



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,
Sharon Radley
sharonradley@tribeuk.com

Va'eira

Parsha Summary:

- The parsha begins with God telling Moshe that the time had come for Him to fulfil His promise to the Jewish people to deliver them from Egypt and take them into Eretz Yisrael. Moshe once again protests about his speech impediment.
- The parsha continues and traces the lineage of Moshe and Aaron his brother.
- God tells Moshe to go and speak to Pharaoh and that Aaron shall serve as his spokesman.
- Moshe and Aaron appear before Pharaoh and as God had instructed him, Aaron casts his staff on to the ground. The stick turns into a snake. Pharaoh's magicians do the same but Aaron's staff swallows up theirs. Pharaoh is unimpressed and the plagues start.
- Plague One: Aaron smites the Nile with his staff. The river and all the waters in Egypt turn to blood and all fish die. The plague lasts seven days but Pharaoh does not change his mind.
- Plague Two: Aaron stretches his staff over the Nile and frogs emerge. The frogs cover the land. Pharaoh summoned Moshe and Aaron and begged them to pray to God to remove the plague, after which he would release the Israelites.

- Moshe prays to God and all the frogs die. Egypt reeks from the odour of rotting frogs yet Pharaoh breaks his promise. He will not let the people go.
- The same pattern continues... The next plagues are lice, wild animals, a cattle epidemic, boils and a catastrophic hail. Each time Pharaoh pleads for the plague to stop and promises to release the Jewish people. As soon as God stops the plague, Pharaoh changes his mind.

(Please note that there are seven plagues in the parsha this week. The last three will be in the next parsha.)

Children's Service: Tots – Year 2

A song about the plagues. To the tune of, '*This Old Man...*'

First God sent,
Plague number **one**,
Turned the Nile into blood.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **two**,
Jumping frogs all over you.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **three**,
Swarms of gnats from head to knee.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **four**,
Wild animals, need we say more?
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **five**,
All the livestock up and died.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **six**,

Boils and sores to make you sick.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **eight**,
Locust came and they sure ate.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
Plague number **nine**,
Total darkness all the time.
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
They told Pharaoh "Let them Go!"

Then God sent,
The last one,
Pharaoh was sad about his son,
All the people in Egypt were feeling pretty low,
Finally Pharaoh let them go.

Activity 1:

Split the children into groups and give each group a name of one of the plagues. The groups should spend a few minutes discussing how they are going to mime the plague and should then perform it to the other groups. The other groups should try to guess what the plague is.

(See above for the names of the plagues.)

Activity Two:

In order for some of the plagues to begin the Nile was struck. It was Aaron and not Moshe who did the striking. This was because Moshe felt a debt of gratitude to the river that had helped save

his life when he was a baby. Even though the river was an inanimate object and the story happened so many years ago, Moshe still remained grateful. We can learn from Moshe's actions to feel and show appreciation to those who help us in any way.

Sit the children in a circle and have a bag with the letters of the alphabet in it. Choose a child to pick a letter out the bag. The child whose name begins with that letter should begin. If there is more than one child with the same starting letter, call out another letter and see whose matches their surname. Ask the child to answer one of the questions below. (Choose one.) The child should answer it and then pick out another letter of the alphabet. The child whose name begins with this letter should answer the questions too. Play continues in this fashion until all children have had a turn.

- Describe something that you do often that makes you happy and why.
- Describe something that happened this past week that you are grateful for and why.
- Describe something you are particularly grateful for in your life and why.
- What do you appreciate the most about the person sitting next to you?
- Name someone you know who makes your life better and explain why.
- Describe a special gift or talent you have, how you use it, and why you are grateful for it.
- Think of something you used today that other people make take for granted.
- Describe a special favour you received, how it helped you, and how it touched you.

Activity 3:

You will need some red scarves/fabric or strips of paper and some ping pong balls or cotton wool balls.

Explain to the children that they are going to act out the miracles that God performed in order to show Pharaoh that He was in charge.

- The first miracle that God did was that he made Aaron's stick turn into a snake when it was thrown on the ground. All children should lie on the floor and wiggle like snakes.
- Next God brought the plague of blood. The children should wave the red fabric or paper around like the current of a river.
- After the blood God made frogs come out of the river and infest all of Egypt. The children should jump around the room like frogs.
- After the frogs came lice. Lice are very itchy. The children should pretend to scratch their body.
- Lice was followed by the plague of wild animals. The children should, on the count of three, make the noise of a wild animal, a roar or a hiss, shriek or yell...
- The next plague was an epidemic which made all the animals die. All the livestock of the Egyptians such as the horses, camel, donkeys and sheep, died. The children should walk around the room on all fours and on the count of three should drop down to the floor.
- As the next plague was boils the children should hop up and down, saying, "Ouch!" as if they have sores all over their bodies.
- The final plague in the parsha this week was hail. It was not ordinary hail that God sent the Egyptians but huge big blocks of hail that we are told had fire inside. The Torah says that there had never been hail like it before. Have the

children throw the cotton wool balls or ping pong balls up into the air on the count of three.

Children's Service: Year 3-6

Please see the activities above as some of them may be useful for your service too.

Drama ideas:

- Ask a child to be 'Mrs. Pharaoh' trying to convince her husband to let the Jews go. She can be talking after or during any of the first seven plagues in the parsha this week.
- One child should be an advisor to Pharaoh and the other child should be Pharaoh. They should act out the advisor speaking to Pharaoh. What will he say to him? Will he try to convince Pharaoh to let the Jewish people go or will he encourage him to keep them as slaves?
- Children should act out a weather report from Egypt during the time of the plagues.

Activity and discussion:

In order for some of the plagues to begin the Nile was struck. It was Aaron and not Moshe who did the striking. This is because Moshe felt a debt of gratitude to the river that had helped save his life when he was a baby. Even though the river was an inanimate object and the story happened so many years ago, Moshe still remained grateful. We can learn from Moshe's actions to feel and show appreciation to those who help us in any way.

Give each child a sweet or something really good to eat that will preferably last a few minutes as they suck on it. (Remember to

check your synagogue's/children's service allergy guidelines.) At the same time give each child a small pebble or marble and ask them to put it inside one or both of their shoes and put their shoes back on again. With the sweet in their mouths and the pebbles in their shoe take a short walk with them. If this is not possible, walk around the room several times.

After the walk ask each child to talk about his experience. What did he feel during the walk? What was he thinking about? In most cases the child will dwell on the discomfort that they felt when walking and won't mention the good taste of the sweet.

Ask the children how this can be compared to our experiences in life. Do we sometimes focus on the difficulties and problems that we have (the pebbles) and forget about all the good things around us and the people that have been kind to us (the sweets)? Moshe didn't forget that the River Nile had saved him when he was a baby and therefore it was Aaron who was designated to hit the river. If the Torah considers it wrong to show ingratitude to an inanimate river surely we must remember the good that has been done to us in our lives by humans.

Discuss

- How can we increase our ability to feel and show gratitude?

(We could try to think of the people in our lives and focus on the good that they have done for us. We could make a note of these acts and look out for ways to return the kindness.)

- Do you think that an important part of happiness is being able to show gratitude?

(If we feel grateful then we will be aware of all the good that happens to us. It allows us to focus on what we have rather than what we lack. This is a major key to living happily.)