



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 led by our Youth Services Coordinator, Sammy, will give youth leader's 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.

Shana Tova.

Ari Matityahu
Assistant Director

Sammy Schaechter
Youth Services Coordinator



PARSHA NATION



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



Published by the National Council of Young Israel

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!	



PARSHA NATION



GRADES K - 2

VAYERA REVIEW

Hashem came to visit Avraham as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent. Avraham saw three “people” travelling through past his tent and ran to go invite them into his home. These “people”, who were actually angels in human disguise, gladly took him up on the invitation, and Avraham and Sarah prepared a beautiful feast for them. The angels told Avraham that Sarah was going to give birth to a child in exactly one year from then. Sarah heard this news and laughed. The angels left from there and continued on to Sodom, where Lot lived, to destroy the five cities in that area. Hashem told Avraham He was going to destroy Sodom because of all the evil people that were there. Avraham tried to save them by trying to find fifty righteous people there. When it was clear that that wasn't going to happen, Avraham "bargained" with Hashem – eventually asking Him to spare Sodom even if there are only ten righteous individuals there, but Avraham couldn't even find ten. The angels came to Sodom, and Lot invited them to his home to eat and rest. The evil people of Sodom heard that Lot was having guests and wanted to come attack them. Lot refused to allow that to happen and the angels made everyone surrounding the house blind. The angels told Lot about what was going to happen, and told him to leave Sodom. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters left the city and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife looked back though and was turned into a pillar of salt. Sarah gave birth to a son named Yitzchak at the age of ninety. Avraham gave Yitzchak a brit milah when he was eight days old. Sarah saw that Yishmael, Yitzchak's older half-brother, was a bad influence him. She told Avraham to kick Yishmael and his mother Hagar out of the house. Hashem told Avraham to take Yitzchak and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain. Avraham took Yitzchak and together headed for the mountain. They got there and Avraham built the altar and tied up Yitzchak. Just as Avraham stretched out his hand to take the slaughtering knife, an angel ordered him to stop and instead Avraham offered a ram. Hashem promised Avraham great blessings as a reward for passing this difficult test.

LEADER TIP: Set up a huge tent with four openings and have all the group leaders come dressed as Avraham and Sarah welcoming the kids to shul!

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions

1. Why did Hashem visit Avraham?
2. How many angels came to visit Avraham?
3. What messages did the angels bring?
4. What was Sarah's response when she heard she was going to have a child?
5. Why did Hashem want to destroy Sodom?
6. How did Avraham try and save Sodom?
7. What did Lot's wife turn into when she looked back at Sodom being destroyed?
8. What did Hashem command Avraham to do to his son Yitzchak?
9. Who stopped Avraham from doing it?
10. What did he do instead?

Answers

1. Because he was sick so Hashem came to visit him.
2. 3
3. To tell Avraham and Sarah they were going to have a son, to heal Avraham, and that they were going to destroy Sodom
4. She laughed because she was really old
5. Because the people there were very evil
6. He looked for tzadikim there but couldn't find any
7. A pillar of salt
8. Sacrifice him
9. An angel came and told him not to
10. He sacrificed a ram

LEADER TIP: Just like Hashem gave Avraham tests He knew Avraham could pass, remind the kids that they're able to answer all these "test" questions as well!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: For the kids to learn about how Avraham would not only always do chessed, but he would do it as fast as he could, even when it may have been difficult for him.

ACTIVITY: “The Chessed Obstacle Course”

Split the kids up into two teams (you can do it as one group as well if there aren't enough kids). The point of the game is to do as much chessed as possible. If there are two teams they will compete against each other, if you do it as one group then time the kids in order that they go as fast as possible.

There will be four different stations representing four different kinds of chessed...

1. Tzedakah- They must throw “coins” into the “tzedakah box”. Be creative with this, have them throw some sort of a fake coin (or something similar) into a box.
2. Cleaning the park- Put out a bunch of different things on the floor and have the kids clean them all up and put them into a bucket/“trash can”.
3. Visiting the sick- Put a blanket over a group leader and give them three high fives.
4. Hachnasat Orchim- Set a place setting at a table (plate, cup, napkin, spoon, and fork) Each kid will get a chance to go through the obstacle course. They will finish all of them as quickly as they can and then come back and tag the next person in line. Make sure to “reset” each station before each person takes their turn (aka put the “garbage” back on the floor, give them “coins”, take the blanket off of the group leader, and clear off the table). If you can think of any other chessed stations, add them to the list!

DISCUSSION: In this week's Parsha, we learn about Avraham and his never ending dedication and commitment to always doing chessed. Avraham was sitting recuperating from his brit milah surgery when he gets a special visit from Hashem. Then in the middle of talking to Hashem, three “people” (who are really angels) come walking by. Avraham jumps up to greet them and he and Sarah welcome them into their home with open arms. Even though Avraham wasn't feeling well and it was probably difficult for him to run around taking care of his guests, he still worked as fast and as hard as he could to take care of his guests. Just like we did in our obstacle course, we learn from Avraham how important it is to do chessed and help other people even if it may sometimes be difficult for us. Just like we'd like people to help us when we need it, we should always try to help people in their times of need as well.

LEADER TIP: After the activity, discuss as a group what kinds of ways everyone can do as much chessed as possible

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: A test isn't only something we take at school - it can be something that makes us choose between right and wrong. In this week's Parsha (Gen. 22:1) we learn how Hashem tested Avraham. And in our lives, too, we can become better people when we 'pass the test' and choose to do what's right.

ACE IN THE HOLE

Robbie had just settled in, placing his textbooks, notepad, calculator and pencils neatly on the smooth, white desk of the library study cubicle. Though he was a good student, he knew he'd have to really dig in and put in a full day of cramming if he was going to ace his geometry mid-term test.

He opened up his book and dug into the first practice example when he heard some loud talking on the other side of the cubicle. He was about to go ask whoever it was to quiet down, when he thought he recognized the voices. Curious, he listened in:

"Please, Kevin, you've gotta help me get ready for this test!" It was Mike, that skinny guy in his class who always looked nervous and never raised his hand.

"No way! I'm too busy studying myself to waste time helping you."

"But you don't understand," Mike was pleading, "If I flunk another math test, my dad said he was going to give away my bike!"

"Your bike?"

"Yeah. He said I waste too much time riding and not enough time studying, that's why I mess up in school. But it's not true - I really try. I just can't lose my bike. I can't! It's the only good thing I have!"

"Hey, look, Mike," Robbie could hear Kevin say, "I'm sorry you're in trouble and everything, but I simply can't spare the time to help you. Now please leave me alone."

Then there was quiet. Robbie could see Mike, holding his textbook, shuffle away from Kevin's desk and go sit by himself at a table at the far side of the room.

Okay, Robbie told himself, let's get studying.

As he started on the examples, Robbie saw that although he remembered how to do most of them, he was definitely rusty and this last-minute study session was just what he needed to make the difference between doing good and doing great.

He shot another glance over to Mike's table and saw him open the book, stare at it a few seconds, then put his head down on top of it like he was sleeping. But Robbie knew he wasn't sleeping because he could see the kid's shoulders shaking every few seconds - as if he was crying.

Poor kid, Robbie thought. Too bad I don't have the time to help him. There's just no way I could - not if I want to ace the test...

* * *

Mike, head still down on the table, was in the middle of a miserable daydream about how lousy life was going to be stuck at home all the time without his bike, when he thought he felt someone tapping him on the shoulder. He looked up with a start through red-rimmed eyes.

"Hey, sorry to bother you, Mike ... but I was sitting by myself trying to study for the midterm and for some reason I just can't concentrate. Would you mind if we, like, worked together on it?"

Mike wanted to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. *Here was Robbie, one of the class brains, asking me to study with him!*

"If you get stuck on something I'll help you, and if I get stuck, you can help me. What do you say?" Robbie asked.

Mike didn't have to say anything, because his amazed, thrilled and grateful eyes said it all.

As the two boys sat down together, Robbie had no idea what kind of grade he was going to end up getting on the midterm, but one thing he knew for sure - he had already passed his test with flying colors.

Discussion Questions:

Q. How did Robbie feel at first about helping Mike studying for his test?

A. He felt like he didn't have time to help him.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He felt good that he passed the test of being selfish and decided to help a kid in trouble.

LEADER TIP: Have you ever gone through a really difficult time in your life? How did it feel knowing you made it through alive and well even though it was difficult?

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

(March 12, 1943- November 8, 2011)



HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel was an American-born rabbi and Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir Yeshiva in Jerusalem, Israel. He grew up in Chicago and even played on the baseball and basketball teams in high school. During his time there from 1990 until his death in 2011, he built the Mir into the largest yeshiva in Israel with nearly 7,600 students. According to one estimate, he taught 25,000 students over his lifetime. Although he suffered from Parkinson's disease for the last 28 years of his life, which made him shake uncontrollably and slurred his speech, he did not let his illness stop him from learning Torah for long hours, giving regular *shiurim*, and fundraising for his yeshiva around the world. He didn't want to take medicine for his illness because it would make him lose his memory and he didn't want to forget all the Torah he learned. He raised about \$500 million for the Mir during his time as Rosh Yeshiva. He was known for his Torah erudition and his warmth and concern for his students. There were about 100,000 people at his funeral. After he passed away, his son Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel took over as Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir.

LEADER TIP: As “regular Average Joe” kids, what do you wish to be/ accomplish when you're older?

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Birkat Kriyat Shema

Before we say Shema, we say two brachot praising Hashem to prepare ourselves for the important tefillah of Shema. We start off by talking about how amazing it was that Hashem created light and darkness. We see from light and darkness both being created by Hashem that both good and bad comes from Hashem. Since everything that comes from Hashem is good, we learn that even though sometimes things may seem bad we know that everything Hashem does for us is for the best. Also, not only did Hashem create the world, He continues to build and run the world every second of the day. Every time we think about the world we should remember that it all started with Hashem and it continues every day with the kindness Hashem does for us. Even if it may not seem so great right away, we must try to remember that everything happens for a reason and Hashem loves us and only does what's best for us.

LEADER TIP: What is one time in your life where you thought things were terrible but ended up working out for the best?



PARSHA NATION

GRADES 3-4

VAYERA REVIEW

Hashem came to visit Avraham as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent. Avraham saw three “people” travelling through past his tent and ran to go invite them into his home. These “people”, who were actually angels in human disguise, gladly took him up on the invitation, and Avraham and Sarah prepared a beautiful feast for them. The angels told Avraham that Sarah was going to give birth to a child in exactly one year from then. Sarah heard this news and laughed. The angels left from there and continued on to Sodom, where Lot lived, to destroy the five cities in that area. Hashem told Avraham He was going to destroy Sodom because of all the evil people that were there. Avraham tried to save them by trying to find fifty righteous people there. When it was clear that that wasn’t going to happen, Avraham “bargained” with Hashem – eventually asking Him to spare Sodom even if there are only ten righteous individuals there, but Avraham couldn’t even find ten. The angels came to Sodom, and Lot invited them to his home to eat and rest. The evil people of Sodom heard that Lot was having guests and wanted to come attack them. Lot refused to allow that to happen and the angels made everyone surrounding the house blind. The angels told Lot about what was going to happen, and told him to leave Sodom. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters left the city and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife looked back though and was turned into a pillar of salt. Sarah gave birth to a son named Yitzchak at the age of ninety. Avraham gave Yitchak a brit milah when he was eight days old. Sarah saw that Yishmael, Yitchak’s older half-brother, was a bad influence him. She told Avraham to kick Yishmael and his mother Hagar out of the house. Hashem told Avraham to take YItchak and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain. Avraham took Yitchak and together headed for the mountain. They got there and Avraham built the altar and tied up Yitchak. Just as Avraham stretched out his hand to take the slaughtering knife, an angel ordered him to stop and instead Avraham offered a ram. Hashem promised Avraham great blessings as a reward for passing this difficult test.

LEADER TIP: Set up a huge tent with four openings and have all the group leaders come dressed as Avraham and Sarah welcoming the kids to shul!

PARSHA QUESTIONS

Questions

1. Why did Hashem visit Avraham?
2. How many angels came to visit Avraham?
3. What messages did the angels bring?
4. What was Sarah's response when she heard she was going to have a child?
5. Why did Hashem want to destroy Sodom?
6. How did Avraham try and save Sodom?
7. At what number of tzadikim did Avraham stop asking Hashem not to destroy Sodom?
8. Why weren't Lot and his family allowed to turn around and look at Sodom being destroyed?
9. What did Lot's wife turn into when she looked back at Sodom being destroyed?
10. Why did Sarah want to send Yishmael away?
11. How old were Avraham and Sarah when Yitzchak was born?
12. What did Hashem command Avraham to do to his son Yitzchak?
13. Where did Avraham and Yitzchak go to do this?
14. Who stopped Avraham from doing it?
15. What did he do instead?

Answers

1. Because he was sick so Hashem came to visit him.
2. 3
3. To tell Avraham and Sarah they were going to have a son, to heal Avraham, and that they were going to destroy Sodom
4. She laughed because she was really old
5. Because the people there were very evil
6. He looked for tzadikim there but couldn't find any
7. He stopped at ten because when the flood happened Hashem destroyed the world even though there were 8 tzadikim.
8. Since they really deserved to be destroyed with them
9. A pillar of salt
10. Because he was a bad influence on Yitzchak
11. Avraham was 100 and Sarah was 90
12. Sacrifice him
13. Har HaMoriah
14. An angel came and told him not to
15. He sacrificed a ram

LEADER TIP: Just like Hashem gave Avraham tests He knew Avraham could pass, remind the kids that they're able to answer all these "test" questions as well!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: For the kids to learn about how Avraham would not only always do chessed, but he would do it as fast as he could, even when it may have been difficult for him.

ACTIVITY: “The Chessed Obstacle Course”

Split the kids up into two teams (you can do it as one group as well if there aren't enough kids). The point of the game is to do as much chessed as possible. If there are two teams they will compete against each other, if you do it as one group then time the kids in order that they go as fast as possible. There will be four different stations representing four different kinds of chessed...

1. Tzedakah- They must throw “coins” into the “tzedakah box”. Be creative with this, have them throw some sort of a fake coin (or something similar) into a box.
2. Cleaning the park- Put out a bunch of different things on the floor and have the kids clean them all up and put them into a bucket/“trash can”.
3. Visiting the sick- Put a blanket over a group leader and give them three high fives.
4. Hachnasat Orchim- Set a place setting at a table (plate, cup, napkin, spoon, and fork)

Each kid will get a chance to go through the obstacle course. They will finish all of them as quickly as they can and then come back and tag the next person in line. Make sure to “reset” each station before each person takes their turn (aka put the “garbage” back on the floor, give them “coins”, take the blanket off of the group leader, and clear off the table). If you can think of any other chessed stations, add them to the list!

Once everyone gets a turn to go, add a rule to make it more difficult. For example, have them do it with one hand behind their back, walking backwards, holding your breath for as long as you can, hoping on one leg, etc. Do another couple rounds adding a different rules each time to make it more difficult (yet still possible) for the kids to accomplish the tasks.

DISCUSSION: In this week's Parsha, we learn about Avraham and his never ending dedication and commitment to always doing chessed. Avraham was sitting recuperating from his brit milah surgery when he gets a special visit from Hashem. Then in the middle of talking to Hashem, three “people” (who are really angels) come walking by. Avraham jumps up to greet them and he and Sarah welcome them into their home with open arms. Even though Avraham wasn't feeling well and it was probably difficult for him to run around taking care of his guests, he still worked as fast and as hard as he could to take care of his guests. Just like we did in our obstacle course, we learn from Avraham how important it is to do chessed and help other people even if it may sometimes be difficult for us. Just like we'd like people to help us when we need it, we should always try to help people in their times of need as well.

LEADER TIP: After the activity, discuss as a group what kinds of ways everyone can do as much chessed as possible

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: A test isn't only something we take at school - it can be something that makes us choose between right and wrong. In this week's Parsha (Gen. 22:1) we learn how Hashem tested Avraham. And in our lives, too, we can become better people when we 'pass the test' and choose to do what's right.

ACE IN THE HOLE

Robbie had just settled in, placing his textbooks, notepad, calculator and pencils neatly on the smooth, white desk of the library study cubicle. Though he was a good student, he knew he'd have to really dig in and put in a full day of cramming if he was going to ace his geometry mid-term test.

He opened up his book and dug into the first practice example when he heard some loud talking on the other side of the cubicle. He was about to go ask whoever it was to quiet down, when he thought he recognized the voices. Curious, he listened in:

"Please, Kevin, you've gotta help me get ready for this test!" It was Mike, that skinny guy in his class who always looked nervous and never raised his hand.

"No way! I'm too busy studying myself to waste time helping you."

"But you don't understand," Mike was pleading, "If I flunk another math test, my dad said he was going to give away my bike!"

"Your bike?"

"Yeah. He said I waste too much time riding and not enough time studying, that's why I mess up in school. But it's not true - I really try. I just can't lose my bike. I can't! It's the only good thing I have!"

"Hey, look, Mike," Robbie could hear Kevin say, "I'm sorry you're in trouble and everything, but I simply can't spare the time to help you. Now please leave me alone."

Then there was quiet. Robbie could see Mike, holding his textbook, shuffle away from Kevin's desk and go sit by himself at a table at the far side of the room.

Okay, Robbie told himself, let's get studying.

As he started on the examples, Robbie saw that although he remembered how to do most of them, he was definitely rusty and this last-minute study session was just what he needed to make the difference between doing good and doing great.

He shot another glance over to Mike's table and saw him open the book, stare at it a few seconds, then put his head down on top of it like he was sleeping. But Robbie knew he wasn't sleeping because he could see the kid's shoulders shaking every few seconds - as if he was crying.

Poor kid, Robbie thought. Too bad I don't have the time to help him. There's just no way I could - not if I want to ace the test...

Mike, head still down on the table, was in the middle of a miserable daydream about how lousy life was going to be stuck at home all the time without his bike, when he thought he felt someone tapping him on the shoulder. He looked up with a start through red-rimmed eyes.

"Hey, sorry to bother you, Mike ... but I was sitting by myself trying to study for the midterm and for some reason I just can't concentrate. Would you mind if we, like, worked together on it?"

Mike wanted to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. *Here was Robbie, one of the class brains, asking me to study with him!*

"If you get stuck on something I'll help you, and if I get stuck, you can help me. What do you say?" Robbie asked.

Mike didn't have to say anything, because his amazed, thrilled and grateful eyes said it all.

As the two boys sat down together, Robbie had no idea what kind of grade he was going to end up getting on the midterm, but one thing he knew for sure - he had already passed his test with flying colors.

Discussion Questions:

Q. What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story?

A. Many times in life, we are tested to choose between right and wrong, generous and stingy, kind and cruel, etc. When we pass our tests and choose properly we grow into better, kinder and more spiritual people.

Q. What do you think was Robbie's 'test'?

A. He had in front of him a choice whether to help a sincere, but unfortunate classmate whose quality of life really depended on his passing the math test - or merely devoting all his time efforts to himself, knowing full well that he was going to do reasonably well on the test either way. He chose kindness over selfishness and doing so, passed his test.

LEADER TIP: Have you ever gone through a really difficult time in your life? How did it feel knowing you made it through alive and well even though it was difficult?

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

(March 12, 1943- November 8, 2011)



Nosson Tzvi Finkel was born in Chicago, Illinois to Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Finkel and his wife, Sara Rosenblum, who ran a kosher catering business. Reb Finkel grew up as a "typical American Jewish boy" who enjoyed playing sports. He was known as Nathan in school and Natie to his friends. In 1957, at the age of 14, he went with his parents on a trip to Israel to visit the holy sites and his father's family. His great-uncle, Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel the Mir Rosh Yeshiva, recognized his ability to think clearly and have patience for studying, and asked his parents to let him stay and study in his yeshiva. Finkel stayed at the Mir for eight months to develop his skills. He came back to Chicago and went to Ida Crown Jewish Academy High School, where he was president of the student council and a starting centerfielder for the baseball team as well as on the basketball team. At the age of 17, Finkel returned to Jerusalem to learn at the Mir under the guidance of his great-uncle. In the summer of 1964 Finkel married Leah, his second cousin, and together they had 11 kids. He continued to learn at all hours, stopping at 2 a.m. Upon the death of his father-in-law, Finkel was named Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir as well as taking on the financial responsibilities for the yeshiva. When Reb Finkel first came to the Mir at the age of 17 in 1960, enrollment was less than 200 students. When he became Rosh Yeshiva in 1990, there were approximately 1,200 students. At the time of his death, there were nearly 7,600 students. This growth is because Reb Finkel's open-door policy as Rosh Yeshiva: whoever wished to learn at the Mir was welcome. He raised about \$500 million for the Mir during his time as Rosh Yeshiva. He was known for his Torah erudition and his warmth and concern for his students. There were about 100,000 people at his funeral. After he passed away, his son Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel took over as Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir.

LEADER TIP: As "regular Average Joe" kids, what do you wish to be/ accomplish when you're older?

Copyright by National Council of Young Israel 2014 All Rights Reserved, No reproduction or copying of this work without permission of the National Council of Young Israel is permitted. Any copying of this work is a violation of U.S. Copyright law and Halacha.

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Birkat Kriyat Shema

The first bracha said before Shema thanks Hashem for creating “light” and “darkness.” However, the Torah does not talk about Hashem creating darkness; it only talks about that Hashem said, “let there be light.” It would seem weird to talk about Hashem in this tefillah with the words “Who creates darkness.” Abarbanel explains that creating the light and darkness refers to “good” and “bad.” The term “light” represents everything in life that people normally see as “good,” such as health, wealth, happiness, freedom and friendship. “Darkness” represents suffering and difficulty. The Gemara (Berachos 11a) explains that looking at Hashem as the Creator of both light and darkness answers the questions about how the god who creates goodness cannot be the same one who creates evil. It shows the Jewish faith in Hashem’s pure goodness, acknowledging that even that which appears negative is simply a form of goodness that is hidden from our understanding.

LEADER TIP: What is one time in your life where you thought things were terrible but ended up working out for the best?



VAYERA REVIEW

Hashem came to visit Avraham as he was sitting at the entrance of his tent. Avraham saw three “people” travelling through past his tent and ran to go invite them into his home. These “people”, who were actually angels in human disguise, gladly took him up on the invitation, and Avraham and Sarah prepared a beautiful feast for them. The angels told Avraham that Sarah was going to give birth to a child in exactly one year from then. Sarah heard this news and laughed. The angels left from there and continued on to Sodom, where Lot lived, to destroy the five cities in that area. Hashem told Avraham He was going to destroy Sodom because of all the evil people that were there. Avraham tried to save them by trying to find fifty righteous people there. When it was clear that that wasn't going to happen, Avraham "bargained" with Hashem – eventually asking Him to spare Sodom even if there are only ten righteous individuals there, but Avraham couldn't even find ten. The angels came to Sodom, and Lot invited them to his home to eat and rest. The evil people of Sodom heard that Lot was having guests and wanted to come attack them. Lot refused to allow that to happen and the angels made everyone surrounding the house blind. The angels told Lot about what was going to happen, and told him to leave Sodom. Lot, his wife, and two of his daughters left the city and were warned not to look back as the city was being destroyed. Lot's wife looked back though and was turned into a pillar of salt. Sarah gave birth to a son named Yitzchak at the age of ninety. Avraham gave Yitzchak a brit milah when he was eight days old. Sarah saw that Yishmael, Yitchak's older half-brother, was a bad influence him. She told Avraham to kick Yishmael and his mother Hagar out of the house. Hashem told Avraham to take Yitchak and offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain. Avraham took Yitchak and together headed for the mountain. They got there and Avraham built the altar and tied up Yitchak. Just as Avraham stretched out his hand to take the slaughtering knife, an angel ordered him to stop and instead Avraham offered a ram. Hashem [romised Avraham great blessings as a reward for passing this difficult test.

LEADER TIP: Set up a huge tent with four openings and have all the group leaders come dressed as Avraham and Sarah welcoming the kids to shul!

PARSHA QUESTIONS

1. Why did G-d appear to Avraham after the *brit mila*?
18:1 - Avraham was sick, so G-d came to "visit" him.
2. Why was Avraham sitting at the entrance to his tent?
18:1 - He was looking for guests.
3. What were the missions of the three angels?
18:2 - To announce Yitzchak's birth, to heal Avraham and to destroy Sodom.
4. Why did Avraham enjoin the guests to wash the dust off their feet?
18:4 - He thought they were among those who worship the dust, and he didnt want any object of idolatry in his home.
5. Why did Avraham ask specifically Yishmael, and not someone else, to prepare food for the guests?
18:7 - To train him in the performance of *mitzvot*.
6. Why did the angels ask Avraham where Sarah was?
18:9 - To call attention to Sarahs modesty, so as to endear her to her husband.
7. When G-d related Sarahs thoughts to Avraham, He did not relate them precisely. Why?
18:13 - For the sake of peace.
8. What "cry" from Sodom came before G-d?
18:21 - The cry of a girl who was executed for giving food to the poor.
9. How many angels went to Sodom?
19:1 - Two; one to destroy the city and one to save Lot.
10. Why was Lot sitting at the gate of Sodom?
19:1 - He was a judge.
11. Lot served the angels *matza*. Why?
19:3 - It was Passover.
12. Why did Lot delay when he left Sodom?
19:16 - He wanted to save his property.

13. Why were Lot and his family not permitted to look back at Sodom?
19:17 - As they, too, deserved to be punished, it wasn't fitting for them to witness the destruction of Sodom.
14. Lot's wife looked back and became a pillar of salt. Why was she punished in this particular way?
19:26 - She was stingy, not wanting to give the guests salt.
15. In what merit did G-d save Lot?
19:29 - Lot had protected Avraham by concealing from the Egyptians the fact that Sarah was his wife.
16. Why did Avraham relocate after the destruction of Sodom?
20:1 - Because travel in the region ceased and Avraham could no longer find guests.
17. Why did Avimelech give gifts to Avraham?
20:14 - So that Avraham would pray for him.
18. Why was Avraham told to listen to Sarah?
21:12 - Because she was greater in prophecy.
19. Why did G-d listen to the prayer of Yishmael and not to that of Hagar?
21:17 - Because the prayer of a sick person is more readily accepted than the prayer of others on his behalf.
20. Who accompanied Avraham and Yitzchak to the *akeidah* (binding)?
22:3 - Yishmael and Eliezer.

LEADER TIP: Just like Hashem gave Avraham tests He knew Avraham could pass, remind the kids that they're able to answer all these "test" questions as well!

PARSHA ACTIVITY

GOAL: The kids will understand the importance of giving to others not only when it's comfortable and easy for them but also when it's hard and they need to sacrifice of ourselves for others.

ACTIVITY: Tell the kids that they are residents of an apartment building; each person gets a card with his\hers personality (attached are 6 characters, you can add more or give each 2/3 kids one character) in a different color and the owner of the building (the group leader) calls them all in for a meeting. He tells them that his sister, Kate, with her three kids, had lived in a small neighborhood in New York till not long ago, but Hurricane Sandy destroyed they house and all she had. So according to the contract they all signed if any emergency happens to the owner or his family, if asked they must leave the house immediately. He asks them to take a minute and think of why they should and should not be the ones to leave the house. You then go round the room and every character has to explain to the rest who they are and the reasons why they should or should not leave. At this point there are no discussions. The next stage is for them to decide together who should be the one to leave; the group leader should encourage a discussion between the whole group. After they have reached a decision you take a vote. Each person gets a card in each color and has to pick up the color of the person he\she should leave and explain shortly why. After all this the group leader poses a question- In reaching a decision, who here thought about themselves and who didn't think at all about themselves.

THE CHARACTERS

- You are an elderly women who has been living in the building for years, even before the owner came in. all your children and grand-children live away from you. Your husband died ten years ago and you are wheel-chair bound.
- You are a new immigrant from Russia, 20 year old. Left your house to go and make money in America and send it back home to your elderly parents. You go to college every day and work nights as a security guard of the building. You don't pay for the apartment because you work there and you know you can't find anything better.

- You are a young couple who just gave birth to a beautiful baby boy. He's four months old. Your wife is in college in her final year of learning medicine and you are a starting lawyer. You moved far away from home to start your life in the city.
- You are a family of two kids. A boy of 12 and a girl of 8. Your husband is a chef in a fancy restaurant and you work in real estate. You have other apartments in Miami and L.A but your main house is in the building. You help to keep the building clean and renovated and personally pay for any construction that needs to be done. You're very generous to the others in the building.
- You are a single man in your late thirties. You're a devoted teacher in a public school and organize activities for the children in the building every now and then. You were never married. You live for your students and for helping others.
- You are a single mom with three kids. A girl of 4 and twins of 2. You struggle to finish the month, Work in three jobs and spend all your money on the rent, the kids and babysitters. You hardly leave the building and if so it's to visit your brothers family who live around the block in a small apartment.

DISCUSSION: Avraham was sitting: פתח האהל כחם היום, "...at the entrance of the tent in the heat of the day". (Gen. 18,1) Rashi states that the sun was shining so as to prevent visitors coming to Avraham since he was still recovering from his circumcision. When he was peeved that no one was coming Hashem sent the three messengers. Avraham, on the other hand, took a lesson from the sun. The sun shines on everyone, the good and the bad alike. Hence, he too was willing and anxious to greet any stranger that appeared near his tent. Before he knew who these three messengers were he invited them in and offered them water and a meal. This is a wonderful trait if we could only imitate it. We should deal with everyone politely and with respect even if we know they don't deserve it. We never know the effect and the influence we can have on a person. It is not an easy quality to develop, but it certainly is worth striving for.

LEADER TIP: After the activity, discuss as a group what kinds of ways everyone can do as much chessed as possible

PARSHA STORY

Before you read: A test isn't only something we take at school - it can be something that makes us choose between right and wrong. In this week's Parsha (Gen. 22:1) we learn how Hashem tested Avraham. And in our lives, too, we can become better people when we 'pass the test' and choose to do what's right.

ACE IN THE HOLE

Robbie had just settled in, placing his textbooks, notepad, calculator and pencils neatly on the smooth, white desk of the library study cubicle. Though he was a good student, he knew he'd have to really dig in and put in a full day of cramming if he was going to ace his geometry mid-term test.

He opened up his book and dug into the first practice example when he heard some loud talking on the other side of the cubicle. He was about to go ask whoever it was to quiet down, when he thought he recognized the voices. Curious, he listened in:

"Please, Kevin, you've gotta help me get ready for this test!" It was Mike, that skinny guy in his class who always looked nervous and never raised his hand.

"No way! I'm too busy studying myself to waste time helping you."

"But you don't understand," Mike was pleading, "If I flunk another math test, my dad said he was going to give away my bike!"

"Your bike?"

"Yeah. He said I waste too much time riding and not enough time studying, that's why I mess up in school. But it's not true - I really try. I just can't lose my bike. I can't! It's the only good thing I have!"

"Hey, look, Mike," Robbie could hear Kevin say, "I'm sorry you're in trouble and everything, but I simply can't spare the time to help you. Now please leave me alone."

Then there was quiet. Robbie could see Mike, holding his textbook, shuffle away from Kevin's desk and go sit by himself at a table at the far side of the room.

Okay, Robbie told himself, let's get studying.

As he started on the examples, Robbie saw that although he remembered how to do most of them, he was definitely rusty and this last-minute study session was just what he needed to make the difference between doing good and doing great.

He shot another glance over to Mike's table and saw him open the book, stare at it a few seconds, then put his head down on top of it like he was sleeping. But Robbie knew he wasn't sleeping because he could see the kid's shoulders shaking every few seconds - as if he was crying.

Poor kid, Robbie thought. Too bad I don't have the time to help him. There's just no way I could - not if I want to ace the test...

* * *

Mike, head still down on the table, was in the middle of a miserable daydream about how lousy life was going to be stuck at home all the time without his bike, when he thought he felt someone tapping him on the shoulder. He looked up with a start through red-rimmed eyes.

"Hey, sorry to bother you, Mike ... but I was sitting by myself trying to study for the midterm and for some reason I just can't concentrate. Would you mind if we, like, worked together on it?"

Mike wanted to pinch himself to make sure he wasn't dreaming. *Here was Robbie, one of the class brains, asking me to study with him!*

"If you get stuck on something I'll help you, and if I get stuck, you can help me. What do you say?" Robbie asked.

Mike didn't have to say anything, because his amazed, thrilled and grateful eyes said it all.

As the two boys sat down together, Robbie had no idea what kind of grade he was going to end up getting on the midterm, but one thing he knew for sure - he had already passed his test with flying colors.

Discussion Questions:

Q. Does passing our tests always mean not doing for ourselves?

A. Not necessarily. Although many times the proper choice is to be altruistic, there are times that we must take care of our own legitimate needs and thus passing the test might mean saying 'no.'

Q. One of our sages once said 'Life is nothing but tests.' What do you think this means?

A. God gave us life and put us in the world to grow spiritually. This growth comes when we freely choose to do, say and even think the right thing. Therefore, we are constantly placed in situations where we can make those choices.

LEADER TIP: Have you ever gone through a really difficult time in your life? How did it feel knowing you made it through alive and well even though it was difficult?

permission of the National Council of Young Israel is permitted. Any copying of this work is a violation of U.S. Copyright law and Halacha.

JEWISH LEADER OF THE WEEK

HaRav Nosson Tzvi Finkel

(March 12, 1943- November 8, 2011)



Nosson Tzvi Finkel was born in Chicago, Illinois to Rabbi Eliyahu Meir Finkel and his wife, Sara Rosenblum, who ran a kosher catering business. Reb Finkel grew up as a "typical American Jewish boy" who enjoyed playing sports. He was known as Nathan in school and Natie to his friends. In 1957, at the age of 14, he went with his parents on a trip to Israel to visit the holy sites and his father's family. His great-uncle, Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel the Mir Rosh Yeshiva, recognized his ability to think clearly and have patience for studying, and asked his parents to let him stay and study in his yeshiva. Finkel stayed at the Mir for eight months to develop his skills. He came back to Chicago and went to Ida Crown Jewish Academy High School, where he was president of the student council and a starting centerfielder for the baseball team as well as on the basketball team. At the age of 17, Finkel returned to Jerusalem to learn at the Mir under the guidance of his great-uncle. In the summer of 1964 Finkel married Leah, his second cousin, and together they had 11 kids. He continued to learn at all hours, stopping at 2 a.m. Upon the death of his father-in-law, Finkel was named Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir as well as taking on the financial responsibilities for the yeshiva. When Reb Finkel first came to the Mir at the age of 17 in 1960, enrollment was less than 200 students. When he became Rosh Yeshiva in 1990, there were approximately 1,200 students. At the time of his death, there were nearly 7,600 students. This growth is because Reb Finkel's open-door policy as Rosh Yeshiva: whoever wished to learn at the Mir was welcome. Reb Finkel was diagnosed with Parkinson's disease in the late 1980s. Though he had a very difficult time walking and talking, and shook uncontrollably and had slurred speech, he continued to learn for hours every day and gave shiurim in the yeshiva, as well as went on fundraising trips all over the world. In later years, when he felt too weak to sit in a chair during learning, he would lie down on a couch and encourage the students to begin the session. He refused to take medication for his condition, since the drugs could make his mind foggy or cause memory loss and he didn't want to risk forgetting his Torah learning. He only took medication that provided temporary relief from his symptoms. There were roughly 100,000 people at his funeral, which started at the Mir yeshiva and continued on foot to Har HaMenuchet, where he was buried next to Rabbi Chaim Shmuelovitz, a former Rosh Yeshiva of the Mir. The procession blocked the entrance to the city and stopped operations of the Jerusalem Light Rail, as tens of thousands of mourners blocked the tracks on the Jerusalem Bridge on the way to the cemetery. At the funeral it was announced that Finkel's eldest son, Rabbi Eliezer Yehuda Finkel, would take over as Rosh Yeshiva.

LEADER TIP: As "regular Average Joe" kids, what do you wish to be/ accomplish when you're older?

TEFILLAH TREASURES

Birkat Kriyat Shema

This blessing said in the morning during Shacharit thanks Hashem for creating אור, “light” and חשך, “darkness.” However, the Torah does not recount Hashem creating darkness; it only relates (Bereishit 1:3) that Hashem proclaimed אור יהי, “let there be light.” It would seem inappropriate, then, to identify Hashem in this tefillah with the words חשך ובורא, “[Who] creates darkness.” Abarbanel explains that חשך ובורא אור יוצר refers to “good” and “bad.” The term “light” represents everything in life that people normally perceive as “good,” such as health, wealth, happiness, freedom and friendship. “Darkness” represents suffering and difficulty. The Gemara (Berachot 11a) explains that proclaiming Hashem as the Creator of both light and darkness answers the philosophers who claim that the god who creates goodness cannot be the same one who creates evil. It demonstrates the Jewish faith in Hashem’s pure goodness, acknowledging that even that which appears negative is simply a form of goodness that is hidden from human comprehension.

LEADER TIP: What is one time in your life where you thought things were terrible but ended up working out for the best?



PARSHA NATION



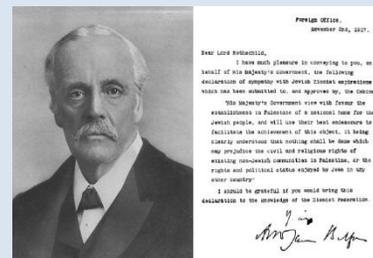
Teen Minyan Kol Haniarim

This Week in Jewish History

November 2, 1917

The Balfour Declaration

The Balfour Declaration of 1917 (dated November 2, 1917) was a classified formal statement of policy by the British government stating that the British government "view with favor the establishment in Palestine of a national home for the Jewish people" with the understanding that "nothing shall be done which may prejudice the civil and religious rights of existing non-Jewish communities in Palestine, or the rights and political status enjoyed by Jews in any other country." The declaration was made in a letter from Foreign Secretary Arthur James Balfour to Lord Rothschild (Walter Rothschild, 2nd Baron Rothschild), a leader of the British Jewish community, for transmission to the Zionist Federation, a private Zionist organization. The letter reflected the position of the British Cabinet,



as agreed upon in a meeting on October 31, 1917. It further stated

that the declaration is a sign of "sympathy with Jewish Zionist aspirations." The statement was issued through the efforts of Chaim Weizmann and Nahum Sokolow, the principal Zionist leaders based in London but, as they had asked for the reconstitution of Palestine as "the" Jewish national home, the Declaration fell short of Zionist expectations. The "Balfour Declaration" was later incorporated into the Sèvres peace treaty with Turkey and the Mandate for Palestine. The original document is kept at the British Library.

FIND...

- Angels
- Hachnasat Orchim
- Avraham
- Sarah
- Lot
- Sodom
- Salt
- Akeidat Yitzchak

STAT LINE OF THE WEEK- VAYERA

4th of the 54 sedras;

4th of 12 sedras in Bereishit

Written on 252 lines in a Sefer Torah, ranks 5th
6 Parshiyot; 4 open, 2 closed

147 p'sukim – ranks 7th (4th in Bereishit)

2085 words – ranks 2nd (first in Bereishit)

7862 letters – ranks 3rd (2nd in Bereishit)

MITZVOT

None of Taryag (the 613) are found in Vayera (one of 17 sedras without entries on the list of 613) – however, there are Midot and values and other lessons.

TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

IN WHAT HILLS IS YERUSHALAYIM LOCATED?

Email your answers to SAMMYS@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!

- **The cruise liner Queen Elizabeth II, moves only six inches for each gallon of fuel that it burns.**
- **The dot over the letter 'i' is called a tittle.**
- **Most lipstick contains fish scales.**

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

Parsha Points to Ponder...

If asked what is more important, heeding the laws that are between man and Hashem or the laws between man and his fellow men, many would opt for the former. We know, of course, that this is not so and we learn it from the beginning of this week's Portion. Avraham was sitting by the entrance to his tent and he was visited by Hashem. He then saw three strangers and he turned away from Hashem and went to invite them and offered them his hospitality. There is an interesting tale told about the Chafetz Chaim, the author of the Mishnah Berurah. He once invited a famous Rabbi who was visiting in his town to partake with him of his Shabbat meal Friday night. When they came home from the prayers the Chafetz Chaim did not say the Shalom Alechem inviting the imaginary angels but immediately proceeded to recite the Kiddush. He then invited everyone to wash and made Hamotzi. It was only after everyone had finished eating the fish that he started to recite the Shalom Alechem. The guest Rabbi could not contain himself. He asked his host to explain why he changed from the usual practice of reciting the Shalom Alechem before Kiddush. The answer he got was that the Chafetz Chaim knew his guest was hungry so he started the meal. The angels, he said, did not depend on him to give them a meal so they could wait. This shows how important it is to treat people with consideration and respect. It stands even on a greater plain than the observance of Mitzvot between man and Hashem.

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

Since 1981



BRYCE CANYON, UTAH

ACHVA

EAST - WEST - ALASKA/HAWAII - ISRAEL

***Once-in-a-lifetime Summer Tours
for Modern Orthodox High School Students***

***www.youngisrael.org/achva
or call 212-929-1525 ext. 181***

***Amazing Summer Programs for post-8th to post-11th graders starting at \$3,650 up to \$9,250.
For itineraries, dates and prices, see our web site. Experience matters: our 34th year! Sign up
online today!***