



November 2018

Welcome to Spark, the Tribe weekly parsha activity sheet for Children's Service Leaders across the United Synagogue communities.

Thank you for offering to run a service, for all the hard work that you put into it and for making a real difference to so many young people. 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.

Spark gives you an overview of the weekly parsha, a song, an activity, discussion questions or D'var 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 Spark. Please be in touch if you have any queries, feedback or if we can be of any help. Thank you again for your amazing work.

With best wishes,
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YITRO 5779

Parsha Summary:

- Yitro, Moshe's father-in-law and a Midianite priest, hears about the miraculous Exodus from Egypt. He comes to meet Moshe in the desert, together with his daughter (Moshe's wife) Tziporah and Moshe's two sons. Moshe greets Yitro and relates to him what has happened to the Israelites. Yitro and Moshe bring offerings.
- The narrative now skips forward to an incident after the giving of the Torah. Moshe is busy making halachic rulings from morning to evening. Concerned about this being too much for Moshe, Yitro advises him to set up an alternative system of judging the people, involving the appointment of a cascading system of judges. Only the major issues would be brought directly to Moshe for his judgement.
- Moshe accepts Yitro's advice and appoints judges over sub-groups of 1000, 100, 50 and 10 men. Yitro returns to Midian.
- The narrative switches back to Rosh Chodesh Sivan, one and a half months after the Exodus, prior to the giving of the Torah. The people travel from Refidim and arrive in the Sinai Desert.
- Moshe ascends Mount Sinai. God tells Moshe to inform the people that if they listen to His voice and keep His covenant, they will become "a kingdom of priests and a holy nation".
- The people agree to God's offer. God tells Moshe to instruct the people to wash their clothing and not to encroach onto the mountain for the next three days. Moshe relays this to the nation. God's Presence descends on the mountain; there is thunder, lightning and shofar blasts; the mountain is covered in smoke.

- God 'descends' upon Mount Sinai and Moshe ascends again. God once again tells Moshe to warn the people not to encroach onto the mountain. After Moshe descends, God speaks the Ten Commandments: 1. Faith in God's existence 2. Prohibition of idol worship 3. Prohibition of swearing false oaths 4. Keeping Shabbat 5. Honouring one's parents Prohibition of: 6. Murder 7. Committing adultery 8. Stealing 9. Bearing false testimony 10. Coveting what others have.
- Trembling from this awesome experience, the people retreat and ask Moshe to be God's conduit, instead of God speaking to them directly, lest they die. Moshe reassures them. God tells Moshe to warn the nation not to carve certain images. The commandment is given to build a designated altar upon which offerings to God should be brought.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 3

- Tip: The information in the parsha summary above can be used as the basis of a quiz. Make sure if you do decide to have a quiz that it's inclusive and fair. Think through carefully before your service to decide if a quiz is a suitable activity for the dynamics of your group.

Song:

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: Respect

Give a few children scenarios to act out to the rest of the group who will then need to decide whether the characters are being respectful or not. Once you see how everyone voted, discuss it with them and explain to them how the characters were respectful or not.

Examples of scenarios to act out are...

A friend is over and you have a wonderful time playing together. Toys are spread all over the playroom. Your friend leaves without offering to help clean up the toys.

An older man comes to your home to visit and your little brother asks him how old he is.

A teacher is trying to teach a class and students raise their hand and wait patiently until the teacher calls on them.

Another option is to make it a multiple-choice game where your children select the correct answer. The laughs gained with playing the game this way can add some fun, given your children have the maturity and judgment to understand that the humor is funny to listen to, but not funny if it is acted out. Some examples include:

You feel a sneeze coming, so you a) look for someone to sneeze on b) cover your mouth and nose with your hands c) turn your head away from people and let the sneeze out as loudly as possible.

You have guests. You notice that after the meal, your mom has a big piece of lettuce on her tooth. You a) point at it and start laughing as loud as you can, b) ask if anyone can tell which of your mom's teeth is not like the other, c) quietly whisper in your mom's ear that she should check her teeth in the bathroom.

Once your children understand the idea behind making up scenarios for the game, they may want to make up some of their own, too.

Discuss:

In these games we learn all about respect. It is so important to show respect to others because they are Hashem's creations. In this week's Parsha we receive the Aseret Hadibrot. We learn that we need to honor and respect our parents. They are the ones that brought us into the world and help us live our lives. 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

- Please check the activities written in the age group above as some of them may be suitable for your service too.
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Activity: The Aseret Hadibrot

- 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: 'Rules Rule'

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: 'Order! Order!'

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. 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.)