



Welcome to Spark2, the Tribe weekly parsha activity sheet for Children's Service Leaders across the United Synagogue communities.

Thank you for offering to run a service. 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.

Spark2 gives you an overview of the weekly parsha, a song, activity or Dvar 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 Spark2. Please be in touch if you have any queries, feedback or if I can be of any help.

With best wishes,
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Shelach

Parsha Summary:

- The parsha begins with the commandment to send spies to Eretz Yisrael and for them to report back about the Land. Moshe picks one man from each tribe to go on this mission and gives them instructions concerning their task.
- After 40 days, the spies return and report that Eretz Yisrael is a land flowing with milk and honey. However the spies continue by saying that the people dwelling there are powerful and like giants.
- Calev and Joshua, two of the spies, try to convince the Jewish people that they are still able to conquer the land but there is national hysteria and the entire nation weeps with fear.
- God then threatens Israel with a punishment because they are still questioning Him, even after the miracle of the splitting of the sea. Moshe prays for the people and God forgives them but decrees forty years of wandering in the desert before entering Eretz Yisrael. The generation of the spies would never see Eretz Yisrael.
- We are given the mitzvah of 'taking challah'.
- The parsha ends by reminding us to keep the mitzvot of Shabbat and tzitzit.

Children's Service: Tot's – Year 2

In the parsha this week we learn that from every batch of about five pounds of dough, made from the five species of grain – wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt, a portion commonly known as *challah* should be separated and given to the Kohen. (Jewish people have taken to calling their Shabbat breads – challah - because of these verses in the Torah.)

The size of a challah portion is roughly the size of an olive. Today there are no pure Kohanim to donate the challah to so we burn this portion.

Activity 1:

- Ask the children how many times on Shabbat we have two challot?
- Explain that on Shabbat we have meals that are especially tasty. At the start of the meal we wash our hands for bread, make the brachot and have some challah. Ask some children to act out the process of washing hands, making the bracha, cutting the challah, dipping it in salt, making the bracha on bread and eating it. Practise the brachot with the children.
- Have a 'feely bag'. Fill it with objects connected to making challah and eating the challah on Shabbat. For example, an apron, a small bag of poppy seeds / flour, a challah board, a rolling pin, challah cloth, salt cellar, bottle of water, a cup... Blindfold children and ask them to put their hands in the bag, feel an object and state what they think it is. They should then say how this links to baking challah, washing for it and eating it. (Don't put a knife in the bag!) When they have done this: Take off the blindfold, take the object out of

the bag and show it to the participant. See if they have guessed correctly!

Activity 2:

In this week's parsha we also learn about Moshe sending spies to the Land of Israel. Their mission was to find out information about it and report back to the Jewish people in the desert. Unfortunately, 10 of the 12 spies come back with negative reports, because they were scared of what they had seen there. God was upset with them because He had hoped that after miracles such as the Red Sea, they would trust in Him, realize that God is all powerful and would protect them.

Play 'I spy' with the children to link to the spies in the parsha.

Activity 3:

Play the game **blind man's keys** with the children.

All the children should sit on chairs in a circle and one child should be blindfolded. Under that child's chair there should be some keys, or another item. Another child is chosen to be the spy, and their aim is to walk around the circle of chairs, retrieve the keys and go back to their seat, all without being discovered. (Similar to the spies in Israel, who did not want to be discovered by the people they were spying on.) The blindfolded child has to try and capture the other child, using their hearing. If they can hear where the child is, they should point in that direction. If they are right, they have caught the spy. If the spy manages to sit down with the keys, undetected, then their mission was successful!

Activity 4:

Choose a leader from among your group. Break the rest of the participants into two teams and have each team form a single file line. Send the leader to the other end of the room and instruct the teams that they are to follow the commands of the leader such as hop, run or skip. The first person in each line follows the instructions of the leader until they reach the leader. Once they reach the leader they turn around and head back to their team while following the leader's instructions. The first team to have all the members complete the relay, wins.

In the parsha this week when the spies returned with their negative comments about Eretz Yisrael two of the spies, Calev and Yehoshua were brave enough to tell the truth and refused to go along with the rest of the spies. They said that the land was great. In this game we have been following our leader but we must realize that there are times when it is important to be brave and think for ourselves just like Calev and Yehoshua did. We must never be afraid to stand up for ourselves.

Children's Service: Years 3 - 6

In the parsha this week we learn that from every batch of about five pounds of dough made from the five species of grain – wheat, barley, oats, rye and spelt, a portion, commonly known as *challah* should be separated and given to the Kohen. (Jewish people have taken to calling their Shabbat breads – challah - because of these verses in the Torah.)

The size of a challah portion is roughly the size of an olive. Today as there are no pure Kohanim to donate the challah to we burn this portion.

Activity 1:

Explain the above mitzvah to the children and divide the room up into five areas corresponding to the five types of grain mentioned above. Start with all the children in the middle. When you call out a name of a grain the children must run to that area. The last child to reach the area is 'out'. You can add more rules to the game by inserting various actions. For example when you call out a command such as 'knead the dough' the children should all stop wherever they are and act out kneading some dough. The last one to do this is out. Then continue the game by calling out a different one of the five grains.

- Ask the children how many times on Shabbat we have two challot?
- Explain that on Shabbat we have meals that are especially tasty. At the start of the meal we wash our hands for bread, make the brachot and have some challah.

Activity 2:

In this week's parsha we also learn about Moshe sending spies to the Land of Israel. Their mission is to find out information about it and report back to the Jewish people in the desert. Unfortunately, 10 of the 12 spies come back with negative reports, because they were scared of what they had seen there. God was upset with them because He had hoped that after miracles such as the Red Sea, they would trust in Him, realize that God is all powerful and would protect them.

Play 'I spy' with the children to link to the spies in the parsha.

Activity 3:

- Play the game *Blind Man's Keys* with the children.

All the children should sit on chairs in a circle, and one child should be blindfolded. Under that child's chair there should be some keys, or another item. Another child is chosen to be the spy, and their aim is to walk around the circle of chairs, retrieve the keys and go back to their seat, all without being discovered. (Similar to the spies in Israel, who did not want to be discovered by the people they were spying on.) The blindfolded child has to try and capture the other child, using their hearing. If they can hear where the child is, they should point in that direction. If they are right, they have caught the spy. If the spy manages to sit down with the keys, undetected, then their mission was successful!

Activity 4:

Follow the leader:

Children sit in a circle. One child is chosen to be 'it' and is sent out of the room. Another child is chosen to be the 'leader'. Their task is to change the actions without 'it' finding out that they are the leader. The children inside should start singing a song and the leader should perform an action such as clapping their hands. All the children should copy this action. Bring 'it' back into the room and explain that there is a leader who will be changing the actions and all the children will be copying the leader. The job of 'it' is to find out who the leader is. The game continues with the leader carefully changing the actions so as not to get caught and 'it' trying to work out who the leader is. You should be able to play this game a few times.

Discuss:

In the parsha this week when the spies returned with their negative comments about Eretz Yisrael two of the spies, Calev and Yehoshua were brave enough to tell the truth and refused to

go along with the rest of the spies. They said that the land was great. In this game we have been following our leader but we must realize that there are times when it is important to be brave and think for ourselves just like Calev and Yehoshua did. We must never be afraid to stand up for ourselves.

- Q. Is it possible to be an independent thinker whilst at the same time conforming to the people around us? Why or why not?

A. Independent thinking isn't about conforming or not conforming. It means that we look at what is happening around us with open eyes and decide whether it is right or wrong based on our own values, rather than because 'everyone says so.' If what people are doing around us is fine, there is no reason not to conform. If it isn't, then we should not be afraid not to conform and do what is right anyway.

- Q. Does independent thinking mean we shouldn't ask others advice?

A. Not at all. Asking and considering the advice of experienced people, whose values we respect, is a valuable way to gather all the information we need to be able to genuinely think independently and arrive at an informed decision.

- Cicero said: 'Nobody can give you wiser advice than yourself'. Discuss.