



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

Head of Education

Tribe

t: 020 8343 5675

e: sharonradley@tribeuk.com

Vayigash

Parsha Summary:

- Last week's parsha concluded with Yosef threatening to keep Yaakov's youngest son, Binyamin, as a slave. This week's parsha opens with Yehuda explaining how he promised his father he would take responsibility for Binyamin.
- Yosef cannot wait any longer. He sends everyone else from the room, and dramatically reveals his identity. Yosef reassures the brothers that he has no bitterness towards them and forgives them for all that has gone before.
- Pharaoh is informed of this latest development and offers special gifts, including some land, for Yaakov and his large family. Yosef also gives the brothers gifts and sends them off to bring their father down to Egypt.
- Yaakov hears that his beloved son is still alive. At first he cannot believe it but then he is overjoyed!
- Hashem tells Yaakov that if he goes to Egypt he will be blessed.
- Yaakov and all his household – 70 people in total, travel to Egypt and settle in Goshen.
- An emotional reunion between Yosef, Viceroy of Egypt and his elderly father, takes place. Yosef then introduces his father to Pharaoh.

- The parsha now returns to the famine and tell us how Yosef managed it.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 2

Activity 1:

Emoticons ☺

Assign each child in your group a character from the parsha. You can use the same person a few times if necessary. For example, Yaakov, Yosef, Yehuda, Pharaoh, Binyamin and any of the other brothers.

Explain to the children that this week's parsha is a riveting one, full of suspense, drama and emotions! It goes from a tense and worrying situation to an overwhelmingly joyful one.

Below is a list of emotions, read through them aloud one at a time. For each emotion the child who thinks his /her character experienced this at one point in the parsha, should jump up and shout their characters name. They should then explain why they think this. (For example, FEAR – Yehuda would have been extremely fearful when Yosef was threatening to keep Binyamin. What would happen to his brother? What would he tell his father?)

LIST OF EMOTIONS

Excited
Worried
Happy
Afraid

Generous
Confused
Emotional
Helpless
Content
Blessed
Reassured
Regret
Shocked

It may be a fun idea to draw some emoticon pictures before Shabbat, and instead of calling out the emotion, hold up the card and give the children a chance to guess what emotion it represents.

ACTIVITY 2:

“Don’t judge a book by its cover”

Before Shabbat, gather together a group of household items that the children will be familiar with and put them in an opaque bag. Try to get an interesting range of various types of items. (Make sure there is nothing that the children could hurt themselves on - for example no sharp edges.)

Sit the group in a circle. One at a time, bring each of the children up and blindfold them. They should take one object out of the bag and try to guess what it is and what it is used for. The children will soon realise it is not as simple as it seems!

Once this is done, explain to the children that in this week’s parsha we learn that sometimes in our lives we need to look a bit deeper and that often there is more going on than what first meets the eye.

At the end of last week's parsha, we are left thinking that Yosef is a cruel and greedy Egyptian leader, who does not care about the brothers and their family. In this week's parsha we are surprised to find out that it is the exact opposite!

Explain the meaning of the phrase *"Don't judge a book by its cover."* Discuss with the group how we can apply this to our everyday life? What about with our friends or family? Has anyone ever been in a situation when they thought one thing was happening but really it was something else entirely?

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Activity 1:

Yaakov was 130 years old when Yosef revealed himself to his brothers! The brothers knew they had to tell their father but were worried the shock would be too great for such an old man. The Midrash tells us that Serach bat Asher, Yaakov's granddaughter, had a beautiful voice, so in order to break the news gently, she wove it into a song. She sat by her grandfather with a lyre, a type of harp, and gently sang "Yosef, my uncle, did not die, he lives and rules over the land of Egypt." She sang this two or three times until eventually Yaakov realised the message she was giving him.

The EgyptVision Song Contest!

The children should group themselves in pairs or threes. How would they break the news? In their groups they should prepare a song – they can take an existing song and change the words, or make up an original one. They can make it fast or slow, a rap or any other song style they wish - there will be points for originality!

Once they have prepared their song they should perform them to the group. The audience should give points out of 5 (by holding up their fingers,) after each performance and the pair with the highest points is the winner!

Activity 2:

A major theme in Vayigash, is that of forgiveness. Once the brothers realised who this powerful leader of Egypt really was, they must have been terrified that he would use his position to punish them for what they did to him all those years ago. Yosef however, is quick to reassure them that he forgives them and only wants the best for them. This must not have been easy for Yosef to do. He was separated from his family for many years and went through much hardship all alone. And yet he forgave his brothers.

Below are several different situations. Discuss each one and ask the children who would need to be the one to forgive in each scenario? Is it always a black and white situation? How can someone prove they are really sorry?

- Sarah, age 14, is in a stationary shop. All her friends have the file with a picture of the latest film on it, and her Mum said they cannot afford a new file right now. She has been using an old one of her brothers. Sarah realises that the shopkeeper is distracted and quickly slips the file into her bag! But....the shopkeeper notices!
- You are at your friend's house. You decide together that you want to play a game of chess. Your friend brings down a beautiful chess set and explains that it used to be her grandfather's set and it is very special to her. During the game you accidentally knock your King over...it falls off the table, on to the floor and smashes in half!

- Daniel is late to meet his friends, he realises his t-shirts are dirty and runs into his brother's room to grab one of his. The only one he can find is his brothers' favourite one. "I'll only be out for a few hours," Daniel thinks, "he won't even notice it is gone." Daniel has a great time with his friends. However, on the way home he falls off his bike and rips a big hole in the t shirt.....

We can see from the above stories that situations are complicated. It is also easy to say the words "I'm sorry," but do we really mean them? One way to know if we mean it, is to judge our reactions if we find ourselves in the same situation again. Do we repeat what we did before and hope that this time we won't get caught? Or, do we learn from our past mistakes and act differently this time?

Yosef saw that his brothers had changed. When he pretended to want to keep Binyamin as a slave, it was a test to see how the brothers would react. When they became so distressed, Yosef knew that they had changed. They had learnt their lesson from their previous actions and he saw they were honest men. Seeing this allowed him to forgive them with all his heart.

Activity 3:

Freeze

You will need a large space to play this game. Designate a person to be the "freezer" and another to be the "forgiver". The freezer will run around trying to freeze people. If the freezer touches someone, that person should freeze in that position until the forgiver comes and whispers in his ear, "You are forgiven".

Play this game several times, choosing new children to be the forgiver and the freezer.

Explain how sometimes, not forgiving someone can make us freeze and unable to move on. It can be difficult to do but when we let go, we can move past the pain that was caused us and hopefully become happier people. Yosef was able to rejoin his family and meet his father once again all those years later, because he forgave his brothers and was able to move forward with them by his side.

Guest writer: Shoshana Citron