



Dear Youth Directors, Youth chairs, and Youth Leaders,

NCYI is excited to continue our very successful Parsha Nation Guides. I hope you're enjoying and learning from Parsha Nation as much as we are. Putting together Parsha Nation every week is indeed no easy task. It takes a lot of time and effort to ensure that each section, as well as each age group, receives the attention and dedication it deserves.

We inspire and mold future leaders. The youth leaders of Young Israel have the distinct honor and privilege to teach and develop the youth of Young Israel. Children today are constantly looking for role models and inspirations to latch on to and learn from. Whether it is actual sit down learning sessions, exciting Parsha trivia games, or even just walking down the hall to the Kiddush room, our youth look to us and watch our every move.

It's not always about the things we say, it's about the things we do. Our children hear and see everything we do whether we realize it or not. This year we are taking our Youth Services to new heights as we introduce our Leadership Training Shabbaton. This engaging, interactive shabbaton will give youth leaders hands on experience and practical solutions to effectively guide your youth department.

Informal education is key. What the summer shows us as educators is that informal education can deliver better results and help increase our youth's connection to Hashem. More and more shuls are revamping their youth program to give their children a better connection to shul and to Hashem. The NCYI is here to help you reconnect with your youth departments and bring more participation.

Thank you for being a light to future generations. You are doing incredible work that should not be taken lightly. You should be proud to call yourself a Young Israel Youth Leader as you have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in so many young people's lives. Keep up the amazing work.

We are looking forward to hearing great things from everyone.

Our doors are always open.

NCYI Department of Synagogue Services

Youth@YoungIsrael.org



Published by the National Council of Young Israel

Program Guide Breakdown

Theme- Each year our curriculum will focus on a theme. By centering the entire year around one overarching theme, our youth group participants will understand different characteristics and concepts that will help them achieve this lofty goal. This year's theme is Manhigut (leadership). Our goal is for our children to view themselves as leaders and to inspire them to play a leadership role every day.

Parsha Review- Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

Parsha Questions- No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

Tefillah Treasure- Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

Group Activity- Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

Discussion Portion- After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

Story- Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week's parsha.

Jewish Leader of the Week- In keeping with our theme of Manhigut, every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today's society.

Teen Minyan Packet- This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

Leader Tip- Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.



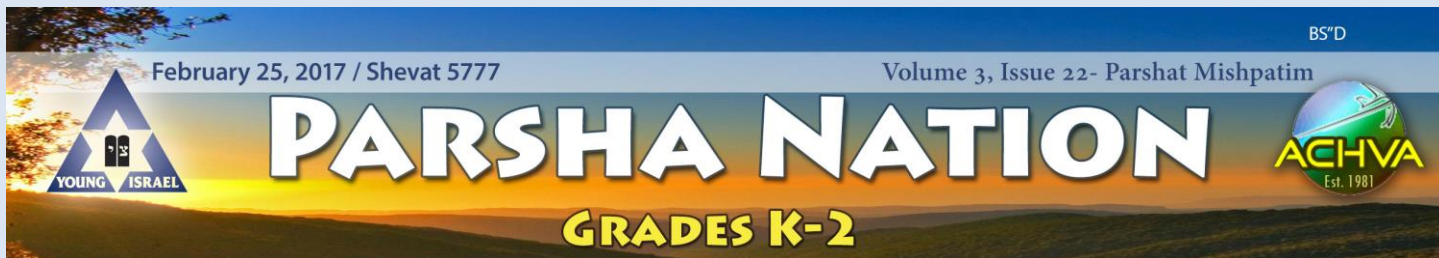
PARSHA NATION



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Shabbat Morning Groups Lesson Plan

Time Duration	Activity	Notes
5 min	Registration	Welcome parents and children in to the group room.
10-35 min	Davening	Depending on your group size and level.
5 min	Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parsha Review	Prep participants for parsha questions.
10 min	Parsha Questions	Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly
2 min	Understanding the Goal	Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity
30 min	Activities	Your choice of two games to play
10 min	Follow Up Discussion	Refer to materials
10 min	Parsha Song	This is for younger groups only.
20 min	Free Game Play	Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.
5 min	Story	Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.
5-10 min	Discussion	Refer to handout
4 min	Jewish Leader of the Week	Refer to handout
4 min	Tefillah Treasures	Refer to Handout
5 min	Parent Pick up/Dismissal	Parents pick up their children.
Total Time:	2 hours & 40 min of programing!	



MISHPATIM REVIEW

In this Parsha, we learn about the laws about a Jew who becomes a slave. He is set free after six years of serving his master. If he would like to stay longer because he likes his master, his master pierces the slave's ear by the doorpost of his house and he may stay. The Torah then talks about the laws of a Jewish maidservant, a husband's obligations towards his wife, punishments for murder, kidnapping, and the penalties for someone who injures another. There are four different types of death penalties: stoning, burning, decapitation, and strangulation. The Torah then shifts its focus to a person's charges for damages caused by his possessions, such as an ox that gores; or his actions, such as leaving an open pit uncovered or lighting a fire. A person who steals is obligated to pay the capital plus corrective damages. The section ends with a person's right to self-defense when facing a thief. The Torah then talks about the potential liabilities of a person who becomes a guardian of someone else's possessions, a borrower, and a renter. The Parsha also introduces us to many new mitzvot: the prohibitions against cursing a judge or leader, eating meat that was not *shechted* properly, offering a korban before the animal is eight days old, returning a lost animal to its owner, and helping to unload an overworked animal. We are commanded not to lie or take a bribe. The mitzvah of Shemita is introduced: six years we work and harvest the land, and on the seventh year we let the land rest. Similarly, on a weekly basis, six days we work and on the seventh day we – and our cattle and servants – must rest. We are not allowed to mention the name of other “gods”. We are commanded to celebrate the three holidays – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot – and to make our way to the Beit HaMikdash on these occasions. Finally, we are told not to cook meat in (its mother's) milk. The Parsha continues by talking about all the blessings Bnei Yisrael will get if they follow the ways of the Torah and serve Hashem. Hashem wants us to be especially nice to three groups of people: a convert, an orphan, and a widow. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. In last week's Parsha, after we received the Aseret HaDibrot, Moshe went up to the top of Har Sinai to get the actual *luchot* where the Aseret HaDibrot were written. Moshe told Bnei Yisrael that he'd be back in forty days. Bnei Yisrael miscalculated when that forty day period was up and it was all downhill from there.

LEADER TIP: We're basically done with the major stories in the Torah. Try to sum up and go over the journey Bnei Yisrael has taken to get to this point the week after receiving the Torah.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What is an Eved Ivri and how does one become an Eved Ivri?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
4. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
5. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
6. Which verse teaches this law?
7. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
8. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
9. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
10. Which three holidays are also known as Shalosh Regalim?

Answers

1. He is a Jewish slave and he became one because he stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. No!
4. Shemitah.
5. Dairy.
6. Lo sevashel gedi bechalev immo.
7. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
8. Hashavat Aveidah.
9. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
10. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.

LEADER TIP: With a lot of damages and punishments in this week's Parsha, try to give more attention to the positive aspects as well.

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids about our journey to Israel preparing ourselves and keeping the mitzvot.

ACTIVITY: Pepsi Cola

- a. Make a boundary line across the room (you can have each kid take off a shoe and make the lines with shoes).
- b. Start by designating one side of the line as "Pepsi" and one as "Coke." Whenever you (or whoever is designated as the leader) calls out "Pepsi" everyone must jump to that side.
- c. Continuously add new ones for example: "Sprite" do a jumping jack, "Fanta" have one leg on each side and get do a funny dance with it, "Root Beer" freeze, "Dr. Pepper" they have to meet in the middle and high five, "Sierra Mist" everyone must raise their hands up in the air. You can come up with tons of different ideas. Have fun with it!

Duck Duck Goose

Have the kids all sit in one big circle on the floor. Pick one person (Person A) to walk around the circle lightly touching each person on the head saying the word "Sin". When they decide who they want to pick, instead of saying the word "Sin", they say the word "Teshuvah". The person they choose (Person B) must get up and chase Person A around the circle. If Person A makes it back into Person B's spot, they win and Person B then becomes the picker. If Person B tags Person A before they get to their spot, then Person A sits in the middle of the circle.

DISCUSSION: Bnei Yisrael suffered in Mitzrayim for hundreds of years, when Hashem brought them out they were promised to enter into Eretz Yisrael. But now we find Bnei Yisrael wandering in the desert, and instead of going straight into Eretz Yisrael they receive countless laws and commandments. What is going on? Pepsi Cola is supposed to represent the growing list of rules, and Duck Duck represents our desire to snatch all the rewards that Hashem- the ducker- is offering us. The question is how do we accomplish this? Following the Mitzvot! So all these Mishpatim are a precondition to entering Eretz Yisrael. Not until we accept all of these commandments (Na'aseh V'Nishmah) do we begin our journey towards Eretz Yisrael, and not until we prove that we will keep them are we permitted to actually enter. So everyone get going with those Mitzvot so we can have Geulah Bimherah B'Yameinu!

LEADER TIP: Together as a group, take on one mitzvah that everyone can do together and accomplish every day/week.

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: We all wish that the world was a more peaceful place and that people would get along better with each other. Is there anything we can do to make it happen? One thing we can do is to set an example of showing real concern for others. This week's Parsha is full of ideas and practical guidelines of how to live more peacefully with the people around us. We can go out of our way to return things we find to the people who lost them. If we happen upon something that someone has lost, or misplaced, while it's good if we don't pocket it for ourselves, it isn't enough. The Torah asks us to make a real effort to identify the owner and return it to him. He will be grateful and realize that people really do care about him. The next time, he may do the same for someone else. By following these guidelines, we turn our personal environment, and the world, little by little, into a saner and more compassionate place.

"BREAKING THE ICE"

The recent snowfall made Sam Firestone and his brother Dave feel a little bit like Arctic explorers as they trudged their way down the path in the woods behind their home. The boys were on their way back from ice-skating on frozen Albert's Pond and looked forward to reaching their warm, cozy home.

The snow had transformed the trail into a magical world of white, with the crunch of the boys' boots the only thing breaking the pristine silence. Suddenly Dave noticed a strange looking orange bump sticking out of one of the snow banks.

"Hey, what's that?" he asked his brother, pointing.

They ran over to check it out, and discovered a brand new looking basketball. "Wow, what a find!" chirped Sam, excitedly.

But Dave was skeptical. "What's a basketball doing in the middle of the woods?" he asked. "Maybe it belongs to somebody."

Sure enough, upon closer investigation the boys noticed the initials W.K. printed neatly in marker. Dave looked up from the trail and put two and two together. "W.K., hmm... Wally Kreiger!" he exclaimed. "That's Wally's house right there above the trail. He must have lost this ball over the fence and it blended into the woods. The white snow made it stick out, and easy to find."

Sam grinned. Wally Kreiger was a nasty kid in the neighborhood who had more than once made trouble for the Firestone brothers. "Well, that's his tough luck, huh? Finder's keepers, losers weepers!"

But his older brother shook his head. "We can't keep this. That would be no better than stealing."

Sam, who knew better than to try to argue with his brother on matters of principle, shrugged his shoulders and said, "I guess you're right. Forget about the stupid ball, that's nasty Wally's problem. Let's get home already, I'm freezing."

He threw down the ball and started marching down the trail, but turned back when his brother didn't follow. Dave frowned. "Nope, we've gotta give the kid back his ball. Since we found it, its only right of us to return it."

The boys cut up a path from the trail that led to the Kreiger's yard. They rang the front doorbell. After a minute Wally opened up. "Whadya guys want?" he asked suspiciously.

Dave swallowed and held out the basketball. "We found this on the trail behind the house. Perhaps it belongs to you?"

The hard expression on Wally's face began to melt into an embarrassed smile. "Wow, thanks a lot!" he said. "It is mine. I lost it the day after I got it, right over the fence, and I never found it."

The brothers turned around and started home, but Wally called them back. "Er... you guys look cold. How about coming in for a few minutes to warm up? My mom just put up some nice, hot cocoa." The boys took Wally up on his offer and ended up staying the whole afternoon. The three of them had a great time together. Sam and Dave were glad that they had returned the ball, and realized that they had found much more than a basketball. They had found a new friend

Discussion Questions:

Q. How did Sam react when they first found the ball?

A. He wanted to keep it, or at least not bother returning it.

Q. How did the boys feel after they had returned the basketball?

A. They knew they had done the right thing, and they saw how this act of kindness had helped to turn an enemy into a friend.

LEADER TIP: How are YOU going to think of others today? This week? This year? Take a step back and instead of thinking different than you is weird, think of it as cool and unique.

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

Yachad/National Council for Disabilities

(Founded in 1983)



Yachad/National Jewish Council for Disabilities is an organization dedicated to the inclusion of all Jews with disabilities in every aspect of Jewish life. North American Inclusion Month (NAIM) was created by the Yachad/National Jewish Council for Disabilities now five years ago as a way of recognizing the need for more opportunities for people with disabilities in everyday life, including in both employment and education. February 2nd, 2010 saw a U.S. House of Representatives resolution, which acknowledged the goals of NAIM.

NAIM is an opportunity for the Jewish world to be more inclusive regarding people with disabilities. Regardless of an individual's disabilities the North American Inclusion Month aims to make them feel every bit a part of society as an able-bodied person. The month is not in place to create a better understanding of a disabled person's needs and aspirations for just four weeks. The North American Inclusion Month is used as a way of introducing a more positive approach, concerning people with disabilities, for the whole year.

Making the world more inclusive for people with disabilities can begin with simple individual actions during NAIM. Going out of your way to interact more with people with disabilities is one example. Often people will not interact with people with disabilities because they are nervous about saying or doing the right thing. However, not feeling part of society is what will often hurt a disabled person most of all.

From children to adults, people with disabilities can feel part of things throughout North American Inclusion Month. Sports should also be inclusive, and this can be achieved by adapting aspects of that sport where necessary. Children at school, who are affected by hearing or sight problems, can be helped by aids, which will make them able to enjoy a lesson just as much as their classmates. For elderly people with disabilities a nostalgia night, which includes a sing-along, can help bring back happy memories. Whatever it is you do, it's important that you do *something*. Every person can make a difference in the world and every person deserves to feel a part of that special world we're creating.

LEADER TIP: February is National American Inclusion Month. Go out of your way to make sure everyone is included. Save a seat open, invite someone to play a game, invite someone for lunch who you may not be so close with.

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Shemoneh Esrei: Hashiva Shofteinu

After asking Hashem to bring back our great judges and advisors from the olden times, we ask that He take away our grief and our sorrow. We ask that Hashem rule over us in His kindness and mercy, treating us generously in judgment. The word “tzedek” actually refers to both justice and to kindness. The concepts of justice and kindness are not only not mismatched, they are actually inseparably entangled. The Torah tells us to judge one another favorably. This is the basis of being *dan l’kaf z’chut* – giving one another benefit of the doubt. We end the bracha that Hashem is the King Who loves both *tzedaka* and *mishpat*. *Tzedaka* refers to justice strengthened with mercy, while *mishpat* means a strict judgment. There are times when each of these is called for and Hashem loves each at the appropriate time. During the *Aseret Yamei Teshuvah*, this bracha ends, “*HaMelech HaMishpat*,” that Hashem is the King of strict judgment. Of course He still judges us with mercy, but we focus on the aspect of *mishpat* as part of our efforts to improve ourselves and become better people.

LEADER TIP: Don't be so quick to judge people. Take a second to recognize that you don't know the whole story of other people's lives.



MISHPATIM REVIEW

In this Parsha, we learn about the laws about a Jew who becomes a slave. He is set free after six years of serving his master. If he would like to stay longer because he likes his master, his master pierces the slave's ear by the doorpost of his house and he may stay. The Torah then talks about the laws of a Jewish maidservant, a husband's obligations towards his wife, punishments for murder, kidnapping, and the penalties for someone who injures another. There are four different types of death penalties: stoning, burning, decapitation, and strangulation. The Torah then shifts its focus to a person's charges for damages caused by his possessions, such as an ox that gores; or his actions, such as leaving an open pit uncovered or lighting a fire. A person who steals is obligated to pay the capital plus corrective damages. The section ends with a person's right to self-defense when facing a thief. The Torah then talks about the potential liabilities of a person who becomes a guardian of someone else's possessions, a borrower, and a renter. The Parsha also introduces us to many new mitzvot: the prohibitions against cursing a judge or leader, eating meat that was not *shechted* properly, offering a korban before the animal is eight days old, returning a lost animal to its owner, and helping to unload an overworked animal. We are commanded not to lie or take a bribe. The mitzvah of Shemita is introduced: six years we work and harvest the land, and on the seventh year we let the land rest. Similarly, on a weekly basis, six days we work and on the seventh day we – and our cattle and servants – must rest. We are not allowed to mention the name of other “gods”. We are commanded to celebrate the three holidays – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot – and to make our way to the Beit HaMikdash on these occasions. Finally, we are told not to cook meat in (its mother's) milk. The Parsha continues by talking about all the blessings Bnei Yisrael will get if they follow the ways of the Torah and serve Hashem. Hashem wants us to be especially nice to three groups of people: a convert, an orphan, and a widow. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. In last week's Parsha, after we received the Aseret HaDibrot, Moshe went up to the top of Har Sinai to get the actual *luchot* where the Aseret HaDibrot were written. Moshe told Bnei Yisrael that he'd be back in forty days. Bnei Yisrael miscalculated when that forty day period was up and it was all downhill from there.

LEADER TIP: We're basically done with the major stories in the Torah. Try to sum up and go over the journey Bnei Yisrael has taken to get to this point the week after receiving the Torah.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What is an Eved Ivri and how does one become an Eved Ivri?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. For how long is a person an eved (slave).
4. How could an eved (slave) stay longer if he wanted to?
5. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
6. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
7. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
8. Which verse teaches this law?
9. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
10. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
11. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
12. How many days was Moshe in shamayim (heaven)?
13. What is the general term that refers to all three Chagim?
14. What are these three holidays?
15. Why are these three holidays referred to as Shalosh Regalim?

Answers

1. He is a Jewish slave and he became one because he stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. Six years.
4. His ear is pierced and he works as a slave until the next Yovel (Jubilee Year).
5. No!
6. Shemitah.
7. Dairy.
8. Lo sevashel gedi bechalev immo.
9. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
10. Hashavat Aveidah.
11. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
12. Fourty days and fourty nights.
13. Shalosh Regalim.
14. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.
15. The Bnei Yisrael go up to Yerushalayim during these three times of the year.

LEADER TIP: With a lot of damages and punishments in this week's Parsha, try to give more attention to the positive aspects as well.

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids about our journey to Israel preparing ourselves and keeping the mitzvot.

ACTIVITY: Pepsi Cola

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On a Mission

Tell the kids you are giving them 5 tasks and if they complete them all they will receive some sort of prize (be it candy, a high five, group leader for a Shabbat, etc)

• Tasks:

1. Sing Kol Haolam Kulo" with hand motions.
2. Hop to one side of room, skip back.
3. Stand in line in order of birthdays; then by height.
4. Take off shoes mix them up in a pile, everyone has to find their own shoes.
5. Play "Tangle me"- everyone stands in a circle, reaches in and grabs random hands so that everyone is tangled. Without letting go the group must untangle themselves until the group is in a circle again. (If need be for Shomer Negiah reasons, make 2 circles OR make them do 20 push-ups instead!) You can come up with tons of different ideas for this too!

DISCUSSION: Bnei Yisrael suffered in Mitzrayim for hundreds of years, when Hashem brought them out they were promised to enter into Eretz Yisrael. But now we find Bnei Yisrael wandering in the desert, and instead of going straight into Eretz Yisrael they receive countless laws and commandments. What is going on? Pepsi Cola is supposed to represent the growing list of rules, and On a Mission represents our desire to snatch all the rewards that Hashem- the ducker- is offering us. The question is how do we accomplish this? Following the Mitzvot! So all these Mishpatim are a precondition to entering Eretz Yisrael. Not until we accept all of these commandments (Na'aseh V'Nishmah) do we begin our journey towards Eretz Yisrael, and not until we prove that we will keep them are we permitted to actually enter. So everyone get going with those Mitzvot so we can have Geulah Bimherah B'Yameinu!

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Discussion Questions:

Q. Why do you think it is so important to be concerned with other people's things?

A. Showing concern about other people's property is an important way of showing concern for them. It is a tangible act of kindness that helps to build up peaceful relationships between people and can really improve our society.

Q. If somebody finds something and he's not sure to whom it belongs, what action can he take to get it back to the owner?

A. He can put up notes in the vicinity of where he found it announcing his find. He can report it to the police. He can ask around amongst the people he knows. He should try to notice any identifying marks on the item, so that if someone comes to claim it, he can ask him first to describe the item, to make sure the person is the one who really lost it.

LEADER TIP: How are YOU going to think of others today? This week? This year? Take a step back and instead of thinking different than you is weird, think of it as cool and unique.

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

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(Founded in 1983)



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NAIM is an opportunity for the Jewish world to be more inclusive regarding people with disabilities. Regardless of an individual's disabilities the North American Inclusion Month aims to make them feel every bit a part of society as an able-bodied person. The month is not in place to create a better understanding of a disabled person's needs and aspirations for just four weeks. The North American Inclusion Month is used as a way of introducing a more positive approach, concerning people with disabilities, for the whole year.

Making the world more inclusive for people with disabilities can begin with simple individual actions during NAIM. Going out of your way to interact more with people with disabilities is one example. Often people will not interact with people with disabilities because they are nervous about saying or doing the right thing. However, not feeling part of society is what will often hurt a disabled person most of all.

From children to adults, people with disabilities can feel part of things throughout North American Inclusion Month. Sports should also be inclusive, and this can be achieved by adapting aspects of that sport where necessary. Children at school, who are affected by hearing or sight problems, can be helped by aids, which will make them able to enjoy a lesson just as much as their classmates. For elderly people with disabilities a nostalgia night, which includes a sing-along, can help bring back happy memories. Whatever it is you do, it's important that you do *something*. Every person can make a difference in the world and every person deserves to feel a part of that special world we're creating.

LEADER TIP: February is National American Inclusion Month. Go out of your way to make sure everyone is included. Save a seat open, invite someone to play a game, invite someone for lunch who you may not be so close with.

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TEFILLAH TREASURES

Shemoneh Esrei: Hashiva Shofteinu

After asking Hashem to bring back our great judges and advisors from the olden times, we ask that He take away our grief and our sorrow. Really, the removal of grief and sorrow is a natural consequence of restoring our Torah leadership. How many of our problems are caused by groups among our people? If we solve our leadership problem by bring back universally-recognized authorities, the cause for many of our sorrows will automatically disappear. (Again, this is based on Tanach. Yishayahu 35:10 promises us that “simchat olam” – everlasting joy – will chase away “yagon va’anacha” – grief and sorrow.)

Finally, we ask that Hashem rule over us in His kindness and mercy, treating us generously in judgment. The word “tzedek” actually refers to both justice and to kindness. The concepts of justice and kindness are not only not mismatched, they are actually inseparably entangled. The Torah tells us to judge one another favorably. This is the basis of being *dan l’kaf z’chut* – giving one another benefit of the doubt.

We end the bracha that Hashem is the King Who loves both *tzedaka* and *mishpat*. *Tzedaka* refers to justice strengthened with mercy, while *mishpat* means a strict judgment. There are times when each of these is called for and Hashem loves each at the appropriate time. During the *Aseret Yamei Teshuvah*, this bracha ends, “*HaMelech HaMishpat*,” that Hashem is the King of strict judgment. Of course He still judges us with mercy, but we focus on the aspect of *mishpat* as part of our efforts to improve ourselves and become better people.

LEADER TIP: Don't be so quick to judge people. Take a second to recognize that you don't know the whole story of other people's lives.



MISHPATIM REVIEW

In this Parsha, we learn about the laws about a Jew who becomes a slave. He is set free after six years of serving his master. If he would like to stay longer because he likes his master, his master pierces the slave's ear by the doorpost of his house and he may stay. The Torah then talks about the laws of a Jewish maidservant, a husband's obligations towards his wife, punishments for murder, kidnapping, and the penalties for someone who injures another. There are four different types of death penalties: stoning, burning, decapitation, and strangulation. The Torah then shifts its focus to a person's charges for damages caused by his possessions, such as an ox that gores; or his actions, such as leaving an open pit uncovered or lighting a fire. A person who steals is obligated to pay the capital plus corrective damages. The section ends with a person's right to self-defense when facing a thief. The Torah then talks about the potential liabilities of a person who becomes a guardian of someone else's possessions, a borrower, and a renter. The Parsha also introduces us to many new mitzvot: the prohibitions against cursing a judge or leader, eating meat that was not *shechted* properly, offering a korban before the animal is eight days old, returning a lost animal to its owner, and helping to unload an overworked animal. We are commanded not to lie or take a bribe. The mitzvah of Shemita is introduced: six years we work and harvest the land, and on the seventh year we let the land rest. Similarly, on a weekly basis, six days we work and on the seventh day we – and our cattle and servants – must rest. We are not allowed to mention the name of other “gods”. We are commanded to celebrate the three holidays – Pesach, Shavuot and Sukkot – and to make our way to the Beit HaMikdash on these occasions. Finally, we are told not to cook meat in (its mother's) milk. The Parsha continues by talking about all the blessings Bnei Yisrael will get if they follow the ways of the Torah and serve Hashem. Hashem wants us to be especially nice to three groups of people: a convert, an orphan, and a widow. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. This *Parsha* is chock full of laws for judges. A *Bait Din* must always have at least three judges. The number of judges always has to be an odd one. Majority rules. In the case of a trial that might warrant the death penalty, you need 23 judges. You need thirteen out of 23 to impose a death sentence. In last week's Parsha, after we received the Aseret HaDibrot, Moshe went up to the top of Har Sinai to get the actual *luchot* where the Aseret HaDibrot were written. Moshe told Bnei Yisrael that he'd be back in forty days. Bnei Yisrael miscalculated when that forty day period was up and it was all downhill from there.

LEADER TIP: We're basically done with the major stories in the Torah. Try to sum up and go over the journey Bnei Yisrael has taken to get to this point the week after receiving the Torah.

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions

1. What reason is there for a Jew to become an Eved Ivri (Jewish slave)?
2. How does a master have to treat an Eved Ivri?
3. For how long is a person an eved (slave).
4. How could an eved (slave) stay longer if he wanted to?
5. What happens if a person kills Beshogeg (by mistake)?
6. Which people have to be treated with special consideration?
7. Are you allowed to charge interest to a Jew when you lent him money?
8. What is the Hebrew term for interest?
9. What is the law of letting the fields in Eretz Yisrael rest during the seventh year called?
10. What are we not allowed to eat together with meat?
11. Which verse teaches this rule?
12. How many times in the Torah is this verse written?
13. What do we learn from the repetition?
14. What is the Mitzvah of staying away from untrue statements called?
15. What is the Mitzvah of returning a lost item to its owner called?
16. If you see a person who has an animal with a heavy load, what should you do?
17. How many days was Moshe in shamayim (heaven)?
18. What is the general term that refers to all three Chagim?
19. What are these three holidays?
20. Why are these three holidays referred to as Shalosh Regalim?

Answers

1. The Jew stole and he could not pay back what he stole.
2. He has to treat him nicely.
3. Six years.
4. His ear is pierced and he works as a slave until the next Yovel (Jubilee Year).
5. He runs to one of the Arei Miklat (Cities of Refuge) and he stays there until the Kohen Gadol (High Priest) dies.

6. The Ger (Jewish convert), Yatom (orphan), and Elmanah (widow).
7. No!
8. Ribit.
9. Shemitah.
10. Dairy.
11. Lo sevashel gedi bechalev immo.
12. Three.
13. Three things are forbidden.
 - a. Eating meat and dairy together.
 - b. Cooking meat and dairy together.
 - c. Getting pleasure from meat and milk together.
14. Midvar Sheker Tirchak.
15. Hashavat Aveidah.
16. Help him unload the weight from the animal.
17. Forty days and forty nights.
18. Shalosh Regalim.
19. Pesach, Shavuot, and Succot.
20. The Bnei Yisrael go up to Yerushalayim during these three times of the year.

LEADER TIP: With a lot of damages and punishments in this week's Parsha, try to give more attention to the positive aspects as well.

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: To teach the kids to fight for what they believe in

ACTIVITY: Split up the kids into a few different groups. Each group will get a bunch of cut up pictures of random objects, things, and places (ex: pool, basketball hoop, truck, BBQ grill, hammock, etc.) The task is as follows. There is a billionaire on his death bed who is looking to pass on his fortune to a worthy Jewish cause. Each group must come up with and present their idea to everyone else through song, skit, or any other creative way they can. They must come up with their ideal Jewish community center/organization/camp to prove to the billionaire that they are the group that deserves all the money. Things to include are facilities, programming, staff, and anything else they can come up with to make their program stick out. They'll work on it for a certain amount of time and then each group will present their "potential establishment" describing what sets them apart and why they deserve the grant. You can set up a committee of group leaders to be the judges on who deserves the grant. You can also even have one of the group leaders come in as a lawyer representing the billionaire. Good luck to everyone! Let's make a difference!

DISCUSSION: At the end of Parshat Mishpatim we read that Hashem tells Moshe to "ascend to me to the mountain and remain there". Although Moshe did not need this lesson there is a very important message here that we can learn. Many people strive hard to reach spiritual heights and when they succeed they relax and fall back to their old practices. This is what Hashem implied to Moshe. Come up to the mountain and reach the great heights of spiritual attainment. Hashem adds, however, that Moshe should remain there, that he should retain that height at all times. Moshe, indeed, did not need that warning. It was given to him so that we should take notice and we should remember to retain the levels that we reach from time to time. We often strive to reach certain worthy goals and when we succeed we relax and fall back a few steps. We stop striving and we regress. We must always remember that if something is worth fighting for it is also worth holding on to. Don't lose what you already gained. Each group had a certain goal in mind and they were willing to do anything for it. But the question is, once you receive your grant, do you stop working as hard or do you now work even harder to use what you've gained and take it to an even higher level?

LEADER TIP: After everyone presents, have a discussion on what everyone came up with. Talk about what kinds of things went into deciding what deserved the money and what the groups thought about as they came up with their ideas.

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: We all wish that the world was a more peaceful place and that people would get along better with each other. Is there anything we can do to make it happen? One thing we can do is to set an example of showing real concern for others. This week's Parsha is full of ideas and practical guidelines of how to live more peacefully with the people around us. We can go out of our way to return things we find to the people who lost them. If we happen upon something that someone has lost, or misplaced, while it's good if we don't pocket it for ourselves, it isn't enough. The Torah asks us to make a real effort to identify the owner and return it to him. He will be grateful and realize that people really do care about him. The next time, he may do the same for someone else. By following these guidelines, we turn our personal environment, and the world, little by little, into a saner and more compassionate place.

"BREAKING THE ICE"

The recent snowfall made Sam Firestone and his brother Dave feel a little bit like Arctic explorers as they trudged their way down the path in the woods behind their home. The boys were on their way back from ice-skating on frozen Albert's Pond and looked forward to reaching their warm, cozy home.

The snow had transformed the trail into a magical world of white, with the crunch of the boys' boots the only thing breaking the pristine silence. Suddenly Dave noticed a strange looking orange bump sticking out of one of the snow banks.

"Hey, what's that?" he asked his brother, pointing.

They ran over to check it out, and discovered a brand new looking basketball. "Wow, what a find!" chirped Sam, excitedly.

But Dave was skeptical. "What's a basketball doing in the middle of the woods?" he asked. "Maybe it belongs to somebody."

Sure enough, upon closer investigation the boys noticed the initials W.K. printed neatly in marker. Dave looked up from the trail and put two and two together. "W.K., hmm... Wally Kreiger!" he exclaimed. "That's Wally's house right there above the trail. He must have lost this ball over the fence and it blended into the woods. The white snow made it stick out, and easy to find."

Sam grinned. Wally Kreiger was a nasty kid in the neighborhood who had more than once made trouble for the Firestone brothers. "Well, that's his tough luck, huh? Finder's keepers, losers weepers!"

But his older brother shook his head. "We can't keep this. That would be no better than stealing."

Sam, who knew better than to try to argue with his brother on matters of principle, shrugged his shoulders and said, "I guess you're right. Forget about the stupid ball, that's nasty Wally's problem. Let's get home already, I'm freezing."

He threw down the ball and started marching down the trail, but turned back when his brother didn't follow. Dave frowned. "Nope, we've gotta give the kid back his ball. Since we found it, it's only right of us to return it."

The boys cut up a path from the trail that led to the Kreiger's yard. They rang the front doorbell. After a minute Wally opened up. "Whadya guys want?" he asked suspiciously.

Dave swallowed and held out the basketball. "We found this on the trail behind the house. Perhaps it belongs to you?"

The hard expression on Wally's face began to melt into an embarrassed smile. "Wow, thanks a lot!" he said. "It is mine. I lost it the day after I got it, right over the fence, and I never found it."

The brothers turned around and started home, but Wally called them back. "Er... you guys look cold. How about coming in for a few minutes to warm up? My mom just put up some nice, hot cocoa." The boys took Wally up on his offer and ended up staying the whole afternoon. The three of them had a great time together. Sam and Dave were glad that they had returned the ball, and realized that they had found much more than a basketball. They had found a new friend

Discussion Questions:

Q. If the boys had turned a blind eye and just left the ball where it was, would there really have been anything wrong with that?

A. It would have tempting. After all it wouldn't be stealing, and it would have saved them a lot of effort. But they would have missed a great Mitzvah to help someone. They would also have missed an important opportunity to transform themselves into more giving and caring people, which is one of our main spiritual tasks in life.

Q. Why do you think that the boys who weren't so friendly with each other got along much better after they returned the basketball?

A. When the boys went out of their way to return the ball, they made a powerful gesture which made Wally feel that they liked and cared about him. It was only natural that he would start to feel warmer to them. When we interact with each other justly and with care, we are quietly but surely transforming the world into a better, more humane place.

LEADER TIP: How are YOU going to think of others today? This week? This year? Take a step back and instead of thinking different than you is weird, think of it as cool and unique.

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TEFILLAH TREASURES

Shemoneh Esrei: Hashiva Shofteinu

In the eleventh bracha, we don't ask for fairness so much as we ask that Hashem bring back our system of fairness. Jewish law requires a Sanhedrin of judges carrying the original tradition, empowered to interpret the Torah and to judge based upon it. Bringing back our legal system would be the first step in returning us to a Torah-based society that functions in the service of Hashem.

As with many other blessings of Shemoneh Esrei, this bracha contains ideas paraphrased from Tanach. "Restore our judges as originally and our advisors as previously" is based on Hashem's promise to do exactly that in Yishayahu 1:26, after which we will enjoy righteousness and justice while the corrupt will be destroyed. (The Midrash suggests that these judges and advisors include the likes of Moses, Aaron, David and Solomon.)

After asking Hashem to bring back our judges and advisors, we ask that He take away our grief and our sorrow. Really, the removal of grief and sorrow is a natural consequence of restoring our Torah leadership. How many of our problems are caused by groups among our people? If we solve our leadership problem by bring back universally-recognized authorities, the cause for many of our sorrows will automatically disappear. (Again, this is based on Tanach. Yishayahu 35:10 promises us that "simchat olam"—everlasting joy—will chase away "yagon va'anacha"—grief and sorrow.)

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LEADER TIP: Don't be so quick to judge people. Take a second to recognize that you don't know the whole story of other people's lives.



This Week in Jewish History

February 14, 1949

The Establishment of the Knesset

The Knesset is the name for Israel's parliament, or legislature, located in the capital Jerusalem. The major function of the Knesset is to legislate laws and revise them as necessary. Additional duties include establishing a government, taking policy decisions, reviewing government activities, and electing the President of the State and the State Comptroller. The Speaker of the Knesset acts as the controlling authority inside the walls. The Knesset took its name and fixed its membership at 120 from the Knesset Hagedolah (Great Assembly), the representative Jewish council convened in Jerusalem by Ezra and Nehemiah in the 5th century B.C.E. The modern Israeli Knesset convened for the first time ever on February 14, 1949, following the elections from January of that same year. This inaugural sitting succeeded the provisional government that had functioned as the Jewish community's parliament during the Mandate era and first few months of the state. In his speech opening the inaugural session in 1949, Israeli President Chaim Weizmann told the new parliament members that the aim of the Jewish state would be, before everything else, "to gather in the exiles from all parts of the world." He emphasized that this was a great day not only in the lives of the Jewish people but also in the history of the world. To mark the historic day, a procession of schoolchildren carrying Israeli flags and huge

bouquets of flowers marched through the main streets of Jerusalem and stopped in the front of the Jewish Agency building, where Weizmann, Prime Minister David Ben Gurion, members of the first Cabinet, the newly-elected members of the Knesset and guests attended a solemn service in honor of the Israel Defense Forces soldiers killed in battle to help establish the State. Before the construction of its permanent home in the Givat Ram neighborhood of Jerusalem, the Knesset met in the Jewish Agency building in Jerusalem, the Kessem Cinema building in Tel Aviv and the Froumine building in Jerusalem. Members of Knesset (also known by their acronym, MK's) are elected every four years within the framework of parties that compete for the electorate's votes. Each party chooses its own Knesset candidates as it sees fit. A new Knesset begins to function after general elections, which determine its composition. In the first session after election, Knesset members declare their allegiance to Israel and the Knesset speaker and deputy speakers are elected. The Knesset usually serves for four years, but may dissolve itself or be dissolved by the prime minister any time during its term. Until a new Knesset is formally constituted following elections, full authority remains with the outgoing one.



FIND...

- Slave
- Maidservant
- Damage
- Goring
- Penalties
- Watchman
- Borrower
- Milk Meat

STAT LINE OF THE WEEK- MISHPATIM

18th of 54 sedras; 6th of 11 in Shemot

Written on 185 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 31st

33 parshiyot; 6 open and 27 closed

3rd most in the Torah; 2nd most S'tumot

118 p'sukim – ranks 22nd (5th in Shemot)

1462 words – ranks 31st (7th in Shemot)

5313 letters – ranks 37th (8th in Shemot)

MITZVOT

Mishpatim has 53 mitzvot; 23 positive and 30 prohibitions. Only 3 sedras have more mitzvot – Ki Teitzei (74), Emor (63), and R'ei (55).

Mishpatim has 8.65% of the Torah's mitzvot (1.85% is average); 48% of the mitzvot in Shemot

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

WHO WERE THE FIRST TWO COUNTRIES TO RECOGNIZE ISRAEL?

Email your answers to YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG along with your **NAME** and **AGE** for a chance to win **AWESOME PRIZES!** Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

THIS JUST IN!

- **Despite a population of over a billion, China has only about 200 family names.**
- **The human heart creates enough pressure when it pumps out to the body to squirt blood 30 feet.**
- **Beethoven dipped his head in cold water before he composed.**
- **Buckingham Palace has 602 rooms**

For more info please feel free to contact us at Youth@youngisrael.org

Parsha Points to Ponder...

There is an interesting discussion in the Talmud whether a slave of a Jewish owner would prefer to be set free or would he rather remain a slave and have the benefits and security that his master must offer him. (Git. 12b) A passage in this week's Portion seems to answer the question. The Torah says if a master strikes his slave so forcefully that he knocked out his eye or tooth he must set him free, LACHOFSHI YESHALCHENU TACHAT EINO, "...he shall set him free in return for his eye." (Ex. 21,26) If it is advantageous for the slave to remain with his master for the benefits he has, then isn't enough that he lost his eye or his tooth that he is further hurt by freeing him from his master and losing all those benefits? The obvious answer is that it depends on what kind of a master he has. If his master follows the requirements and the restrictions the law imposes on him, he certainly prefers to stay on. If, on the other hand, he has a master that is so violent that he beats him so as to cause major physical damage, and then he is certainly better off being freed and getting away from such horrible treatment. Everything in life depends on the circumstances. There are no general rules that apply to every situation. We must also not judge another's actions unless we know all the conditions that brought him to this behavior.

W	I	J	H	X	E	O	K	Q	S	G	Y
A	I	Z	P	U	E	E	J	O	I	N	M
T	C	F	E	M	V	R	K	D	M	I	A
C	B	F	N	I	A	E	P	A	M	R	I
H	L	J	A	L	L	W	O	M	H	O	D
M	P	Q	L	K	S	O	V	A	U	G	S
A	D	R	T	M	U	R	F	G	V	R	E
N	F	X	I	E	Z	R	F	E	Y	O	R
Q	N	L	E	A	F	O	S	M	E	L	V
P	L	Z	S	T	H	B	S	G	J	B	A
U	U	N	E	K	O	X	H	L	E	F	N
Y	E	V	O	V	K	I	F	G	C	B	T

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