

Parasha Thinking

- 1) Why do you think the people started to believe the spies?
- 2) If the spies who Moshe chose were supposed to be righteous, why do you think ten of them didn't stay righteous?
- 3) How does the word, forty, link to the Parasha?

Key Parasha Information

Summary

The Jewish people were nearing the land of Israel, known at that time as Kena'an (Canaan), and the Erev Rav (group of Egyptians that became Jewish in order to escape the plagues and more suffering in Egypt) riled up the rest of the Jewish people. "How do we know that the land is actually a good place?" "We heard that there are giants there!" "How will we ever conquer the land against the strong mob that live there?" "We're doomed!" "WE WANT SPIES, WE WANT SPIES!"

Moshe (Moses) chose twelve men who he thought would each be a good spy and bring back a positive report about the land of Kena'an. He gave them instructions and made sure they understood that this is what would keep them safe. The twelve men spied out the land and returned to the rest of the Jewish people forty days later, carrying a massive fig, a bunch of grapes and a pomegranate. They began to describe a rich and plentiful land but then ten of the spies turn this information around, saying that the land is full of giants and soldiers who are more powerful than the Jewish nation – just look at the size of the food these giants eat. Two of the spies; Calev (Caleb) and Yehoshua (Joshua) are adamant that the Jewish people can conquer the land as they have Hashem's (G-d's) help.

The people didn't listen to the good spies and only took in what the bad spies were reporting. They started to cry and they wished that they could return to mitzrayim (Egypt). Hashem was not pleased with the people and decreed that they would now wait forty additional years, before they go into Kena'an. During those years, the generation who believed the spies, would die in the desert. There was a team of Jewish people who truly regretted what they had done and they climbed the mountain on the border of Israel in order to enter early but unfortunately, two nations ganged up against them – the Amalekites and the Canaanites.

Grain, wine and oil offerings were explained to the Jewish people and the Mitzvah of Challah was taught, too, where a small portion of dough is removed from the main batch of dough, as this is holy for Hashem.

A man from the Jewish camp publically broke Shabbat (the Sabbath) by gathering sticks, and was punished.

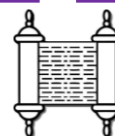
Finally, Hashem told the Jewish people that they had to put tzitzit (specially knotted strings) on the four corners of their clothing, to remember the 613 mitzvot (biblical commandments).

Discovery

Did you know that when the Erev Rav requested to join the Jewish nation, Hashem told Moshe they could but that they'd cause trouble in the future.

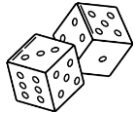
Did you know that Moshe told the spies to only travel by day, so it won't look odd, when they move about. He also said start from the South and go Northwards and the land starts off great and gets better and better as you go North.

Did you know that we still remove a portion of dough from the batch in this day and age, even though we don't have a Temple?



Games

1) Sit Downwwwwwn



Link: The spies had to find out about the land and the participants are finding out about each other.

Children stand in a circle. The first player will announce something about themselves. E.g. I am in Year 5. Any other child who is in Year 5 must sit down. The next player who is still standing can choose something else about themselves e.g. I grew up in London. Etc. If no child sits down, then the speaker is out of the game and must sit down. The game continues until there is one person remaining in the circle.

2) Stop Walk Race

Link: The spies were told to walk around the land of Cena'an at day and stop at night.

Use the Shul's hall for this game, if permitted, or a long corridor. If this is not possible, clear as much space in the children's service room as possible. Players will stand at one end of the hall. Children's service leader will call out, "WALK!" and racers must walk toward the finish line as fast as possible. Leader will shout "STOP!" randomly, and all the participants freeze until they hear the word walk again. The game continues in this manner until the first player reaches the finish line.

3) Guess the Hummer's Tune

Link: Listen carefully and hear what is RIGHT

The first player hums a well-known tune e.g. Adon Olam. Other teammates must guess the tune. Whoever guesses the song, gets to hum the next one. Keep a score of the points – the person with the most points wins.

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



"Let's hide behind this wall and listen to what people talk about when they think no one's listening!" Giggled Talya, as she grabbed her friends arms and ran with them and crouched behind the wall in their playground.

First to pass, were the boys from their class. The three friends had to cover their mouths to stop the laughter coming out. Elai was telling a joke about a gorilla and doing the most hilarious impressions. He was normally quite shy in class but now they saw him oozing confidence.

Next was a group of Year Sixes. "Ooh, I see Year 6 coming!" whispered Annie, excitedly. "But they can't see us. I wonder what they will be talking about!" "Shhhhh!!" warned Talya, "you don't want them to hear us!" but as the year sixes approached, they heard sobs. "I just don't know what to do," cried Daisy, "I've tried everything and it just doesn't work - it's no use, I feel so daft." Her friends who were walking with her tried to comfort her but it was no use, she was so upset, she just couldn't stop crying. Once they passed, Talya looked at her friends and said, "Guys, I don't think we should be doing this! We're kind of encroaching on people's right to privacy. They don't know we're here and we're listening to things that we really shouldn't be hearing." Her friends nodded and were about to stand up and head back to where they normally ate lunch, when they spotted two teachers walking by; Mr Cohen and Mr Levy.

"Have you been told which year group you'll be teaching in September yet? Are you staying in Year 4 or are you moving years?" Mr Cohen asked. "Actually," Mr Levy turned to him, "I haven't really told anyone this apart from the Head Teacher but I'm leaving the school - I'm moving to Australia in August. I've got a new teaching job lined up there and a place to live. I'm all set. We're announcing it to staff on Thursday and telling the kids on Friday." The three friends eyes widened and they all felt really sad about what they'd heard. Of course they knew that Mr Levy would be happy in Australia but they loved his lessons and they couldn't imagine the school without him. Sally, the third friend, whispered, "Part of me wants to tell absolutely everyone right now but I KNOW that's wrong! Guys, when they announce it on Friday, we will have to look just ask shocked as everyone else. If we need to talk to anyone, we talk to each other or we talk to our parents but this is not our news to share, agreed?!" "AGREED!" said Talya and Annie. Sally continued "We must stop spying on people now – let's go back to our normal bench and just do normal games, like we normally do – ok everyone?" "OK!" said Talya! "Normal it is!" said Annie.

When they returned to their normal bench, to do normal things, Talya apologised to the group, for getting them interested in the spying. They had truly learnt their lesson.

- 1) What can we learn from this story and how does it connect to the Parasha?
- 2) Have you ever overheard something you shouldn't have (please do NOT share what it was) – how did it make you feel? If something is bothering you, who can you talk to about it?
- 3) Do you think it was wrong to listen to Elai doing the gorilla impressions when he didn't know they were there?