



igniting your shabbat services

**tribe spark**



וַיַּעֲשֶׂה

Vayeishev

## 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

# וישב Vayeishev

- Yosef's brothers know that he is their father's favourite child, so they dislike him.
- Yosef has two dreams which he tells his brothers, which makes them hate him even more.
- In one dream Yosef imagined he was a bale of hay and so were all his brothers. Then they all bowed to him.
- In another dream, Yosef imagines that the sun, moon and eleven stars all bow to him. This is a metaphor for his father, mother and twelve brothers.
- Yosef is sent to visit his brothers, and they plot to kill him.
- Reuven attempts to save his brother by throwing him in a pit.
- Yosef is taken out of the pit and sold to the Ishmaelites (descendants of Yitzchak's half-brother Yishmael).
- The brothers slaughter a lamb, dip it in blood and take it to Yacov. They then pretend to him that Yosef has been killed.
- Yosef is sold to Potifar, adviser to Pharaoh in Egypt.
- Yehuda's son Er marries Tamar and then dies.
- Potifar's wife attempts to seduce Yosef but he refuses and flees.
- Yosef is put in prison, where he interprets dreams.



In this week's parasha Yacov gives Yosef a beautiful coat as a gift.

Sing this song to the tune of 'Old McDonald had a farm':

Yosef he had a coat, it was so very grand

And everywhere that Yosef went it was loved throughout the land.

It was red and yellow and green and blue, orange and pink and purple too.

Yosef he had a coat, it was so very grand.

Yosef he had a coat, it was so very grand.

And when his brothers looked at him, they didn't understand.

'Why him, not us? It isn't fair.

A beautiful coat we want to wear.'

Yosef he had a coat, it was so very grand.



In this week's parasha after Yosef is sent to Egypt, he gets put in to prison with a butler and a baker.

**Read the following story with the children;**

Rikky's room looked very much like the carnival her class was planning for Chanukah. Papers, streamers, balloons, tickets, prizes, and boxes were scattered all around. Rikky's friends were going to come over soon to organize the project. Rikky sat hunched over her plan book. "What are we going to do?" she thought. "We don't have enough room to set up all the booths." She tried to rearrange the floor plan again on a fresh piece of paper.



While Rikky was busy working, her sister came into the room. "Rikky, our class is putting on a Chanukah play. I'm one of the seven Hasmonean sons from the Chanukah story who wouldn't bow down to the idol. I can't decide which costume to wear."

"Oh!" blurted out Rikky. "I'm busy enough with my own problems, and I can't possibly worry about yours!" Rikky went back to her work. She didn't notice her mother standing in the doorway of her room.

"Rikky, I'm happy that you are so involved in a good project," her mother said with a smile. "I'm sure it's a lot of work and that you have to handle many details. Still, you might try to put your affairs aside for a moment and help someone else with theirs. Think what Yosef did when he was imprisoned in Egypt." Rikky put down her pen and looked at her mother. To tell the truth, she was pleased to take a break from her project.

"Yosef," her mother continued, "certainly had plenty of problems of his own. Nevertheless, he paid attention to other prisoners as well. "One day, Yosef noticed that the royal butler and baker were in a bad mood. Yosef was probably not in a great mood himself, since he was taken from his family and thrown into prison. Still, he listened patiently to their dreams, and he offered them some advice. "This was very typical of Yosef. He was a person who cared about others even if he had his own worries."

Ask the children if they can think of examples how they may be able to show care and concern for others.

**YEAR 3 & 4**

Ages 7-9

וישב

**Vayeishev**

The stories surrounding Yosef, his coat, favouritism, Egypt... are all well known, so try and encourage the children to delve in to what they have previously learnt, and build upon that. Act out the scenes leading up to Yosef's journey to Egypt. Make sure to include:



- Yosef is disliked by his brothers.
- Yosef's brothers all go out to work in the field but Yosef stays at home with Yacov.
- Yacov sends Yosef to check on his brothers; they see him approaching and plot to kill him.
- Reuven, the eldest, persuades his brothers to throw Yosef into a pit instead of killing him. (Reuven secretly plans to rescue him later.)
- Without Reuven knowing, the brothers then sell Yosef as a slave to people passing by on their way to Egypt.
- The brothers then pretend to their father that Yosef is dead.

### **Discussion Points;**

- It was very important in God's 'master-plan' that Yosef should be in Egypt.
- Why was this a good way of getting him there?
- What do we learn from Yosef, Reuven, the other brothers, and Yacov in this week's parasha?

In this week's parasha, Reuven tries to save his brother from being killed. He is faced with the dilemma of doing the right thing against his other brothers, and he alone has to convince all of them.

Play the game 'Have you ever...'

- In turn, the children have to think of something that they have done, that possibly nobody else in the group has.
- E.g. Have you ever been to Barbados? OR Have you ever cooked a meal for 10 people? OR Have you ever watched TV for more than 4 hours in a row?
- All the children who have done so (including the one who asked the question) stand up and swap places.
- Eventually you (the leader) ask 'have you ever done the right thing when it may have been easier to do the wrong thing?'



## Discussion Points:

- In this week's parasha, Reuven planned to rescue Yosef while he was in the pit, but he was not able to. In this respect he was not successful, so was there any point in what he did?
- Why did Reuven not try to argue with his brothers more? Is it a coincidence that it was the eldest brother who tried to save Yosef? Why did Reuven not tell Yacov the truth?
- Have you ever been in a situation when you are the ONLY person who wants to do the right thing? Can you share some examples?
- Should we always try to do the right thing? Can you think of any examples where it is not good or not safe to do the right thing?
- Does society have an impact on us and how we act?

## Dvar Torah

After his brothers threw Yosef into a pit and were deciding what to do with him, the Torah states: "And they sat down to eat bread, and they lifted up their eyes and looked, and behold, a company of Ishmaelites came from Gilad with their camels carrying aromatic gum, balm, and ladanum, going to carry it down to Egypt" (Genesis 37:25).



Why did the Torah deem it necessary for us to know what the camels were carrying? Rashi teaches us that the Torah is extolling the reward for the righteous. This was the caravan to which they would sell Yosef and which would transport him to Egypt. Usually caravans to Egypt carried kerosene and resin used for fuel - which had unpleasant odors. However, this caravan which carried Yosef to Egypt had pleasant smelling spices; because of his righteousness, he was not subjected to the unpleasant odors on his journey to Egypt.

This seems to be little consolation for Yosef. He was being sold as a slave by his brothers. How would something minor like the pleasant smelling merchandise on the caravan taking him to Egypt make a difference?

The answer is that this was a subtle hint from God to Yosef. It was a message to Yosef that all was not lost - it is easy to focus solely on what is going wrong with one's life. However, one needs to keep one's eyes open, and be aware of any positive aspects there may be. The phrase "gam zu letova" - "everything is for the good" is an important idea that teaches us that even when we cannot see God's plan, we believe that everything happens for a reason and even the bad things in life are ultimately part of the good.



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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!

The Tribe Education Team

t: 020 8343 5656

e: [info@tribeuk.com](mailto:info@tribeuk.com)

[www.tribeuk.com](http://www.tribeuk.com)

