



For Children's Service Leaders

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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Lech Lecha

Parsha Summary:

- God speaks to Avram and commands him, “Go from your land, from your birthplace and from your father’s house, to the land which I will show you.”
- Avram and his family are the first people to make Aliya – doing the Mitzva of going to live in the Land of Israel.
- God promises the Land of Israel to the Jewish people and that “all the families of the world will be blessed” through the Jewish People.”
- A famine forces Avram and his family to temporarily relocate to Egypt, where an incident with Pharaoh results in Avram leaving Egypt with great wealth.
- Disagreements were occurring between the shepherds of Avram and the shepherds of his nephew Lot. To avoid this, Avram suggests that they go their separate ways. Lot moves to the city of Sodom, where he is taken captive when the mighty armies of Chedorlaomer and his three allies, conquer the five cities of the Sodom Valley. Avram sets out with just a few men to rescue his nephew. He defeats the four kings and is given a blessing by Malchizedek, the King of Salem (Jerusalem) but refuses to take any reward from the King of Sodom.

- God seals the brit – covenant, between Himself and Avram, in which the exile and persecution (galut) of the people is foretold and the Holy Land is promised to Avram and his offspring as their eternal heritage.
- Avram and Sarai, his wife, are still childless ten years after their arrival in the Land. Sarai tells Avram to marry her maidservant Hagar. Once Hagar conceives, she becomes rude to Sarai and then flees when Sarai treats her harshly. An angel appears to Hagar and convinces her to return and assures her that her son will father a populous nation. Ishmael is born in Avram's eighty sixth year.
- Thirteen years later, Hashem changes Avram's name to Avraham – Father of Multitudes - and Sarai's to Sarah – Princess. He promises them that a son will be born to them, whom they should call Isaac and from him will come a great nation with which God will establish His special bond.
- Avraham is commanded to circumcise himself and his descendants, as a "sign of the covenant between Me and you." Avraham immediately does so and circumcises himself and all the males of his household.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

Activity 1:

Avram and Sarai were commanded to leave their home and all that was familiar to them. Moving is not always easy and in fact it was one of the ten tests that Avram faced. Sit the children in a semi-circle and tell a story of a family moving house. What do they have to do before they leave? Is there anything they forgot and have to return to retrieve? You can ask a few children to act it out as you are telling the story and provide props for them to actually carry across the room or to have to go back for.

Once you have told the story, discuss with the children how we feel when we move. (Some of them may have moved, or had a close family member move house and can relate and share their experiences.) Often we can feel nervous and / or excited. Ask the children to imagine how Avram and his family would have felt. They did not know where they were going , had no phones or trucks to carry their belongings, they were travelling across a desert....moving home then was very different!

Activity 2:

Game - When I moved home I took my teddy, my toothbrush..... Going round the circle, each person states what they would take with when they move home and has to remember and repeat the items mentioned by the previous people in the circle. If they forget one they are 'out' and will need to fold their arms.

Activity 3:

Avram was the first person to make Aliya – move to Israel. Divide the children into two groups. One group will be the people making Aliyah. They need to be given a bag each and a UK passport (piece of paper with Union Jack on it). The second group will be the people meeting them at the airport.

The children should role play packing their bags and leaving with their UK passports. Once they have done this, the second group should greet them, waving flags and saying "Welcome Home to Israel" and officially giving them their new Israeli passport, (paper with a Magen David on it). If they know the song Hevenu Shalom Aleichem, they can sing it too. The "Israeli" group should teach the new olim some basic Hebrew words. (You should have them written out clearly on individual papers.) For example: *Shalom* - Hello and Goodbye, *Delet* - Door, *Chalon* - Window, *Kiseh* - Chair, *Shulchan* - Table)

Activity 4:

The flag of Israel, will be familiar to many of the children. This activity encourages them to think a little more deeply about it and why this was chosen to be the symbol of the State of Israel.

Split the children into groups and give them an A4 white piece of paper and 10 blue strips of paper of equal length. The strips should be 15cm long, so that when the paper is orientated landscape, 2 will stretch across the top and 2 rows the bottom, leaving 6 to make up the Magen David.

1. Ask the children to make as many different shapes as they can, using all of the strips.

2. On the page, get the children to put two strips next to each other, stretching across the page, above and below, leaving a small gap of white at the top and bottom. Ask the children if it reminds them of anything? (Clue—which day of creation? The second day with the water above and below. Another clue is something that men wear in shul – stripes on the Tallit.)
3. Get the children to make 2 triangles above and below each other, one with the long edge at the top of the space with the point facing down and the other with the long edge at the bottom with the point facing up. Ask the children what this reminds them of? (Hint - there is something from above pointing/looking down and something from below pointing/looking up.) This symbolises Hashem looking down on the Jewish People and the Jewish people looking up to Hashem.
4. Why is the flag called the Magen David? This was the symbol on King David's shield. King David's fight against Goliath and then leadership of the Jewish people in their own land, under their own rule, is a great symbol for the Jewish People living in the Land of Israel as the State of Israel.

Activity 5:

Hashem made a special brit – covenant with Avram. Today when people make a deal or pact with one another, they seal it with a handshake. In pairs, the children should make up their own fun handshake or fist bump.

Activity 6:

In this week's parsha, both Avram and Sarai had the letter 'Hey' (to symbolize God's name) added to their names, changing them to Avraham and Sarah. Our names are part of who we are, part of our unique individuality. We have the name we were called when we were born, nicknames our parents, friends and families call us and many of us have middle names too. Discuss the following with your group:

Do you have a middle name?

Do you have a Hebrew name? Do you know what it is?

Who were you named after and why were you named after that person?

If you were not named after someone do you know why your parents chose that name for you?

What do you like about your name?

Do you know anyone else with the same name?

Do you know anyone who has that name in the Tenach?

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Please look through the activities above as some may also be appropriate for your group.

Activity 1:

Game – The one and only.

If you moved house and you could only take one thing, what would it be? What if you could only take one photograph? One sound? One memory? One food? (See activity two above as well.)

Discussion - Jews have often had to move from place to place. How have they managed to continue their Judaism in the new place? What are the challenges to continuity? Do you think Shabbat has helped establish this continuity and if so why?

Activity 2:

Avram and Sarai, in the parsha this week, are the first new Olim (people who make Aliya) – to leave their home and move to Israel, the Jewish Homeland.

How is living in Israel different to living in the UK?

Split the children into groups to create a role play of cousins in England and Israel, Skyping each other on different days and times of year, to show the differences between living in England and Israel. (See starter list below and others that you and the children think of.)

- Learning in Hebrew rather than English in School
- Sunday is a working and school day, but on Friday there is no school or work for most people

- What clothes they will be wearing according to the weather at different times of the year
- Jewish Festivals are national holidays which many people are taking part in and you will see going on all around you.

Bring the groups back together and discuss the many similarities and differences between living in England and Israel. What is so special about doing the same things, but in the two various countries?

Activity 3:

Lech Lecha speaks of the journeys of Avram. Explain that Canaan is Eretz Yisrael. Split the children into groups and give each group a map of Israel and some slips of paper or card with place names that are mentioned in Lech Lecha such as Shechem, Bet – El, Chevron, the Dead Sea and Egypt. Have a competition to see which group is able to put the place names on the correct location on the map in a given time. The group with the most correct places are the winners. You may want to extend this activity and include important places in Israel or places that the children may have visited such as Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Be'er Sheva, Netanya, Eilat...

Activity 5:

Avram is not the only person on the move in this week's parsha. Lot, his nephew moves too. Once he settles in his new city, he is taken captive and Avram, comes to his rescue. This was to set the precedent for the future for the Jewish People.

Discuss: What does the phrase "*Kol Yisrael Arevim Zeh Bazeh*" - "All of Israel are responsible one for the other" mean to you?

When our fellow Jew is in trouble or difficulty, even if we do not know them or they live far away from us, we do whatever we can to help.

News Reports - Split the group into 3 and give each group one of the three stories below; "Summaries of Jewish Rescue of Jews around the world". The group could produce this as a news report with a news reader and reporters on site, interviewing different people involved.

(Note: Please only use stories that are suitable for your group.)

Discussion - How else do the Jewish community in Israel and other countries look after each other? (For example, sending rescue teams to disaster stricken areas.)

Summaries of Jewish Rescue of Jews Around the world

Operation Magic Carpet - "On Eagles Wings" 1949

In 1949, 50,000 Jews made Aliyah from Yemen via an airlift from the city of Aden, in an operation that has come to be known as "On Eagles' Wings." The name of this Aliyah was derived from the Book of Shemot, 19:4, where it is written "...and I will transport you on eagles' wings and bring you to Me..."

In 1948, at the time of the establishment of the State of Israel, there were some 50,000 Jews in Yemen living in dozens of villages, cities and towns. Many Jews in Arab countries were in danger at this time, including Yemen. The State of Israel began to organize rescue operations to bring them to Israel. In 1949, the Imam of Yemen agreed to allow Jews to leave his country. This gave a green light for the beginning of a massive operation to bring the Jews to Israel. This operation brought thousands of Yemenite Jews to Israel within a very short period of time. It was necessary

to airlift them quickly out of fears that the Imam would shortly rescind his permission.

The people were living in quite a primitive way and although they had seen airplanes in the skies, they had ever been close to them, or been on them. They felt that they had been brought to Israel "On Eagles wings" as it says in the Torah. Some of those who were cold on the plane even tried to light fires to keep warm. There are now many thriving Yemenite communities in Israel.

Entebbe Story – 1976

An Air France Airplane flying from Tel Aviv to Paris was hijacked by terrorists, after a stopover in Athens. There were 248 passengers with many Jews and Israeli's on board. The hijackers forced it to land at Entebbe airport in Uganda, in Africa. 148 non-Israeli and non-Jewish passengers were allowed to leave.

However, 94 Jewish and Israeli passengers and the 12 crew members were still held. The terrorists demanded the freedom of other terrorists in prison, in exchange for these hostages and threatened to kill them if this did not happen. The Israeli government flew a special unit of Israeli soldiers to rescue them, which included flying out a car and a soldier who dressed up and looked like the Ugandan president Idi Amin, so that the soldiers could enter the airport. The daring rescue was a success. Sadly, one soldier died in the fighting, Yoni Netanyahu, brother of Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu.

Russian Refuseniks - 1990-1996

Between 1990-1996, over 600,000 Jews left the CIS for Israel. The first were the ones who were released from prison, having been locked up for protesting, famously including Anatoly Sharansky, (Natan Sharansky), the world's most famous refusenik and now Member of the Knesset.

For many decades, Jewish people were not allowed to practise Judaism freely and it became illegal to teach Hebrew. Anyone asking to leave the country to go and live in Israel was refused this request and lost their job, had police following them, put them in jail for crimes that they did not commit and caused them and their families a lot of trouble. They became known as refuseniks. Around the world, people campaigned to give Jews in Russia the right to be Jewish freely or leave Russia. Many Jewish people visited Russia on secret missions, smuggling in Jewish books, Haggadot for Pesach, Mezuzot, Tefillin and other items. Eventually, Russia decided to start letting the Jews leave and hundreds of thousands of Jewish people came to live in Israel. This is why there are so many signs in Russian in Israel.