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**Parsha Overview**

This week’s Parsha starts off with Moshe speaking to the Jews in the desert. He tells them to get ready to go into the Land of Israel. He reminds them that there are many new mitzvot that they will have to keep when they go into the Land. These are some of those laws:

1) Destroy the idols that you find. Also destroy the places that people serve idols.

2) They should build the Beit Hamikdash, the Holy Temple. This is a place where they will serve G-d and bring karbonot, sacrifices.

3) Only people who are pure are allowed to eat certain holy foods like karbonot and other special foods that are given to a kohen.

4) A prophet is someone who G-d speaks to. Anybody who pretends that they are a prophet will be killed. The way that people can figure out if someone is a pretend prophet, is if they say things that are against the Torah. An example of this would be if he said that he got a prophesy from an idol, or that G-d said not to do certain mitzvot.

5) Moshe reteaches the signs of kosher animals and fish. A kosher animal chews its cud and has split hooves. Kosher fish have fins and scales. The Torah lists all the birds that aren’t kosher. Any birds not on the list is kosher. The last kosher law in this parsha is that milk and meat are not allowed to be mixed.
6) If there is a city in the Land of Israel where all the people serve idols, then all the people are killed. Everything that belongs to them has to be destroyed.

7) The first baby animal that a kosher animal gives birth to, has to be given to a kohen.

8) The Laws of Shmittah. For six years, all the farmers are allowed to work in their fields. On the seventh year, the farmers must let the land rest. Anything that grows by itself in the fields on the seventh year are free for anyone to take. During the year of Shmittah, if anyone who borrowed money and didn’t pay it back yet, then they do not have to pay it back. Also, any Jewish slaves go free during Shmittah.

9) The parsha ends by telling us about the three main holidays, Pesach (Passover), Shavuot and Sukkot. During the times of the Beit Hamikdash, all the Jews would go up to Jerusalem on these holidays. Today, we celebrate Passover by eating matzah, Shavuot by hearing the Ten Commandments, and Sukkot by eating in special huts for seven days.

**Parsha Questions**

1) If a person finds an idol, what should he do with it? [Destroy it.]

2) What was done with the first baby born to a kosher animal? [It was given to the kohen.]

3) What was done to a pretend prophet? [He was killed.]

4) What are the signs of a kosher animal? [split hooves, chews its cud]

5) What kind of work is not allowed during Shmittah? [work in the field]

6) Where do these laws apply? [Only in the Land of Israel]

7) What are some other laws of Shmittah? [All loans are cancelled and slaves go free.]

8) What are the 3 main holidays? [Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot]

**Focus of the Month: Teshuva**

Today is Rosh Chodesh Elul, the first day of the Jewish month of Elul. Our Rabbis tell us that this month should be used to get ready for Rosh Hashana, the first day of the New Year. It is also the time when G-d decides if we will have a good
year. In order to prepare for Rosh Hashana, we are supposed to spend our time in Elul doing Teshuva. Teshuva is changing our bad behaviors and trying to do better. Since we are now in the month of Elul, the next 5 weeks will be a time when we will talk about getting rid of our bad actions and trying to do good ones.

Week 1

Discussion Questions

1) What is Teshuva?
2) Why do we have to do Teshuva?
3) What are some things you have to do Teshuvah for?

Note to Leaders:

Discuss that Teshuvah includes saying sorry for the mistakes that we have made and for the aveiros, sins, that we do. Use the activity to illustrate that until we do Teshuvah the aveirah leaves a burden on our neshamah, soul.

Games

“Throw your sins away”

You will need:
Tape before Shabbat or String
1-2 pieces of paper per child

Goal: The team with the fewest balls of trash on their side of the tape line wins.

Before Shabbat, place a masking tape line down the center of the room. If you were unable to do this, place a string or other divider down the middle. Divide the class into two teams. Have each child crumple up one or two balls of paper and place them at their feet. The goal of the game is to throw all the balls of trash to your opponent’s side. You may only throw one ball at a time. You may not throw the balls of trash AT anyone. Before saying go, tell the group that you will clap your hands three times to signal the end of the game. If anyone throws a ball after your signal, then their team will be penalized by getting the ball they threw plus one more back from the other side. The team with the fewest balls of trash on their side of the line wins. To clean up, have every child line up along the tape, holding one or two balls of trash.
Come around with the trash can and stand a reasonable distance away from each child and give them a chance, one by one, to throw their trash into the trash can. Once they throw their trash away, they have a seat.

“Hot Feeling” (like Hot Potato)

You will need: Ball

Ask the group what are some of the things your body feels when you feel angry or frustrated? One thing is that they might get really hot. These can be called “hot feelings” because sometimes your face can get red, you might feel a burning feeling in your stomach, and you might even feel like a volcano full of hot lava! When you touch something hot, do you want to hold onto it? No! You want to let it go as quickly as you can.

In this game, the ball is a “hot feeling.” Pass it around the circle while the leader sings/hums, letting it go as quickly as they can. When the music stops, whoever is holding the hot feeling has to keep holding it until the rest of the group says, “We’re sorry.” The person holding the ball puts it down and says, “That’s okay.” Then that person is out, and the game continues until only one player is left.

Story

It was 10:30 on a brisk, clear morning. Recess time! The school’s doors flew open and a crowd of lively youngsters ran out into the open lot that serves as the schoolyard. Soon happy sounds filled the air.

Making his way through the scrambling children was a very tall, very heavy man, whose large body swayed from side to side as he walked. He stopped for a moment at the foot of the narrow stone steps leading to a small synagogue, then slowly began to climb the stairs. The clumsy man caught the attention of little Shalom, who stopped playing and began to imitate him, perfectly.

Shalom’s classmates had also seen the man, and now their attention was caught by Shalom as well. Oho!” they whooped. “Who is copying whom?”

The man didn’t notice his “shadow” until the children’s laughter reached his ears. Looking downward, he saw Shalom and a few of his classmates, who were all swaying from side to side. It was clear that the children were imitating the big man.

He sighed softly. “Tsk, tsk...” he mumbled, and continued his upward climb. But the laughter grew louder and louder until, white with anger, the man turned to the children. “Who started all this?” he thundered, and began to come down the stairs. In a flash it was quiet. All the boys were gone!

The man tried to find the troublemaker who started it all, but Shalom and the other boys had disappeared. Only when the poor man had left the yard did the boys creep out from their hiding places. They were safe!

Shalom, however, did not feel better. He could not forget the man’s white face and his booming voice. “How could I do something like that?” he wondered. “How could I make fun of another person?” That night, Shalom lay in bed filled with sadness. “Tomorrow I must find the man and apologize,” he decided.

Finding the man was not easy. Shalom walked up and down the streets, around and around the winding alleys. “Maybe the man is in the synagogue,” he thought, as he checked one shul after the other. Just as he was about to leave
a shul that was high up in an attic, Shalom missed a step and tripped. Suddenly, two big hands caught him and set him back on his feet.

Shalom looked up to see who had saved him, and gasped. It was the very same man for whom he had been looking! In a panic, Shalom pulled away from the man and ran!

When he finally stopped to catch his breath, the little boy thought to himself. “That was silly. I was looking for that man, and when I found him I just ran away! I must find him again and apologize.”

Shalom found his way back to the synagogue. Sticking his head inside, Shalom closed his eyes, took a deep breath, cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted at the top of his lungs: “I AM THE BOY WHO MADE FUN OF YOU YESTERDAY. I’M SORRY!”

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Shalom turned to escape. Suddenly he felt two big hands around his waist. He could not run! The huge man had Shalom in his hands! Scared and crying, the child kicked his feet and waved his arms wildly, but the man held him tightly. He lifted Shalom way, way above the heads of the people in shul.

“Look!” the man called out with joy. “This is a boy who has come to apologize! Have you ever seen anything like this before?” He kissed Shalom on the forehead and set him down gently. For a split second Shalom just stood there, and then he sped away- this time with a light and singing heart.

This little Shalom grew up to be the famous rabbi and orator, Rabbi Shalom Schwadron.(1912– 1997) He was also known as the “Maggid of Jerusalem” for the fiery inspirational talks that he gave. The great sensitivity and caring for others that he displayed as an adult was already noticeable from a very young age.

Adapted from Olomeinu Magazine, October 2000

Note to Leaders
Discuss with the children how saying sorry can sometimes be very hard. Discuss how little Shalom felt before he said sorry and how he felt after. Maybe if we say sorry it will also make us feel better.

There are four parts to doing Teshuvah:

1) Stop doing the sin.
2) Feel bad that you did the sin.
3) Say to God that you are sorry.
4) Commit not to do the sin again.
Riddle of the Week

Who was the first person in history to do teshuvah?

Send you answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.
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3) Only people who are pure are allowed to eat certain holy foods like karbanot and other special foods that are given to a kohen. A person who touches a dead body becomes tameh, impure and must have special ashes from the Temple sprinkled on him, and he must go into a mikvah, a ritual bath.

4) A prophet is someone who G-d speaks to. Anybody who pretends that they are a prophet will be killed. The way that people can figure out if someone is a pretend prophet, is if they say things that are against the Torah. An example of this would be if he said that he got a prophesy from an idol, or that G-d said not to do certain mitzvot. Also in order to prove that a person was a prophet he must perform a miracle.

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8) What are some other laws of Shmittah? [All loans are cancelled and slaves go free.]

9) What are the 3 main holidays and how were they celebrated in the times of the Temple? [Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot. All the Jews would go to Jerusalem and bring sacrifices.]
10) How are these holidays celebrated today? [On Passover we eat matzah, on Shavuot we hear the Ten Commandments, and on Sukkot we eat in special huts for seven days.]

**Focus of the Month: Teshuva**

Today is Rosh Chodesh Elul, the first day of the Jewish month of Elul. Our Rabbis tell us that this month should be used to get ready for Rosh Hashana, the first day of the New Year. It is also the time when G-d decides if we will have a good year. In order to prepare for Rosh Hashana, we are supposed to spend our time in Elul doing Teshuva. Teshuva is changing our bad behaviors and trying to do better. Since we are now in the month of Elul, the next 5 weeks will be a time when we will talk about getting rid of our bad actions and trying to do good ones.

**Week 1**

**Discussion Questions**

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**Note to Leaders**

Discuss that Teshuvah includes saying sorry for the mistakes that we have made and for the aveiros, sins, that we do.

Use the activity to illustrate that until we do Teshuvah the aveirah leaves a burden on our neshamah, soul.
“Hot Feeling” (like Hot Potato)

You will need: Ball

Ask the group what are some of the things your body feels when you feel angry or frustrated? One thing is that they might get really hot. These can be called “hot feelings” because sometimes your face can get red, you might feel a burning feeling in your stomach, and you might even feel like a volcano full of hot lava! When you touch something hot, do you want to hold onto it? No! You want to let it go as quickly as you can.

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“I’m Sorry” Game

In our game today, we’re going to practice saying the words “I’m sorry!” The more times you say it, the easier it will become!

Have students form two teams and line up at one end of the room. You go to the other end of the room.

Students will have to race forward, doing the crab walk with the heavy book on top of their stomachs. (In a crab walk, you’re facing the ceiling with your hands and feet on the floor.) Students have to crab walk to you. Every time the book falls off, they have to stop and pick it up.

When each student reaches you, he says, “I’m sorry!” You take the book, and he runs back freely and tags his classmate.

What happened when you said, “I’m sorry?” You took the weight from us, like God would.
Once you got rid of that heavy weight, what were you able to do? Sail back freely!

Story

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Note to Leaders:

Discuss with the children how saying sorry can sometimes be very hard. Discuss how little Shalom felt before he said sorry and how he felt after. Maybe if we say sorry it will also make us feel better.

Halacha of the week

There are four parts to doing Teshuvah:

1) Stop doing the sin.
2) Feel bad that you did the sin.
3) Say to God that you are sorry.
4) Commit not to do the sin again.

If a person did something wrong to his friend he must first apologize to his friend. Only after his friend forgives him can he ask forgiveness from God.

Riddle of the Week

Who was the first person in history to do teshuvah and what did he do teshuva for?

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2) They should build the Beit Hamikdash, the Holy Temple. This is a place where they will serve G-d and bring korbanot, sacrifices. Once the Temple is built, sacrifices can only be brought in the Temple.

3) Only people who are pure are allowed to eat certain holy foods like karbanot and other special foods that are given to a kohen. A person who touches a dead body becomes tameh, impure and must have special ashes from the Temple sprinkled on him, and he must go into a mikvah, a ritual bath. Since we no longer have those ashes we are all impure. For this reason when one makes bread and takes off a small piece for that in Temple time was give to the kohen, it is burned instead.

4) A prophet is someone who G-d speaks to. Anybody who pretends that they are a prophet will be killed. The way that people can figure out if someone is a pretend prophet, is if they say things that are against the Torah. An example of this would be if he said that he got a prophesy from an idol, or that G-d said not to do certain mitzvot. Also in order to prove that a person was a prophet he must perform a miracle.
5) Moshe reteaches the signs of kosher animals and fish. A kosher animal chews its cud and has split hooves. Kosher fish have fins and scales. The Torah lists all the birds that aren’t kosher. Any birds not on the list is kosher. The last kosher law in this parsha is that milk and meat are not allowed to be mixed.

6) If there is a city in the Land of Israel where all the people serve idols, then all the people are killed. Everything that belongs to them has to be destroyed.

7) The first baby animal that a kosher animal gives birth to, has to be given to a kohen.

8) The Laws of Shmittah. For six years, all the farmers are allowed to work in their fields. On the seventh years, the farmers must let the land rest. Anything that grows by itself in the fields on the seventh year are free for anyone to take. These law only applies in the Land of Israel. During the year of Shmittah, if anyone who borrowed money and didn’t pay it back yet, then they do not have to pay it back. In later generations the Rabbis instituted a document called a pruzbal, which prevents the loan form being cancelled. Also, any Jewish slaves go free during Shmittah.

9) The parsha ends by telling us about the three main holidays, Pesach (Passover), Shavuot and Sukkot. During the times of the Beit Hamikdash, all the Jews would go up to Jerusalem on these holidays. Today, we celebrate Passover by eating matzah, Shavuot by hearing the Ten Commandments, and Sukkot by eating in special huts for seven days, and shaking the four special items, an etrog, a lulav, hadasim (branches from a myrtle tree and aravot (willow branches).

Parsha Questions

1) If a person finds an idol, what should he do with it? [Destroy it.]

2) What was done with a the first baby born to a kosher animal? [It was given to the kohen.]

3) What was done to a pretend prophet? [He was killed.]

4) What is one way for a prophet to prove that he is a real prophet? [He must perform a miracle.]

5) What are the signs of a kosher animal? [split hooves, chews its cud]

6) What are signs of a kosher fish? [Fins and scales]
7) What are signs of a kosher bird? [There are no signs. Any bird that is not on the list of non-kosher birds is kosher.]

8) What kind of work is not allowed during Shmittah? [work in the field]

9) Where do these laws apply? [Only in the Land of Israel]

10) What are some other laws of Shmittah? [All loans are cancelled and slaves go free.]

11) If a person does not want his loan to be cancelled what can he do? [Write a special document called a pruzbal.]

12) What are the 3 main holidays and how were they celebrated in the times of the Temple? [Pesach, Shavuot, Sukkot. All the Jews would go to Jerusalem and bring sacrifices.]

13) How are these holidays celebrated today? [On Passover we eat matzah, on Shavuot we hear the Ten Commandments, and on Sukkot we eat in special huts for seven days.]

14) What are the four special items that we shake on Sukkot? [etrog, lulav, hadasim (branches from a myrtle tree and aravot (willow branches).]

15) How many are taken of each? [1 etrog, 1 lulav, 3 hadasim, 2 aravot]

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Focus of the Month: Teshuva

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Week 1

Discussion Questions

1) What is Teshuva?
2) Why do we have to do Teshuvah?

3) What are some things you have to do Teshuvah for?

4) The word Teshuvah can also mean to return. What does repentance have to do with returning?

Note to Leaders

Discuss that Teshuvah includes saying sorry for the mistakes that we have made and for the aveiros, sins, that we do. Our souls were created perfect. When we sin our souls become hurt. Only when we repent can we bring our souls back to perfection. Use the activity to illustrate that until we do Teshuvah the aveirah leaves a burden and a stain on our neshamah, soul.

Games

“I’m Sorry” Game

In our game today, we’re going to practice saying the words “I’m sorry!” The more times you say it, the easier it will become!

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When each student reaches you, he says, “I’m sorry!” You take the book, and he runs back freely and tags his classmate.
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Story

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Shalom found his way back to the synagogue. Sticking his head inside, Shalom closed his eyes, took a deep breath, cupped his hands around his mouth and shouted at the top of his lungs: “I AM THE BOY WHO MADE FUN OF YOU YESTERDAY. I’M SORRY!”

As soon as the words were out of his mouth, Shalom turned to escape. Suddenly he felt two big hands around his waist. He could not run! The huge man had Shalom in his hands! Scared and crying, the child kicked his feet and waved his arms wildly, but the man held him tightly. He lifted Shalom way, way above the heads of the people in shul.

“Look!” the man called out with joy. “This is a boy who has come to apologize! Have you ever seen anything like this before?” He kissed Shalom on the forehead and set him down gently. For a split second Shalom just stood there, and then he sped away—this time with a light and singing heart.

This little Shalom grew up to be the famous rabbi and orator, Rabbi Shalom Schwadron. (1912–1997) He was also known as the “Maggid of Jerusalem” for the fiery inspirational talks that he gave. The great sensitivity and caring for others that he displayed as an adult was already noticeable from a very young age.
Note to Leaders

Discuss with the children how saying sorry can sometime be very hard. Discuss how little Shalom felt before he said sorry and how he felt after. Maybe if we say sorry it will also make us feel better.

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**Halacha of the week**

There are four parts to doing Teshuvah:

1) Stop doing the sin.
2) Feel bad that you did the sin.
3) Say to God that you are sorry.
4) Commit not to do the sin again.

If a person did something wrong to his friend he must first apologize to his friend. Only after his friend forgives him can he ask forgiveness from God. It is therefore customary before Yom Kippur to ask forgiveness from anyone we may have offended.

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**Riddle of the Week**

What mitzvah applies only to kosher birds?

Send you answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.
Teen Minyan

Note to Leaders:

This program is made to enhance your teen minyan. Let your teens take turns give the Drasha and Dvar Halacha. Try to get them the texts as early as possible so they can practice it before they say it on Shabbat. You can also invite parents to watch their child live in action.

Drasha

Seeing is Believing

See I put before you today blessing and curse! (Devarim 11:26)

Hear O’Israel Hashem is our G-d Hashem is One! (Devarim)

You should know today and return it to your heart that Hashem is G-d in the heavens above and on the earth below. There is no other! (Devarim).

The distance between the mind and the heart is greater than the distance between the sun and the earth! (Rabbi Yisrael Salanter)

Hearing is not comparable to seeing! (Talmud Rosh HaShanah)
What is the difference between the way learn with our ears and the way we learn with our eyes? We see that sometimes the Torah shouts “LISTEN” and sometimes “LOOK”. We know that the Torah is read and heard. There is an Oral and a Written Torah. What is the Difference?

Imagine that you hear a news report of disastrous proportion. Hundreds of thousands of individuals are swept away by a giant tidal wave. The numbers are startling. The reports are gruesome. You arrive home and begin to share the ugly news with your wife as she brings dinner to the table. You take a bite and request salt, ketchup, and a napkin all while sprinkling the report like a spice on your dinner table. Sure, you’re in pain. You are grieving and anguishing while imagining the pain of the last moments, the horror of the event and its devastating aftermath. You decide to skip desert that night as a sign of solidarity and solace for the victims and their families.

The next night you are hurrying home from the office and about to make the last turn before coming down your block. You can almost smell the dinner and your starved. In one moment a little brown doggie rushes into the street you have no time to react. You see the whole thing. You hear the whelp upon impact. Looking in the rear view mirror you slow down. Doggie is on the side of the road twitching. You wonder what can be done. Suddenly a Mack Truck that had been trailing behind you finishes off your issue.

You pull your car slowly into the driveway and slink up the steps. You slowly open the front door where and you are met by your wife who exclaims with exuberance, “Guess what I have for dinner tonight dear; your favorite, HOT DOGS!” You excuse yourself and go to bed early without a word!

What happened here? Do we care more about one dog than we do about one hundred thousand people? One night we can eat and discuss and pour the ketchup liberally and the next night we are ill from the tragedy of the doggie!? The answer is, simply, that one event we heard about and the other we witnessed with our own eyes.

We do not act upon what we know but what we feel. Knowledge is like having food in the freezer. Feeling is like putting a steak on the fire. The advantage of knowledge is that it remains with us longer. We will recall years later the event of the tidal wave, its date and details. The doggie hurt for a day or two and then we were back to the barbecue.
Through listening we gain knowledge and information through vision and imagination we gain motivation. When a driver is caught driving drunk he is forced to watch vivid films of human tragedy to sober his reckless ways. To know that friends don't let friends drink and drive is not effective unless it is accompanied by a picture.

Therefore, the Torah after filling our freezer with knowledge by shouting endlessly "Hear O' Israel"... now demands that we stoke the fire of vision. "Knowing today"... is one project but engaging the heart is another.

Perhaps now we can appreciate the Talmudic adage that the wise man is the one who sees the outcome! Not only does he anticipate what will be, but he envisions with his mind’s eye the consequences of his actions.

Write an action or behavior that you would either like to adopt or reject but you’re having difficulty getting started. Write down what pain or cost is involved with this action. (Effort or money or status quo.) Then write briefly how you would feel if you did this good thing for the next 5, then 10, the 20 years. How would you feel if this negative trait persisted. Create a detailed picture of the pain and pleasure of the foreseeable future and you are counted amongst the wise.

Good Shabbos.

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Dvar Halacha

(To be said right after Davening)

There are four parts to doing Teshuvah:

1) Stop doing the sin.

2) Feel bad that you did the sin.

3) Say to God that you are sorry.

4) Commit not to do the sin again.
If a person did something wrong to his friend he must first apologize to his friend. Only after his friend forgives him can he ask forgiveness from God. It is therefore customary before Yom Kippur to ask forgiveness from anyone we may have offended.

If someone asks you forgiveness, it is appropriate for you to forgive him/her and not bear a grudge. If we can find it on our hearts to forgive others when they wronged us, we can ask God to act midah k’neged midah, measure for measure, and forgive us for the wrongdoing Him.

**Kiddush Activity**

**Discussion Questions**

1) What is teshuvah, repentance?

2) Why does God forgive us for our sins and not make us pay for our crimes?

**Note to Leaders:**

Discuss how when we repent, we are not merely asking God to pretend our sins never happened. We are telling God that there is no need to punish us to ensure we will not sin again. We have realized our mistakes and will change our ways. It is crucial to keep this in mind when we pray for forgiveness throughout the High Holidays. If we are just paying lip service to God without realizing what we are doing, our prayers are not nearly as meaningful as they could be.

**Riddle of the Week**

What mitzvah applies only to kosher birds and to all kosher birds?

Send you answer to youth@youngisrael.org for a chance to win a great prize.