would supply them with all their needs.
- News of the arrival of the brothers had reached Pharaoh and as well as reiterating Yoseph's (Joseph's) message to his father, he sent wagons with the brothers, to use for the journey back to Egypt with all their possessions and family members.
- Yoseph (Joseph) presented each of his brothers with sets of different clothing as gifts and he gave Binyamin (Benjamin) five sets of clothes and 300 pieces of silver. He also gave the brothers provisions for the journey, including 10 donkeys laden with the best of the land of Egypt and 10 asses laden with all types of food for the journey.





- Upon arrival in Canaan, the brothers told their father that Yoseph (Joseph) was still alive and was ruler over the entire land of Egypt. At first, Yaakov (Jacob) did not believe them so the brothers relayed all that Yoseph (Joseph) had said to them and all that Yoseph (Joseph) had sent with them to Canaan. Yaakov (Jacob) then exclaimed, 'There is still much joy in my life for Yoseph (Joseph) is still alive. I will go and see him before I die.'
- Yaakov (Jacob) set out on his journey to Egypt and when he reached Be'er Sheva (Be'er Sheba) he offered sacrifices to God, Who then appeared to him in a vision. God told Yaakov (Jacob) not to be afraid of going to Egypt, for it is there that God would make Israel in to a great nation.
- Yoseph (Joseph) personally harnessed his own chariot and went to meet his father. In an extremely emotional scene, Yaakov (Jacob) and Yoseph (Joseph) hugged one another and both cried continuously.
- Yoseph (Joseph) told his brothers and their households that he was going to inform Pharaoh that they had all arrived. He advised his brothers to tell Pharaoh that they were herdsmen by occupation, thus assuring them that Pharaoh would then offer the land of Goshen as a place to settle.
- Yoseph (Joseph) presented 5 of his brothers to Pharaoh and they followed Yoseph's (Joseph's) advice in their conversation with Pharaoh. Yoseph (Joseph) then brought his father Yaakov (Jacob) to Pharaoh, whereupon Yaakov (Jacob) blessed him.
- The famine had reached a critical stage and Yoseph (Joseph) collected all the money in the lands of Egypt and Canaan through the sale of food. He brought all the money to Pharaoh's house. To obtain food, Yoseph (Joseph) required as payment from the Egyptians, first their cattle and later their land. The people were extremely grateful to Yoseph (Joseph) and thanked him for saving their lives.

Parasha Overview
- In a Little More Detail!

These next two activities (below and in the quiz section) focus on 'Forgiveness'. When Yoseph (Joseph) revealed himself to his brothers, they were very sorry for what they had done to him years earlier. But Yoseph (Joseph) forgave them completely, explaining that it was God's will that he was sold and ended up as the Viceroy of Egypt.



Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

Activity

Hot Potato

You will need a soft ball for this game. Ask the children to stand in a circle. While you are holding the ball, tell the children about a time when you forgave someone for something. Then throw the soft ball (if you can't find a soft enough ball, simply walk over to the child and hand him/her the ball). As you give the person the ball, say 'hot potato'. Now it's that person's turn to share with everyone how they forgave someone.

Let them pass the ball, sharing their stories. Once the ball lands back in your hands, you can make up other things to say which will encourage the children to think of different examples of 'forgiveness'.



Poem about Forgiveness

An angel named Forgiveness
Travelled from mind to mind
Teaching people how to move forward
And leave the past behind
She reminded them of their regrets
Taught that perfection is rare
And humanity makes mistakes
Despite their love and care

She tried to stay strong; hold her ground
But she was just not that tough
Soon to be replaced by anger and grudges
Because sorry was no longer enough
Forgiveness was soon out of the picture
As revenge suddenly became right
But she still travelled from mind to mind
Convincing them to see the light

Children's Service: Years 3- 6

Activity –

Role Play: What Forgiveness Looks Like

Before you start this activity, divide the children into pairs and give them the list of scenarios that follow this paragraph. Tell the children that these scenarios you have given them are examples of a time when someone may have done something to upset you. Ask the children to act out a role-play of 'What Forgiveness Looks Like' in any one or more of these situations.

Invite each pair to then explain their responses.

Different Scenarios...

- Your friend accidentally broke your favourite toy.
- **You** did something **you** feel is wrong (forgiving yourself).
- Your brother takes something of yours without asking.
- Your friend got angry and said something unkind to you and then apologised.
- Someone keeps doing something hurtful to you over and over again without being sorry.
- Your teacher told you off for talking, but you are so sure you didn't actually talk. You are sure it was someone else in the classroom.





Tots – Year 3 Quiz

Before starting the quiz, it would be good to go through a short synopsis of the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion).

This quiz should be played as a 'True or False' game. When you make a statement, the child/ren must tell you if it is 'True' or 'False'.

1. Yoseph (Joseph) had 13 brothers. **False**
2. Yoseph (Joseph) told his brothers, 'I'm NOT Joseph!!' **False**
3. Yehudah (Judah) danced in front of Joseph because he was so happy. **False**
4. Yaakov (Jacob) was so happy when he heard that his son Yoseph (Joseph) was alive. **True**
5. Pharaoh was very annoyed when he met Yaakov (Jacob). **False**
6. Yaakov (Jacob) and his entire family came to live in Egypt. **True**
7. Yoseph (Joseph) wouldn't give any food to anyone who asked for it. **False**
8. Yoseph (Joseph) and his father Yaakov (Jacob) hugged each other and cried when they met for the first time after a very long time. **True**
9. Yoseph's (Joseph's) favourite brother was Binyamin (Benjamin). **True**
10. The Jewish people lived in Egypt in a place called Cairo. **False**



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 Torah Portion) of Vayigash.

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 decide what they would do in a similar situation.

We learn from the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) that Yehuda (Judah) teaches us the most effective way of making our feelings known. He approached Yoseph (Joseph) and politely and respectfully, but very firmly told Yoseph (Joseph) his feelings.

Discuss the following questions;

1. What was Dr Tsoris' reaction to being told that 'Happy Hour' finished early today.
2. What was Dan's reaction to being told the same thing?
3. What was Dina's reaction to being told that 'Happy Hour' had finished early?
4. What was it that Dina said which changed the mind of the man at the doughnut counter?



In the Parasha (Weekly Torah Portion) this week we are told that before Yoseph (Joseph) revealed his true identity to his brothers, he sent everyone else out of the room. Different commentators give different reasons as to why they think Yoseph (Joseph) took this action before telling his brothers. One reason given is so as not to embarrass his brothers; after all, their reaction would have been one of regret and remorse at what they had done to him years earlier. Yoseph (Joseph) didn't want others to see his brothers in this state and so he sent them out the room.

Story 1

During a tour around Israel, a group visited a Bedouin camp. The Bedouin host told the group of their elaborate rituals around coffee, an essential part of the hospitality dance. 'We even use the coffee cup to indicate to a guest that it is time for them to go,' he said. "How do you think we do this?"

All the guesses were of actions aggressive and humiliating: 'Throw the coffee cup at the guest?' 'Spill the coffee on his caftan?'

The Bedouin frowned.

'No, we fill the cup to the top,' he said. 'It is a quiet signal, and the guest can leave with dignity.'

Story 2

There is a story about Rebbe Akiva Eiger (Austria/Poland 1761 – 1837), who had guests at his Shabbat table, one of whom accidentally knocked over a glass of wine. The other guests were horrified as wine spread across the tablecloth. The Rabbi, seeing the embarrassment on the man's face, swiftly knocked over his own glass, declaring, "The table must be crooked!"

Story 3

There is a Chassidic story of the visiting rabbi who was given the first serving of a family's kugel. The rabbi quickly ate the entire tray before anyone could take a bite. The townspeople were so upset that they ran the glutton out of town. Many years later they discovered that someone had mistaken salt for sugar in the kugel and it tasted horrible. To save the cook from humiliation, the rabbi had eaten it all himself.

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.

Vayigash Song

https://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/519467/jewish/Vayigash.htm

Yehudah said to Yoseph, "I'm stronger it is so
Please take me for a slave, and let Binyamin go."
The brothers knew what they had done to Yoseph was wrong
Yosef sent his servants out, and in a voice so strong, said

Chorus: "I am Yoseph, is my father still alive?

Ani Yoseph, haod avi chai?"

"Don't be afraid," the brothers were told

"It was Hashem's will that I was sold

Go and tell our father, to Hashem I am true

Take food and wagons, but bring Yaakov back with you."

Chorus:

Serach was the grand-daughter of Jacob and the commentators on the Chumash (5 Books of Moses) teach us that she played music on her harp, so as to break the news about Joseph in a soft and gentle way.

Serach played on her kinor (harp), Yoseph is alive

Yaakov was so happy when the wagons did arrive

When Yaakov saw Yoseph after so many years

They hugged one another and cried happy tears

Chorus: "I am Yoseph, my father is alive."

"I am Yoseph, my father is alive."



Shabbat Shalom!