



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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Yitro

Parsha Summary:

- Having heard about God's miracles, Yitro, the father-in-law of Moshe came from his home in Midian to the Israelite camp in the desert. He brought with him Moshe's wife and his two sons.
- Yitro advised Moshe about a more suitable system for adjudicating all the disputes of the Israelites. Yitro observed that all the burden fell on Moshe and wanted to help resolve this. With Yitro's new system Moshe would only preside over the most difficult cases.
- Six weeks after leaving Egypt the Israelites arrived at Mount Sinai where they set up camp and prepare to receive the Torah. Moshe ascended the mountain.
- The Israelites are warned not to approach the mountain until after God had given them the Torah. Three days later thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the sound of a shofar emanated from the mountain. The sound of the shofar grew increasingly louder.
- God descended the mountain and spoke the Ten Commandments. The Israelites were terrified and asked Moshe to act as an intermediary between them and God.
- The parsha concludes with the prohibition against creating graven images.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 2

Activity 1:

In this week's parsha we read the '*Aseret Hadibrot*' the Ten Commandments. Here is a song about them:

To the tune of: '*We're all going to the Zoo Tomorrow.*' (The tune can be found on YouTube.)

"Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,
The Ten Commandments, the Ten Commandments
Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,
And this is what they say!

Listen to your mum and dad, and do what they say
Have a nice rest on the Shabbat day
Don't take other people's things away
It's all in the Ten Commandments

Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,
The Ten Commandments, the Ten Commandments
Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,
And this is what they say!

I am Hashem- never worship any others
Never tell lies about your sisters or your brothers
Enjoy yourself, don't envy others
It's all in the Ten Commandments

Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,

The Ten Commandments, the Ten Commandments
Hashem gave us the Ten Commandments,
And this is what they say!

Don't take Hashem's name in vain
Don't cause your partner any pain
The people of the world must never be slain
It's all in the Ten Commandments!

Discuss

How would you prepare yourself before an important event?
(Wash, clean clothes, have a rest etc...)

Sing the song below to the tune of '*Here we go round the Mulberry Bush.*' Insert the children's ideas.

This is the way we prepare ourselves,
Prep ourselves, prep ourselves,
This is the way we prepare ourselves,
Prep ourselves, prep ourselves,
For a very special occasion.

Explain that for the three days leading up to the giving of the Torah the Jewish people were commanded to prepare themselves. They were instructed to wash their clothes and prepare themselves spiritually. In the same way as we wouldn't walk into a very important meeting laughing and joking or run into a shul service, so too the Israelites had to compose themselves and think about the awesome event that was about to happen.

Activity 2:

“Mother May I?” (What’s the time Mr Wolf?)

In this game, one person is chosen as the “mother” (or father if it’s a boy). They stand with their back to a line of children. One by one the children in line ask the mother or father if they can take a specific number of a certain type of step either forwards or backwards. For example, they would ask “Mother may I take seven giant steps forward?” and the mother/father would respond either yes or no. The first child to reach and touch the mother/father wins and becomes the new mother/father. You can introduce a number of different kinds of steps to them, be creative and come up with your own. Some examples are: bunny hops (hopping like a bunny), frog hops (going down on all fours and hopping like a frog), scissors steps (jump while crossing your feet, then jump while uncrossing them as one step) and skip steps (steps as though one is skipping)

Discuss

In this game we learn all about respect. It is so important to show respect to others because they are Hashem’s creations. One of the Aseret HaDibrot is to honor and respect our parents. They are the ones that brought us into the world and help us live our lives as happily and as productively as possible. Our parents give us everything. They worry about us 24 hours a day, buy us clothes, feed us and care for us when we are ill. It is important that we treat our parents with great respect. We must do whatever our parents ask us to. The Torah tells us that whoever honors his or

her parents will be rewarded with long life. Sometimes we may not recognize everything they do for us, but we should always try to say thank you and respect and honor our parents as much as we can.

Children's Service: Years 3-6

Activity 1:

Discussion on 'Na'aseh V'nishma' – 'We will do and we will listen'.

- Start by asking all the participants to stand up in turn and name their favourite song and then sit down again.
- Next ask them to all stand up and stand on one leg. See who can stand the longest.
- Ask them why they carried out these two activities without knowing why they were being told to do them?
- Just before the Jewish people were given the Ten Commandments they said the famous words 'Na'aseh, V'nishma', 'We will do and we will listen.' (Shemot 19:8) They accepted the Torah without knowing what was in it!
- What do the participants feel that this demonstrates?
- Do they have any examples of when they do things without understanding why?
- The Jewish people at Mt Sinai demonstrated complete *Emunah* – trust in God.

One reason for this could be because when the Jewish people were at Mt. Sinai they saw God, it was an awesome experience and they were inspired and said, "Yes, we will keep the mitzvot

whatever they are..." We however are not standing at Mount Sinai hearing God speak. It is much harder for us. What should we do?

We can try to imagine what it must have been like at Mt. Sinai, we learn about it, we study our history and we make a decision to accept the mitzvot. Are we going to have faith, accept the mitzvot and say our own personal Na'aseh Vnishma?

Activity 2:

- Ask the children if they know any of the Ten Commandments
- Explain that the Ten Commandments are split into two sections. One section is about mitzvot that are to do with people and their relationship with each other and one section is to do with people and their relationship with God.
- Explain that you are going to divide the room into two. On one side or one wall will be the commandments that are about people and their relationship with each other and the other side will be about the commandments that are between people and God. You are going to call out a commandment and they will need to run to the side of the room to which they think it belongs. (You may need to simplify some of the commandments so that the children are able to understand them at their level.)
- Once they have run to the side you will let them know if they are correct.
- The children may ask why 'Honouring you parents' is in the first section of the Aseret Hadibrot which is all about our relationship with God. You can explain to them that

bringing up a child is a partnership between ones parents and God. (See also the activity below.)

Activity 3:

'The need for rules'

Play a game such as 'Duck duck goose'. Play it once according to the rules. Then play the game again but explain to the children that you are going to remove one of the rules. As the game progresses keep taking away the rules one by one. The game should become anarchic and not much fun. Don't worry! You want this to happen! Please stop the game before it becomes wild. Sit the children in a circle and ask them which version of the game they preferred and why. Hopefully they will say version one as it was the fairest version and didn't descend into chaos.

Explain to the children that sometimes in life we may not like rules. For example we may not want to go to bed at our bedtime, we may want to eat more sweets than we are allowed. However, rules are there to help us! Our parents and guardians know us and have the experience to know what is best for us. We have to trust them and follow the rules they have put in place for us. The Torah is our guidebook for life.

In the parsha this week we are given the Aseret Hadibrot, Ten Commandments. All of the mitzvot that we have been given by God are our rules for life. They are there to help us.

Activity 4:

Give the children the Ten Commandments cut out. Split the children into groups and ask them to put them in the order they think is most important. Give them a limited time. When time is up ask the groups to read their order and discuss why they chose that order.

Next, show the children the actual order of the commandments. Explain that the commandments are split into two sections. The first section is mitzvot between man and God and the second section is mitzvot between man and man. Discuss why the mitzvah to honour ones parents is in the first section. (One reason is because if we honour our parents and have gratitude towards them we will come to have gratitude towards God who is our ultimate provider. Honouring our parents is how nearly all of us come to recognize that there is a moral authority above us to whom we are morally accountable. Without this, we cannot create or maintain a moral society.)