

Chayei Sarah

Parsha Summary:

- The parsha begins with Sarah's death at the age of 127. Avraham is very sad and mourns her. He looks for a special place to bury her.
- Avraham negotiates with Ephron to buy the Cave of Machpelah as a burial place for Sarah. He pays him 400 silver coins.
- Avraham sends his trusted servant Eliezer, to find a wife for Yitzchak.
- Eliezer arrives in Charan and stops by a well. He thinks of a plan to find the best bride for Yitzchak.
- Rivka arrives at the well and offers water to Eliezer and his entire caravan of 10 camels. Eliezer is impressed with her kindness; she meets the criteria he is looking for and so he presents her with gifts.
- Eliezer is invited into Rivka's father's home, where he tells the story of his mission and his encounter with Rivka. Eliezer asks for her hand in marriage to Yitzchak. Betuel (her father) and Lavan (her brother) agree.
- Rivka returns with Eliezer and she and Yitzchak are married shortly after.
- The miracles of Sarah's tent return with Rivka's marriage to Yitzchak.
- Avraham then married Ketura (Hagar) and had six more sons.

- Avraham dies at the age of 175. His two older sons, Yitzchak and Yishmael make peace and come together to bury him in the Cave of Machpelah, beside Sarah.

Children's Service: Tots-Year 3

In this week's parsha we see how Rivka drew water for not only Eliezer, but also his whole caravan of thirsty camels. Ask the children if they've ever been to the zoo – who has seen a camel? A camel is good for travelling in the desert because it doesn't need to drink water so often, but a thirsty camel will drink a lot of water! Show the children a 1 litre bottle of water. Ask the children how much they can drink when they're REALLY thirsty? Discuss how much of the bottle they would drink. Perhaps they would even drink it all.

A thirsty camel can drink between 150-200 litres in about 3 minutes! And that's just ONE camel. Rivka provided water for all TEN camels of Eliezer. Discuss how many litre bottle equivalents Rivka would need for all the camels.

She didn't have to, no one asked her to. Eliezer just asked for a little water for himself. She offered to get water not only for him but the camels too! This shows us the great chessed of Rivka and this was how Eliezer knew she was the right bride for Yitzchak.

Activity 1:

Thirsty Camel Challenge!

Bring in a picture of a camel or designate a toy animal as the resident 'camel'. Split the children into two teams, put the camel on one side of the room and the team's line up on the opposite side. Each team gets a stack of plastic cups. When you say go, the child at the front of the line runs across the room to place a cup in front of the thirsty camel. Each cup must be the right way and cannot fall over. The team to get all their cups upright in front of the camel wins.

Remind the children that Rivka had to do this by herself, with heavy jugs water and she didn't complain at all! In addition to

thinking of other people and emulating the chessed of Rivka, we should also remember to offer a drink to people who might be thirsty.

Another idea we see in this week's parsha is that of *Emor Me'at V'aseh Harbeh*. *Say a little and do a lot*. This is first illustrated by Avraham in last week's parsha when he offered the visiting angels a bit of water and a piece of bread, but actually served them a big meal. As we have discussed, Rivka also displays this middah when she provides water for the whole caravan of camels instead of just Eliezer. The opposite is with Ephron at the beginning of the parsha, when he initially offers the Cave of Machpelah to Avraham for free, but ends up charging him 400 silver coins.

The following story illustrates this idea - where a boy ends up doing far more than he originally set out to do.

Activity 2:

Double Take, Double Give by Nesanel Yoel Safaran

"Brad" his Mum called out, "I just found out that Mrs. Sommers, our neighbour, is going to the hospital for a few days. She needs someone to feed her two cats. Do you think you could help her out?"

"Sure Mum, no problem," shrugged the boy as he headed out the door. "I can stop by on my way home from school, I guess."

Later that day, Brad made his way to the elderly widow's house and let himself in with the key that she had left under the welcome mat. The door opened with a loud squeak, alerting the two Calico cats, who purred with gratitude as their visitor

graciously filled up their bowls with generous portions of food and water.

"Okay - good deed for the day accomplished," Brad thought with a sense of satisfaction.

Just then he noticed a strange dripping sound coming from the kitchen. Curious, Brad went to investigate and discovered the culprit - a leaking tap, which by the looks of the water stain on the sink, had been dripping for quite some time.

For a brief moment, the thought flashed through Brad's mind: "I could fix that..." But he quickly dismissed the idea. After all, he was just there to feed the cats. And besides, he knew that all of his friends would be out playing ball and he was anxious to join them.

He turned to leave. As he stepped out the door Brad nearly tripped on the tall, overgrown grass. "Wow, this really needs trimming. In fact, this whole place is falling apart. It was never like this when Mr. Sommers was alive. But that's none of my business."

Brad started on his way, half jogging, toward the park. But he had hardly gone a half a dozen steps when he stopped in his tracks. "Maybe I really should go back and take care of some of those problems," he thought to himself. "But, then again", he countered, "I *did* feed the cats like she asked. What do I need to get so involved for?"

Brad took a few more steps and stopped again. He imagined the poor, old widow, all alone and how big these "little" problems must seem to her now that her husband was no longer around to take care of them.

"I'm going to do it!" he resolutely decided. Without delay, the boy ran home and grabbed a few tools. After an hour and a half of spraying, wrench-twisting and weed-trimming, Mrs. Sommer's house was starting to look like new. The door stopped squeaking,

the tap stopped dripping and the grass looked neat and trim again. Even the cats seemed somehow more content.

A few days later, after Brad had forgotten about the whole thing, his Mum called him out from his bedroom. She had a big smile on her face and seemed to be glowing with pride. "I just got off the phone with Mrs. Sommers. She told me that an 'angel' had visited her house while she was away. She was crying with joy as she told me about how overwhelmed she had been by all the creaks and leaks since Mr. Sommers passed away and that your surprise good deed made her feel like a new person!"

Brad blushed. He was glad that he had been able to open his heart and make the extra effort to do even more than he had been asked.

Adapted from Aish.com

Children's Service: Years 3-6

In this week's parsha we see the idea of *Emor Me'at V'aseh Harbeh*. *Say a little and do a lot*. This is first illustrated by Avraham in last week's parsha when he offered the visiting angels a bit of water and a piece of bread but actually served them a big meal. Rivka also displays this middah, when she provides water for the whole caravan of camels instead of just Eliezer. The opposite is with Ephron at the beginning of the parsha, when he initially offers the Cave of Machpelah to Avraham for free, but ends up charging him 400 silver coins. Sometimes we offer more than we can actually deliver. We see from this week's parsha that it is better to offer less but do more.

Activity 1:

Chayei Sarah Charades

A great way to "*say a little and do a lot*" is by playing charades without talking! Children take turns to act something out without talking at all. Use words or ideas from the parsha such as Rivka, camels, well, drawing water, Avraham, Yitzchak etc.

Ask the children for practical examples of the concept that this game illustrates. How can we act similarly?

Activity 2:

When Eliezer knew that Rivka was the right bride for Yitzchak, he gave her many gifts from him and lots of jewellery. When Rivka entered her house with all the new jewellery, it was clear that she had met someone important.

The Chocolate Game – Chayei Sarah Style!

Bring in lots of costume/toy jewellery: bracelets, necklaces, rings, a crown – the more the better! Children sit in a circle (all the jewellery is in the middle) and take turns to throw a die. Anyone who rolls a 6 gets to go in the middle and start adorning! They can only tuck into the chocolate (with a knife and fork of course) when they have all the jewellery on. Anyone who subsequently rolls a 6 replaces them, even if they haven't yet got anywhere near the chocolate.

Discuss how actions form behaviour. Eliezer gave the jewellery to Rivka because he was very impressed with the way she behaved at the well and went out of her way to help him. Let's

have a look at the details so we can appreciate the magnitude of what she did.

Ask the children how much they can drink when they're REALLY thirsty? Discuss how much of a 1 litre water bottle they would drink. Perhaps they would even drink it all.

A thirsty camel can drink between 150-200 litres in about 3 minutes! And that's just ONE camel. Do the maths! Rivka got water for all TEN camels of Eliezer. How many litre bottle equivalents would Rivka need for all the camels? How can we go out of our way to help people?