



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,
Sharon Radley
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Vayishlach

Parsha Summary:

- Yaakov returns home to his father Yitzchak after many years.
- Yaakov prepares to face his brother Esav for the first time in thirty four years. Esav is heading towards Yaakov with four hundred soldiers. Yaakov sends messengers and presents. He prays to God and divides his family and possessions into two groups so that one group would be able to escape even if the other had to fight.
- Yaakov has an encounter with a man during the night. They wrestle until dawn when Yaakov won. During the fight the man strikes Yaakov's hip. Our Rabbis explain that this man was really an angel and before Yaakov let him go, he asked the angel for a blessing. The angel blesses him that he will no longer be called Yaakov but Yisrael. (The angel hit Yaakov on the hip joint and because of this the Torah prohibits a Jew from eating the sciatic nerve on the hip joint of an animal.)
- Yaakov and Esav meet. Esav embraces Yaakov and they both weep.
- On the road to Bet Lechem, Rachel gives birth to Binyamin and then passes away. Yaakov marks the place with a monument known as Kever (the Tomb of) Rachel. To this day Jews visit this very spot to pray to God.
- Yaakov reaches his father in Chevron and is reunited with him.

- Yitzchak dies at the age of one hundred and eighty.
- Esav takes all his family to live in the Land of Edom.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

Esav Advances to Attack Yaakov

In the parsha this week Yaakov and his family continue on their journey back to Eretz Yisrael to see Yitzchak before he dies. They come near to the land of Edom where Yaakov's brother Esav lived. Yaakov remembers how angry Esav had been with him before he went away and was afraid that Esav would still be angry. He decided to send messengers ahead to tell Esav that Yaakov, all his family and many animals were coming his way. The messengers reported back that Esav was heading toward Yaakov with 400 hundred soldiers!

Yaakov then 'planned a three pronged strategy' for their confrontation. He split his camp into two so that one group could escape even if the other had to fight. Next Yaakov prays to God for help and finally he sends valuable presents of precious stones, jewels, over two hundred goats, camels, cows, bulls and donkeys to Esav. Yaakov instructs his servants to keep a distance between the various gifts so that when Esav saw them approaching from across the horizon he would think that the gift was even larger and more impressive.

When Yaakov eventually sees Esav coming towards him he bows seven times. Esav ran towards Yaakov, embraces him and kisses him. They then both weep.

Activity 1:

Role play: Yaakov's preparations when he is on his way to Esav and the meeting between Yaakov and his family with Esav and his four hundred soldiers.

Discuss:

- How would you make up with someone with whom you have had an argument?

New Name

While he was travelling Yaakov crossed the River Yabok with his family. When on the other side he realized that he had left some earthenware jugs there and he took the trouble of going back to retrieve them rather than let them become ruined or wasted.

When Yaakov returns to fetch his pitchers he wrestles with a man until dawn. The rabbis tell us that this 'man' was in fact an angel. The angel blesses Yaakov and says to him that he will no longer be called Yaakov but Yisrael as he had prevailed over the angel. (The word Yisrael in Hebrew comes from the two words, to prevail and the Divine.)

Discuss:

- The name Yaakov was given to him at birth and it comes from the word, 'ekev' which means 'heel'. Yaakov was holding on to the heel of his brother when he was born. The name Yisrael describes how successfully Yaakov overcame the powers that attempted to destroy him. We are known as the Bnei Yisrael – the Children of Israel.
- If you could choose a new name for yourself what would it be and why?
- Compliments game: Sit the children in a circle and give one child a bean bag or other safe suitable object for throwing such as a fluffy ball or pom - pom. The child holding the

bean bag should say a compliment such as, “She is very kind.” The other children sit there quietly. The person who said the compliment should now throw the bean bag at the person who they said the compliment about and say their name. The person who was given the compliment should now do the same to someone else. Each person receives and gives one compliment. Play this game throughout your service to break it up and so that no one child is sitting there waiting until the very end to receive a compliment. Link it to Yaakov being given a new name.

Activity 2:

From the actions of Yaakov who went back across the river to retrieve his jugs we learn to appreciate everything that we have, to treat them with care and not to waste anything. Yaakov made the effort to go all the way back rather than let his possessions become ruined or wasted.

Discuss:

- Recycling and reusing are ways that one could not waste. What examples do the children have from their personal lives where they are doing this or could be doing it better? (Using the other side of a piece of paper, using the recycling bins at home, turning off lights when they leave a room, turning off water when brushing teeth, giving unwanted items to a charity shop...)
- Give an example of something you have seen or bought that has been recycled.

Children's Service: Years 3- 6

Activity 1:

Explain the main points of the parsha to the children. (See summary above and more information below for details.) When they have understood the narrative split the children into groups and ask each group to practise a role play of the story which they will then show to the other groups. Secretly give each group a random word to insert in their role play, for example: lawn mower. When the groups act out their role play to the other groups they should insert their random words. At the end the other groups need to guess what the random words were.

Activity 2:

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the various gifts so that when Esav saw them approaching from across the horizon he would think that the gift was even larger and more impressive.

When Yaakov eventually sees Esav coming towards him he bows seven times. Esav ran towards Yaakov, embraces him and kisses him. They then both weep.

Discuss:

- What would you do to make up with someone with whom you have had an argument?
- What lengths would you go to for peace?

The Struggle with the Angel

In Vayishlach, Rashi (Gen 32:25) tells us that while he was travelling Yaakov crossed the River Yabok with his family. When on the other side he realized that he had left some earthenware jugs there and he took the trouble of going back to retrieve them rather than let them become ruined or wasted.

From the actions of Yaakov we learn to appreciate everything that we have, to treat them with care and not to waste anything.

Discuss:

- Recycling and reusing are ways that one could not waste. What examples do they have from their personal lives where they are doing this or could be doing it better? (Using the other side of a piece of paper, using the recycling bins at home, turning off lights when they leave a room, turning off water when brushing teeth, giving unwanted items to a charity shop...)

- Give an example of something you have seen or bought that has been recycled.

“Recycle your Bottle Bowling”

Set up bowling pins made from 2-liter plastic bottles, small bleach bottles, or tall dishwashing detergent bottles. Tip: Put some stones in the bottom of the bottles; the pins will still be easy to bowl down, but the bottles won't fall as easily as they would if there was no rocks in them. Depending on how many children there are in your group, each child should get a number of turns to throw a ball at the bowling bottles. The number of bottles overturned equals the number of points earned. A strike gets a second go. The child with the most points at the end is the winner!

Activity 3:

When Yaakov returns to fetch his pitchers he wrestles with a man until dawn. The rabbis tell us that this ‘man’ was in fact an angel. The angel blesses Yaakov and says to him that he will no longer be called Yaakov but Yisrael as he had prevailed over the angel. (The word Yisrael in Hebrew comes from the two words, to prevail and the Divine.)

Discuss:

- The name Yaakov was given to him at birth and it comes from the word, ‘ekev’ which means ‘heel’. Yaakov was holding on to the heel of his brother when he was born. The name Yisrael describes how successfully Yaakov overcame the powers that attempted to destroy him. We are known as the Bnei Yisrael – the Children of Israel.

- If you could choose a new name for yourself what would it be and why?
- In Judaism it is believed that your Hebrew name is your essence. It embodies your unique character traits and gifts. You are your name! Do you live up to your identity?
- **Play name game : Shabbat Shalom**

Stand children in a circle. The facilitator should stand in the middle. The aim of the game is to be the last one standing. The facilitator calls out a name of a child, for example: David. David needs to duck down when his name is called. The children on either side of David have to turn toward David, clap their hands twice and call out, "Shabbat Shalom". Whichever of the children do that last is out and moves out the circle. If David ducks before the children clap he stays in the game but if he forgets to duck or only ducks down after they have clapped then David is out and also steps out of the circle. All the children now left in the circle take a step in to close the circle up more and the facilitator calls out a new name.

When you have two remaining children they should stand in the middle back to back and when the facilitator calls out the numbers one to five they should take five steps away from each other. One step on each number. They should then turn around, clap twice and call out each other's name. The one who does this first is the winner.