



igniting your shabbat services

tribe spark



תולדות

Toldot

Hello and welcome to Spark!

Spark is a new idea from Tribe, aimed at facilitating the smooth running of Toddlers' Services, Children's Services and Youth Services across United Synagogue communities.

Firstly, thank you for offering to run a Children's Service in your local shul. The US is very proud of the numerous Children's services that are run every week across the UK, and we would not be able to do this without you!

Spark has been designed in order to help you run your Children's Services. Obviously, every Children's Service is different, in terms of how many children there are; what their age range is; how long it is for; and how knowledgeable the children are likely to be of this week's parasha.

Ideally, where possible, a Children's Service should consist of some time used to discuss the weekly parasha, and some time devoted to davening. Spark is aimed at the parasha part of the service. It gives you an overview of what happens in the weekly parasha, and then a song, activity, discussion or Dvar Torah to run with the children - depending on their ages.

After the parasha summary on the next page, Spark has been split into 5 sections. Larger communities may have 5 different Children's / Youth Services running concurrently. Each of these will be able to use one section for their relevant age group. If your shul does not have as many groups, then you should use the section that best suits the age range of your participants.

It has been created in a way to be flexible, so that it can be run in 10 minutes, if you have a short service, or longer if you have the time. If you also look at sections for other age groups, you may even find that you would like to use the ideas and information from more than one of the sections.

It is important to note that Spark should help you to run Children's Services, but it does not completely run it for you. It is not designed to give to one of the children to read out to the group for them to run themselves. You are running the Children's Service, and Spark is here to help you do it.

Largely, no props will be needed, but ideally you should read Spark before you start the Children's Service, so that you can think of further ideas to complement it.

We hope that you and the children in the Children's Service will benefit from Spark, we thank and congratulate you for doing it; and as always we welcome your feedback.

Shabbat shalom,

The Tribe Education Team

- Rivka became pregnant with twins.
- Yacov and Esav were born - Esav was born first, and he was hairy and very red in colour. Then followed Yaacov, who was holding Esav's heel as he was born.
- Esav and Yacov were quite different: Esav was sly and loved to hunt, while Yacov was peaceful and spent most of his time studying Torah.
- Esav sold Yacov his birthright in return for a bowl of red lentils.
- There was a famine in the land of Canaan so Yitzchak and his family moved and settled in Philistia.
- Yitzchak dug wells and became wealthy, but had a dispute with the local people over historic wells and moved away from the city.
- On instruction from Rivka, Yacov impersonated Esav and received Esav's blessing from Yitzchak.
- When Esav discovered that Yacov got the first blessings, he became very angry and wanted to kill his brother, so Rivka helped Yacov to run away.

Did you know?

As the babies grew inside Rivka's tummy, she constantly felt kicking. There is a Midrash which says that whenever Rivka passed a 'house of evil' she would feel kicking from Esav, and whenever she passed by a place of Torah study she would feel kicking from Yacov. Rivka went to visit a great rabbi by the name of Shem to ask him for advice because she did not know she was carrying twins. Shem told Riva that there were two children in her womb who were to be the fathers of two nations, and the younger one would eventually rule the older one - that's why they were fighting even before they were born.



In this week's parasha, Esav was angry with Yacov because he received the firstborn blessing from their father Yitzchak instead of him. This song is about saying sorry to someone you have upset.



**Say you're sorry when you're sorry
(to the tune of Just a Spoonful of Sugar)**

Say you're sorry when you're sorry
When you know that you've been wrong
Say you're sorry to another
And your heart will sing a song

Say you're sorry when you're sorry
It's the best thing you can do
To make a nice warm feeling
Feeling deep inside of you

Say you're sorry when you're sorry
On this day - or any day
If you're sorry - say you're sorry
You can find the words to say

You can say it with a flower
You can say it with a touch
You can say it with a smile
And it will mean so very much

Say you're sorry when you're sorry
It's the best thing you can do
To make a nice warm feeling
Feeling deep inside of you

In this week's parasha, Yitzchak had grown old, and become blind. Yacov wanted the blessing that his brother Esav was due to receive, and so he deceived his father. He dressed up as Esav, by putting goat skins on his arms, so that he would feel hairy like Esav - his plan worked, and he received the blessing.



Activity:

- Play the blindfold awareness game with the children.
- Blindfold one child, who sits on a chair in the middle of the room. An object is placed under the chair.
- Another child is chosen, and they must try to retrieve the object under the chair, without being caught out.
- If the blindfolded child thinks that they can hear the other child, they should point to where they think s/he is. If they are wrong, they carry on.
- If the blindfolded child guesses correctly, they win the challenge. If the other child manages to retrieve the object, then they have won the challenge.

In this week's parasha, we are told that Yitzchak has become old and blind, and mixes up his own sons. However, there is still a lot that we can learn from him.

Read the following story with the children, with them acting out the main characters;

"Oh, Mum," groaned Josh, "I'm so bored. Being stuck in bed with a broken leg is no fun at all." Josh's mother nodded sympathetically. "I agree, Josh. Still, there is a lot of good a person can do even if he stays in one place." "Really? If I could go out, I would have more fun, and be able to do much more for you, too. I could go shopping for you and do errands. What can I do when I have to stay in bed?"

"You know, Josh, there's a lesson in this week's parasha which might help you think about things you can do. Toldot tells us about the life of Yitzchak. We read about a famine in Israel, just like in the days of Avraham. Yitzchak thought about travelling to Egypt like his father did, but God told him not to leave Israel."

"Have you ever wondered about that?" asked Josh's mother. "Both Avraham and Yacov journeyed in and out of Israel. But God told Yitzchak to stay put." Josh thought for a moment. "I don't know, I remember learning how Avraham and Yaacov did many important things on their journeys." "Yes Josh, there is a lot of good a person can do when he goes outside to be involved with other people. But by telling Yitzchak to stay in Israel, God is teaching us that there is a lot a person can - and should - do, by staying in one place."

"Maybe that's why the Torah tells us about all the wells he dug," suggested Josh. "Very good thought, and if you remember what happened later, you'll see how working with the inside influences things on the outside too. Avimelech, king of the Philistines, had argued with Yitzchak and caused trouble. But later he came to Yitzchak with his army and asked for his friendship, saying; 'We realize that you are blessed by God.' "We can see how much influence Yitzchak had on the outside even while he stayed inside concentrating on what he had within."

"You just got me thinking, Mummy," Josh said excitedly. "There really is a lot I can do in here, and I'm going to start by straightening up this room for you!"

Discussion Points;

- What can we learn from this story?
- Do we learn about more of Yitzchak's positive or negative traits this week?
- What have we learnt from Avraham, Yitzchak and Yacov throughout the book of Bereshit so far?

After Avraham dies, on the day that he is buried, Esav goes hunting whilst Yacov stays home and cooks a pot of lentils for his father to eat (a person who is mourning a loved one eats round foods when they come back from the funeral, and lentils are round). Esav comes home and is very hungry, so hungry that he sits next to Yaacov and says: "Give me that red stuff to eat!" He wants Yaacov to pour the food down his throat. Yaacov says yes, on condition that Esav sell him his birthright, his right to be the firstborn.

Why did Yacov want Esav's birthright? Yacov knew that in the future the firstborn would be privileged to serve in the Holy Temple, but Esav didn't behave in a way that should merit this - he hunted and killed, and didn't have respect for life - so Yaacov asked him to sell his birthright, which he did. Yacov bought the birthright from Esav who had no regard for it and was happy to sell it for a bowl of lentils. With the help of his mother Rivka, Yaacov then deceived his father Yitzchak by pretending to be Esav, in order to get the firstborn blessing.



Discussion Points:

- Did Yacov do anything wrong? Why? Is it always wrong to lie?
- Why did Rivka help one son, while deceiving her other son and their father?
- Esav hated Yacov when he discovered that he had the blessing instead of him - was he right to be angry? Is it ok to hate others?
- We are told that although Esav was a murderer, Yitzchak loved Esav, while Rivka loved Yaaov. How could Yitzchak love Esav if he was evil? Didn't he realize?
- Esav hunted for Yitzchak, gave Yitzchak food, and respected him. Yitzchak knew that Esav was evil, but because Esav showed him respect, this proved that there was still hope for him, which is why Yitzchak loved him.
- When the Pasuk says that Yitzchak loved Esav, it uses the past tense, yet when describing Rivka's love, it uses the present tense. This is because Yitzchak's love was based on something tangible and was short-lived (this is proven when Yitzchak gave Yacov the blessings, and according to many opinions he knew it was Yacov)- while Rivka's love is pure and ever-lasting.
- The Torah is teaching us a very important lesson about love: When we love someone, it MUST be unconditional, or it won't last. We love our families like that. The same applies to loving God. We can't love God just when things are good, but must constantly work on loving God for what He is, and what He stands for, for He will stand when all else fails or falls!

Dvar Torah

In this week's parasha we see that Yitzchak was physically blind but also blind in his perception of his sons. His two sons, Esav and Yacov both trick him into believing something which was not true.



We are told that "Yitzchak loved Esav...but Rivka loved Yacov". The Midrash tells us how Esav went to great efforts to mislead his father into thinking that he was righteous; he asked him detailed questions about Torah in which he had no real interest. Rashi says that Esav was a hunter of animals, but also of people; he ensnared them with his words. Rivka saw through this, but Yitzchak did not.

Yacov dresses up as Esav by putting goat skins on his arms. He then falsely portrays himself to his blind father, hoping to receive the firstborn blessings intended for Esav. Again Yitzchak is deceived. He sensed that something was not right, "the hands are the hands of Esav, but the voice is the voice of Yacov", but still did the blessings; to some degree he allowed himself to be wronged, and as this realisation presents itself to him, he trembles in disbelief. What made Yitzchak so vulnerable and easy to hoodwink? Why did God allow the legacy of his people to be left to chance, left to the choice of an unseeing man?

Some background to the Yom Kippur service in the Temple helps to explain. The service included the selection of two goats that were identical in appearance. One of the goats was hurled off a desert cliff and the other was brought as a sacrifice into the sanctuary; one was brought toward holiness and the other cast aside. A lot was cast to determine the fate of the two goats. The Midrash compares the two goats from the Yom Kippur service to Yacov and Esav. Both animals must be identical, and the fate of the goats is then dependent, not on selection, but on a lottery, on 'chance'.

In the same way that Yitzchak was blind to his choice, we allow fate to run its course; essentially, we allow God to decide. God is at man's side and is always present in our decisions. Sometimes the decisions that are hardest and the moments when we feel the most helpless, are precisely the moments when God is most present.



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We hope you find our guide to this week's Parsha useful.

Be sure to look out for exciting Tribe programmes in your shul.

Shabbat Shalom!

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