

Parasha Thinking

- 1) Think about the four watchmen – paid, unpaid, renter, borrower – can you explain each of them in terms of walking someone's dog.
- 2) In your opinion, why did Aharon and Chur need to be in charge of the people whilst Moshe was gone? Why did they need leaders?
- 3) How does the word, different, link to the Parasha?

Key Parasha Information

Summary

In last week's Parasha, the Jewish people were told the Torah and given the 10 Commandments at Har (Mt.) Sinai. In this Parasha, Hashem (G-d) gave the Jewish people some laws about the way we need to treat other people. We're taught what happens if someone steals an item that doesn't belong to them – there are different rules for different circumstances so we can't write one definitive answer here.

There is also discussion as to what happens when someone damages another person's property or even if they cause harm to another person. There are four kinds of watchmen described in this Parasha; 1) paid (e.g. it's someone's job to guard a building), 2) unpaid (e.g. they are volunteering to guard someone and they do this in their own time), 3) borrower (e.g. they have asked for you to lend them an item and will look after it whilst they have it) and 4) a renter (e.g. they are paying you to use something of yours and it's their responsibility to stop it getting damaged). This Parasha also explains that we're not allowed to charge interest on a loan. We are taught that judges must be honest and not accept a bribe.

Hashem explained very clearly that we have to be kind to someone who has become Jewish. We are taught about some of the chaggim and the offerings that had to be brought to the Beit HaMikdash (Temple). Most famously, we're taught the mitzvah of not mixing milk and meat. We next learn the Mitzvah of Tefillah (prayer).

Hashem promised to bring the Jewish people to Israel (known then as Cena'an), and reminded them not to copy the people living there because they serve idols.

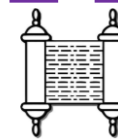
The Jewish people announced in unison, "We will do and we will hear everything that Hashem commands us." Moshe (Moses) went up Har Sinai for forty days and forty nights to receive the written and spoken Torah from Hashem. Aharon (Aaron) and Chur (Hur) were now in charge of the Jewish people, until Moshe's return.

Discovery

Did you know that the Hebrew word for interest (on a loan) is ribit?

Did you know that if a judge is offered a bribe, he must step down from the case, in case it makes him show more favour to either side.

Did you know that there are still some nations in the world today, that serve idols?





Games



1) On your chairs

If safe to do so, get all children to stand on their chairs and go round the circle asking them quiz questions based on the Parasha summary. If they do not get the parasha question right, they have to stand on the floor. If they get the next question right on the next round, they can stand up on their chair again but if not, they're out.

2) What's In Your Cup of Milk? What's in your burger?

Link: We may not mix meat and milk.

One person is chosen and asked "what's in your cup of milk?" The person answers with a noun of any kind, e.g. "elephants." Everybody must think of a question to ask the first person but their answer has to be the same (elephants) every time. If they giggle, they're out. Choose someone else and ask them 'what's in your burger?' They're in until they laugh. The secret is to keep the questions coming fast.

3) Who Stole the Keys?

Link: In real life, we are not allowed to steal.

One child sits blindfolded on a chair and a bunch of keys or a Shabbat belt is placed on the floor underneath their seat. The others sit on chairs surrounding the blindfolded child. The children's service leader points to one child who needs to creep behind the child in the middle, take the keys and tiptoe back to their chair, placing the keys behind them. They have 40 seconds to do this. The child in the center has to name one person who they think has the keys. If they get it right, that child goes in the middle. The person collecting the keys can, if they wish, throw them off scent by making sound effects or stamping etc.

Story (One of the children can read this out loud – encourage them to use expression.)

"Nope! Nope! Nope, with an extra serving of NOPE!"

"Oh, pleeeeeeeeeeeasssssssssssse!"

"I SAID, NO!"

"I'll make it worth your while!" Zeke told his older brother, George.

"Now I'm listening," replied George.

Zeke thought about what he could say to make George agree to lend him £10. He only needed it to buy Dad a birthday present. He was getting paid the very next day for his paper round so he would definitely be able to pay George back tomorrow. Zeke had an idea that he thought George would go for. "I'll add on interest of an extra 50p for each day until I pay you back. So tomorrow when I get my paper round money, I'll give you back £10.50. How does that sound?"

George thought about it. Wow, this is an easy way to get rich. "Let me get this straight," asked George, "Say Anita, your boss, doesn't pay you tomorrow for some reason, like, uhhh, I don't know, uhh, her car breaks down and she can't drop round your envelope, does that mean you'll owe me £11?" "I guess so," sighed Zeke. George continued "... and if she can't pay you the next day either because, uhhh, ummm, she's got chicken pox or something, you'll owe me £11.50?" "Yup," responded Zeke looking glum, starting to regret his offer. However, what could he do? He needed that money urgently.

George gave Zeke a crisp £10 note and tauntingly reminded him that he'd agreed to pay interest. Zeke went straight to the stationary shop and ordered Dad a personalised pen with his name on it, which would arrive on the day of his birthday. It cost him exactly £10.

The next day, the phone rang. It was Anita. She was full of apologies to Zeke. Her car had broken down on the motorway and there was no way she'd make it to their house, to give him his wages. Zeke started to panic but what could he do? He couldn't even get a lift to her house to collect his envelope because she wasn't home. George did a celebratory dance, imagining what he would do with all his extra money.

Mum looked up from her laptop and asked what was going on? George excitedly explained his moneymaking deal and mum put out her hand and said, "Let me stop you right there! You can't charge interest, George! You can't make him pay you back more than you've lent him! Yes it is a great idea in theory but you actually cannot do this – it says so in the Torah."

"I actually knew that!" admitted George, looking both embarrassed and relieved at the same time. "I just thought I could get away with it and no adults would even notice but do you know what? I've had an uneasy feeling about this the whole time! Zeke, I won't charge you any interest, in fact, I know that you were really relying on Anita brining you your salary tonight – do you need me to lend you any more cash for the next few days? – And of course, it'll be interest-free!"

1) What can we learn from this story and how does it connect to the Parasha?

2) Have you ever heard of someone being charged interest in the playground – maybe for money or for something else?

3) In your opinion, why did George look embarrassed and relieved at the same time when his mum spoke to him?