



igniting your shabbat services

tribe spark



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Vayetzei

HOW TO USE THIS GUIDE

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Vayetzei

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

PARASHA SUMMARY

ויצא Vayetzei

- Yacov travels to his uncle Lavan's house.
- On the way Yacov has a dream: he sees a ladder going up to heaven with angels ascending and descending on it.
- Yacov meets Lavan's younger daughter Rachel at the well and helps her to feed her flock by moving the rock that was covering the well.
- Yacov wants to marry Rachel and agrees to work for Lavan for 7 years in exchange for his permission to marry her.
- Lavan tricks Yacov into marrying his older daughter Leah instead of Rachel.
- Yacov then agrees to work another 7 years in order to marry Rachel.
- Yacov also marries Bilha and Zilpa who are Leah's and Rachel's handmaids.
- Yacov's wives initially give birth to 11 sons: Reuven, Shimon, Levi, Yehuda, Dan, Naftali, Gad, Asher, Yissachar, Zevulun and Yosef; and one daughter - Dina. (Yacov's 12th son, Binyamin, was born later on.)
- Yacov works an additional 6 years for Lavan.
- Yacov and his family leave to return to Canaan.
- Lavan follows them, but does not find the idols which Rachel took from him before they left.



In this week's parasha, Leah names her fourth son Yehuda, which means 'thanks.' She wanted to thank God for giving her so many children. When we wake up every day the first thing we say is 'Modeh Ani' - which thanks God for everything He does for us.



teach the children the Modeh Ani Song:

We open one eye,

We open two.

We say Modeh Ani

X2

Because it means 'Thank You'

We wash our hands six times it's true

That's what every Jewish girl and boy should do!

In this week's parasha, Yacov is away from his parents for a very long time. This was before he was able to phone, e-mail or skype them, and they must have been very anxious about what was happening in their son's life for such a long time. To make him realize this, in future years Yosef is away from his father Yacov for the same number of years.



Play the following game of 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?' with the children. This is a game about time and a journey:

- One child stands at the front of the room, facing away from all the other children.
- All the children ask together in unison 'What's the Time Mr Wolf?' and the child at the front responds e.g. nine o'clock. All the children then move forwards nine steps. The child at the front then turns around, and everyone has to be very still. If the wolf sees them moving, they have to go back and start again.
- The children have to try and get to the front, and tap the child on the shoulder, before the child turns around.

In this week's parasha, Lavan tricks Yacov on a number of occasions. Sometimes Yacov is aware of this, in regards to his salary. When Leah was swapped for Rachel though, Yacov was not aware that he was marrying the 'wrong' person. This shows that it is not always easy to know when someone is lying to you.



Play the game 'Call my bluff' with the children:

- Each child tells the rest of the group three interesting facts about him/herself - two which are true, and one of which is a lie - the group has to guess which is the lie. Everybody gets a turn.

We are told that Yacov was prepared for the possibility that Lavan may try to deceive him, and so he told Rachel a code to say to him. This was so that he would know it was her, even when he could not see her. However, Rachel also expected her father's trickery, but did not want Leah to be very embarrassed, so she told Leah the code.

Discussion Points;

- Was Rachel right to try and save Leah from embarrassment?
- But then she let her deceitful father get away with it. Was this wrong?
- What was Leah's role here - passive or active?

There are many acts of deception in this week's parasha to discuss with the children. Examples include:

- Lavan tricked Yacov into marrying Leah because he did not want his younger daughter married before his older daughter.
- Lavan kept changing Yacov's salary, to suit himself.
- Yacov did not tell Lavan that they were leaving.
- Rachel took her father's idols before they left.

Discussion Points:

- Which could have been avoided?
- Which were done for a good reason?
- Which were the people involved punished for?



Dvar Torah

"Again she [Leah] conceived and bore a son and declared, 'This time I will thankfully praise God!'" Bereshit/Genesis 29:35

Yacov travelled to the home of Lavan, in order to marry. After working 7 years, he was tricked into marrying Leah, and he agreed to work an additional 7 years to marry Rachel. With each bride he also married a maidservant, giving him a total of 4 wives. Yacov and his wives knew that the foundations of the Jewish people were in their hands and that they were destined to give birth to a total of 12 tribes.

The first to conceive was Leah, and she gave her sons names which were symbolic of her feelings; Reuven, God saw [re-u means to see] my suffering; Shimon, God heard [shema means to hear] my cries; Levi, my husband will now accompany [levaya means to escort] me. The fourth child was named Yehuda [hoda-ah is thanks] - "This time I will gratefully praise God."

The Talmud says: "From the time of creation there was no person who praised God until Leah came and thanked him upon the birth of Yehuda." Could it be that Leah did not express thanks for her first three children? Is it possible that Avraham, Yitzchak, Sarah and Rivka never thanked God for their good fortunes? Was there no human being before Leah who gratefully praised God?

Although there were others who expressed appreciation to God, the thanks of Leah had a unique quality that none other contained. Yacov's four wives knew that there would be 12 tribes, and they assumed that each wife would have 3 of the 12 children, an equal share. When Yehuda, Leah's fourth son was born, she felt an overwhelming sense of gratitude, that she had been blessed with more than what was due to her.

Many people feel that they earn what they receive from God. We think: "I do a mitzvah, I help others and God sends me His acknowledgment in the form of bounty." Leah felt what she had, she did not deserve and even more so - an additional child was too good to be true. When a person thanks God, one should feel that ALL they have is a totally undeserved gift. When someone achieves a happy milestone in life, one's heart overflows with joy and gratitude. Yet, as time passes, the joy begins to dissipate. Leah understood this, and wanted to permanently ingrain her initial joy. Therefore, she put the root of the word for "thanks" in her son's name. In this way she would re-ignite her appreciation every time she called her son's name. This type of thanks - no one before Leah had expressed.





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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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