



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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Va'etchanan

Parsha Summary:

- Moshe continues his re-telling the story of the recent history of his people. He recounts how he pleaded with God to allow him to enter Eretz Yisrael, but to no avail. Moshe is however, permitted to climb a mountain that overlooks the Promised Land and see it from afar.
- Moshe reminds the Jewish nation of what a gift the Torah is and how we felt on the day it was given. We learn that we may not change, add or take away from any of the mitzvot.
- The importance of setting aside three cities of refuge for a person who may have killed someone by mistake.
- Moshe gives over the Ten Commandments once again.
- The first section of the Shema Prayer.
- Moshe warns the Jews not to forget God when times are good and prosperous and the tradition we have to pass on our laws and our history to our children.
- The commandment to destroy the seven nations who live in Canaan along with their idols, when the Jewish people arrive in Eretz Yisrael.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 2

Activity 1:

In this week's parsha Moshe continues telling the story of the journey of the Jewish people. This theme of travel is fitting for this time of year, when many of us go away on our summer holidays.

Show the children the prayer we say when going on a long journey. (See Page 253 of the Tribe Shevet Asher Siddur.) Explain to the group how there are different parts for going by plane, returning on the same day etc.

Activity 2:

Mini Quiz!

Go around the group giving each child the name of a place. For each one they should say how they would get there e.g. plane / foot / car/ boat etc. and if they could return on the same day. Examples could be local, within England, abroad and so on.

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Activity 1:

In this week's parsha Moshe continues telling the story of the journey of the Jewish people. This theme of travel is fitting for this time of year, when many of us go away on our summer holidays.

Show the children the prayer we say when going on a long journey. Page 253 of the Tribe Shevet Asher Siddur. Explain to the group how there are different parts for going by plane, returning on the same day etc.

Activity 2:

"I went on holiday" - Biblical style!

Most of the children should be familiar with the game "I went on holiday and I took with me..." The group should sit in a circle and each child must say an item they would take away with them, as well as the items said previously in order. If they forget an item, they are out. This time we are going to play the game with a twist! The group have to put themselves in the shoes of the Jewish People travelling through the desert. What type of things would they have brought with? What things that we take for granted would they not have had?

Activity 3:

In parshat Yitro, several weeks ago, the Jewish people received the Ten Commandments. In this week's portion, Moshe goes over them once again. See how many of them your group remembers.

Some of the Commandments, such as “Honouring your parents,” “Do not steal” etc. are easily relatable to and their benefit to us and society is clear. Some however are more difficult for us to understand, especially in this day and age. The following 2 activities should help the children look at some of the commandments from a different perspective and help them understand their application today.

1. “You shall have no other gods before me”

Sit your group in a circle and ask each child who their favourite celebrity is and why. Explain that sociologists have created a new term - ‘celebrity worship syndrome,’ whereby we follow a celebrity’s every move and events in their lives and treat them as if they are modern gods. Discuss amongst the group if they think there are any dangers in doing this? Does the group think these people are suitable role models? If not, what, or who would, make a good role model?

2. “You shall not covet”

The Oxford Dictionary defines “to covet” as

“Yearn to possess (something, especially something belonging to another)”

There is a multibillion-dollar industry whose goal is to make every one of us covet. It is called advertising. It makes us believe that we can never be happy with what we have, only with what we do not as yet own. Discuss the ways adverts do this. What emotions or weaknesses do advertisers play on? How do they target different audiences – e.g. teenagers or parents?

The Torah wants us to remember that happiness comes not from what we have but from who we are. According to Pirkei avot (Avot 4:1) – “Who is wealthy? Someone who is happy with their lot.”

