

PARSHA GAMES

Pyramid Challenge

by Sammy Schaechter

GOAL: To teach the kids about how the Jews felt while they were slaves in Egypt and that when the Jewish people stick together that no one can bring us down.

TYPE: Moderate, indoor, group game.

HOW TO PLAY: Split the group up into groups of at least six. Start off the competition by asking each group to get in order of birthday from January to December. Once

they accomplish that, have them then get in order of first name alphabetically. Finally, have them get in order of shoe size. If they are younger kids, they may need more assistance so keep an eye out for that. Then give each group a stack of cups and challenge them to make a 10 cup pyramid. Then challenge them to make a human pyramid using six people. Try to keep them working as hard as possible but encourage them to work together.

TEFILAH TREASURES

Shemona Esrei - Selach Lanu

In this bracha, we ask Hashem to forgive us for all the bad things we've done. Sometimes we do the wrong thing or make bad decisions without thinking about it and sometimes we do the wrong thing or make bad decisions even when we know they're not good. One of the hardest things to do when we do something wrong is to admit that we did something wrong. We don't like to admit that we messed up, even though everyone in the world messes up and no one is perfect. In this bracha, we admit to Hashem that we messed up and we ask Him not to punish us for our mistakes and to give us another chance. If we were to make mistakes or do bad things to our friends every single day and ask them to forgive us every single day, they may get tired of us and not forgive us or give us any more chances. Hashem is not like that though. He knows that we make

mistakes every day and that we're human beings who aren't perfect. Hashem gives us another chance every single day no matter how many times we mess up. It's important to always try to be the best people we can be even after we make mistakes.

Further discussion for older kids...

At the start of the bracha, we ask Hashem for selicha and then mechilah. In the next part, we flip it around and say that Hashem is mocheil v'solei'ach, that He forgives and overlooks. There are several explanations for this. One of them is that forgiveness happens in steps. When Hashem forgives our p'sha'im, the intentional transgressions, they are reduced in size to chata'im, the careless sins. When He wipes away our chata'im, the former p'sha'im are then included



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Where The Road Begins

And she gave birth to a son and she saw him that he was good (2:2)

The Sefas Emes, as the second Gerrer Rebbe was called, was very young when he became Admor of the Gerrer chasidim. Some were disturbed by his youth.

“How can such a young man lead Jews twice and three times his age, men who are noted scholars and famed for their piety?” they wondered.

One of the chasidim answered the question by the use of a parable:

A man who lived at the foot of a high mountain had always desired to climb all the way to the top. One day he decided that the time had come to realize his lifetime dream. He looked up at the cloud-encircled peak and began climbing. He walked with a sure foot, invigorated by the thought that his dream would soon come true.

He walked for one day and then another. He looked back and saw that he had come a long way, yet, when he looked up at the mountain peak, it seemed as distant as ever. But he did not get discouraged. He knew that as long as he kept on walking, he would

be nearing his goal.

The man walked at a steady pace, day after day. Still, the distance hardly seemed less.

Weeks passed and he was still far from his destination which towered majestically above him. Still, he trudged steadily onwards towards his goal. The weeks turned into months, the months became years; the man pressed on.

This was his lifetime dream and he refused to turn back now, after he had come all this way.

Finally, after years of constant, tireless effort, he saw the mountain peak looming up right before his eyes. Soon, soon he would be there on top, looking down on everything. He could hardly wait. The great day finally arrived and the man, who was now old, walked the last few steps up the slope to the very top. “Aha!” he thought, “How many people have looked up to this mountain and never reached it? But I, after months and years of constant effort, have finally reached my goal.”

Just at that moment, he noticed a little boy. What was he doing there?

How had he gotten there? He could not believe his eyes! He had labored for years, many more years than this boy had even lived on earth, to reach the mountain top. How could the boy have gotten there first?

He stood there with his mouth hanging open in amazement. When he finally recovered his senses, he asked the child, “How did you get here? It took me many years of steady climbing. How did you come?”

The little boy replied simply, “You began at the bottom of the mountain and had to cover all the distance up to the top; I was born here.”

The chasid had finished the parable and addressed his audience. “We all agree that the Sefas Emes is very young. No one denies that fact. But we must bear something else in mind. While others have achieved Torah greatness, scholarship, and piety by hard work over a lifetime, he was born to greatness, he was already on the peak when he came into the world. Small wonder then, that he is already fit to lead all his chasidim, young and old alike.”

The Voices Burst Forth

And lo, a lad was weeping...And she said: this one is from the children of the Hebrews (2:6)

Something must be done about our situation! It is severe: We Jews are suffering to the limit of our endurance!”

“We can bear this no longer. Our people will be totally crushed unless something is done!”

This was a meeting of the leaders of the Jewish community of Prague. The Jews, beset by enemies at the royal court, were overtaxed and restricted

in everything they did. But they knew who was behind all the harsh decrees.

“It is the queen’s fault. We must send someone to speak to her and plead our cause. Perhaps if we approach Queen Maria Theresa directly, she will have pity on us.”

“That is an excellent idea. Of course, the only candidate for such an important mission is Reb Zalman Karov, the wealthy financier. He has influence everywhere. He will be able to get an audience with the Queen. When he stands before her, he will plead our

case capably. She will surely be impressed by him and convinced by his sincerity.”

“Hear! Hear! That is the solution!” Cries arose from all those gathered at the emergency meeting. And so, it was unanimously decided to send Reb Zalman to speak to the Queen.

Without too much effort Reb Zalman secured an appointment with Her Royal Majesty. The day arrived. Reb Zalman went to the palace. He was ushered into the Queen’s presence. As he stood before her, a loud cry suddenly

PARSHA STORIES

other man in the wagon, the Vilna Gaon, and began to berate him angrily for not taking sufficient care to prevent the horse from straying onto private property.

The Vilna Gaon might have answered, "I am not to blame, but rather the wagon driver is, who did not guide

his horse properly." But he decided instead to refrain from giving any answer. The gentile demanded payment for the damage, and even struck the Vilna Gaon, who sat quietly through the entire outburst.

Later, the Vilna Gaon explained why he had refrained from entering into

an argument with the gentile. Had he explained that the blame rested on the wagon driver's shoulders, he would have been as one who comes to a non-Jew to accuse a Jewish man of wrongdoing — a very severe transgression indeed.

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

Lost in the Woods

And it was because the midwives feared G-d that He made houses for them. (Shemos 1:21)

One who never saw R' Yitzchak Belzer during the Yamim Nora'im never witnessed true yiras Shamayim — fear of Heaven. The moment he ascended the bimah in the shul on Rosh Chodesh Elul and began to speak, the entire congregation would burst into tears. Anyone privileged to hear him speak during the Yamim Nora'im found that the significance of those special days took on new meaning for him.

R' Yitzchak would wrap himself in his tallis and would weave stories and parables to capture his audience's interest and move them to do teshuvah.

Once, he told of a Jew who lost his way in a thick forest. For nearly two full days he wandered in the forest, but could not find a way out. Suddenly, he saw another Jew coming toward him. The man rushed joyously to greet the new face.

"Show me the way out of this tangled forest!" he pleaded.

The second man asked, "How long have you been lost?"

"Two days!" the first man replied.

"I've been wandering in this forest for a few weeks and still haven't found the way out. You've only been lost for two days and you're asking me how to get out?"

R' Yitzchak raised his voice and cried, "My friends! You are young men. You have not yet had time to make many mistakes in your lifetimes. But I am old, and for years, I have been making mistakes and seeking ways to rectify them and to change my negative traits. How is it that you have summoned me here to show you the way?" He sobbed aloud, and his listeners wept along with him.

"There is one way in which I might help you," R' Yitzchak ended. "From my vast experience, from the errors I've made and the challenges I've faced, I can point to the paths that are not correct, and warn you to stay away from them..."

STORIES MY GRANDFATHER TOLD ME

Self-Control

He went out the next day and behold! two Hebrew men were fighting... and he thought, "Indeed, the matter has become known!" (Shemos 2:13-14)

The book *Leshichno Tidreshu* tells a story about a strong-willed woman who refrained from becoming involved in controversy — and as a result merited having a son who lit up the world with his Torah.

The incident took place in Jerusalem, several generations ago. A woman was hanging laundry in the courtyard of the building in which she lived. In those days, there was one specific day of the week called "laundry day." On that day, women would spend many hours hand-washing the family's laun-

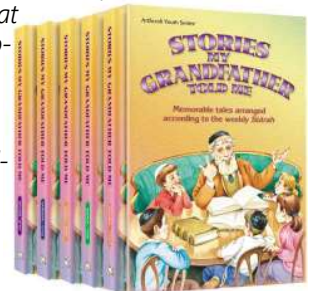
dry for the week — a back-breaking chore — before finally hanging it all out to dry.

When the woman's laundry was all hung at last, she returned indoors. A neighbor, who could not abide seeing the clothes strung out in the courtyard, became enraged at the sight of the freshly washed laundry hanging there. She took a pair of scissors and snipped the clothesline. All the laundry fell to the ground and became dirty again.

The woman, who had spent hours washing all those clothes, witnessed this outrageous behavior from her window — but she swallowed her anguish and refrained from running out and screaming at her neighbor. In-

stead, she went outside, quietly gathered up the dirty clothes, and began washing them all over again. After several more hours of this difficult work, she hung the wash in a different place, never saying a word to her neighbor,

Stories My Grandfather Told Me by Zev Greenwald (Author) Libby Lazewnik (Translator) and Tova Katz (Illustrator) is packed with short pleasant stories that teach children important life lessons from the weekly Parsha. The five-volume set is available from your favorite Jewish book store, or at artscroll.com.



I Also Scream!

For I know their pains (3:7)

Yisrael of Modzitz, the famous Rebbe whose music became legend throughout chasidic circles, was once very ill. He was taken to a Berlin hospital for surgery and lay there in a room, afterwards, slowly recovering. One day the surgeon who was treating him entered the room and rubbing his hands with satisfaction, said, "Good morning, honored rabbi! I have just come from

the bedside of another patient of mine, lying here in the hospital. I happened to mention you in high praise, comparing your behavior to his. He is a government minister who has just undergone surgery less difficult and painful than yours. Yet he lies there moaning and screaming with pain. I told him that you must be suffering even more than he, yet we do not hear a peep out of you. On the contrary, you continue to sing and compose beautiful tunes. I told him to use

you as an example of how one should overcome pain."

"Herr Doktor," the Rebbe said as he lay helplessly on his back. "do not think that since I do not scream and writhe with pain, I am not also suffering. But, when I open my mouth to shout, I do not let the sounds emerge as screams of pain. I do not want to utter any sound in vain, therefore, the sound I make emerges as music and song in praise to my G-d."

PARSHA PUZZLERS

TEST YOUR PARSHA KNOWLEDGE

by Sammy Schaechter
and Dovid Saleman
Answers on page 7.

EASY Qs

1. What is this week's Parsha?
2. How were the Jewish people treated after the shevatim died?
3. What decree did Pharaoh issue against the Jewish baby boys?
4. What order did Pharaoh give to the Jewish midwives?
5. When Moshe was born, what did Yocheved place Moshe in? Where did Yocheved place him?
6. Who found Moshe floating in a basket and who took Moshe out of the river?
7. What did Moshe do when he saw an Egyptian beating a Jew?
8. Where did Hashem first speak to Moshe?
9. What mission did Hashem give

Moshe?

10. Why didn't Moshe want to be the leader?
11. What did Moshe request from Pharaoh?

12. What was Pharaoh's response?

MEDIUM Qs

13. Why didn't the midwives obey the order?
14. Who were Moshe's parents?
15. Which shevat did not work?
16. Who did Hashem say would be the spokesman for Moshe?

HARD Qs

17. Why did Pharaoh want to kill the Jewish male babies?
18. Name Amram's and Yocheved's three children.
19. Where did Moshe run to after killing the Egyptian?
20. Who did Moshe marry?

CRACK THE PARSHA CODE

by Rabbi Yaakov Levine
Answers on page 7.

1. The J did not C their N, their D, and their L
2. The J W gave B to 6 B at a time
3. S & P were really M & Y
4. Y put M in a B and put it in the N R
5. M did not want to N from a M W
6. M couldn't S very well, because he B his M on a H C
7. The S of L did not W for P, and instead L T the whole D
8. M ran away from M and L in M by Y
9. H A to M in a B B
10. M R his S before he A the B B
11. M told H that he wasn't F to take B Y out of M
12. M almost D, because his S did not have a B
13. M W was T

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