The Complete Torah Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all BimBam parsha videos)

For more teaching resources visit www.bimbam.com

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Thank you to Sydney Calander and Maya Bernstein for their extraordinary assistance in compiling this guide
Welcome to BimBam’s Complete Torah Guide for Educators!

In an ancient Jewish custom, new students of Torah receive a slate covered with Hebrew words and spread with honey. Teachers encouraged these children to lick the honey from each letter and experiencing the Torah’s sweetness. BimBam is a new kind of honey. We keep the Torah central in our vision and create these videos to get students engaged.

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We’ve created a lesson guide for each video in BimBam: The Torah and each follows the same format. We offer an overall impact statement for each BimBam, a set of learning objectives, a summary of the parsha upon which the cartoon is based, comprehension questions, prompts for discussion and active learning ideas. It’s easy to show a BimBam video and start talking Torah, but we recommend a few steps to make it really work in your classroom.

While most activities includes a recommended minimum age, all of our learning ideas can be modified for slightly younger or older learners. Each learning idea also incorporates higher-order thinking skills, and includes elements from all levels of Bloom’s Taxonomy. For added creativity, be sure to look for the color wheel next to lessons that are particularly arts-based!

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1. Familiarize yourself with the general content of the parsha (portion) of the Torah you plan to teach. There is too much in a parsha to cover in less than four minutes, so our videos are usually not fully comprehensive. Each unit of this Guide provides a brief summary of the week’s entire parsha and highlights which parts of the narrative the BimBam addresses.

There are many additional resources, in print and online, to help you get familiar with the week’s parsha. A quick search of the Internet will yield hundreds and most rabbis have favorites to offer.
2. Be sure to view the cartoon at least once prior to showing it to your class. Ask yourself:
   ○ Is this video appropriate for my students? (BimBam is primarily intended for ages 12 and up, but use your own expert judgment to make decisions about younger children.)
   ○ What specific learning outcomes would I like to derive from the cartoon?
   ○ How will I know if the intended outcomes are achieved?
   ○ Which of the active learning exercises will I incorporate?

Take it to the Classroom

1. **Before viewing:** Prepare your students for the viewing by making sure that they are seated quietly and comfortably, with a good view of the screen. Explain why you are showing them a “movie.” Depending on your class’s background in the subject material, you may also need to provide the context, background, or characters in the video. You may also use this time to give out a task for them to focus on during the viewing.

2. **Viewing:** Some teachers find that it is best to allow students to simply watch the cartoon. Others find it effective to have the students answer questions or complete a worksheet during the viewing. Some teachers suggest showing the video twice to the students—the first time, just let them watch it. Ask some basic comprehension questions to ensure that they have understood the story and the storyteller’s “takeaway.” The second time, follow the screening with more in-depth discussion questions.

3. **After viewing:** Following up with your class — that is, guiding their analysis and reflection — is the most important step. Want students to remember what happened in the video, or its teachings? Reinforcing the BimBam with an active learning activity will profoundly increase the retention of information. This guide is full of interactive ideas for this stage.

A Final Note
Remember: BimBam is not the definitive version of the story of the Torah… the Torah is!

BimBam is a collection of 55 different people’s thoughts, reactions and songs on the weekly parsha. Each of your students (and, of course, YOU) have stories to tell and thoughts to offer. Some of their opinions may contradict our storytellers’. Some might be strikingly similar, or take the text in a completely new creative direction.

Our hope? That our readings and yours, are creative, captivating and increase the study of Torah.
Bereshit Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all the Bereshit parsha videos from BimBam)

This curriculum was created and written by Emma Jaszczak, a Jewish arts educator.

For more teacher resources: www.BimBam.com
Note: This series contains two Bereshit episodes. We’ve included content for both!

Mystic and author Rabbi Lawrence Kushner’s BimBam video encourages viewers to view the Creation story in a more complex way, especially when it comes to the topic of light.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that…

1) Light was created on the first day but the luminaries were not created until the fourth day.
2) According to Kabbalah, the light created on the first day was human consciousness.
3) According to Kabbalah, the divine light of Creation is hidden away in nature, creatures, and humans.

PARSHA SUMMARY
1) On the first day, God makes darkness and light.*
2) On the second day, God forms the heavens, dividing the "upper waters" from the "lower waters."
3) On the third day, God sets the boundaries of land and sea, and brings vegetation from the earth.
4) On the fourth day, God creates the sun, moon, and stars.*
5) On the fifth day, God creates fish, birds, and reptiles.
6) On the sixth day, God creates land-animals, and then the first human being, Adam.
7) On the seventh day, God ceases work and sanctifies it as a day of rest.
8) God places Adam in the Garden of Eden and prohibits him from eating from the Tree of Knowledge.*
9) God creates a woman, Eve, from Adam’s side.
10) The serpent convinces Eve to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and to share it with Adam.
11) The serpent is punished and Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden.
12) Adam and Eve have two sons: Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel after God accepts Abel’s offering and rejects Cain’s. Adam and Eve have a third son named Seth.
13) Noah lives ten generations after Adam as the world becomes corrupt.

*included in this BimBam episode

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What did God create on the first day?
2) What day did God create the moon, sun and stars?
3) What is problematic or challenging about the fact that God didn’t create the sources of light until day four?
4) According to the narrator, what kind of light was the light created on day one?
5) What mitzvah (commandment) did God give Adam?
6) What happened to the light God created on day one?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) Do you read the story of the days of Creation literally?
2) The narrator suggests that the light created on the first day was the light of consciousness. What else can light symbolize?
3) What are some ways that people can bring “light” into the world?
4) Light can be illuminating, it makes things clear. How is the consciousness described in the parsha illuminating?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) Text Study/Chevruta (25 minutes) (Recommended Age: 12<)

But was the light created on the first day? For, behold, it is written: And God set them in the firmament of the heaven and it is [further] written: And there was evening and there was morning a fourth day— This is [to be explained] according to R. Eleazar. For R. Eleazar said: The light which the Holy One, blessed be He, created on the first day, one could see thereby from one end of the world to the other; but as soon as the Holy One, blessed be He, beheld the generation of the Flood and the generation of the Dispersion and saw that their actions were corrupt, He arose and hid it from them, for it is said: But from the wicked their light is withholden. And for whom did he reserve it? For the
righteous in the time to come, for it is said: And God saw the light, that it was good; and 'good' means only the righteous, for it is said: Say ye of the righteous that he is good. As soon as He saw the light that He had reserved for the righteous, He rejoiced, for it is said: He rejoiceth at the light of the righteous. Now Tannaim [differ on the point]: The light which the Holy One, blessed be He, created on the first day one could see and look thereby from one end of the world to the other; this is the view of R. Jacob. But the Sages say: It is identical with the luminaries; for they were created on the first day, but they were not hung up [in the firmament] till the fourth day.

(Babylonian Talmud, Chagigah 12a)

● What are the two different ways that the Rabbis reconcile the problem of the first and fourth days of Creation?
● Why did God have to hide away the supernal light? For whom and for when is it reserved?
● Share an example of a time that you only shared something with certain people.
● What are the differences between making or getting something and hanging it up? Is hanging it up less important, equally important, or more important? Why?
● Using one or both of these explanations, compose a tweet from God explaining the why there are two mentions of light.

2) Wire/Shadow Sculptures (1 hour) (Recommended Age: 10+)

Lead students in a discussion about how shining a light on something can make it more clear, and bring consciousness to something that may have been previously unnoticed.

● What were the two types of light that were created in Bereshit?
● How does the narrator of the video explain the difference?
● Describe a time when you had to ‘shine a light on,’ or describe, something in order for the person you were talking to to understand what you were talking about.
● What are the differences between a word and picture?
● Which do you think makes something more clear? Why? (There is no ‘right’ answer.)
Have them build small 3D wire sculptures with shadows that show messages about creation. The message can be a single word or a picture, as long as they can explain their message.

For example, a student could create a piece whose shadow shows the word ‘tov’ to represent the repetition of God finding each step good, or a fish to represent the creation of sea life on the 5th day. Let them get creative!

18-20 gauge wire is easy to manipulate and will hold its shape, yet is forgiving if students mess up or want to re-do part of their sculpture (it’s also easy to find online or at Lowe’s). Keep a large piece of white paper (or a few pieces of paper taped together) taped to the wall with a flashlight so students can check their progress as they work.

BimBam’s Executive Director, Sarah Lefton, derives from the opening verses of the Torah that when something is good, we sometimes need to express it twice. So enjoy a second take on Bereshit!

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this episode, students will know that…

1) The six days of creation were each deemed *tov* (good) by God. The third day was deemed *tov* twice and the sixth day was *Tov me’od*, very good.

2) There is endless learning to be done when we study the Torah, year after year.

3) We finish reading the Torah and start again at the beginning, on the holiday of Simchat Torah.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

1) On the first day, God makes darkness and light.*

2) On the second day, God forms the heavens, dividing the “upper waters” from the “lower waters.”* *

3) On the third day, God set the boundaries of land and sea, and brings vegetation from the earth.*
4) On the fourth day, God creates the sun, moon, and stars.*
5) On the fifth day, God creates fish, birds, and reptiles.*
6) On the sixth day, God creates land-animals, and then the first human being, Adam.*
7) On the seventh day, God ceases work and sanctifies it as a day of rest.*
8) God places Adam in the Garden of Eden and prohibits him from eating from the Tree of Knowledge.
9) God creates a woman, Eve, from Adam’s side.
10) The serpent convinces Eve to eat fruit from the Tree of Knowledge and to share it with Adam.
11) The serpent is punished and Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden.
12) Adam and Eve have two sons: Cain and Abel. Cain kills Abel after God accepts Abel’s offering and rejects Cain’s. Adam and Eve have a third son named Seth.
13) Noah lives ten generations after Adam as the world become corrupt.

*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1. What does “ki tov” mean?
2. On which day does God say “ki tov” twice?
3. What are some reasons why that day was “pamayim ki tov?”
4. Which day does God describe as “very good”?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. What does God create on the seventh day? How do we commemorate that now?
2. Every year we finish reading the end of the Torah, then scroll back to the beginning and read about Creation. What does the storyteller suggest is the reason why we read this text over and over again, year after year?
3. What are reasons you say things twice? Or reasons you wait to say something?
4. Why do you think BimBam chose to create two episodes for parshat Bereshit? Which episode do you prefer and why?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Creation Calendar (45 minutes) (Recommended Age: 8<)
If there were only seven days, calendars would be really small. Work with your students to brainstorm what kinds of images you would use to illustrate each day of creation!

- How many days are in the creation story?
- Describe what happened on the first day. The second. The third…. The 7th.
- What kinds of things could you draw to represent each of the days?
- What is the difference between the light from the first day and the light from the fourth day?
- Why do you think God called the 3rd day ‘tov,’ or good twice? Do you think God was right?

Break them into seven groups; each one should take on one day of Creation and use pens, crayons, magazine images, pastels, etc. to create one page of a “calendar” that you can hang on the wall of the classroom. This will make it easy and fun to remember what happened on each day of Creation. Challenge each group to incorporate the applicable phrasing (or lack thereof!) of Ki Tov into their images.

2) Rewind the Torah (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 5<)
If you have access to a Sefer Torah, it can be an amazing exercise to scroll it from one end to the other with your class. Have everyone stand around the Torah while two people trained in Torah “rewinding” slowly move from the end to the beginning. Can your students recognize the parts of the text that correspond to great moments in the Torah? Point out infamous moments when you can – and make sure to show off the incredible visual poetry of the Song of the Sea!

- How many books are in the Torah?
- Where in the Torah is the story of creation?
- How could you use what you know about the Torah to find different stories?
- What are the similarities and differences between this section (point to the creation story) and this section (point to Song of the Sea)?
- Do you think it’s a good idea to have certain parts look different and the rest all look the same? Why or why not? What do you think the story of creation would look like if it had a different layout like Song of the Sea
Writer Matthue Roth shares his ambivalence about Noah’s righteousness with viewers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that...
1) The people during the time of Noah were corrupt and sinful.
2) The Torah calls Noah a tzadik, a righteous person. The meaning of this is open to interpretation and may depend on context.
3) God commanded Noah to build an ark for himself, his family, and the animals.
4) After the flood, Noah sends a raven and then a dove to determine the status of the world.
5) The dove returns with an olive branch, symbolizing the end of the flood.
6) Noah follows God’s orders but does not go beyond that.

PARSHA SUMMARY
• The world is filled with corruption, but Noah is a righteous man.*
• God informs Noah that God is going to destroy the world in a flood.*
• Noah is given instructions to build an ark and to populate it with every kind of animal.*
• The rains last for forty days and nights, destroying all of the inhabitants of the world.*
• Noah first sends out a raven, and then a dove to see if the waters have abated. The dove returns with an olive branch, indicating that the waters have abated.*
• Noah and his family exit the ark and bring sacrifices.
• Noah is commanded to be fruitful and multiply, to not murder, and to not eat a limb ripped from a living animal.
• God promises to never flood the earth again, designating a rainbow as the sign of this covenant.
• Noah plants a vineyard, gets drunk, and falls asleep. Noah’s son, Ham, reveals Noah’s nakedness. Noah’s other two sons, Shem and Japheth, cover Noah, and Noah curses Ham and blesses Shem and Japheth.
• Noah’s descendants build the Tower of Babel. In response, God causes them to each speak a different language.
• The tenth generation of Shem produces Abram, who marries Sarai.
*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What does the Hebrew word tzadik mean?
2) Who else was on the ark besides Noah?
3) How many sets of kosher animals and how many sets of unkosher animals were brought on the ark?
4) What did the dove bring back, and what did that symbolize?
5) According to the narrator, what kind of righteous person was Noah? How could he have been different?
6) How was Noah like the raven and not like the dove?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) How do you understand God’s decision to destroy the world so soon after its creation?
2) The narrator suggests that although Noah was righteous, he could have done more. What other actions could Noah have taken when he heard God’s plans?
3) The narrator suggests that Noah should have done more to warn or help other people. Do you agree that this was his responsibility? Do you think that we have a responsibility to change the behavior of others?
4) There are two powerful images in the Noah story: the dove and the rainbow. What do these images symbolize for you when you think of them?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text Study/Chevruta (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 12<)

Break students into study pairs and share these texts and questions with them:
Noah was a righteous man; he was blameless in his generation; Noah walked with God.
(Genesis 6:9).

Next, read the famous commentary of Rashi to this verse:
“In his generation.” -
There are those among our Sages who infer from this to his praise: Certainly, had he lived in a righteous generation he would have been even more righteous. There are others who infer from this to his discredit: Relative to his generation he was righteous, but had he lived in the generation of Abraham he would not have been considered significant.

● How was Noah’s generation described?
● What are the two opinions about Noah found in the sages? How are they similar and different?
● What is the logic behind each argument? Which do you agree with and why?
● Do you think that our behavior is judged relative to or independent of those around us? What other examples from the Torah help you formulate your opinion?

“Noah walked with God” -
Whereas, concerning Abraham the Torah says: “God before whom I walked.” This is because Noah required God’s support to uphold him in his righteousness whereas, Abraham drew strength from within himself and walked in his righteousness by himself.

● Why would these midrashim choose to compare Noah and Abraham?
● In what ways do you think Abraham showed himself to be more righteous than Noah?

2) **Craft It: Buttons (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 10<)**

In this BimBam video, there are two powerful images: the rainbow and the dove. Discuss what these two images symbolize, and why they are so prevalent in political movements and pop culture.

● Which two birds did Noah send?
● Where do we see them?
● What messages are they used to convey?
● What other colors, words, and symbols are used to convey messages? How? What messages?
● Do you think that these were effective symbols within the story? Why or why not?
Then create your own iconography. Many craft supply shops have kits for creating wearable buttons, stickers, or t-shirts. Have your group work with the themes that rainbows and doves call to mind (for instance, peace, beauty, and promises) or with their own themes to create wearable buttons or bumper stickers with these images. If getting a button maker or kit isn’t possible, use a button-sized circle template for students to design on, have students cut out their designs, laminate the circles, and either hot glue safety pins to the back or just push the pin through a small portion of the middle of the button to attach it.
Husband and wife musical duo Stereo Sinai retells the events of this parsha from the matriarch Sarah’s perspective.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that…
1) Sarah is many things: beautiful, growing old, and committed to fulfilling her destiny.
2) Abram and Sarai are sent to an unknown place to receive their promise.
3) Abram and Sarai’s names are changed to Abraham and Sarah.

PARSHA SUMMARY
1) God commands Abram to leave his homeland and travel to a land that God will show him.*
2) Abram travels with his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot.*
3) Because of famine, Abram and Sarai travel to Egypt where they claim to be brother and sister to prevent Abram being killed by men who want Sarai for her beauty.*
4) Sarai is taken by the Pharaoh, and God puts a plague on the palace in order to get the Pharaoh to release them with great wealth.*
1) Abram and Lot separate because of their cattle, and Lot settles in Sodom.
2) Lot is taken captive, and Abram successfully battles for his release.
3) God promises Abram that his descendants will be numerous, despite his childlessness.*
4) In the Brit ben Habetarim (the covenant between the parts), God tells Abram that his descendants will be exiled and in bondage but ultimately redeemed.
5) Because of her childlessness, Sarai suggests that Abram father a child with her handmaid, Hagar.
6) Sarai mistreats Hagar, and Hagar gives birth to Ishmael.
7) Abram’s name is changed to Abraham. Sarai’s name is changed to Sarah.*
8) Abraham circumcises himself and all the males in his household.

*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) The chorus of this song contains the words: *Vayomer Hashem el Avram, lech lecha*. What do these words mean?

2) From whose perspective is this story told?

3) What are Abram and Sarai commanded to do?

4) What are Abram and Sarai’s new names?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) Why do you think the songwriter chose to tell the story from Sarah’s perspective? What does this add?

2) Why do you think God changes the names of Sarah and Abraham? What is the impact of changing your name?

3) Sarah and Abraham are told to go to an unknown place and start all over. Have you ever had the experience of going to an unknown place and starting all over (moving cities, getting older and changing schools, starting a new team)? What emotions did that experience trigger? What were the advantages and disadvantages of that experience?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) Contemporary Commentary – Women’s perspective (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 11<)

Historically, rabbis wrote midrash to explain parts of the biblical text that weren’t clear. Today, people write contemporary commentaries to retell stories from different perspectives.

Since women are often secondary characters in the biblical texts, or because, although they have important roles to play, we don’t hear their voices directly, they often become the central characters in contemporary commentaries. Below is a story from this week’s parsha that involves Sarah, but is not told from her perspective. Discuss the story, then challenge students to write a contemporary commentary of this story from Sarah’s perspective.

*When Avram approached Egypt, he said to Sarai his wife, “You are an attractive woman. When the Egyptians see you, they’ll say, ‘It’s his wife!’ They will kill me and keep you alive!*
Say that you’re my sister, so that they will favor me because of you and my life will be spared thanks to you. Pharaoh’s ministers saw her and praised her. She was taken to the house of Pharaoh…. God afflicted Pharaoh and his household with a severe disease because of Sarai. When Pharaoh summoned Avram, he said, “What have you done to me? Why didn’t you tell me that she was your wife? Why did you say, ‘She is my sister? Here she is. Take her and go!’” Pharaoh gave his men orders to protect them. They escorted Avram and his wife and all their possessions away. (Genesis 12:11-20)

- Where are Avram and Sarai going?
- What is Avram afraid will happen in Egypt?
- From what Avram is saying, what might Sarai be feeling?
- How are their feelings similar? How are they different?
- Do you think Avram’s suggestion was the best idea for their situation? Why or why not?

2) Name Activity (45 minutes) (Recommended Age: 8<)

Have your students list all the different names they have (first, middle, last, Hebrew, English, nicknames, etc). Then discuss:

- When Avram and Sarai’s names changed to Avraham and Sarah, what did the change mean?
- What does your name mean, if anything?
- Why did your parents choose it? Is there a story that you know?
- When do we use people’s names, and why do we use them? What are all the ways you can think of?
- Do different people have different names for you? Why do you think different people call you different things?
- Would you ever want to change your name? If so, to what? Why?

Then, using paper and pens, crayons, magazine images, pastels, etc., have students write out their first name in bubble letters, decorating the inside of each letter with images that represents who they are. Students who have particularly short names can include their middle, last, Hebrew, or nicknames if time allows.
Vayeira — Bereshit (Genesis) 18:1-22:24

Note: An incredible amount of narrative occurs in this parsha and the BimBam storyteller has focused on just a small bit of it. For a retelling of another portion of this parsha, look online for BimBam’s Rosh Hashanah episode, which tells the story of the Binding of Isaac, or ‘the Akedah’.

Jewish educator Evan Wolkenstein focuses his BimBam video on Hagar’s story, making the case that Hagar and Ishmael’s suffering is part of the Torah’s recipe for greatness.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that…
1) Abraham has a child, Ishmael, by Hagar because he cannot (yet) have one with his wife, Sarah.
2) Sarah exiles Hagar from their home. She and Ishmael wander in the desert where they meet an angel.
3) Hagar is promised that Ishmael will be the father of a great nation.

PARSHA SUMMARY
• Abraham is visited by three guests, who turn out to be angels, and serves them a feast.
• The angels inform Abraham and Sarah that 89-year-old Sarah will have a child; she laughs in response.
• God tells Abraham that God plans to destroy the city of Sodom; Abraham bargains to save its people.
• Lot, Abraham’s nephew, opens his home to two angels who come to Sodom as guests. The Sodomites demand that Lot surrender his guests. Lot begs them to stop, but they persist. The angels then blind the Sodomites with a bright light.
• God destroys Sodom, saving only Lot and his family; Lot’s wife turns back and turns into a pillar of salt.
• Lot’s daughters seduce him in order to repopulate the world. They each give birth to a son (the antecedents of the Ammonite and Moabite nations).
• Abimelech, the king of the Philistines, takes Sarah. God afflicts Abimelech’s house with a disease. He releases Sarah, bestows gifts upon them, and is healed.
• Sarah conceives and, at the age of ninety, gives birth to a son named Isaac.
• Abraham circumcises Isaac when he is eight days old.
• Sarah expels Hagar and her son Ishmael to the desert where they encounter an angel who tells Hagar that Ishmael will be the father of a great nation.*
• Abraham and Abimelech enter a peace treaty.
• God commands Abraham to take his son Isaac to be slaughtered.
• As Abraham is about to slaughter Isaac, an angel intercedes and a ram is slaughtered in his stead.

*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who is Hagar? What is her relationship with Sarah and Abraham?
2) What does the name Hagar mean?
3) What did the angel promise Hagar?
4) What did the angel ask Hagar?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The narrator of this episode asks us: “You want to do everything you can to protect your children from suffering—but this is the growing-up process. Could you have become the person you are without the suffering you’ve gone through?” Do you agree that suffering is part of the growing up process? How have the ways that you’ve suffered changed you?
2) The storyteller says that both Sarah and Hagar’s descendants had to experience enslavement and suffering before they could become great nations. Why might suffering have something to do with success in a nation’s development?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) The Descendants of Sarah and Hagar (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 11<)

Share a copy of the *Birkat Hamazon*. Explain to students that in some versions, the following blessing is added:

*Harachaman, hu yasim shalom bein b’nei Sarah u’vein b’nei Hagar.*
May the Merciful One place peace between the children of Sarah and the children of Hagar.
(You may also have seen it as “the children of Isaac and the children of Ishmael”)

- Who are the “children of Sarah/Isaac” and who are the “children of Hagar/Ishmael”?
- How were these two lineages separated?
- What would “peace between the children of Sarah/Isaac and the “children of Hagar/Ishmael” look like today?
- Why do you think that some versions use the expression “between the children of Sarah and the children of Hagar” instead of “the descendents of Isaac and Ishmael” or “the descendents of Abraham”?
- Do you think this is an important addition for Jews to say?
- What are other additions that we could add that are important for Jews to say today? Why?

2) Art Critique (45 minutes) (Recommended Age: all ages)

Locate these two photographs for your students:
  a. Adi Nes’s 2006 photograph “Hagar”
  b. Dorothea Lange’s 1936 photograph “Migrant Mother”

Adi Nes, a contemporary Israeli photographer, created a series of photographs that reflect Biblical stories of homelessness and destitution. The photograph “Hagar” evokes Dorothea Lange’s 1936 “Migrant Mother”, which has become an iconic picture of the Great Depression in the United States. The following questioning sequence is the outline for a traditional art critique. This method can be used for Kindergarten through adulthood, so feel free to adjust the language as you see fit. Begin by showing your students both of the photographs without titles or any context.

1) Reaction
   ○ In 1-2 words, what is your first reaction to these photographs?

2) Description
   ○ Obvious thematic, formal, and technical qualities
Don’t assume anything, or add your own interpretation just yet. What do you see?

Formal relationships of images to each other
- Which formal elements (colors, textures, lighting) are the most prominent in the photographs?
- Is movement portrayed at all? If so, how?
- Is there any contrast within the photographs themselves? Dark vs light, bright vs dull, etc.?
- What is the focal point, or main focus, in the work? What features or elements cause it to be the focal point?

Formal characterization
- What is the mood presented? What feelings is it trying to evoke? How can you tell?

Contextual examination (historical and cultural context)
- “Migrant Mother” by Dorothea Lange
  - Dorothea Lange was a professional photographer during the period of the Great Depression
  - She took a job as a photographer with the Resettlement Administration, whose job was to help poor families relocate within the United States
  - While at a campsite full of out-of-work pea pickers whose crop had been destroyed by freezing rain, Lange saw the woman in the photograph with her seven children.
  - She asked if she could photograph them, and the resulting image, “Migrant Mother,” because the iconic photo of the Great Depression, and one of the most well-known images of the 20th century.
- “Hagar” by Adi Nes
  - Adi Nes is a contemporary Israeli photographer
  - He created a series of photographs that reflect Biblical stories of homelessness and destitution
  - This photograph from 2006 and is titled “Hagar”
  - It is modeled after Dorothea Lange’s “Migrant Mother”
3) Interpretation
   ○ What is the purpose of these photographs? Why do you think they were taken?
   ○ What opinions do you think are being expressed? What do you think the photographers think? What about the people being photographed?
   ○ Who do you think the audience is? Who do you think the photographers wanted to see their work?
   ○ Why do you think Adi Nes modeled his photograph, “Hagar”, after Dorothea Lange’s, “Migrant Mother”?

4) Evaluation
   ○ Personal experience
     ■ Has your opinion of either of the photographs changed since we first looked at them? Or have your feelings gotten stronger or weaker?
   ○ Aesthetic judgement
     ■ Are these good photographs? Are they done well?
   ○ Contextual judgement
     ■ What do these photographs say about Hagar?
   ○ Final judgement
     ■ Do these photographs have meaning as art?
     ■ Do they have meaning as biblical commentary?
     ■ Are they worth looking at for studying this parsha?
Chayei Sarah — Bereshit (Genesis) 23:1-25:18

Note: The storyteller in this episode bases some of her tale on commentary that states that Rebecca was just three years old in this story. This is an opportunity to point out the difference to your students between the written Torah and commentary about it.

Novelist Goldie Goldbloom’s BimBam video uses midrash to associate Rebecca with kindness in the viewer’s imagination.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that...
1) Abraham’s servant, Eliezer, is sent to find a wife for Isaac.
2) Eliezer says that whichever woman offers water to him and his camels will be the right woman.
3) Rebecca, who, according to the midrash, is only three years old, brings water for all of his camels.
4) Rebecca’s great quality is that of kindness and helping others.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Sarah dies at the age of 127.
- Abraham buys a plot of land from Ephron the Hittite, and Sarah is buried in the Cave of Machpelah.
- Abraham sends his servant to find a wife for his son, Isaac, in Abraham’s native land of Aram.*
- The servant finds Rebecca, Abraham’s great-niece, who offers him and his camels water at the well. *
- Rebecca’s brother, Laban, celebrates the engagement and Rebecca returns with the servant to marry Isaac.
- Abraham remarries, fathers many more children, and dies at the age of 175.
- Ishmael dies at the age of 137.

* included in this BimBam episode
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who is Eliezer?
2) What is his mission?
3) Where does he go to find Isaac a wife?
4) What is the sign that will tell him he has found the right woman?
5) How old, according to the midrash, was Rebecca? How old was Isaac?
6) According to the narrator, what are the characteristics of babies and small children?
7) What, according to the narrator, was Rebecca’s fundamental characteristic?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) According to the storyteller, Eliezer is not concerned with beauty or wealth when searching for a mate for Isaac. He is only concerned with kindness. What are the top characteristics that you look for in a friend or romantic partner?
2) One midrash suggests that Rebecca was three years old at the time of this incident. Why might the midrash say something that seems so unlikely?
3) Isaac relies on first impressions. What kind of behavior makes a good first impression on you?
4) Eliezer is the first matchmaker. What do you think are the advantages and disadvantages of traditional matchmaking vs. modern-day dating?
5) What is your definition of kindness? When have you experienced it?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Choosing a Partner (45 minutes) (Recommended Age: 11+)

First, discuss with your students what they look for in a friend or partner:

- What was Rebecca’s great quality?
- Explain how Rebecca showed her kindness?
- What are ways we show kindness in relationships today?
- What are the differences between internal qualities, like kindness, and external qualities like beauty?
- Should we put more emphasis on internal qualities or external qualities or both when looking for partners? What about friends? If there’s a difference, why?
Next, divide the class into small groups and have the students list the top five characteristics of their ideal partner or friend. (Alternatively, give the students a huge list of ready-to-consider characteristics, eg: [http://ideonomy.mit.edu/essays/traits.html](http://ideonomy.mit.edu/essays/traits.html)).

Then, ask the group to prioritize these characteristics from one to five, including examples of how each characteristic might play out in a relationship, eg: “Sense of Humor would be important because I am very serious and it would be great to have balance”.

Finally, share each group’s responses, then have each student individually consider what they think are the five best qualities that they bring to a relationship and allow students who are interested to share.

2) Random Acts of Kindness Day (45 minutes, longer if you choose to deliver cards as a class) (Recommended Age: 5<)

The narrator emphasizes that Rebecca’s great quality was kindness to others. Discuss with students:

- What was Rebecca’s act of kindness?
- Without using examples, what is kindness?
- How can we be kind to others and our communities?
- How is being kind different from being nice to someone so that they are nice to you?
- Why is being kind to others and to our communities important?

Ask the students to commit to doing one random act of kindness at home or in their community. Have each student write their commitment on an index card, hang it on a bulletin board, and report back in writing or orally how the experience made them feel. Additionally, brainstorm as a class ways that you can be kind at school:

- What things do other people at school have to do for us to learn successfully?
- Which people do those things?
- How can we show our appreciation for those people and the things they do for us?
Using construction paper, markers, and other art supplies, create thank-you cards for members of your school’s community who may be under-appreciated, like maintenance staff, cafeteria staff, office staff, and administration. You can either deliver them later, or take a class field trip around the school to deliver the cards and thank people in person.
Note: The storyteller in this episode bases some of his narrative on commentary rather than the text of the written Torah. This is an opportunity to point out the difference to your students between the written Torah and different types of commentary.

Nechama Tamler, a Palo Alto based Jewish educator, digs into the family infighting of our ancestors in Parshat Toldot, from Jacob tricking Esau into giving up his birthright to Rebekah’s part in the scheme.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that…
1) Rebecca becomes pregnant with two sons who struggle inside of her.
2) Esau and Jacob are born with different physical and spiritual qualities.
3) Dealmaking and tricks play roles in the lives of the patriarchs and matriarchs.

PARSHA SUMMARY
• Isaac and Rebecca pray to conceive a child.*
• Rebecca conceives and is told that she has twin children fighting inside of her.*
• Rebecca gives birth to Esau and then to Jacob, who is holding onto Esau’s heel.*
• Esau returns from the field and wants Jacob’s stew. Jacob exchanges his stew for Esau’s birthright.*
• Isaac and Rebecca go to Philistine where they pretend to be brother and sister.
• Isaac digs and re-digs a series of wells. Isaac and Abimelech of Philistine make a peace treaty.
• Isaac becomes old and blind and wishes to bless Esau.*
• Rebecca advises Jacob to put on Esau’s clothing and trick Isaac into blessing him instead.*
• Isaac blesses Jacob instead of Esau. Esau returns furious and receives another blessing.*
• Jacob goes to Charan to find a wife and escape from Esau.

*included in this BimBam episode
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who is Rebecca carrying in her womb and why is her pregnancy so painful?
2) According to the storyteller (who uses Rashi), when would Jacob and Esau kick in Rebecca’s womb?
3) What are Esau’s physical and spiritual characteristics? What are Jacob’s?
4) What is the birthright? How does Jacob get the birthright from Esau?
5) What plan does Rebecca devise and why?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Why does Isaac favor one son and Rebecca the other? Have you ever experienced being the favored or less-favored child? Why do you think this happens and how does it feel?
2) Esau and Jacob were born of the same mother and father yet they are described as being completely different both physically and spiritually? Do you think that it is common for siblings to be so different from one another? Do differences make sibling rivalry easier or harder?
3) The storyteller suggests that this story is all about divine irony – “Man plans and God laughs.” Have you ever felt like you knew what was going to happen in your life but then things turned out radically different? How?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1. Text study/Chevruta (10 minutes) (Recommended Age: 10<)

The storyteller of this episode may have relied on the following source, which students can examine in pairs:

And the children struggled together within her. (Genesis 25:22): Our rabbis interpreted the word “struggled” as a play on “running.” When she would pass by the Torah study halls of Shem and Ever, Jacob would run and struggle to come out and when she would pass by the houses of idolatry, Esau would run and struggle to come out.”
-Rashi

- How does Rashi explain the use of “struggled?”
- What traits does this commentary attribute to each of the twins?
● What is an example of struggle from within your own family?
● How can we reconcile the claim that a person’s nature is determined before birth with a belief in free will and repentance?
● Do you believe that a person’s nature is determined before birth? Do you believe that a person can change? Why or why not?
● Based on what we know about the twins, create or plan out an activity that both Jacob and Esau would enjoy doing.

2. LABELS (45 minutes) (Recommended Age: 8<)

Discuss with students:

● What is a label?
● What labels were used for each of the twins?
● What are some other labels you’ve heard people use for others?

Have students write out labels they have heard or encountered on small slips of paper. Collect all of the labels in a bowl or container, and distribute paper and drawing supplies or collage supplies (magazines, scissors, glue sticks), or have them use an internet connective device. Have each student draw a label from the bowl and give them 5 minutes to draw, collage, or use images from the internet to create the person they think that label belongs to: what do they look like, what are they wearing, what are they doing? Do this for 2 labels.

Next, screen the BimBam video.

Then, discuss with your students:

Esau is labeled the “hairy one,” “the hunter,” and “wicked.” Jacob is labeled “hairless,” “the tent-dweller,” and “righteous.” It is very common to use labels to describe people, even parents do it: “she’s our wild one” or “he’s our little scholar.”
Children are also labeled at school: the smart one, the class clown, the social butterfly. Earlier you thought about the labels you’ve heard of or encountered. You even came up with what you thought people might look like just based on those labels.

- What impact do labels have on you? Do you act differently when you have a specific label? Do you feel different?
- Are these labels fair? Helpful? Harmful?
Esther D. Kustanowitz uses her dry sense of humor to tell the story of Jacob's family. It's complicated.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this episode, students will know that...

1) Jacob has a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder.
2) Jacob goes through a series of trials and tribulations in his pursuit of his love, Rachel.
3) Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah all bear children with Jacob.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- On his way to Haran, Jacob has a dream of angels ascending and descending a ladder. God makes a promise to protect him and Jacob names the place “Bet-El”.*
- In Haran, Jacob sees Rachel, Laban’s youngest daughter, at the well. He single-handedly rolls a heavy rock off of the top of the well and gives water to Rachel’s flock.*
- As part of his deal with Laban, Jacob works seven years for Rachel’s hand in marriage. However, he is deceived by Laban who substitutes Leah as a bride instead.*
- Jacob works another seven years in order to also marry Rachel.*
- Leah has four sons: Reuben, Simeon, Levi, and Judah.*
- Rachel is barren, so she gives Jacob her maid, Bilhah. Bilhah bears two sons, Dan and Naphtali.*
- Leah gives Jacob her maid, Zilpah, who bears Gad and Asher.*
- Leah has another three children: Issachar, Zebulun, and daughter Dinah. *
- Rachel finally conceives and bears Joseph.*
- Jacob amasses a large flock by differentiating streaked and spotted sheep.
- Jacob and his household flee the house of Laban and Rachel takes his household idols.
- Jacob and Laban sign a peace treaty.

*included in this BimBam episode
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Why does Jacob have to leave his father’s home?
2) What does Jacob see in his dream?
3) Who does Jacob meet at the well in Haran?
4) How does Laban deceived Jacob?
5) What do Rachel and Leah do when they cannot become pregnant?
6) How many children does Jacob ultimately have? How many children did Leah have? Rachel?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Why do you think barrenness was such a critical issue in the story of the matriarchs?
2) Do you sympathize more with Rachel or with Leah? Why?
3) The last line of this episode is: “sometimes you have to leave home to find home.” When have you had a transformative experience that you could only have had away from your home, city, or family?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text Study/Chevruta (20 minutes) (Recommended Age: 11<)

Have students examine this text in pairs and answer the questions:

In the evening, they led Leah in to the bridal chamber and extinguished the light...In the morning, however, “behold it was Leah (29:25)”. Jacob said to Leah: “You are a deceiver and the daughter of a deceiver!” “Is there a teacher without pupils?” she retorted. “Did not your father call you ‘Esau’ and you answered him? So, you called me ‘Rachel’ and I answered you!” Jacob then asked Laban, “Why did you deceive me?” Laban replied: “It is not the practice in our place to marry off the younger before the older.” (Genesis Rabbah, 70:19)

● Who was responsible for deceiving Jacob?
● Why does the text say Jacob was deceived?
● Using the text, show all of the parallels between this story and the story of Jacob and Esau.
● Do you think that Jacob got what he deserved?
Do you think that people’s sins always come back to “bite them” in some way? Share an example.

Have you ever lied, thought you got away with it, but were somehow punished for it later on? If so, based on those feelings, how do you think Jacob felt? If not, how do you imagine Jacob felt when it happened to him?

2) “POSTING” THE BIBLE (1 hour) (Recommended Age: 10<)

The narrator of this episode was a professional writer of blogs and newspaper articles about Hollywood, as well as Jewish community topics.

Have your students draft an instagram post (or other social media post that includes a picture) from the perspective of either Rachel or Leah. Don’t forget to have your students add a caption, hashtags, and other elements appropriate for the platform they are “posting” on. Using construction paper, colored pencils, markers, collage supplies, or other art supplies, have students create the picture that goes with their post. You can also have students stage scenes and use a phone, ipad, or other device that takes pictures to take the photograph. After students have completed their post, hang them around the room for other students to “comment” on them with post-it notes.
Award-winning novelist Dara Horn inspires students to delve deeply and thoughtfully into the Torah, and to consider the role of interpretation.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this episode, students will know that…

1) Jacob’s early life is characterized by deception and trickery.
2) Jacob wrestles with a man who injures him and then changes Jacob’s name to Israel.
3) The name Israel means “wrestle with God.”
4) Traditional commentaries debate the identity of the man who wrestled with Jacob.
5) Esau and Jacob reconcile.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Jacob prepares to meet his brother Esau by praying, sending gifts, and sending his family ahead to spend time by himself.*
- At night, Jacob wrestles with a “man” until dawn. Jacob prevails, but his hip is dislodged. The “man” blesses him and tells him that his name will be changed to Israel. Jacob names the place “Peniel,” or “face of God.”*
- Jacob reconciles with Esau.*
- Dinah is raped by Shechem. Dinah’s brothers Simeon and Levi convince the inhabitants of Shechem’s city to circumcise themselves, and then they slaughter and plunder the city.
- Jacob rebukes his sons; they explain that they were defending their sister’s honor.
- Jacob builds an altar and rids his household of all foreign gods.
- Rachel dies during the birth of her son Benjamin.
- Isaac dies at the age of 180 years old.

*included in this BimBam episode

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) How does the narrator characterize Jacob?
2) What does Jacob do to prepare for his meeting with Esau?
3) What happens to Jacob as a result of his wrestling match – physically and spiritually?
4) What is the meaning of the name Israel?
5) What is the meaning of the name Peniel?
6) What are the three different interpretations the narrator suggests about the identity of the mysterious wrestler?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The storyteller suggests different interpretations of who the “mysterious man” was. Which interpretation do you prefer? Do you think that the man could have been someone else? Why?
2) The storyteller says that Jacob develops from a trickster to a man of humility. Do you believe that people can really change? Has there been a time when you replaced a negative quality of yours with a positive one? How did it happen?
3) Jacob’s encounter with the “man” changes him in different ways. Have you ever had a one-time encounter with a person that changed you? Who was it and how did you change?
4) In this parsha, Jacob has a name change. What else changes when you change your name? Do different people call you by different names? Nicknames from your family or your friends? How does being called by a different name change who you are?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Jacob, Esau, or Man? (1 hour) (Recommended Age: 11+)
Have your students divide into three groups. Each group should be assigned one of the interpretations that the narrator suggests for the identity of the “mysterious man” listed below:

a. An angel
b. Jacob’s own conscious
c. Esau

Each group should study the text of Genesis 32: 25-33 and discuss the following points:

Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn. When he saw that he had not prevailed against him, he wrenched Jacob’s hip at its socket, so that the socket of his hip was strained as he wrestled with him. Then he said, “Let me go, for dawn is breaking.” But he answered, “I will not let you go, unless you bless me.” He said to him,
“What is your name?” He replied, “Jacob.” Said he, “Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have persevered with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.” Jacob asked, “Pray tell me your name.” But he said, “You must not ask my name!” And he took leave of him there. So Jacob named the place Peniel, meaning, “I have seen a divine being face to face, yet my life has been preserved.” The sun rose upon him as he passed Penuel, limping on his hip. That is why the children of Israel to this day do not eat the thigh muscle that is on the socket of the hip, since Jacob’s hip socket was wrenched at the thigh muscle.

- List the events in the order that they happened.
- Explain why Jacob was renamed Israel.
- Share a story of a time in your life when it wasn’t very clear who did what.
- Look back at the dialogue and distinguish who said what.

Then have students develop three proofs from the text to argue their position (if they can come up with additional proofs from other texts, they may do so in addition to these three). Then have students pick one of the three interpretations and, using examples from the arguments presented, write a either dialogue between Jacob and his family or a monologue from Jacob in which Jacob recounts the story of his wrestling.

2) Letter of Reconciliation (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 8+)

Explain to students how Esau and Jacob reconciled after a separation of 20 years. Have students think of someone who they have lost touch with, had a falling out with, have an unresolved fight with, or have broken up with. Instruct them to think through the following prompts, then write that person a letter of forgiveness and reconciliation (they don’t have to send it, but they can if they wish).

- When did the event happen?
- Explain what the event changed your relationship was? What happened to cause your fight or separation?
- What would you do differently now?
- What do you think the other person was thinking and feeling?
- What should you both do to reconcile with each other? Why?
Then write a response from the perspective of the person you’re writing to. How do they feel about the situation? How do they feel about your letter? Finish by writing a short paragraph about the ways in which you’ve struggled with this situation, and, based on your struggle, what might you change your name to in order to reflect that.
Hip hop artist and activist Danny Raphael begins the dramatic story of Joseph and his brothers in rhyme.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that...
1) Jacob’s favorite wife is Rachel and his favorite child is her son Joseph.
2) In the generations of Isaac and Jacob, one son is always chosen and one is always rejected.
3) Jacob gives Joseph a precious coat.
4) Joseph shares his dreams of superiority with his brothers who became jealous and hateful.
5) The brothers execute a plot to get rid of Joseph and Jacob comes to believe his son is dead.
6) Joseph ends up in an Egyptian prison.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Jacob favors his youngest son Joseph and gives him a precious coat.*
- Joseph tells his brothers his dream which increases their jealousy.*
- Joseph’s brothers plot to kill him; Reuben suggests they throw him into a pit instead.*
- Following Judah’s advice, the brothers sell Joseph to an Ishmaelite caravan going to Egypt.*
- The brothers give Jacob Joseph’s coat dipped in blood and Jacob mourns for him.*
- The story of Judah and his daughter-in-law Tamar is told.
- Joseph becomes a servant to Potiphar in Egypt. Potiphar’s wife tries to seduce Joseph and when he refuses she accuses him of attacking her. He is thrown in prison.*
- In prison, Joseph interprets the dreams of his fellow prisoners, the butler and the baker.*

*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who was Jacob’s favorite wife? Who was his favorite son?
2) Based on family history, what were the other brothers worried about?
3) What special gift did Jacob give to Joseph?
4) What dream did Joseph relay to his brothers?
5) What does the narrator mean when he says “peacock pride”?
6) What did the brothers do to Joseph? Where did he end up? What did the brothers tell Jacob?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) How might we make sense of the fact that Joseph’s brothers are the ancestors of the Jewish people…yet they seemed to act with such questionable morality?
2) Have you ever experienced or witnessed the impact of favoritism in a family? What is the cause and consequence?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Dream Interpretation (1 hour and 15 minutes) (Recommended Age: 12<)

The Rabbis of the Talmud discuss the significance and interpretation of dreams in the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Berachot 55a-57b. Have students work in pairs to read and discuss the following excerpts and questions:

R. Johanan said: If one rises early and a Scriptural verse comes to his mouth, this is a kind of minor prophecy. R. Johanan also said: Three kinds of dream are fulfilled: an early morning dream, a dream which a friend has about one, and a dream which is interpreted in the midst of a dream. Some add also, a dream which is repeated, as it says “and for that the dream was doubled unto Pharaoh twice,” etc.

R. Samuel b. Nahmani said in the name of R. Jonathan: A man is shown in a dream only what is suggested by his own thoughts, as it says, “As for you, Oh King, your thoughts came into your mind upon your bed.” Or if you like, I can derive it from here: “That you may know the thoughts of the heart.” Raba said: This is proved by the fact that a man is never shown in a dream a date palm of gold, or an elephant going through the eye of a needle.

- Which kinds of dreams does R. Johanan say are fulfilled?
What importance did the Rabbis give to dreams?

How do the Rabbis’ understanding of dreams correspond to your experience of dreaming??

How are the opinions from the two excerpts similar? How are they different?

What do you think about the interpretation of dreams?

Have students choose one of the 2 excerpts, either in groups or individually, and have them reinterpret the text as a short comic (5-10 panels). They can write it and sketch it out on paper, then draw their final draft on either paper or poster board. Use BimBam’s split script template (Find it here: bimbam.com/resources) so students can easily sketch out their panels. Alternately, they can use a web-based comics creation tool - there are many, and they change frequently so do some research.

2.) Joseph Songs (30 minutes, plus homework) (Recommended Age: 10<)

Hand out the lyrics to this song “Joseph’s Coat” from Andrew Lloyd Webber’s musical “Joseph And The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat” and to the song from the BimBam video (available on BimBam.com). As a class, have students watch the video and listen to the song. Then, either as a class or in small groups, have students compare the version of the Joseph story from the musical to the one in this BimBam episode.

Who do they both say was Jacob’s favorite wife?

Explain how Joseph’s brothers were feeling according to both songs.

Based on the information from the two songs, when was a time where you acted like someone from the story? Jacob? Joseph? The brothers?

What are the differences between the two songs in the way the story is told?

Why do you think the Joseph story works so well as a musical and theatrical performance?

Send the students home with a creative assignment (or do it in class if you have enough time):
Write new lyrics - to the tune of a current pop song - about one or two incidents in the Joseph narrative.

You can either give each student a different part of the story, have everyone work on the same part, or allow students to choose whichever part they’d like. You can either put on a musical in class, or up the creativity a little and have students create their own music videos!
Miketz — Bereshit (Genesis) 41:1–44:17

Sociologist Tobin Belzer makes viewers think about the pros and cons of assimilation in her BimBam video, which continues the story of Joseph.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that...
1) Joseph comes to be known for dream interpretation.
2) Joseph becomes powerful in Egypt and gains the outward appearance of an Egyptian lifestyle.
3) Joseph’s brothers come to Egypt from Canaan to look for food and they don’t recognize him.

PARSHA SUMMARY
• Pharaoh has a dream of seven skinny cows that eat seven fat cows, and seven healthy ears of corn that eat seven withering ears of corn.*
• The butler tells Pharaoh that Joseph (who is in prison) is an interpreter of dreams.
• Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams to mean that there will be seven years of plenty in Egypt followed by seven years of famine. Joseph suggests a plan to store food in preparation for the famine.*
• Pharaoh appoints Joseph to be viceroy in Egypt. Joseph marries Osnat and has two sons: Ephraim and Menashe. *
• In Canaan, Jacob sends his ten sons (all except Benjamin) to Egypt to find food. *
• When Joseph’s brothers stand in front of him, they do not recognize him. He accuses them of being spies and sends them to prison.*
• Joseph releases the brothers (except Simeon) to go back to Canaan to get Benjamin. Jacob does not want to send Benjamin but does when Judah promises to protect him.
• Joseph plants a goblet in Benjamin’s sack and accuses him of being a thief.

*included in this BimBam episode
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What were the contents of Pharaoh’s two dreams?
2) What was Joseph’s interpretation of the dreams?
3) What are the names of Joseph’s sons? What do these names mean?
4) How did Joseph treat his brothers when they came to Egypt?
5) What blessings do parents traditionally give their children on Friday nights?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Does Joseph become assimilated into Egyptian culture? In what ways is this positive or negative?
2) What do you think of the way that Joseph welcomed his brothers? Was his welcome justified, based on their history? Have you ever been in a situation where you had to deal cautiously with friends or family?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Hunger Relief (timing will vary, it can also be done partially or completely at home) (Recommended Age: 10<)

Discuss with your students how Parshat Miketz describes the way Joseph distributed food to Egyptians and foreigners during a time of famine. Famine still exists in today’s day and age. This can be an opportunity to learn about US and international hunger and ways that you can help.

Assign or have your students pick a place in the world that has recently been hit by disastrous flooding, drought, earthquakes, or another catastrophe that has caused widespread hunger.

Have students research the catastrophe and then answer the following questions:

- How many people were affected?
- Was food delivered to the people? By whom?
- Could this kind of disaster happen in the city where I live? If not, what kind could? How would it affect the community’s access to food?
- How is the disaster I’m researching similar to and different from the famine in the story?
• Was the response to the disaster successful? Why or why not? How about in the story? Why or why not?
• Draw or collage before and after pictures of either the whole community or one aspect of the community that the disaster affected.
• ***Older students can also research images and reports from different news sources and address their biases or agendas.

Have your students use this information to design and create a poster about the disaster they researched to inform others about global hunger and famine.

This is also a perfect week to take time out of the classroom and volunteer at a food bank, soup kitchen, or other hunger related cause

2) Assimilation (1 hour) (Recommended Age: 9+)

Discuss with your students how the story says that Joseph went through an “extreme makeover” in Egypt. He changed his name to an Egyptian name, he changed his clothes to Egyptian clothes and he married an Egyptian woman. He was unrecognizable as a Jew to his brothers. He became “Egyptianized” in the way that many Jews have become “Americanized” or “Canadified.” He rose to economic and political power, realizing the “Egyptian dream.”

Have a discussion with your students about what it means to be both American/Canadian/etc and Jewish.

• What are the two identities associated with Joseph?
• How did he become Egyptianized?
• Based on that, do you consider yourself to be Americanized (or insert applicable form of nationality)? Why or why not?
• Are you an American (or other nationality) Jew, or a Jewish American? Is there a difference?
• Is it possible to live fully with both identities? How?

Talk about the use of flags in showing identity: country flags, state flags, sexual orientation flags, gender presentation flags, cultural flags, flags for various causes and beliefs, flags to represent sports teams, flags for scouting troupes or other organizations, etc. Then discuss
other things your students identify with: hobbies, family traditions, birth order, hair texture, school mascot, etc.

Have your students design their own flag to represent their multifaceted, intersectional identities. They can either do this on paper, or on cloth. They can use drawing materials, collage colored paper, use magazine clippings, or use scraps of fabric and fabric glue. Get creative!

If you want to get even more creative, turn all of the flags into a class quilt by hole punching each corner and tying the flags together. If you have time, you can even have your students connect the flags by identity markers they have in common to show how, even with differences, the whole class is connected.
Filmmaker and youth media educator Liz Nord continues the Joseph story in her own easy-to-understand way, reminding viewers that even Biblical heroes went through tough spots.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this episode, students will know that...
1) Judah pleads with Joseph to spare Benjamin and take him instead.
2) Joseph eventually revealed his identity to his brothers.
3) Joseph brings his father back to Egypt and provides for his entire family there.
4) Biblical heroes did not behave perfectly all the time.

PARSHA SUMMARY
1) Judah pleads with Joseph to return Benjamin to his father. *
2) Joseph reveals his identity to his brothers. *
3) The brothers return to Jacob with the news and bring Jacob back to Egypt. *
4) The area of Goshen is designated for Joseph’s family and they prosper during the famine. *
5) Egyptians suffer and are enslaved during the remaining years of famine. *

*included in this BimBam episode

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What does Judah beg Joseph to do?
2) What does Joseph commit to doing after he reveals his identity?
3) What is the fate of the Egyptians during the remaining years of famine?
4) What are the values that we can learn from Joseph’s narrative?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Judah is willing to sacrifice himself for his brother Benjamin. Is there anyone you would be willing to sacrifice yourself for? Why?
2) Joseph says to his brothers: “You didn’t send me here; God did.” Do you believe that God was “pulling the strings” in the Joseph story? Do you believe that God is always “pulling the strings”? If so, are people still responsible for their actions?

3) According to the narrator, all the biblical heroes were human and made mistakes. Can you think of other examples of biblical characters that made grave mistakes or had serious weaknesses? Why doesn’t the Torah present us with more saintly or perfect people?

4) The narrator says that one of the lessons of this parsha is the importance of taking care of family. Do you agree that this is an important value? What are some ways that you help to take care of your family? What are some ways you hope to help take care of them in the future?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Text Study/Chevruta (30 minutes, longer if more students share) (Recommended Age: 11+)

Have students take a look at this text from Maimonides and discuss the questions in study pairs, then have the class discuss the questions as a group.

“What constitutes complete repentance? When one is confronted by the identical situation wherein he previously sinned and it lies within his power to commit the sin again, yet he does not do it because he wishes to repent—not because he is too fearful or weak [to repeat the sin]. How so? [For example,] if he had relations with a woman forbidden to him and he is again alone with her, still in the throes of his passion for her and his virility hasn’t lessened and [they are] in the same place where they previously sinned; if he abstains and does not sin, this is true repentance.” (Mishneh Torah, Laws of Repentance, 2:1)

- What is the definition Maimonides gives for complete repentance?
- How does the example he gives show complete repentance?
- Think about a time you have been in a familiar situation yet made a different decision about how to behave. How did it feel?
- In what ways was the brothers’ situation in Egypt with Benjamin “identical” to the sin they had committed with Joseph originally?
• Do Judah’s actions in this week’s parsha constitute “complete repentance”? Why or why not?

Have students design their own “Most Improved” awards for a previous flaw that they have since repented for. They should be detailed, explaining the original wrongdoing along with the instance in which they repented. You can do them as paper plate awards with markers and other drawing utensils, print out an award template on paper, or come up with another creative idea. As these can be very personal and private, offer an opportunity for students to share, but do not make it mandatory.

2) Movie Script (1 hour) (Recommended Age: 11<)

The narrator of this episode is a documentary filmmaker who has also covered politics for MTV news. One of the hardest parts of filmmaking and journalism is capturing dialogue well, and picking the right quotes to communicate a story and emotion to the audience.

Have your students script a short dialogue (no more than 5 minutes) based on the conversation that might have taken place between the brothers on their way home from Egypt. Then have students perform the dialogue, taking roles as the brothers.

Have students discuss the following questions in their groups before they begin writing:
• Who were the major players in the story?
• What happened while they were in Egypt?
• What are some feelings that a resolution like this may cause?
• How will the concept of your movie differ from the original story?
• Will you write this as a drama, comedy, musical, or something else? How does your choice help you authentically tell the story?

Some questions to consider when writing the script:
• What kinds of arguments might have happened?
• What are some ways that the mundane trip – camels, baggage, heat, stops for water – might become moments that drive the story forward?
• Does anyone change their mind about anything along the way?
Additionally, have students design the promotional poster that would go with this movie. They can use paper or poster board, drawing materials or collage materials, or create it digitally on a computer. Have them consider the following things during their design process:

- What quotes will you put on it?
- Which characters will the focus of the image?
- What will the setting be?
- What will it be called?
Playwright, actor, and Bibliyoga creator Marcus Freed's BimBam video brings the book of Genesis – and the story of Jacob’s family - to a close with a big dramatic flourish.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this episode, students will know that…

1) Jacob’s final request to be buried in Israel is fulfilled.
2) Jacob blesses Ephraim and Menashe, Joseph’s sons, before his death.
3) Jacob blesses each of his sons individually before his death.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Joseph promises to bury Jacob in Israel. *
- Jacob blesses Joseph’s sons, Ephraim and Menashe. Jacob crosses his hands so that his right hand rests above the younger child. When Joseph tries to correct his father, Jacob explains that the younger will be greater than the older.*
- Jacob blesses each of his sons on his deathbed.*
- Jacob dies at the age of 147 and there is a great funeral procession.*
- The brothers fear that Joseph will take revenge after Jacob’s death. Joseph reassures them that he holds no animosity towards them.*
- Joseph dies at the age of 110.*
- The book of Genesis concludes. *

*included in this BimBam episode

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What is Jacob’s final request from Joseph?
2) Which of Joseph’s sons does Jacob bless with his right hand? Why is this strange? Why does he do it?
3) What do the brothers fear will happen once Jacob dies?
4) What is the reason that Joseph gave to the brothers as to why he won’t harm them?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**
1) What significance does birth order play in your family? Do the older children and younger children get different treatment?

2) Why do you think the Torah stories always have the younger sibling become the chosen one?

3) Joseph’s final request is to be buried in Israel. Why do you think that is? What do you think your final request might be? Where would you want to be buried and why?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Bibliyoga (50 minutes) (Recommended Age: 9+)

The narrator of this episode, Marcus Freed, is the creator of “Bibliyoga.” For each parsha, he chooses a verse as his “kosher sutra,” and then creates a yoga pose that corresponds to the parsha. For example, since Isaac sees camels in Parshat Chayei Sarah, Marcus uses the flexible yoga pose, Camel Pose, to express Isaac’s physical and spiritual strength.

Reread the parsha as a class and then have students get into small groups. Instruct each group to select a different verse from the text to use as inspiration for a “bibliyoga pose.” Either have the students look up some charts of different yoga poses for inspiration, or provide them with some examples. Searching for “yoga posture chart” is a good starting point.

As they read through their text and think about different positions and motions, have each group discuss the following questions together:

- Which part of the story is your verse from?
- Explain what else is happening during that part of the story. What is the context?
- Think about a time in your life where you may have felt similarly to the people in this part of the story. What were you feeling?
- Test out some different types of positions and movements for your pose. Examine how they make your body and your mind feel. Is the way that position or movement makes you feel similar or different to the way you think the people in the story felt?
- What are you going to call your pose and why? How does this name show the connection between your verse and your pose?
Once the group has discussed their text and developed their pose, have them create a drawing of their yoga pose (it can be a stick figure, extremely detailed, or anything in between), and write how it relates to their verse. Combine all of the drawings into a book to create your own yoga how-to for Parshat Vayechi!

Move aside the chairs or go outside and allow students to teach their poses to the rest of the group.

2) Ethical Wills (30 minutes) (Recommended Age: 8+)

Discuss with students how there is a long tradition in Judaism of writing an ethical will, and it may have started right here in Parshat Vayechi (chapter 49). Explain to them how an ethical will is a way to share your values with your family and friends, and that while they aren’t legal wills, they can be profound and meaningful, since they contain personal beliefs, blessings, guidance, and perhaps even surprising sentiments for loved ones to read. Discuss the following questions as a class:

- Who does Jacob bless on his deathbed?
- How do his blessings share his values with his family?
- What’s an example of something you might bless your family with?
- How are Jacob’s blessings like an ethical will?
- Do you think ethical wills should be shared before or after the person dies? Why?

Have students write their own ethical will containing the messages and ideas that they would like to pass on to their friends or family. They can include messages for people who may not even exist yet – future children, future spouses, etc. They can be in the form of a list, or a narrative, like a letter. Students may wish to share selections from their ethical wills, or keep them private.

Each student should seal his or her ethical will in a nice envelope and keep it somewhere safe.

Example (adapt for different age groups, if necessary):
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For...</th>
<th>Value: Message</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>My baby sister</td>
<td>Sharing: Learning to share will help you be close with people and make great friendships</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My best friend, Alex</td>
<td>Living life: Keep saying yes, and having lots of adventures and trying new things. It will make your life more exciting and keep you happy!</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>My future child</td>
<td>Hard work: Always try your best, even when it’s hard! The best things in life come from things that challenge you.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Shemot Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all the Shemot parsha videos from BimBam)

This curriculum was created and written by Emily Shapiro Katz

For more teacher resources: www.BimBam.com
Jason Lieberman’s impactful video inspires empathy for persons with disabilities and fosters a respect for Moses, who overcame a personal challenge to become a great leader.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Parshat Shemot is the first parsha of the second book of the Torah - Exodus, or in Hebrew, Shemot.
2) Moses has many challenging experiences in his early life.
3) Moses is called by God to deliver the Israelite slaves at the burning bush, but is resistant to accept his mission because of a problem with his speech, or tongue.
4) God assigns Aaron as Moses’s spokesperson.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Jacob’s descendents multiply in the Land of Egypt.
- The new Pharaoh enslaves the Israelites to build his storage houses.
- Pharaoh instructs the midwives to kill Hebrew sons but they defy his orders.
- Pharaoh commands the Egyptians to cast all newborn male Israelites into the Nile.*
- Moses is born and is sent by his mother Jochebed in a basket down the Nile River.*
- Pharaoh’s daughter discovers the child and Miriam devises a plan for Jochebed to nurse him.*
- Moses grows up in Egypt and one day sees an Egyptian hitting a Hebrew. Moses kills the Egyptian.*
- Moses flees to Midian where he marries Zipporah, the daughter of Jethro and they have a son, Gershom.*
- Moses is called on by God at the burning bush to deliver the people from Egypt.*
- Moses protests that he is “heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue,” so God appoints Aaron as his mouthpiece. *
- Zipporah circumcised their son en route to Egypt.
- Moses approaches Pharaoh with his demand to free the people but Pharaoh increases the slaves’ workload and torment instead.
*included in this video*

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What book of the Torah are we beginning? What is it called in Hebrew and in English?
2) What does the storyteller say the relationship is between this book and the one that comes before it?
3) Who is the main character of this book?
4) Where is Moses raised? Why does he have to flee?
5) What is Moses’s reaction to being called by God to deliver the people? What is his objection?
6) What is God’s response to Moses’s objection?
7) What is Aaron’s role in relationship to Moses?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) What impact do you think the early events of Moses’s life (being cast into the Nile, raised in the Egyptian palace, fleeing to Midian, becoming a shepherd) had on his ultimate role as a great leader?
2) The storyteller points out that God chose not to fix Moses’s speech difficulty. Why do you think God maintained Moses’s disability?
3) Do you think that Moses was chosen in spite of his impediment or because of it? Explain your position.
4) What is the connection between this particular storyteller and the video he tells? What was your reaction to hearing him speak?
5) Have you ever felt that you had a personal “disability” or weakness that made you unworthy for a task or a role you were called upon to do?
6) The storyteller suggests that using Aaron as spokesperson teaches us that a community functions best when it uses multiple people with diverse strengths to overcome challenges. Have you ever had to rely on someone else’s strengths to compliment your weaknesses?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Great Leaders with Disabilities (homework assignment, plus time for presentation)

Moses may have been one of the greatest leaders with a disability. Throughout history, there have been leaders, inventors, politicians and entertainers who have had various physical and mental disabilities. Break students into groups and assign each a character from the list below:

- Franklin Roosevelt
- Ludwig van Beethoven
- Helen Keller
- Clara Barton
- Christopher Reeve
- Stephen Hawking
- Marlee Matlin

Have the groups research their character’s biography and discuss the following questions:

- How did the person’s disability contribute to their character and accomplishments?
- Is this person a great leader because of, or in spite of, his or her greatness?
- What do you think motivated (or motivates) this person on a day-to-day basis?

If you have the time and resources, have each group prepare a presentation poster that includes a photograph of their leader, an inspirational quote and some basic facts about their life.

2) Text study/ Chevruta (20 minutes)

In pairs, have students read these two excerpts that describe Moses’ speech:

And Moses said to the Lord, O my Lord, I am not a man of words, neither yesterday nor the day before, nor since you first spoke to your servant; but I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue. And the Lord said to him, Who has made man’s mouth? Who makes the dumb, or deaf, or the seeing, or the blind? Is it not I the Lord? Now therefore go and I will be with your mouth and teach you what you shall say. (Exodus 4:10)
Go, speak to Pharaoh king of Egypt, that he let the people of Israel go out of his land. And Moses spoke before the Lord, saying, Behold, the people of Israel have not listened to me; how then shall Pharaoh hear me, who am of uncircumcised lips? (Exodus 6:11)

Moses uses three different expressions to describe his problem:
- I am not a man of words
- I am heavy of mouth and heavy of tongue
- I am of uncircumcised lips

Lead a discussion:
- What do these different expressions mean? The BimBam storyteller interprets them to mean that Moses has a speech impediment.
- Can you suggest other interpretations?
- Do you think it matters what kind of problem Moses actually had?

Other Jewish scholars have taken different perspectives. Share these with the group.
- Ibn Ezra – This means either that he had a stutter or that he had trouble pronouncing certain letters
- Rashbam – “I am not an expert in the Egyptian language because I ran away from there and now I am 80 years old!”
- Sforno – “I am not trained in the craft of speaking before a king”
Rabbi Katie Mizrahi’s video retells one of the best known stories in the entire Torah, helping viewers see how the plagues caused both enormous misery and enormous awe of God.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The plagues served multiple purposes: punishment, persuasion, fear and reminder.
2) Pharaoh continuously breaks his promise and refuses to let the people go.
3) This week’s parsha contains the first seven plagues: blood, frogs, lice, insects, pestilence, boils and hail.
4) Every year the ten plagues are commemorated at the Passover Seder. Ten drops of wine are removed in remembrance for the suffering of the Egyptians.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Moses tells the Israelites that God has sent him to free them, but they do not listen.*
- God explains that Pharaoh’s heart will be hardened.*
- Moses is sent to Pharaoh to let the Israelite slaves free.*
- Aaron’s staff turns into a serpent and Pharaoh’s magicians do the same. Aaron’s serpent eats their serpents.*
- Seven plagues are cast upon the Egyptians:
  - First plague: blood*
  - Second plague: frogs*
  - Third plague: lice*
  - Fourth plague: insects*
  - Fifth plague: pestilence*
  - Sixth plague: boils*
  - Seventh plague: hail*

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Why were the Israelites reluctant to listen to Moses’s promises?
2) What, according to the storyteller, are possible reasons that God might have sent the plagues?
3) What was the sign that Aaron performed to convince the Pharaoh of God’s existence?
4) Why did Pharaoh refuse to let the people go, even after he promised to do so?
5) What purpose did the plagues serve for the Israelites?
6) Why do we spill a drop of wine at a Passover seder when we list the ten plagues?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Why did God have to send plagues at all? Couldn’t God have freed the Israelites in a quicker and easier manner? Why these specific plagues?
2) Do you think that the entire Egyptian people - and their animals - deserved the suffering of the plagues? Why didn’t God afflict only the guiltiest parties?
3) Why do you think God allowed Pharaoh’s heart to be hardened repeatedly?
4) The storyteller explains that we spill wine to show that we do not rejoice in the suffering of our enemies. How is this concept relevant to the way that you think about the tensions in contemporary politics? Is it ever ok to rejoice in the suffering of our enemies?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text Study (15 minutes)

Share this text with your class.
“The final decision always rests with man. At the beginning, however, man is free to choose any path of action he so desires. He is afforded equal opportunity to do good or evil. But as soon as he has made his first choice, then the opportunities are no longer so evenly balanced. The more he persists in the first path of his choosing, shall we say, the evil path, the harder will it become for him to revert to the good path, even though his essential freedom of choice is not affected. In other words, it is not the Almighty who has hampered his freedom and made the path of repentance difficult. He has, by his own choice and persistence in evil, placed obstacles in the way leading back to reformation.” – Nechama Leibowitz, Israel, 1905-1997
How might Leibowitz explain Pharoah’s decisions? Did he make his own choices, or was everything determined by the fact that God hardened Pharoah’s heart?

2) **Contemporary Plagues (30 minutes)**

In pairs or groups have students come up with a list of the ten worst plagues today (examples: HIV, terrorism, global warming, racism).

- Defend your choices: what makes these plagues instead of just problems?
- How are leaders and people responding to these modern plagues?
Actor and director Joel Stanley's video is told from Aaron's point of view and will help students literally get inside his head and think creatively about the lives of Torah characters.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The last three plagues – locusts, darkness and death of the firstborn – are described in this parsha.
2) Aaron is Moses's spokesperson.
3) Pharaoh's heart is hardened after every plague.
4) Moses demands that the Israelites leave Egypt along with their entire community – which includes women and cattle.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**
- Two more plagues occur:
  - Eighth plague: locusts*
  - Ninth plague: darkness*
- The mitzvah of Rosh Chodesh is given.
- The Israelites are commanded to bring a paschal lamb and to smear its blood on their doorposts.
- The Israelites are commanded to keep Passover for seven days every year and to abstain from eating leavened bread.
- The tenth plague, the death of the firstborn sons, is dealt.*
- Pharaoh sends away the Israelites on the 15th day of Nisan
- The Israelites exit with Egyptian valuables and dough that did not have time to rise.
- All male Israelite firstborn sons and beasts are sanctified to God.
- We learn that there should be “sign upon your hand and a remembrance between your eyes.”

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What is the meaning of the word bo, also the name of this week’s parsha?
2) What is the deal that Pharaoh offers the Israelites? What did he want them to leave behind?
3) What are the last three plagues?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Why do you think the storyteller speaks from the perspective of Aaron? What impact does it have?
2) According to the storyteller, God says “bo” (come) to Pharaoh instead of “go” in order to teach that God is present everywhere – even within Pharaoh. Do you believe that God is present in every situation and in every person? Is this hard to accept? What examples can you give that illustrate your opinion?
3) In this video, Aaron says that he and Moses were afraid, but that they found confidence through experience. What is something that you do today that you were once scared, or intimidated, about doing? Did it take a lot of practice? Coaching? Prayer? Something else?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEA
1) First Person Bibliodrama (45 minutes)

The storyteller of this BimBam is an actor and director. He chose to tell this story using the first-person narrative, which is a powerful medium for creating a personal connection with the audience.

Split students into small groups. Each person should choose a character from this week’s parsha. It can be a main character like Moses or a minor character like an anonymous slave, or an Egyptian woman who is pregnant.

Each student should retell the story of the last three plagues from their chosen character’s perspective. Another member of the group should play the moderator or interviewer and ask the character guiding questions:

- Where were you when the locusts started swarming?
- What did you and your family do in the darkness?
● How do you feel about the Pharaoh’s behavior?

All characters should respond in the first person. Rotate through the group until everyone has a chance to answer the questions.

Variation: If your class enjoys working with video, create these interviews as videos and post them on the internet!
Challah for Hunger founder Eli Winkelman’s funny video helps viewers will feel sympathy for leaders who have to listen and tend to the complaints of a lot of people.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) God leads the Israelites out of Egypt via the Red Sea.
3) At the Red Sea, the water splits for the Israelites and drowns the Egyptians.
4) At Marah, the waters are bitter, the people complain and Moses sweetens the water.
5) God provides manna for the people to eat, but they may only take one portion per day and two portions on Shabbat.
6) The Israelites continue to complain and doubt throughout the desert.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● God sends the Israelites on a circuitous route out of Egypt, via the Red Sea.*
● The Egyptians chase after the Israelites and the Israelites are fearful and doubtful. *
● Moses stretches out his staff over the sea and it splits for the Israelites to pass.*
● Moses stretches out his staff again and the sea drowns the Egyptians.*
● Miriam and Moses lead the people in a victory song. *
● The people complain about the bitter waters at Marah so Moses sweetens it miraculously.*
● The Israelites complain about the lack of food so God promises manna and quail. *
● The Israelites violate the special laws of manna on weekdays and Shabbat.*
● The Israelites successfully battle the Amalekites.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What happens to the Israelites and the Egyptians at the Red Sea?
2) What happens at Marah?
3) What does God provide for the people’s hunger? What are the restrictions he sets?
4) What is the rule of manna on the Sabbath?
5) Why do the Israelites, according to the storyteller, complain and doubt so much?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) Why do you think that the people could so easily turn to complaints and doubts after they had witnessed the miracle at the Red Sea?
2) Why do people in general (or you, specifically) complain? What is it that we are really hoping for when we complain?
3) What impact does complaining have on us? On others?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) Gratitude Journal (30 minutes)

Complaining and gratitude can be seen as opposites. It is difficult to be thankful when you are complaining.

Have the students take a clean sheet of white paper. Make two columns – one labeled COMPLAINT and the second labeled GRATITUDE.

In the first column, list five things that they often complain about (examples: too much homework, have to wake up too early, my mother is annoying).

In the second, have students turn each of these complaints into a statement of gratitude (examples: I am grateful to have a serious education, to have a bed to sleep and wake up in and to have parents who care for me).

Finally, lead a discussion:

- How does it feel to think, or say, the statements in the second column instead of the first?
- How might these expressions of gratitude change your complaints?

Encourage students to take the Gratitude Journal home and peek at it when they’re feeling whiny.
2. Complaining is Contagious (20 minutes)

This is a fun way to end class.

Sit in a circle. Have one student share a complaint – for instance - “we get too much homework”.

As you go around the circle, the task of each participant is to elaborate and exaggerate upon the original statement. Do this out loud. The original complaint will get worse and worse until you’re drowning in misery!

At the end, compare the first and last statements. Notice how fun it was to exaggerate.

Next, do the same activity, but with a statement of positive-thinking.

Point out that just as complaining can be contagious, so can positive-thinking! Send students home on a happy note.
New media consultant Leah Jones's practical video reminds viewers to offer solutions to problems, rather than just complaining about them.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) This week’s parsha includes the Ten Commandments.
2) This week’s parsha is named Yitro, after Moses’s non-Jewish father-in-law.
3) Yitro devises a new judicial system so that the burden of law is delegated to others besides Moses.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**
- Yitro, Moses’s father-in-law joins the Israelites in the desert with Moses’s wife and sons. *
- Yitro suggests a new judicial system to Moses in order to lighten his burden. *
- The Israelites encamp at Mt. Sinai and Moses ascends the mountain to talk to God.
- The people prepare for revelation for three days and are forbidden to approach the mountain.
- Thunder, lightning, a thick cloud and the sound of a shofar surround Mt. Sinai.
- God speaks the Ten Commandments:
  - God is the only God
  - Don’t worship idols
  - Don’t take God’s name in vain
  - Remember Shabbat
  - Honor your parents
  - Don’t murder
  - Don’t commit adultery
  - Don’t steal
  - Don’t lie
  - Don’t covet
- God makes a prohibition against creating graven images and the commands the Israelites to erect a sacrificial altar.

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What are the Ten Commandments?
2) Who is this week’s parsha named after? Why might that seem strange or surprising?
3) What problem does Yitro see in Moses’s system?
4) What is Yitro’s advice to Moses?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) This BimBam storyteller suggests numerous unhelpful things that Yitro could have done or said to Moses. Have you ever been in a difficult situation where people kept saying or doing all the wrong things? What kind of help would you have preferred?
2) Think of some reasons why Yitro (a non-Israelite, who had just arrived from afar), who was the only one able to see the problem clearly and offer a productive solution.
3) Have you ever needed assistance that only an outsider or a “third-party” could offer?
4) Yitro taught Moses about delegating. Why is delegating so important?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) Conversion Panel (at least an hour)

“When Jethro, the priest of Midian, Moses’ father-in-law, heard of all that God had done for Moses and for Israel his people and that the Lord had brought Israel out of Egypt…Jethro rejoiced because of all the goodness which the Lord had done to Israel, whom he had delivered from the hand of the Egyptians. And Jethro said, Blessed be the Lord, who has saved you from the hand of the Egyptians and from the hand of Pharaoh, who has saved the people from under the hand of the Egyptians. Now I know that the Lord is greater than all gods; for in the thing where they dealt proudly he was above them. And Jethro, Moses’ father-in-law, took a burnt offering and sacrifices for God; and Aaron came and all the elders of Israel, to eat bread with Moses’ father-in-law before God.” (Exodus 18:1, 18:9-12)
Based on these verses, the Rabbis of the Talmud believed that Yitro was the first convert to Judaism. The storyteller in this video is also an adult convert to Judaism - she writes a blog called “Accidentally Jewish,” in which she blogged the entire experience of converting to Judaism in her late 20s.

Convene a panel of Jews by Choice (converts to Judaism) and ask them questions based on this week’s parsha such as:

- Yitro was inspired to convert based on hearing about God’s deliverance of the Israelites from Egypt. What inspired you to convert?
- Yitro’s daughter, Zipporah, was married to an Israelite – Moses. Did you have any family or social connections to the Jewish community before you converted?
- Yitro made a great contribution by reorganizing the judicial system. It is possible that his insights were only possible because of his non-Israelite background. What contributions do you think that you make to the Jewish community specifically because you have a non-Jewish background?

2) “Be More Like Yitro” (20 minutes, plus time for sharing, if desired)

Have your students divide into pairs. Each person in the pair should describe something that he or she does that is not effective or efficient, or that feels too overwhelming. The role of the other person is to ask their partner questions that help them understand why they are doing things that way - and to offer a solution for the problem. Switch sides after ten minutes.

Each pair can present their problem and solution to the rest of the group.
History professor David Henkin’s intellectual video explains some reasons why we write things down in seferim, or books.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that…

1) Parshat Mishpatim deals with many types of laws.
2) The Israelites respond to God’s commands with the expression *Na’aseh V’nishma*, which means “we will do and we will listen.”
3) Moses does not only relay the laws orally, he writes them down into a *sefer*.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- 53 of the 613 *mitzvot* are found in this parsha.*
- The laws of the Israelite slave and maidservant, manslaughter, murder, injuring a parent, kidnapping, cursing a parent, are all included.
- Laws about the killing of slaves, personal damages, injury to slaves, the killer ox, a hole in the ground, damage by goring, penalties for stealing are included.
- Laws of damage by grazing, damage by fire, the unpaid custodian, the paid custodian, the borrowed article, seduction, occult practices, idolatry and oppression, lending money, are given.
- Prohibitions against cursing a judge or leader, consuming meat that was not ritually slaughtered, offering a sacrifice before the animal is eight days old, perjury and judicial corruption; the commandments to separate all agricultural tithes in their proper order, sanctify the first-born son, return a lost animal to its owner and help unload an overburdened animal, are given.
- The laws of the Shemmitah year, Shabbat, Pesach, Shavout, Sukkot and the prohibitions against milk and meat are given.
- God provides an angel for the Israelites in the desert who will either punish or reward them, based on their obedience or lack thereof.
- Moses ascends the mountain and writes down all the commandments.*
- The Israelites declare “we will do and we will hear.”*
- Moses, Aaron, Aaron’s sons and the 70 elders have a vision of God.*
*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What is Parshat Mishaptim full of?
2) What does Na’aseh V’nishma mean?
3) What do Moses and Aaron see atop the mountain?
4) List the different reasons the storyteller suggests for why Moses chooses to write down the laws.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The famous expression Na’aseh V’nishma can be translated many different ways. Na’aseh can be translated as: we will practice, do, act, obey or observe. Nishma can be translated as: we will hear, listen, understand, or study. How does your understanding of this expression change depending on what translation is used?
2) The storyteller refers to the idea that the Jewish people are known as “People of the Book.” Do you think that Jews have a particular attachment to the written word, libraries, texts, books? If so, why do you think – historically, sociologically, or psychologically – this might be true?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text Study/Chevruta (30 minutes)

The storyteller points out that the phrase Na’aseh V’nishma seems out of order. Usually, people learn or understand before they practice or act. See the text below about the relationship between study and practice:

Rabbi Tarfon and the Elders were once reclining in the upper story of Nithza’s house, in Lydda, when this question was raised before them: Is study greater, or practice? Rabbi Tarfon answered, saying: Practice is greater. Rabbi Akiba answered, saying: Study is greater, for it leads to practice. Then they all answered and said: Study is greater, for it leads to action. (Kiddushin 40b)
• How would you answer the question “Is study greater than practice?” Explain your reasoning.
• Does study lead to practice or action? How?

2) Classroom Contract (30 minutes)

At the end of this video, the storyteller suggests that the Torah is like a written contract between two parties (in this case God and the people). In the “Torah contract,” there are the responsibilities for both parties and rules and consequences for following or breaking them.

Create a written classroom contract between the students and the teacher.

Brainstorm:
• What are your classroom rules?
• What are the responsibilities of the students?
• What are the responsibilities of the teacher?
• What are the consequences of not following these rules and responsibilities?

Choose a written form to present your contract (bulletin board, website, scroll, etc)
Furniture designer Rafael Kushick’s humorous video will help viewers understand the design and construction of the Mishkan and draw connections from it to their own lives.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Israelites are instructed to build a portable Mishkan in the desert with donated precious materials.
2) The main vessels in the Mishkan are the ark, the table of the showbread, the Menorah and the altar.
3) The Israelites make a golden calf out of similar materials.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- The Israelites are instructed to contribute precious materials for the building of the Mishkan (Tabernacle). *
- The instructions for building the Ark, the Table for the Showbread and the Menorah are given.*
- The instructions and measurements for building the sanctuary are given.*
- The Tabernacle is divided into the Holy of Holies and the Holy Chamber.*
- The Tabernacle’s courtyard contains the outdoor altar.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What are the Israelites commanded to do with their donations of precious materials?
2) What is the Mishkan?
3) What are the main vessels in the Mishkan?
4) Why did the Mishkan have to be portable? How was this achieved?
5) What other item, made of precious materials, did the Israelites make in the desert?
1) Why do you think the Mishkan has to be made of such expensive and valuable materials? Does God need these physical materials?

2) Answer the questions that the storyteller poses: what are our most precious possessions today? How do we store them?

3) The storyteller draws a parallel between the Golden Calf and the Mishkan. They were made of the same materials, yet one is associated with sin and one with goodness. What are modern examples of how the same physical materials can be used for good or for evil?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Build-a-Mishkan (60 minutes)**

Divide the students into at least four groups. Assign each group one of the Mishkan’s main vessels listed below:

- The ark
- The table
- The menorah
- The altar

Each group’s task is to read the verses that describe how their item is constructed. They should start by looking through the text in Shemot 25:1-27:19 to find it.

Build a 3-D version to present to the class. Provide craft materials such as cardboard boxes, fabric scraps, craft sticks and gold paint. The entire group can bring their projects together within a group-built complete model of the Mishkan.

2) **Make-YOUR-Mishkan (45 minutes)**

The Mishkan represented the concretization of the people’s relationship with God, their culture and their religion. Today, we do not necessarily relate to the objects that they used to represent this connection.

Have participants create their a personal Mishkan – a blueprint that represents their personal relationship with God, the Jewish people and Judaism.
Draw a portable container of your own design and then decide what you would put in it (examples: photographs from a special trip, a memento from a beloved grandparent, parents’ candlesticks, a Jewish camp t-shirt, etc).

For this activity, you may want to ask the students to bring these objects to class.
PunkTorah founder Patrick Aleph’s fast-paced and funny video introduces students to priestly garb and uses the prohibition of mixing wool and linen to explain notions of holiness.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) In this week’s parsha, the priestly garb is described in great detail.
2) Although mixing wool and linen is usually prohibited, the priest’s clothing must be made from this combination.
3) The priestly clothing, like the Mishkan, is made out of gold, the material used to make the Golden Calf.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- The special garments of the *Kohen Gadol* include:
  - Ephod - Apron
  - Choshen Mishpat - Breastplate
  - Urim Vetumim – we aren’t exactly sure what these are
  - Meil - Robe
  - Tzitz - Headpiece
- The four garments worn by the High Priests and the regular priests: tunics, turbans, sashes and pants.*
- The Kohanim are consecrated by immersing themselves in a mikveh and bringing sacrifices.
- The Kohanim burn incense on the altar twice a day.

*included in this video*

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What two fabrics make up the Kohanim’s clothing? Why is it surprising that the Kohen is commanded to wear these two materials together?
2) Why, according to the storyteller, were the Mishkan and the priestly clothes made out of gold specifically? What is the relationship between the sin of the golden calf and these items?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) What are some jobs today that call for a certain kind of dress? What happens if the person is wearing the wrong clothes?

2) Why do we dress in certain ways in certain social situations? What does a person’s clothing say?

3) The storyteller suggests one reason that the Kohen is permitted to wear linen and wool when the Torah typically forbids this combination. Can you think of any other reasons for this exception? Why can the Kohen wear something that is forbidden to everyone else?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Kohen Fashion Show (45 minutes)

Divide the group into at least five smaller groups. Assign each group a different Kohen Gadol garment from the list below:

- Ephod – Apron
- Choshen Mishpat - Breastplate
- Mei - Robe
- Tzitz - Headpiece

Each group is responsible for reading the verses associated with their assigned garment and creating a physical representation of it. Provide craft materials such as oak tag paper or posterboard, paint, fabrics and ribbons.

2) Uniforms (20 minutes)

Show photographs of people wearing different types of uniforms, for instance, professional athletes, world religious leaders, police officers, royalty, soldiers, prisoners). It may draw laughs and interest if you include some pictures of professionals in your organization that students will recognize – a rabbi in robes, the nurse in uniform, a
maintenance staff member in uniform, the gym coach in sweats, the president of the Board in a suit, a student in a graduation robe, etc.

Analyze each picture, using the following questions:

- What aspects of the uniform are functional? Symbolic? Ceremonial?
- What is the impact of the uniform on the person wearing it?
- What is the impact of the uniform on the person who sees it?
Ki Tisa — Shemot (Exodus) 30:11-34:35

Author and speaking trainer Sarah Gershman’s video helps students think about the Torah narrative using psychological insights.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Israelites feel anxious when Moses does not return from the mountain.
2) The Israelites ask Aaron to build a golden calf. Aaron delays them by asking them to donate their jewelry to the cause, but the project does move forward successfully.
3) God wants to destroy the Israelites but Moses successfully prays on their behalf.
4) When Moses sees the golden calf, he breaks the tablets of the law.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● Moses takes a census of the people by collecting a half-shekel from each person.
● The instructions for the holy laver and the recipe for the anointing oil are given.
● Bezalel is chosen as the craftsman of the Mishkan.
● Moses is on Mt. Sinai for 40 days, the Israelites become impatient for his return and turn to Aaron.*
● The Israelites donate their gold to fashion a Golden Calf.*
● Moses begs God not to destroy the people and to forgive them.*
● When Moses sees the Golden Calf, he breaks the tablets.*
● Thousands of Israelites are killed by the Levites for their participation in the Golden Calf.
● Moses has a vision of God’s back (but not God’s face) and God’s thirteen attributes are revealed.
● Commandments not to make molten gods, to observe the three festivals, not to eat chametz on Passover, to sanctify male firstborn humans and cattle and not to cook meat together with milk are given.
● Moses delivers a new set of tablets, as beams of light project off his face.

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What do the Israelites do when they think that Moses is not returning?
2) What does Aaron do in an attempt to delay them?
3) What does God want to do in response to the Golden Calf?
4) What does Moses do when he sees the Golden Calf for himself?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Share an example of something that you know intellectually is true, but that you have trouble believing, because you haven’t seen it with your own eyes.
2) The storyteller suggests that the Golden Calf was a “representation of Moses.” This is a psychological reading of the Torah. What are some other ways to interpret the story, in other words, what else could the Golden Calf represent?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Transitional Objects (15 minutes)

The storyteller says that the Israelites at the Golden Calf were like infants; they did not understand that objects still exist after they are no longer in sight. Like a baby, the people needed a “transitional object,” something to represent Moses when he was not there.

For a baby, transitional objects are usually things like a blanket, a bottle, or a teddy bear. Ask students to interview their parents or other caregivers including babysitters, nannies, grandparents, etc.

Did you have any transitional objects as a child? When did you most need them? What did they represent for you? How did they provide you with security?

Have the class share these stories out loud before watching the BimBam. This will probably raise the level of understanding when the storyteller discusses transitional objects.
2) **Text Study/Chevruta (25 minutes)**

According to the storyteller, Moses smashed the tablets out of anger at the Israelites. For a different interpretation of his actions, read the sources below in study pairs and answer the questions.

“When he saw there was no future hope for Israel, he threw in his lot with theirs and broke the tablets and said to the Holy one blessed be He: They have sinned, but so have I with the breaking of the tablets. If you forgive them, forgive me too; as it is said; “and now, if thou wilt forgive their sin” forgive mine too. But if thou dost not forgive them, do not forgive me but “blot me out I pray Thee from Thy book which thou hast written.” (Shemot Rabbah)

“He did not break them on the mountain itself when he was first apprised of the sin of the calf, but he broke them in the camp. For had Israel not seen the Tables intact, the awesome work of the Lord, they would not have been moved by the fragments, since the soul is more impressed by what it sees, than by what it hears. He therefore brought them down from the mountain to show them to the people and then break them before their very eyes” (Abrabanel).

- Why, according to these sources, did Moses break the tablets?
- Why do you think Moses broke the tablets?
- Do you think it was spontaneous or premeditated?
- Do you think that Moses’s actions were sinful or praiseworthy?
Vayakhel — Shemot (Exodus) 35:1-38:20

Violinist and singer Alicia Jo Rabins's video uses heartfelt music and lyrics to teach about God’s request that wise-hearted men and women bring gifts to make the Mishkan glorious and that skilled craftsmen complete the construction work.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Men and women contributed what they could to the Mishkan.
2) The Mishkan was a place for God to dwell.
3) Betzalel and Ohaliab were in charge of the design and construction of the Mishkan.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● Men and women donate goods and skills to the construction of the Tabernacle.*
● Bezalel and Oholiab are chosen as the foremen of the Tabernacle construction project. *
● Moses tells the people to stop donating materials because there is enough.
● The vessels and tapestries of the Tabernacle are assembled.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who are Betzalel and Oholiab?
2) Who contributed to the building of the Mishkan?
3) Which vessels are mentioned in this song?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) We don’t have a Mishkan today. But we do have synagogues. What contributions have to be made for a synagogue to run (examples: skills, resources, time, etc?)
2) One of the lyrics of this song is “Build me a tent that I can dwell in.” What does it mean for God to dwell in a physical place?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Community Quilt (60 minutes plus a substantial amount of construction time afterwards)

The chorus of this song is:

\[
\text{Wise hearted men, wise hearted women} \\
\text{bring what you can, silver and linen} \\
\text{wool of crimson and of blue} \\
\text{and the bodies I gave you}
\]

The work of the Mishkan was an opportunity for cooperation and collaboration: “\textit{everyone who excelled in ability and everyone whose spirit was moved came... men and women, all whose hearts moved them...}” (Exodus 21-22).

The name of this week’s parsha, Vayakhel comes from the root word \textit{kahal}, which means “community”. True community is built through active participation and contribution from all of its members.

Create a class quilt. Each participant should contribute a square that represents his or her individual and unique contribution to your community. Here’s how to make them:

Materials: drawing paper, carbon transfer paper, linoleum blocks, carving tools, colorful squares of velvet, iron, cotton batting, quilt backing

- Students should design the words and/or images that they would like to appear on their square on a regular piece of drawing paper. Remember that images will “print” backwards because these are stamps.
- Use carbon paper to trace and transfer the designs onto linoleum blocks.
- Carve the design into the blocks.
- Iron these stamps onto the fuzzy side of colorful squares of velvet. Wherever the stamp is cutaway, the velvet will “stay fuzzy,” while everything else will melt.
When all the quilt blocks are completed, stitch them together and assemble with the cotton batting and quilt backing for a completed quilt that will look wonderful hung in your classroom.

2) Betzalel Project (30 minutes)

Betzalel Academy of Arts and Design is Israel's national school of art. It is named for Bezalel who, as we learned in this BimBam, was appointed by Moses to oversee the design and construction of the Mishkan. Bezalel has become known as the first Jewish artist.

First, lead a discussion:

- What makes something “Jewish art?”
  - Does the subject matter have to be Jewish?
  - Is a piece of art - a book, a painting, a film - Jewish just because the artist is Jewish?

Look at some works of famous Jewish visual artists such as Amedeo Clemente Modigliani, Marc Chagall, Judy Chicago and Yaakov Agam. Discuss how their Judaism is or isn’t relevant to their artwork.
Pekudei — Shemot (Exodus) 38:21-40:38

Note: This video includes an image of a man and woman in lingerie.

Puppeteer Dov Weinstein’s humorous BimBam brings the book of Exodus to a close, comparing the Mishkan to a new couple’s home.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The details of the priestly garments and the Tabernacle vessels are repeated in this parsha.
2) Gold, silver and copper are the precious metals used to build the Mishkan.
3) Moses anoints the priests with oil.
4) God’s presence dwells in the Mishkan.
5) The relationship between God and the people is compared to that between a bride and a groom.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Gold, silver and copper are donated for the construction of the Tabernacle and its vessels.
- The special garments of the Kohen Gadol include:
  - Ephod - Apron
  - Choshen Mishpat - Breastplate
  - Meil - Robe
  - Tzitz - Headpiece
- The four garments worn by both the High Priest and the regular priests are: tunics, turbans, sashes and pants.*
- Moses anoints all of the vessels and the priests with anointing oil.*
- The Cloud of Glory and the Divine Presence fill the Tabernacle.*

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What details are repeated in this parsha?
2) What materials are used to build the Mishkan?
3) What is the meaning of the phrase “Chazak Chazak v’nitchazek?” When do we say this?
4) What does Moses use to anoint the priests and vessels?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The storyteller suggests that the description of the Mishkan is told with such detail and repetition to emphasize how precious it is. What are some things that you take care of with great precision and detail?
2) The storyteller compares the relationship of God and Israel to the relationship between a husband and a wife. What other metaphors for this relationship are you familiar with (examples: student/teacher, father/son, king/servant)? What metaphor resonates most with you?
3) The storyteller compares the Mishkan to a newlywed couple’s first home together. Think about what might be the most special or “holy” place to you. Ask students to imagine this place quietly for a while in every visual and intangible detail possible. Then discuss what makes these places special or holy.

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Text-study (10 minutes)
Consider, as a group, this verse from the parsha:

Let them make Me a sanctuary that I may dwell among them. (Exodus 25:8)

- What words are strange in this verse? (Answer: among them instead of in it)
- What does this expression suggest about the purpose of the Mishkan?

2) Synagogues Today (15 minutes)
Synagogues today are based on the concept of *mikdash meat* or “mini” Temple/Tabernacles. What are some of the objects or architecture that parallel the design of the Mishkan?

- What do you like about your synagogue?
- What services does it provide for you, your family and community?
- If you were to re-design your synagogue from scratch, what would you add, remove, or change?
Vayikra Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all the Vayikra parsha videos from BimBam)

This curriculum was created and written by Emily Shapiro Katz

For more teacher resources: www.BimBam.com
Vayikra — Vayikra (Leviticus) 1:1-6:7

Education Director Rachel Kohl Finegold's video explains the ins and outs of sacrifices in the Torah, making them relevant to today.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Hebrew word for sacrifice is Korban. It comes from the root word, Karov (to come close).
2) Sacrifices were the ancient way of becoming close to God.
3) When sacrifices ceased, daily prayer replaced them.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- The Laws of sacrifices are given, including*:
  - The Olah (burnt) offering
  - The Minchah (meal) offering
  - The Omer (barley) offering
  - The Shelamim (peace) offering
  - The Chatat (sin) offering
  - The Asham (guilt) sacrifice

*included in this BimBam video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What is the Hebrew word for sacrifice? What is the meaning of the root of this word?
2) What was the purpose of bringing sacrifices to the Temple?
3) Why was there a “vegetarian” sacrificial option?
4) Now that we no longer bring sacrifices to the Temple, what has replaced them?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The narrator says that Korbanot were a way for people to “come close” to God. What do you do when you want to feel closer to God?
2) Some people believe that there will come a time when the Jewish people will again bring animal sacrifices to the Temple. Would you want this ritual to return? Why or why not?

3) What is the modern meaning of the word *sacrifice*? How is it related to the Biblical meaning? What is the greatest sacrifice that you have ever made for God or for another person?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Korbanot as Gifts (15 minutes)**

Lead a discussion about when we give gifts. Try to draw out these three main ideas:

- Commemoration of an event – holiday, anniversary, birthday
- Asking for forgiveness – trying to win someone’s favor back, regain closeness with someone
- Spontaneous expression of love or appreciation

Share this idea: *Korbanot* can be understood as gifts. There are three main times when *Korbanot* are offered:

- Holidays
- When you transgress (in this case, it is mandatory that you offer *Korbanot*)
- When you are spontaneously motivated

Ask your students what makes something a “good gift.” You will probably receive answers like these on the left. Draw parallels with the related ideas about *Korbanot*, on the right.
### Makes it a good gift

| Financial expense – how much you spent/saved/sacrificed to give the gift | According to a sliding scale, your korban has to be the best of what you can give. |
| Personal touch – how much the gift embodies you as an individual | When offering Korbanot, owners must put their hands on the animal with all their weight (Smichat Yadayim), to confer on the animal an element of his own identity. |

### 2) Text Study/Chevruta (20 minutes)

The narrator mentions that prophets, like Hosea, ultimately rebuke the people for their misunderstanding of the purpose of ritual sacrifices. Have your students read and discuss two examples in chevruta pairs, looking at the questions below.

*For I desire mercy and not sacrifice and the knowledge of God rather than burnt-offerings.* (Hosea 6:6)

*To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices unto Me? says the LORD; I am full of the burnt-offerings of rams and the fat of fed beasts; and I delight not in the blood of bullocks, or of lambs, or of he-goats. 12 When you come to appear before Me, who has required this at your hand, to trample My courts? 13 Bring no more vain oblations; it is an offering of abomination unto Me; new moon and sabbath, the holding of convocations--I cannot endure iniquity along with the solemn assembly. (Isaiah 1:11-13:)*

- What is the objection that these prophets have to the sacrifices being brought in their time?
- What do their objections suggest about the true purpose of sacrifices?
Publisher Jennifer Joseph's funny video explains more about sacrifices to viewers - when, where, made of what...and make this text very approachable.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The *Kohanim* were responsible for the sacrifices brought in the Tabernacle and Temple.
2) The fire on the altar had to be kept burning at all times.
3) The priests were sanctified by being washed, dressed and anointed.
4) Food and eating have always been part of Jewish tradition.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- The Priests are commanded to keep the fire on the altar burning perpetually. *
- The Priests receive directions about the sacrifices and their portions. *
- The Priests are prepared for ordination by washing, dressing and anointing.*
- The prohibition against eating blood and certain fats is given.
- There are seven days of inaugurating the Temple

*included in this BimBam video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) Who is responsible for the sacrifices?
2) What is the rule of the fire on the altar?
3) How are the Priests sanctified?
4) How did the ancient sacrifices fill all five senses?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) The storyteller says that it is important for us to have personal rituals. What are some meaningful rituals in your life or family?
2) The narrator mentions the importance of eating in Judaism, (which started back in the time of sacrifices). What role does food play in your family or community’s experience of Judaism?
3) In the time of the Temple and Tabernacle, the priests were responsible for the ritual practices of the community. Who are the people now responsible for the Jewish community? What roles do they play? How are they similar or different from the priests of old?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Rituals Bulletin Board (20 minutes)

Lead a discussion about ritual. Include questions such as:

- What is the purpose of ritual?
- What rituals does your family have?
- What daily rituals do you have?
- What makes a ritual “Jewish”?

Hand out index cards and have students write down their favorite ritual. Create a bulletin board displaying everyone’s ideas.

2) Ner Tamid (30 minutes of discussion plus homework)

The Ner Tamid found in all synagogues is modeled after the perpetual fire of the altar described in this week’s video. Have your students research Neirot Tamid by looking at the one in their synagogue’s sanctuary and by looking at photos on the Internet.

Make sure they take note of how the light is displayed and enhanced. How do these Neirot Tamid reflect different ideas of beauty and culture?

Have your students design their own Ner Tamid that can be displayed in the classroom.
Bandleader Dan Saks’s extremely catchy video tells the story of Nadav and Avihu in song and makes it really, really hard to forget which animals are permitted to eat according to the laws of kashrut.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that…

1) Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, are consumed by fire when they bring a strange fire to the altar.
2) A land animal is kosher if it has split hooves and chews its cud.
3) Fish are kosher if they have scales and fins.
4) Most bugs are not kosher.
5) Generally, birds of prey are not kosher.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Aaron brings sacrifices in honor of the Tabernacle’s inauguration. *
- Aaron blesses the people with the priestly blessing.*
- Aaron’s sons, Nadav and Avihu, bring a strange fire on the altar and they are consumed.*
- Aaron is silent and is instructed not to mourn the deaths of his sons.*
- The priests are instructed not to drink wine before performing Temple rituals.*
- The laws of kosher and non-kosher animals are given.*
- Laws of ritual impurity are given.

*included in this BimBam video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What were Nadav and Avihu doing when they were killed?
2) What did God instruct Aaron to tell his remaining sons not to do?
3) What are the signs of a kosher land animal?
4) Generally, what birds are not kosher?
5) What are the signs of a kosher fish?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Have you ever been “speechless” after a tragic event? Why do you think Aaron was silent after hearing about the death of his sons?

2) The Torah does not give a reason why certain animals are kosher and others are not. Why do you think certain animals are permitted and others prohibited?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Under the Influence (45 minutes)

Many commentators link the deaths of Nadav and Avihu to the resulting command prohibiting the priests from drinking alcohol before Temple rituals. These commentators suggest that Nadav and Avihu’s sin was that they brought their sacrifice in a drunken state and that this impaired their judgment and abilities.

This may be the perfect opportunity to discuss how drugs and alcohol can cause bad behavior and even destroy lives. Ask the students if they know anyone who has been harmed, or done harm because they were under the influence of drugs or alcohol. Create a collage of articles and photographs about people in the media or popular culture who have caused accidents, lost their jobs, or hurt their family because of alcohol abuse.

2) Am I Kosher? Game (20 minutes)

Divide the students into two teams.

Show a picture of an animal and have each team meet as a group to determine if the animal is kosher or not kosher based on the signs of kashrut (keeping kosher) they learned in the video. The winning team is the team that gets the most correct answers.
Author Jennifer Traig’s funny video explains the laws of tzara’at in a way that teens especially should be able to appreciate.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Hebrew word for biblical skin disease is tzara’at.
2) A person afflicted with tzara’at is isolated from the camp and has to be purified.
3) The rabbis associated tzara’at with the sin of gossip.

PARSHA SUMMARY

- The laws of ritual impurity for a woman after childbirth are given.*
- The laws of tzara’at are given.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1) What is the Hebrew name of the skin disease described in this parsha? How is it usually translated?
2) Who diagnosed skin diseases in biblical times?
3) What did the person afflicted with a skin disease have to do?
4) According to the Rabbis, what was the sin that caused tzara’at?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) Do you believe that people suffer physically for their spiritual flaws?
2) What counts as gossip? Why do people gossip? What are the effects of gossip?
3) Has anyone ever gossiped about you? If so, how did it make you feel?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) B’nei Mitzvah Speech (20 minutes)
The narrator says right off the bat that this week’s parsha is the worst that a B’nei Mitzvah student could get. Yet she tells an interesting – and even funny – story about it. Have your students pretend that they are writing a dvar torah to give in front of a large crowd of friends and family about Parshat Tazria.

What they would write about? How could they tie the parsha into their big day? Brainstorm some ideas.

2) Broken Telephone (30 minutes)

Play a few rounds of the game “telephone.” Then have an open, honest conversation about how rumors and gossip spread in students’ everyday lives. Ask the students questions based on their responses:

- What are some times that something – even if it was slightly true – got blown out of proportion?
- Did you notice when someone distorted the message? Did it make you laugh? Feel annoyed? Want to distort the message also? Any other feelings?
- Why is it fun to distort the “telephone” message? What might that teach us about gossiping?
Rabbi Steven Greenberg's video is a pair with the previous video, Tazria and goes into some more depth about tzara’at.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) **Tzara’at** is the Hebrew word for biblical skin disease and it can also impact buildings.
2) **Leprosy** is an incorrect translation of tzara’at.
3) According to the Rabbis, tzara’at was a result of lashon hara (evil speech).
4) The power of speech is demonstrated by the fact that God created the world with words.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- The purification process for the person afflicted with tzara’at is explained.*
- The laws of a home afflicted with tzara’at are described.*
- It is taught that there is ritual impurity from seminal discharge.*
- It is taught that there is ritual impurity from menstruation.*

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What is the name of the skin disease in this parsha?
2) What is the incorrect translation of tzara’at? What was the unfortunate consequence of this understanding?
3) In addition to people, what else can contract tzara’at?
4) What is the meaning of the Hebrew expression lashon hara?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) The narrator says that “words are the building bricks of our relationships.” What does this mean to you? How do you use words in your relationships?
2) The narrator quotes a verse from Proverbs that says “the power of life and death lies in the tongue.” How can words be the cause of creating life or death?
3) Are there people today who should be sent out of our community? Is exclusion ever justified?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) HIV and AIDS discussion (30 minutes)

The narrator of this video is Rabbi Steve Greenberg, who is the author of *Wrestling with God and Men: Homosexuality in the Jewish Tradition*. Unfortunately, many people with HIV and AIDS – especially LGBTQ individuals - have been stigmatized and banished from their communities and workplaces, or even blamed for their disease. Read or watch an excerpt from “Angels in America” to highlight the isolation that people with HIV and AIDS have experienced.

Ask your students if they’ve ever judged someone’s morality based on a physical ailment or disability. Ask them what kinds of people have been shunned or isolated from their community.

2) Text Study (30 minutes)

Share this text with the group and then discuss the questions.

*The School of R. Ishmael taught: Whoever speaks slander increases his sins even up to the degree of the three cardinal sins: idolatry, incest and the shedding of blood…In the West they say: The talk about third persons kills three persons: him who tells the slander, him who accepts it and him about whom it is told. R. Hama b. Hanina said: What is the meaning of: “Death and life are in the hand of the tongue?” Has the tongue ‘a hand’? It tells you that just as the hand can kill, so can the tongue...Raba said: He who wants to live can find life through the tongue; he who wants to die [can find death] through the tongue.* (Babylonian Talmud, Arachin 15 b)

- Why would the Rabbis compare *lashon hara* to such severe sins as idolatry, incest and murder?
- What do the Rabbis mean when they say that words can kill?
Acharei Mot — Vayikra (Leviticus) 16:1-18:30

Note: This video deals – albeit lightly - with a list of prohibited sexual relations detailed in this parsha. Use this video with an older audience that can understand the content.

Storahtelling founder Amichai Lau-Lavie’s humorous, fast-paced video will help students to understand the Torah as a totally relevant modern tool for living in today’s world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) This week’s parsha follows the death of Aaron’s two sons.
2) The parsha deals with the rules of meat, sex and atonement.
3) Although everyone may no longer interpret the details of the biblical laws the same way, their underlying message still applies. The ancient laws of the Torah are relevant in the modern world.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● The High Priest enters into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur.
● This parsha describes the scapegoat ceremony of Yom Kippur
● The afflictions of Yom Kippur are included.*
● It is commanded that there is no sacrificing outside of the Tabernacle.*
● It is prohibited to consume blood.*
● It is prohibited to eat an animal that has died or been torn by wild beasts.*
● There is a list of sexual prohibitions.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) After what significant event does this parsha take place?
2) According to the narrator, what are the three main topics that are addressed in this parsha?
3) What are some of the laws regulating the consumption of meat?
4) What special day is dedicated to atonement?
5) What are two sexual prohibitions from this parsha that the narrator mentions?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) The narrator states that “discipline matters.” Most people have done something that requires self-discipline (practicing the piano, going on a diet, studying dance, etc.). Can you think of one? How did it make you feel? When and why is self-discipline important?

2) If the Torah permitted the eating of animals, why would it limit where it can be eaten, what kind of animal can be eaten and which parts can be eaten? What might be the purpose of these regulations?

3) Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement. What practices do you observe on Yom Kippur? Are they meaningful to you? What do you think about on this day?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Ethics of Kosher Meat (40 minutes)
In this video, we learn that although the Torah permits the consumption of animal meat, there are numerous regulations that contribute to the intentionality and humanity that we should exhibit. Ask your students what “kosher meat” should mean in the 21st century.

Divide the class into three groups. Assign each group an element of meat production to think through and present. How do they think kashrut currently addresses the following and what would they change about that, if anything?

- Worker Treatment
- Animal Welfare
- Sustainability

You can also take this opportunity to have your students learn about Jewish social justice organizations like Magen Tzedek and Uri L’Tzedek, which are dedicated to bringing Jewish values to the kosher food industry. In addition, students can research and present information about the growing number of companies dedicated to providing meat that is local, kosher, humanely raised and ethically slaughtered.
2) **Relationship Rules (40 minutes)**

The Torah lists many rules and regulations and a lot of them have to do with sex and relationships. The narrator points out that although the specific laws might not be interpreted in exactly the same ways by all readers, the underlying theme - that our relationships should be dictated by love, respect, safety and intention – always applies. In pairs or groups, students should draw up a list of what they think the rules should be that guide modern relationships. Think about sex, dating…and even breakups and divorce. If it helps spur creativity, include an art component.

Have participants list their rules on “tablets” and call them the Ten Commandments of Relationships
Kedoshim — Vayikra (Leviticus) 19:1-20:27

Jewish music educator Elana Jagoda’s catchy video can aid students’ memorization of the rules in the parsha, or just help them connect to the text.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The theme of Parshat Kedoshim is holiness
2) Parshat Kedoshim lists many ethical and ritual commandments

PARSHA SUMMARY
● The commandment to be holy because God is holy is given. *
● Many other laws are given, including:
  ○ The laws of providing for the needy. *
  ○ The commandment to respect the elderly *
  ○ The prohibition against putting a stumbling block in front of the blind or cursing the deaf.*
  ○ The commandment to love your neighbor and the stranger in your midst. *
  ○ The commandment to be fair in judgment and to not bear a grudge. *
  ○ The prohibition against mixing different species.*
  ○ The prohibited sexual relations. *

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1) According to the songwriter, what is the theme of this week’s parsha?
2) What are some of the laws that the song lists from this week’s parsha?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1) How do you define the word “holy”? How does a person become “holy”?
2) Are there times or places in your life that you consider “holy”?
3) Which of the laws mentioned in this song do you especially observe? Why?
4) Which of the laws mentioned in this song do not resonate with your personal practice or beliefs? Why?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Categorizing the Commandments (40 minutes)**

There are a lot of ways to categorize mitzvot (biblical commandments.) Elana Jagoda, the singer/songwriter of this BimBam, puts them in an order so that they rhyme and the animation team had fun building them one on top of the next in a little story about a Torah scholar and a village.

First, help the class brainstorm some diverse ways of categorizing the mitzvot, for instance:
- Relevant vs. No longer applicable
- Positives/Do’s vs. Negatives/Don’t
- Mishpatim/Rational vs. Chukim/Illogical
- Between people and God/Between people and people

Next, hand out printed lyrics to this video’s song. (There is a link to them at [www.BimBam.com/kedoshim](http://www.BimBam.com/kedoshim).)

Create a chart like the one below – feel free to add different categories as your teaching goals may vary - and have students fill it out in pairs using the lyrics of the song:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>MITZVAH</th>
<th>Applicable today or not?</th>
<th>Positive or negative?</th>
<th>Rational or Illogical?</th>
<th>Between People and God or People and People?</th>
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</tbody>
</table>
2) **Children’s Song-writing (60 minutes, or a great homework assignment)**

Elana Jagoda is a popular writer and performer of Jewish children’s music. Have your students look through this week’s parsha and pick one memorable verse (like “You should not stand idly by” or “Love your neighbor as yourself”) and write a short children’s song based just on this one verse.

There are lots of ways to create lyrics:
- By telling a story that expands on the idea of the verse
- By giving examples of behaviors that would follow from the mitzvah in the verse
- By inventing a dialogue between a few characters

Look for inspiration to other Jewish children’s music.

If it helps, they can set the lyrics to the tune of an existing song. Put on a performance as a class and share your songs. (If there is a class of young kids down the hall…invite them to listen!)
Emor — Vayikra (Leviticus) 21:1-24:23

Drummer Temim Fruchter’s video helps us relate to Moses’s task - to deliver a lot of important messages to the Israelites.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Moses is tasked with delivering a speech of rules and laws to the Israelite community.
2) Two of the festivals described in this parsha are Passover and Sukkot.
3) The two major rituals of Sukkot are the Sukkah and the four species.
4) The priests have special laws and restrictions.
5) The punishment for blasphemy is death.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- The laws of the priests are given.*
- The laws of ritual sacrifices are given.
- The laws of the holy days – Sabbath, Passover, Shavuot, Rosh Hashanah, Yom Kippur are included.*
- A half-Israelite who blasphemes God’s name, is to be stoned to death as punishment.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What does the word Emor mean?
2) What is Moses’s task?
3) What are two of the harvest festivals mentioned in this parsha?
4) What are the two major symbols of the Sukkot holiday?
5) What are some of the special laws for priests?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) A lot of our communicating these days happens through devices. Do you think that direct speech is a more effective form of communication than digital forms? Why or why not?

2) Why do you think it is important for communities to have established norms and rules?

3) Do you think that Moses was ultimately successful at communicating with the people?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Text Discussion (30 minutes)**

Share this text with your class and then discuss the questions:

*On the first day you shall take the product of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, boughs of leafy trees and willows of the brook and you shall rejoice before the Eternal your God for seven days.* (Leviticus 23:40)

As the Etrog has aroma and has edible fruit, so Israel have in their midst people who have knowledge of Torah and also have good deeds. As the palm tree has edible fruit but no aroma, so Israel have in their midst people who have knowledge of Torah but have not good deeds. As the myrtle tree has aroma but not edible fruit, so Israel have in their midst people who have good deeds but have not Torah. As the willow has neither edible fruit nor aroma, so Israel have in their midst men in whom there is neither knowledge of Torah nor good deeds. The Holy One says: In order to make it impossible for Israel to be destroyed, let all of them be bound together into a cluster, so that they will atone for one another. (Midrash Vayikrah Rabba 30:12)

- According to the midrash, what are the four types of Jews?
- Which type of Jew do you most identify with?
- Do you think that one type is more valuable than another?
2) Picture it...You’re Moses (40 minutes)

The narrator suggests that Moses was both nervous and excited about being the one who got to deliver a speech that would contribute to the building of the Israelite community, even if it takes the form of listing lots of rules.

Give your students 20 minutes of quiet writing time to prepare a motivational speech about something hard – like running a marathon, or reading a whole novel in a day, or doing the dishes after a huge dinner party. The harder the task, the more motivational the speech will have to be. You can use positive AND negative reinforcement in your speech.

Select a few lucky speech-givers to perform their speeches in front of the group.
Organic farmer Emily Freed's video highlights the cycles of the land and the needs of farmworkers.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) The year of rest, called Shmita, is the seventh year when the land cannot be worked.
2) The fiftieth year is called the Jubilee year, when all of the land goes back to its original owner.
3) Rest and rejuvenation are important for the land, for farmers and for us.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- The laws of Shmita (the sabbatical year) are described.*
- The Israelites are told of the laws of Yovel, (the Jubilee year), when the land is to lie fallow, property reverts to its original owners and Hebrew slaves are freed.*
- The Israelites are prohibited from worshipping idols and are commanded to keep Shabbat.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What should the people do with the land for six years?
2) What should happen on the seventh year?
3) What is the Hebrew word for the year of rest?
4) What happens in the fiftieth year? What is this year called?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) How do you personally rest and rejuvenate? What happens when you don’t do this?
2) If you could take a personal sabbatical year, how would you spend it?
3) Are you aware of the different farming seasons? How could you be more in touch with the land’s produce?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1)  Text Study/Chevruta (30 minutes)

Have students split into chevruta pairs and examine the following text. Share your responses.

*A year of solemn rest is essential for both the nation and the land, a year of peace and quiet without oppressor and tyrant...It is a year of equality and rest, in which the soul reaches out towards divine justice, towards God who sustains the living creatures with loving kindness. There is no private property and no punctilious privilege but the peace of God reigns over all in which there is the breath of life.*

- Rav Kook—Introduction to "The Sabbath of the Land"

- What is the difference between the nation and the land?
- According to Rav Kook, why is the Shmita year essential?
- What would be the effects if everyone embraced a Shmita year?

2)  The Shmita Project (time will vary)

The narrator of this video has worked extensively with the environmental organization Hazon. Hazon has a program called “The Shmita Project.” On their website (http://shmitaproject.org), they encourage you to contribute in numerous ways that your group may enjoy investigating.

Some examples:

- Plant a fruit tree as a group. You’ll be able to eat and fully enjoy its fruit next Shmita while fully keeping the mitzvot of the year!
- Contribute to the Shmita Project Conversation: Think about your life. How can you look at it through the lens of the values and ideals found in the Shmita year? Send your thoughts to shmitaproject@hazon.org and they just might add them to their website.
Bechukotai — Vayikra (Leviticus) 26:3-27:34

Note: This video mentions the curse that parents will eat their own children. Proceed with caution with younger children.

Musician Jeremiah Lockwood's dark and gloomy video expresses the anger that God sometimes displays in the Torah and reminds students that God has many sides.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) In the Torah, God promises blessings and curses based on the people’s observance of the commandments.
2) God’s anger can be followed by compassion and forgiveness.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Blessings are promised in return for observance of the commandments.*
- Punishments are promised for rejection of the commandments. *
- God promises never to forsake the people completely. *
- The endowments or gifts that can be pledged to the Temple are listed. *
- The laws of tithes are included. *

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What are some of the blessings the people will experience if they observe the commandments?
2) What, according to this parsha, will be the consequences for not observing the commandments?
3) What are some of the curses described in this parsha?
4) What is the meaning of the phrase Chazak Chazak V’nitchazek?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Do you believe in the concept of divine reward and punishment?

2) This parsha describes exile as a punishment. Are you a Diaspora Jew? Do you consider yourself in exile? Does it feel like a punishment? If not, why?

3) The narrator suggests that God is in a rage in this parsha. What do you think it means to describe God’s moods?

4) Have you ever experienced forgiveness and compassion after a period of anger?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Abstract Drawing (40 minutes)**

   The graphics in this video are different than those in other videos. The images are much more linear and abstract. Ask the group to discuss why the style might be so different in this video.

   Have them markers or paint to create two abstract pictures. One should represent the notion of blessings and one should represent curses. (These drawings do not have to relate exactly to the video, but they can.) As students add their pictures two by two to the wall, they should explain their artistic vision.

2) **Counting our Blessings (30 minutes, or longer if you add a craft component)**

   Ask your students what blessings exist in their lives, families and communities. Have them make a list of ways they feel blessed, both materially and spiritually.

   Variation: It can be fun to create “charm bracelets” featuring these blessings if you have the time and craft supplies!

   For example, use shrinky dinks to create representations of each blessing. Poke a hole in each design before you shrink it and attach the finished charms to embroidery thread or leather bracelets using jewelry jump rings.
Bemidbar Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all the Bemidbar parsha videos from BimBam)

This curriculum was created and written by Emily Shapiro Katz

For more teacher resources: www.BimBam.com
Bemidbar — Bemidbar (Numbers) 1:1-4:20

Reporter Helen Chemikoff’s video compares the Israelite’s desert wanderings to human adolescence.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) *Bemidbar* means “in the desert” - it is the first parsha in the fourth book of Torah.
2) The People of Israel are ambivalent about their newfound freedom and even asked to return to slavery.
3) In the desert, the tribes are divided and the people are counted in a census. Because of their unique role, the Levites are not included in the census.
4) The desert is an important time period of transition from slavery to freedom where the people need to figure out what their mission and identity is.

PARSHA SUMMARY

- There is a census (a counting) of all of the tribes. *
- The Levites are not part of the census. They are assigned the holy task of caring for the Tabernacle.*
- Originally, all first-born sons had the honor of working in the tabernacle, but that role was transferred to the Levites after the sin of the Golden Calf.
- The encampment is described with the Mishkan at the center and the tribes surrounding it.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:
1) What does *Bemidbar* mean?
2) What did the Israelites miss from Egypt?
3) Which tribe is not counted in the census and why?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:
1) Do you agree that the Levites are “lucky,” as the narrator suggests, because they are assigned their mission?
2) What is your personal midbar – a place where you contemplate important transitions in your life? This “place” can be very specific, like a chair, or very abstract, like “time I spend listening to a certain band.”

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS:
1) Text Study/Chevruta (15 minutes)

This week’s parsha is usually read right before the holiday of Shavuot, which celebrates the giving of the Torah at Mt. Sinai. In pairs, have your students read and discuss the following rabbinic text that suggests why the Torah had to be given in the desert.

“Anyone who does not make himself hefker (ownerless, abandoned, or free) like the desert cannot acquire wisdom or Torah” (Bemidbar Rabba 1:7)

● What are the qualities of the desert that make it the ideal place for revelation to occur?
● Why couldn’t the Torah be given in Egypt or in Israel?
● What does it mean to make yourself hefker? Why is this a prerequisite for revelation?

2) Newspaper Report (25 minutes)

The storyteller in this BimBam is a newspaper reporter. Have students pretend that they are newspaper reporters (fedoras are optional) and have them rewrite the story of this week’s parsha in the style of a news article.

News articles always start with “the lede” – the most important facts of the story. Usually, this is the place for the five W’s: Who, What, When, Where, Why and – bonus - How? You know you’ve written a good lede when you could learn most everything you would need to know from that first sentence…and yet it didn’t feel too long or cumbersome. Share some lede sentences from today’s news to help students get started.
Note: This video deals with the subject of sexual infidelity.

Inbal Freund Novick, co-founder of The Unmasked Comics Project, takes on the difficult tale of the Sotah, the woman accused of infidelity by her husband in the Torah.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) In Torah times, a woman suspected of adultery had to go through an arduous ritual to determine her status.
2) Relationships are an important topic in the Torah.
3) Using Hebrew letters and words is a way to share spiritual, mystical teachings.

PARSHA SUMMARY:
● This parsha details the responsibilities and count of the Levite families Gershon and Merari.
● The laws for sending the ritually impure out of the camp are included.
● The laws of the Sotah, the suspected adulteress, are commanded.*
● The laws of the Nazirite are included.
● The Priestly Blessing is given.
● Tribal gifts for the dedication of the Mishkan are given.
● God communicates to Moses between the two Cherubs atop the Holy Ark.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS:
1) What is the process that a woman goes through when her husband suspects her of adultery but has no proof?
2) What happens to the woman if she is guilty of adultery? What happens if she is innocent?
3) Can you reiterate the Hebrew spiritual teaching that the storyteller shared? (It may help to put these Hebrew letters and words up on a board or screen.)

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1) What does it mean when the storyteller says that God is present when there is trust in a relationship? What does she mean when she says that there is fire in that relationship when there isn’t trust?

2) Does it help to make amends for breaking someone’s trust in public? What if you weren’t guilty?

3) What modern rituals do we have for alleviating jealousy or mistrust?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Two Truths and a Life (20 minutes)**

Each student should share three statements about themselves, two that are true and one that is false. The other students have to guess which statements are true and which are false. Try to encourage a serious tone rather than letting the exercise get too funny (which is easy.)

After everyone has had a chance, ask the group some questions:

- How did they determine when someone was lying?
- How did it feel to lie?
- How did it feel to be lied to? Did certain lies bother them more than others?

2) **Comic (30 minutes)**

The storyteller in this video is the co-founder of “The Unmasked Comics Project”, a social change comics project. (You can read their comics online at unmaskedcomics.com – older students may enjoy these Jewish stories.)

You’ve seen an animated retelling of Parshat Naso…now let’s create a comic. Have your group draw a comic strip that retells the story. They can work with graph paper, or you can provide them with a ready-to-use copied sheet on which you’ve drawn five or ten comic strip panels. The fewer panels you draw, the more difficult the project is!
Beha’alotcha — Bemidbar (Numbers) 8:1-12:16

Rabbi Charlie Buckholtz and guitarist Jon Madof take us on a rollicking musical romp through this week’s parsha, telling the story of the strange things that go down in the desert.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The time spent in the desert was a great trial for the Israelites.
2) The Israelites complained about their lack of food in the desert.
3) God provided the Israelites with meat but also punished their greediness.
4) A lot happens in this parsha! Songs can help us remember all the details of the sins and punishments.

PARSHA SUMMARY:
- Aaron is commanded to light the Menorah.
- The Levites are commanded to purify themselves and bring offerings.
- The Laws of Pesach Sheni (the Second Passover) are given for those who were impure at Passover.
- The divine cloud leads the people in the desert.
- Moses is commanded to make silver trumpets for the community.
- God sends a fire into the camp to punish the people for their complaining. *
- The Israelites lust after meat and complain about eating only manna. *
- Moses cries out to God about his burden, wanting to die. *
- God commands Moses to gather 70 elders to share his burden.
- Eldad and Medad prophecy in the camp. Joshua is displeased and Moses placates him. *
- God promises to send meat to the people and sends quails in an enormous overabundance, then smites the still-chewing people with a plague at what becomes called the “Graves of Desire.” *
- Miriam and Aaron speak against Moses’ choice of wife. *
- Miriam is punished with tzara’at. Moses prays on her behalf and she returns to the camp. *
*included in this video:

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What did the Israelites complain about?
2) What happened at the “Grave of Desire”? Why?
3) What did Miriam and Aaron say about Moses?
4) What was Miriam’s punishment?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

1) Why do you think that there was so much tension and animosity in the desert? When do groups get into internal turmoil?
2) Have you ever experienced the pressures and demands of leadership in the way that Moses did?
3) How can a leader balance being “in charge” and also being “one of the people”?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS:**

1) **SONG-WRITING (30 minutes)**

The chorus of the song in this video was written and sung by a duo – a writer and a musician:

*Because the strangest things happen in the desert*

*You never know just what is coming next*

*So many changes happen in the desert*

*Sometimes it feels like one big endless test*

*I said the strangest things happen in the desert*

*That’s why they call it God’s great sacred nest*

*So many dangers can happen in the desert*

*Sometimes the Nile beckons me to regress*

Put your group in pairs and have them write a different chorus that could also describes or summarize the experience of the Israelites in the desert. They can use the same melody for their new lyrics, or use another popular tune.
Perform your choruses for the class!

2) VERSE SCAVENGER HUNT (30 minutes)

This video touches on many different events from chapters 11-12 of Bemidbar. Break students into small groups and assign each one of the following events (don’t share the chapter and verse references!):

- The Israelites complaints about food and God’s punishment (11:1-5)
- Moses’s desperate plea to God. (11:11-15)
- Eldad and Medad’s prophecy. (26-29)
- The quail and the plague (11:31-34)
- Miriam and Aaron speaking against Moses. (12:1-9)
- Miriam’s leprosy and Moses’s prayer (12:10-16)

Each group must accomplish a few tasks:
1. Find your story in the text of Beha’alotcha (chapter and verses)
2. Read the story in the original text and come up with three questions about your passage
3. Present the details of their passage and questions to the rest of the class.
Writer, scholar and activist Jay Michaelson's video shares the insight that sometimes our greatest challenge is grappling with our own limitations.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:
After watching this video, students will know...

1) The story of the scouts
2) The two different reports that the ten fearful and the two hopeful spies brought back.
3) God punished the people with 40 years of wandering in the desert parallel to the forty days of scouting.
4) The meaning of the words Shelach Lecha

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Moses sends scouts (or spies), one from each tribe, to spy out the Land of Canaan.*
- All of them, except Joshua and Caleb, report that the Land is not conquerable.*
- The people react fearfully and rebelliously to this report.*
- God decrees forty years of wandering in the desert, during which time all males between the ages of twenty and sixty will perish.*
- Many Israelites attempt to unilaterally proceed to Canaan, but are cut down by the Canaanites.
- Various laws are discussed including:
  - Libations
  - Giving part of the challah to a Kohen
  - Sin sacrifices
  - The mitzvah of tzitzit.
- A man is found desecrating Shabbat and is executed.

*included in this video.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What is the task of the spies?
2) How many spies were sent? What is the significance of that number?
3) What is the positive report about the land?
4) What is the negative report of the ten spies?
5) Which spies give a different report than the majority? What is their report?
6) What is the reaction of the people to the report?
7) What is the punishment of the people? What is the significance of the number 40?
8) What is the meaning of the words Shelach Lecha?
9) Why does a new generation have to be the one to inherit the land?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Describe a current event in which different leaders see the same situation differently. Pay close attention: do some of the leaders describe the challenge with hopeful messages while others use fearful language? To which type of leader do you respond more strongly?
2) Share an example of something that fear prevented you from accomplishing, although you probably could have done it.

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Optical Illusions (10 minutes)
This is a great way to start off class, before showing the BimBam. Locate some famous optical illusions on the Internet and share them with your group. For instance, you might display some of these famous images:
   - Two women (Is it an old or a young woman?)
   - Is it two faces staring at each other? Or a cup?
   - Some of the famous M.C. Escher images of impossible endless staircases

Display the images on the wall. Ask the group:
   - What do you see?
   - Can everyone see the different images?
   - How can you change your perspective (the way you’re looking at the picture) to see something different?
   - What if you turn it upside down? How is it possible for one picture to be two things at once?
2) Text Study/Chevruta (15 minutes)
The following verses are part of the spies’ report to the people. Discuss these verses in pairs.

“We are unable to go up against the people, for they are stronger than us… We appeared like grasshoppers in our eyes and so we were in their eyes.” (Numbers 13:31-33)

- What is the significance of the metaphor that the spies use? What does it mean?
- Why does the verse tell us how they appeared to themselves?
- How do the spies know how they appeared to others?
- What do you think psychologists mean by the term “grasshopper complex”
Author and Rabbi Joseph Telushkin’s video shares the dramatic story of Korach’s rebellion, contrasting his sense of entitlement with Moses’s humility.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After viewing this video, students will know...

1) Korach, from the tribe of Levi, rebelled against Moses’ leadership, accusing him of nepotism.
2) Korach and his followers were ultimately destroyed.
3) Korach’s descendents made important religious contributions.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Korach, from the tribe of Levi, stages a rebellion against Moses and Aaron. *
- Moses sets up a test to determine who is worthy of the Priesthood. *
- The earth opens up and swallows Korach and his followers.*
- A plague breaks out throughout the nation.
- Every tribe writes its name on a staff and only Aaron’s staff blossoms as proof of his chosenness.
- The Levites receive various gifts but do not receive a portion of the land since they will receive 1/10 of all Israelite crops.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Who was Korach? What tribe was he from?
2) What is the significance of the tribe of Levi?
3) What does Korach accuse Moses of?
4) What is Moses’s initial response?
5) What is the test that Moses sets up?
6) What happens to Korach and his followers?
7) Who were the descendents of Korach?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The narrator calls Korach’s behavior chutzpah. Is chutzpah a good thing or a bad thing, or does it depend?
2) When is it good to challenge authority and when is it destructive?
3) Do you criticize authority? Out loud or just inside your head? If you feel comfortable sharing, what are your complaints? How are they similar or different from Korach’s?
4) The narrator points out some of the honored descendents of Korach. What does this teach us about the power of repentance?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text study/Chevruta (20 minutes)

Have your students study the following mishna with a partner and answer the questions:

“A controversy for the sake of Heaven (leshem shamayim) will have lasting value, but a controversy which is not for the sake of Heaven (lo leshem shamayim) will not endure.”

What is an example of a controversy for the sake of Heaven? The debates of Rabbis Hillel and Shammai. What is an example of a controversy not for the sake of Heaven? The rebellion of Korach and his followers.” (Avot 5:19)

- What is the difference between the debate of Korach and his followers and the debates between the Rabbis?
- Why does this mishna say the “rebellion of Korach and his followers” and not “the debate of Korach and Moses?”
- According to this mishna, which types of controversy are “holy” and which are not? Give a contemporary example of a controversy leshem shamayim and a controversy lo leshem shamayim.

2) Role-Playing/Debate (30 minutes)

Divide your students into two groups. One group will represent Israelites in support of Korach and the other will represent Israelites in support of Moses. Each group should
come up with five arguments to support their position, dealing with questions of authority, democracy and hierarchy.

Option: If you have the time, it might be fun to stage this as a traditional Lincoln-Douglas style debate. (You can look up the rules for such a debate online.)

As the leader, you can assist the groups with points like these:

**Korach supporters’ arguments**
- All the leaders are Moses’s close family.
- Power should be divided equally amongst all of the tribes.

**Moses supporters’ arguments**
- God spoke directly to Moses
- It is important to have a clear religious authority.
Chukat — Bemidbar (Numbers) 19:1-22:1

Filmmaker Malki Rose’s video makes the case that when we are gripped with fear, the best approach is to confront our challenges head-on.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After viewing this video, students will know that...

1) In response to the Israelite complaints, God sends lethal snakes into their camp.
2) Moses is instructed to build a copper snake to heal the people.
3) In the Bible, the snake represents the yetzer hara (evil inclination).

PARSHA SUMMARY
● The laws of the Red Heifer are shared.
● Miriam dies.
● Moses strikes the rock to bring forth water. Moses and Aaron are severely punished.
● Edom refuses to allow the Israelites to pass through his land.
● Aaron dies and passes his priestly vestments to his son.
● Israelites complain about the manna, so God sends snakes that kill many of them.*
● Moses fashions a copper snake that heals the Israelites.*
● The Israelites battle with the Emorites and Og, king of Bashan.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1. What is the punishment that God sends in response to the people’s complaints?
2. What does Moses do on behalf of the people?
3. How are the people healed?
4. Why is it surprising that Moses would build a copper snake?
5. When is the first place that the snake appears in the Bible?
6. What, according to the narrator, does the snake represent?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1. The storyteller identifies the yetzer hara (evil inclination) as a little voice inside our heads that instills fear and doubt in us. How else does the yetzer hara manifest itself in your life?
2. The narrator suggests that only through facing our fears head-on can we be healed. What do you fear most (examples: heights, public speaking, water, bugs)? What would happen if you faced your fear head-on?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1. Modern Midrash (15 minutes)

The storyteller interprets the power of the copper snake from the perspective of a psychologist. Divide your students into three groups. Each group should read the verse below and provide a different interpretation of this strange story from the perspective of
- A group of historians
- A group of rabbis
- A group of doctors

Share these interpretations with the group!

And God sent poisonous snakes among the people and they bit the nation and many perished of the people of Israel. And the people came to Moshe and they said, “we have sinned, because we spoke against God and against you; pray to God that He take away from us the snakes.” And Moshe prayed on behalf of the nation. And God said to Moshe, “make for yourself a snake and put it on a pole and it will be that anyone bitten will see it and live.” And Moshe made a copper snake and set it on a high pole and it was that if a snake bit a man and he stared at the copper snake, that he lived. (Numbers 21:6-9)

2. Art Assignment (30 minutes)

According to the storyteller, the copper snake that Moses builds is a physical representation of the Israelites fears. Ask your group to each select a personal fear or phobia and plan a way to visually represent it.
Each student should use whatever art media you select (pastels, paint, collage) to create a poster that they will share with the group. Label the poster boldly with the name of the fear and then fill the space with the vision.

Perhaps hanging the posters where they will be seen all the time will help these artists conquer their fears!
Balak — Bemidbar (Numbers) 22:2-25:9

Note: The word “ass” is used in this video humorously at the end of this video to mean both donkey and backside.

Rabbi Andrew Shapiro Katz's video asks us to consider the role of the intellect versus the gut when we make decisions.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Balak, king of Moab, hired Balaam to curse the Israelites.
2) Balaam’s donkey sees an angel in his path and halts, causing Balaam to strike him repeatedly.
3) Balaam’s donkey speaks to him and finally Balaam sees the angel for himself.
4) Balaam’s donkey can be interpreted as a representation of the emotional “gut.”

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Balak, king of Moab, fears the Israelites and asks the prophet Balaam in Midian to curse them. *
- First, God instructs Balaam not to go. Then, God allows Balaam to go, on condition that he only speaks the words of God.
- Balaam’s donkey sees an angel in his path. Balaam strikes the donkey and the donkey speaks.*
- Balaam finally sees the angel and is rebuked for striking his donkey and is reminded of God’s instructions. *
- Balaam repeatedly speaks words of praise and blessing for the Israelites.
- Moabite and Midianite women seduce Israelite men and entice them to worship Baal Peor.
- A plague erupts.
- Zimri publicly displays the Midianite princess with whom he was consorting. Pinchas kills them both and the plague is halted.

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Why does Balak hire Balaam?
2) What does the donkey see in his path?
3) How does Balaam treat his donkey?
4) According to the BimBam storyteller, what does Balaam’s donkey represent?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The storyteller suggests that Balaam represents the intellect and the donkey represents the gut. Have you ever experienced a conflict between your intellect and your intuition?
2) Why do you think a donkey was chosen as the animal to deliver this message? Have you ever received an important lesson or message from an unlikely source?
3) Have you ever been in a situation and not seen something that was readily apparent? What helped you to eventually see it? What stops us from "seeing" things?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Creative Writing (homework, or 30 minutes in class)

Talking animals have had a long and distinguished history in both children’s and adult storytelling (e.g., Aesop’s fables, The Three Little Pigs, The Chronicles of Narnia, Animal Farm).

Bring in some examples and have students read selections out loud. Then ask everyone to write a short story (just a page or two) featuring a talking animal.

● First, students should select a moral lesson they would like to teach in their story.
● Next, they should select a main character or two and decide what sort of human characteristics those animals will have.
● Finally, write the story, making sure to include a memorable statement of the moral within the tale.
2) Text Study/Chevruta (15 minutes)

Have pairs of students read the interpretations of this story by the following medieval commentators and then answer the questions:

Maimonides: “That which happened to Balaam on the way and the speaking of the donkey, took place in a prophetic vision, since further on, in the same account, an angel of God is introduced as speaking to Balaam.”

Nachmanides: “The entire incident of the donkey was a great miracle, like a new creation.

- What is the debate between Maimonides and Nachmanides?
- Which commentator do you agree with and why?
- Do you think this story is reality or fantasy?”
Pinchas — Bemidbar (Numbers) 25:10-30:1

Note: In this video, there is an image of Pinchas slaying a Midianite woman and Israelite man while they are kissing passionately, with a spear.

Electro-hip-hop-art-rocker Hesta Prynn tells the story of the Daughters of Zelophachad and encourages us to ask for what we want.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) Zelophechad was an Israelite who died, having five daughters and no sons.
2) The daughters of Zelophechad make an unprecedented request to Moses that they should inherit their father’s land along with his brothers.
3) Moses passes the request to God, who instructs Moses to grant them their request – and even changes the Torah’s laws of inheritance.

After watching this video, students will feel...
1) Inspired by the initiative and courage that the daughters of Zelophechad displayed.
2) Encouraged that, like the daughters of Zelophechad, they too have the power to change things that are unfair or unjust.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Pinchas is praised for slaying an Israelite and Moabite woman.*
- Per God’s command, there is a census of all men over twenty, in order to appropriately divide the Land.
- The daughters of Zelophechad ask Moses for their father’s inheritance since he bore no sons.*
- God instructs Moses to grant them their request.*
- Moses sees into the Promised Land and appoints Joshua as his successor.
- There is a description of the holiday sacrifices.

*included in this video
COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What happens to Zelophechad? How many daughters does he have? How many sons?
2) What was the law of inheritance at the time for a man who had no sons?
3) What do the daughters of Zelophechad ask of Moses?
4) What does Moses do with the daughters’ request?
5) What is God’s response to their plea?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) What do you find most remarkable about the daughters’ actions?
2) Have you ever felt that a law or societal norm was unfair or unjust to you, specifically?
   Have you been vocal in expressing your objection? If you are comfortable sharing the story, do.
3) Do you agree with the narrator that societal changes happen in “baby steps”? What examples can you bring to support your claim?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEA

B’not Zelophechad Achievement Award (homework, plus 20 minutes in class)
The Daughters of Zelophechad have become Biblical models for modern Jewish activists. Below is a list of Jewish women who, like the daughters of Zelophechad, took initiative and risks to contest the status quo and to become great leaders in the Jewish world.

Have your students imagine that each of the women listed below has been nominated for the “B’not Zelophechad Achievement Award.” Each group will be assigned one woman to research (a great resource for biographies is the Jewish Women’s Archive (http://jwa.org/) and must argue to the rest of the groups why their nominee is the most deserving.

- Golda Meir
- Henrietta Szold
- Emma Lazarus
- Anne Frank
- Hannah Senesh
- Nechama Leibowitz
- Sara Schenirer
- Rachel Bluwstein
Note: In this video, the singer/songwriters suggest that the Torah provides an annulment process for vows. To be more precise, it is only the Rabbis who, when developing Jewish law, created a process called hatarat nedarim which allows for annulling vows. Be clear with your students that the songwriters have taken a bit of interpretive liberty in their lyrics.

Blanket Statementstein's musical video reminds us that words really do matter.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) There is a biblical prohibition against breaking one’s promises.
2) On Yom Kippur, we are granted the opportunity to annul our vows.
3) The laws of vows reflect the belief that words are powerful and that speech is what distinguishes human beings from all other animals.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**
- The laws of vows are included*
- The Israelites battle against Midian*
- The laws of ritual purification after battle are commanded.
- The spoils of battle are divided amongst the community.
- The tribes of Reuben and Gad ask to settle on the Eastern bank of the Jordan.

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**
1) Who do the Israelites battle and why?
2) What is the relationship between lying and breaking a vow?
3) What holiday grants us the opportunity to annul our vows?
4) What, according to the narrator, distinguishes us from animals?
5) What are the two meanings of the Hebrew word *dvar*?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Why do you think the Torah takes vows, oaths and promises so seriously?
2) Have you ever broken a promise to yourself or to someone else? How did you feel?
3) Do you agree that words are important and have great power? Give examples.

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Text Study/Chevruta (15 minutes)
One of the most famous Jewish prayers is Kol Nidre, which is recited at the beginning of Yom Kippur. Read the translation of this prayer in pairs and discuss the following questions:

All vows, obligations, oaths or anathemas, pledges of all names, which we have vowed, sworn, devoted, or bound ourselves to, from this day of atonement, until the next day of atonement, we repent of them all, they shall all be deemed absolved, forgiven, annulled, void and made of no effect; they shall not be binding, nor have any power; the vows shall not be reckoned as vows, the obligations shall not be obligatory, nor the oaths considered as oaths.

- Why is this the way that we start Yom Kippur every year?
- Why is this text traditionally recited with such awe and emotion?
- Does the existence of this prayer mean that we can take our promises less seriously?

2) Guided Journal Writing (15 minutes)
Ask your students to journal freely in response to the following questions that you read aloud. 3 minutes per question is probably about the right amount of time.

- What is the last promise you made to someone? Did you keep it, break it, or are you still working on it? How did it feel?
- What is the last promise that you made to yourself? Did you keep it, break it, or are you still working on it? How did it feel?
- How do you feel when someone makes a promise to you and then he/she breaks it?
- Is it ever OK to break a promise? Under what circumstances?
Masei — Bemidbar (Numbers) 33:1-36:13

Urban planner Jill Slater shares the design of the Levite cities. Are these utopian communities?

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Levites did not acquire an allotment of land in Israel like the other tribes.
2) The Levites were responsible to be teachers, role models and Temple servants.
3) The Levites had 48 cities dispersed throughout the other tribes.
4) Two belts of land dedicated for recreation, agriculture and cattle surrounded every Levite city.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● There is a review of the Israelites’ journeys from Egypt to the Jordan River.
● The Israelites are commanded to destroy the Canaanites in the Land of Israel.
● The land is divided amongst the tribes.*
● The Levites are given 48 cities to dwell in and expansive lands for their cattle. *
● Six cities of refuge are provided for a person who inadvertently kills another.
● Zelophechad's daughters are instructed to marry men only from their own tribe.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1. Which tribe does not receive an allotment of Land? Why not? What are their responsibilities?
2. How many Levite cities are there? Where are they located?
3. What surrounds each Levite city? What are these lands to be used for?
4. What is the reciprocal relationship between the Levites and the other tribes?
5. What is the meaning of the words Chazak Chazak V'nitchazek? When are these words recited?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The storyteller describes the Levite cities as “models of great design, spirituality and urban harmony.” Do you agree with this assessment? What do you think are the qualities of an ideal community?
2) Do you think that the arrangement between the Levites and the other tribes were fair? Efficient?
3) In this arrangement, would you rather have the role of a Levite or an Israelite? Why?
4) In contemporary society, are there any roles that parallel that of the Levites?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEA (30 minutes)

The storyteller in this video is an urban planner who feels passionately about “local, sustainable and non-industrial agriculture.” In this video, she describes the migrah, the open space that must surround the Levite city.

The Talmud explains that only the city itself is “zoned” for construction. The inner belt serves to beautify the city as open parkland; it may not be used for construction or agriculture. The outer belt is “zoned” for agriculture. Maimonides ruled that these laws apply to all Jewish cities in Israel, not only to the Levite towns. So this parsha can be viewed as a model for “green” urban planning!

Divide the students into four groups. Their task is to design their ideal city – one that is convenient for humans, preserves the environment and maintains a quality of life for both animals and humans. They should present it to the rest of the group, using a birds-eye view drawing.

The plans for the city must require the following elements:
- Name of the city
- Laws for the city to help make all citizens aware of their ecological responsibilities.
- Power source for lights and heat.
- Some method for waste disposal.
- Two productive industries.
- Homes for the population.
Guiding questions

● Where will people live, work and go to school? Where will they get their groceries? What happens to their garbage when they throw it away?
● Think about how the city will get energy to power homes and businesses. How will it get food and water to nourish its population?
● How will people get around? How will people have fun? What kinds of museums, playgrounds and parks will your city have?
Devarim Lesson Guide

(Includes curriculum for all the Bereshit parsha videos from BimBam)

This curriculum was created and written by Emily Shapiro Katz.

For more teacher resources: www.BimBam.com
Devarim—Devarim (Deuteronomy) 1:1-3:22

Like Moses does in this week’s parsha, Jumpstart CEO Shawn Landres recounts history in this BimBam video, lest we feel disconnected from the events that shaped Jewish history.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Instead of taking 11 days to travel the desert, it took the Israelites 40 years.
2) All of the Israelites (except Moses, Caleb and Joshua) who left Egypt died in the desert. The Israelites entering the Land of Israel are a new generation.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● Entrance into the land and Moses’s death are imminent. *
● Moses recounts the history of the 40 years in the desert, including the sin of the spies.
  *
● No one from the generation that left Egypt would enter the Land of Israel.*
● The lands of Seir, Moab and Amon are the inheritance of Esau and Lot.
● The lands of the Emorites and the Bashanites were given to the tribes of Reuben, Gad and half the tribe of Manasseh.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) How long should it have taken the people to cross the desert? How long did it actually take?
2) Where is Kadesh Barnea?
3) What happened to the Israelites who left Egypt? Who are the only three people remaining from that time?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The narrator mentions the old saw: “Those who forget the lessons of history are doomed to repeat them.” Do you agree with this statement?
2) The narrator says that the “new generation” has no memory of enslavement, the Exodus, or Sinai. One could argue that we today are a new generation of Jews who have no direct memory of major events like the Shoah or the establishment of the State of Israel.

- Do you feel connected to these events even though you didn’t experience them firsthand? How do you connect to them? What are the ramifications of being removed in time from these events?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Text Study/Chevruta (30 minutes)

There are several instances in this parsha where the text appears to contradict material found elsewhere in the Torah. Here are some selections your group can look up and compare:

- The spies: Numbers 13:1-3 and Deuteronomy 1:20-25
- Entering the Land: Numbers 14:6-7, 24 and Deuteronomy 1:35-36
- Moses is not allowed to enter the Land: Numbers 20:2-13 and Deuteronomy 1:35-37
- Judicial system: Exodus 18:8-27 and Deuteronomy 1:9-18

What are the differences between the two accounts? What are some ways in which we can reconcile these contradictions?

2) Why Study Jewish History? (30 minutes)

Ask the students to write down three pivotal events in Jewish history. Using the students’ chosen events, create a timeline on the board or have the students create a physical timeline. Discuss the events that they chose, ask them:

- Why did you pick these events?
- Why are these events significant?
- What was their impact?
- If these events had not occurred, how might our lives be different today as Jews? As people in the world?

Lead a discussion on why it is or isn’t important to study Jewish history.
Ve’etchanan — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 3:23-7:11

Beatboxer Yuri Lane and Biblical scholar Rachel Havrelock (a husband and wife duo) grapple with why Moses wasn’t allowed to enter the Promised Land…and why we need "Joshuas" in the world.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Moses begs God to be allowed into the Land but his request is denied.
2) There are different reasons given for why Moses would not be allowed into the Land.
3) The first section of the Shema is found in this parsha.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● Moses is denied entry into the Land of Israel but is shown it from a mountaintop. *
● Moses pleads with the people to remain loyal to God and the Torah.
● Moses designates three Cities of Refuge east of the Jordan.
● Moses repeats the Ten Commandments.
● The commandments of the Shema and V’ahavta are given - including the love of God, the use of tefillin, the mezuzah and Torah study.*
● The Israelites are commanded to destroy the inhabitants of Canaan and their idols.

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) Where are the Israelites situated during this parsha?
2) What is Moses reaction to not being allowed entrance into the Land of Israel?
3) What are the different reasons that the narrator gives for why Moses may not have been allowed into the Land?
4) What are the different mitzvot (commandments) that are mentioned in this video?
5) Who will lead the people into the Land instead of Moses?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) Do you think that Moses should have entered into the Land with the Israelite people?
2) This video compares Moses to Martin Luther King and Theodore Herzl. What are the similarities between these leaders?

3) This parsha includes the commandment to “love God with all your heart, with all your soul and with all your might.” What does it mean to love, anyway? Can love be commanded? Is it essential to love God before you can do mitzvot?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) Six-Word Project (30 minutes)

A few years ago, SMITH online magazine started as a reader contest: Your life story in six words. Ultimately, they published a book titled *Not Quite What I Was Planning: Six-Word Memoirs by Writers Famous and Obscure*. The results were entertaining and powerful. Look at the website [http://www.smithmag.net/sixwords/](http://www.smithmag.net/sixwords/) and share some of your favorite examples with the students so they understand the concept.

Explain that the Shema: “Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu Adonai Echad” can be considered the six-word thesis statement of Judaism. Challenge your students to write their own six-word synopsis or statement of Judaism or of their own personal relationship with Judaism in six words. Make a bulletin board that displays all of their six-word statements.

2) Moses’ and Joshua’s in modern history (20 minutes)

Barak Obama gave a speech in 2007 (when he was a Senator and not yet President) in Selma, Alabama at the commemoration of the Selma Voting Rights March. In it, he talks about being in the presence of “Moseses” – giants of American history who did battle on behalf of their people, African Americans as well as all of America. Then he goes on to discuss the Joshua Generation, the younger generations who will be responsible to carry on the work of their elder leaders.

Find the speech online at Obama’s website:

(It’s a long speech and the Moses/Joshua parts are mainly in the middle.)
Have your students highlight the sections of the speech that relate to Moses and Joshua. Try reading them out loud – public speeches are dramatic and better heard than read. Then analyze the speech together with questions like these:

- Can you recognize any quotes from the Torah in this speech?
- Why does Obama compare King’s generation to the Moses generation?
- Why does he compare his own generation to the Joshua generation?
- Do you agree with these comparisons?
- What are the different challenges of each generation?
- Why is it effective to make a speech that references the Bible?
Filmmaker Lindsay Litowitz’s video encourages us to do a "spiritual spring cleaning," making room in our hearts for new experiences.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) God commands the people to circumcise their hearts.
2) Moses gives a long speech to the Israelites before they enter the Land of Israel.
3) The second paragraph of the Shema comes from this parsha.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- God promises the Israelites the Canaanite enemies will not trouble them, if they follow in God’s ways.
- There is a review of the events of the desert, including the sin of the Golden Calf, the Israelites’ complaints and the incident of the Spies.*
- The Israelites are told to always remember that the source of their abundance in the Land is God. *
- The Israelites are told they will inherit the Land not because of their own merits, but because of the promise to their forefathers.*
- The second paragraph of what we call the Shema is given. It explains that faithfulness to God’s laws will result in prosperity and blessing, while disobedience will result in doom. *

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What does God command the Israelites to circumcise in this week’s parsha? How does this video’s storyteller explain this commandment?
2) What are the seven species of the Land of Israel?
3) What are some of the mistakes and sins that Moses reminds the people of in his speech?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) What things are blocking your heart?
2) Can you think of an alternative metaphor that means the same thing as “circumcision of the heart”?
3) How do you think Moses is feeling at this moment? What about the people?
4) Have you ever felt like you were at the brink of entering “the Promised Land”?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Spiritual Spring Cleaning (20 minutes)

The storyteller says that the expression to “circumcise your heart” may be a command to do a “spiritual spring cleaning.” Have your students answer the following questions privately in a journal.

- Are there relationships in your life that have become messy and that need to be “cleaned up”?
- Do you ever feel dirty on the inside? What causes you to feel this way?
- Do internal messes block you from reaching goals? Think of some goals you could achieve now if you had less “mess” inside.

2) Graduation Speech (30 minutes)

The narrator of this video explains that Moses’s final speech in the Book of Deuteronomy is like a valedictory speech at a graduation to those “graduating” from the desert.

Write your own speech from the perspective of an Israelite who is about to “graduate” from the desert and move on to a new life in Israel. Include memories, gratitude, accomplishments, reflections from the past and thoughts about the future. If you had it to do all over again, what would you change? Do you have any words of wisdom or inspiration for your fellow graduates?

Select one or two dramatic students to give their speeches to the class.
Musician Chanan Rosin of the band Majuda sings verses that compare the Israelites to children who are growing up and preparing to enter adulthood in the Promised Land.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) The Israelites are referred to as God’s children.
2) The Israelites are promised blessings for obedience and curses for disobedience.
3) There are three festivals a year of celebration and joy.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- The Israelites are told that they can be the recipients of either blessings or curses. They will be blessed if they obey God’s commandments and will be cursed if they do not.*
- The Israelites are commanded to destroy all idols and that all false prophets of idolatry must be killed.*
- The people are told that there will be a special place designated for God’s presence.
- Lists of kosher and non-kosher animals; the prohibition against eating blood.
- The laws of tithing are given.
- The laws of Shmita (Sabbatical year) are given.
- The laws of the three pilgrimage festivals are given.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) How does God refer to the Israelites in this video?
2) What happens when the people listen to God’s commands?
3) What happens when they don’t?
4) How many times a year are Jews commanded to gather in celebration?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) What is the meaning of the recurring image in this video of the parent and child?
2) During the lyrics “there will be temptation to do wrong,” there is an image of a preacher on a soapbox, a visual allusion to the false prophets in this week’s parsha. What false messages do we receive in modern society that can sometimes tempt us?

3) In the song there is a lyric: “The fuel that feeds your bodies becomes a part of who you are” – do you agree with this statement? What impact do you think the food you eat has on your body, mind, soul?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Are You What You Eat? (30 minutes)

*The fuel that feeds your bodies becomes a part of who you are.* – Chanan Rosin

There are numerous laws in this week’s parsha referring to what we can and cannot eat. Have the students look through the text of the parsha on their own and copy the various laws onto a sheet of paper.

The reason for the laws of Kashrut is not stated in the Torah but many rationales have been suggested. Post the statements below in four corners of the room. Students should gather to the corner with the reason that they find most compelling. Each group should discuss why they think their reason is most compelling and why they do not agree with the other rationales.

#1 – “Because God said so” – The laws of Kashrut are not rational and require complete and unconditional obedience to the Divine Command regardless of their logic.

#2 – “Humanitarianism” – The laws of Kashrut train us to have compassion and sensitivity towards animals. The ideal style of life is vegetarianism; the laws of Kashrut are the compromise.

#3 – “Jewish Community” – The laws of Kashrut distinguish Jews from other groups of people and make it difficult for Jews to engage in social activities with non-Jews. Kashrut encourages Jews to build strong communities and distinctly Jewish identities.

#4 – “Sanctification of the physical” – The laws of Kashrut elevate an otherwise mundane and physical pleasure. By defining and limiting our physical pleasures, we elevate them to a holy status.
2) **Analyze the Lyrics (30 minutes)**

The lyrics of this song can seem a bit abstract but they correspond to verses in this parsha.

Hand out a copy of the lyrics to the students (available at [http://www.BimBam.com/reeh-lyrics](http://www.BimBam.com/reeh-lyrics)).

First, have the students identify the parts of the song that repeat. Analyze their meaning:

*Children, Wo! My children you see.*

*Soon you’re on your own two feet*  
*Blessing in your life, your life on the land*

*Guide them the way I show you today*  
*And you have from me, from me a*

*Be strong and blessed and never fall*  
*helping hand*

*astray*

Divide the students into four groups and assign each a stanza to read and analyze.
Social justice leader Rabbi David Saperstein talks about the specifics of what it means to pursue justice.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) The Hebrew word for justice is *tzedek*.
2) The Israelites are commanded to appoint judges and officers.
3) The laws of worship, kingship, cities of refuge, testimony and warfare are all examples of Biblical justice.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- The commandment to appoint judges and officers in every city is given.*
- The people are commanded to stop all acts of idolatry.*
- The laws of appointing a king after entering the Land of Israel are given.*
- The *Kohanim* (priests) do not receive an inheritance in the land, but receive various gifts.
- The prohibitions against divination, fortune telling and similar occult practices are given.
- The people are commanded to listen to God’s true prophets.
- The cities of refuge are created.*
- The people are told that there must be a minimum of two witness in a legal trial.*
- Procedures for the battlefield are given.*
- There are unsolved murders.

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What is the meaning of the word *shoftim*?
2) What is the meaning of the Hebrew expression *Tzedek Tzedek Tirdof*?
3) Why might the word *tzedek* be repeated twice?
4) What are the five kinds of justice that this parsha includes?
5) What are the rules of kingship?
6) What is a city of refuge? Who is it for?
7) How many witnesses must testify in a criminal case?
8) Who is exempt from going to battle?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) The storyteller lists a number of social justice issues in our time. What do you think are the greatest social injustices of our time?
2) What is your definition of justice?
3) Do you think that our society is just? What systems do we have that help it be just?
4) *Tzedek*, the Hebrew word for justice, is the root of the Hebrew word *Tzedakah*. What is the connection?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Symbol of Justice**

Show an image of Lady Justice (the Roman goddess of Justice). Discuss the image:

- What is the meaning of the symbol?
- Why is the woman blindfolded?
- What does the scale stand for?
- How is this image similar or different from what a Jewish representation of justice might look like?

Then, have students create their own new symbol of justice using both words and images.

2) **Moot Beit Din (30 minutes)**

After discussing briefly how a Beit Din works and what kinds of cases were dealt with there, have participants act it out.

Two should be the litigants. Between them, they should make up a case and then act it out before the judges. The judges must now decide (with the help of everyone else) who is guilty and who is innocent. Take turns with the different roles.
3) Social Justice Articles (30 minutes)

Bring in copies of different current newspapers. Have each student look for articles that deal with questions of justice. Each student should read their article and present the issue to the rest of the class.
Dr. Jeremy Benstein, of the Heschel Center for Environmental Learning and Leadership, asks us to think about the relationship between people and animals in his BimBam video.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) This parsha has more mitzvot than any other.
2) The Torah is greatly concerned with preventing the suffering of animals.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Many laws are given, including: *
  - Women taken captive in war
  - Treating the sons of two wives equally
  - The rebellious son
  - Burial of the dead
  - Returning lost objects
  - Cross-dressing
  - Sending away the mother bird*
  - Building a safety fence on a roof
  - Mixing different animals
  - Mixing wool and linen
  - Rape, adultery, prostitution, divorce and marriage
  - Kidnapping
  - Paying workers on time
  - Gifts for the poor
  - Amalek is remembered.
  - Miriam’s tzara’at is remembered.

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What does the word mitzvah mean?
2) How many commandments are listed in this parsha?
3) What are the two main categories that mitzvot fall into?
4) What is the definition of the expression tzaar baalei chaim?
5) What are some examples of earlier Torah laws that treat animals kindly?
6) What are the possible reasons for sending away the mother bird before taking her eggs?
7) What is the reward promised for sending away the mother bird?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) What do you consider to be cruelty to animals?
2) Is it always cruel to kill animals?
3) Is it acceptable for animals to suffer if there is an overriding human benefit, (e.g. experiments on animals that further medical science or find cures for diseases)?

**ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS**

1) **Commitment Poster (30 minutes)**

As a group, have your students brainstorm a list of commitments that they could take on to prevent animal cruelty. Examples include: buying cruelty-free products, buying animal-free clothing, eating vegetarian more often, supporting animal free circuses, adopting your next pet from a shelter.

Have students create an educational poster with these commitments. Decorate it with pictures of animals and hang it in the classroom or around the school.

2) **Text Study/Chevruta (25 minutes)**

The mitzvah mentioned in this video about sending away mother birds is called Shiluah haKen. The Rabbis debated the rationale behind this mitzvah:

*If, along the road, you chance upon a bird's nest, in any tree or on the ground, with fledglings or eggs and the mother is sitting over the fledglings or on the eggs, do not take the mother together with her young, in order that you may fare well and have a long life. (Deuteronomy 22:6,7)*
Ask four students to read the commentaries below out loud in front of the class. Then, discuss as a group which explanation is most compelling:

It is also prohibited to kill an animal with its young on the same day to prevent people from killing the two together in such a manner that the young is slain in the sight of the mother; for the suffering of animals under such circumstances is very great... and does not differ from that of humans, since the love and tenderness of the mother for her young ones .... [is a] faculty [that] exists not only in humans but in most living beings... The same reason applies to the sending away of the mother bird... If the Torah provides that such grief should not be caused to cattle and birds, how much more careful must we be that we should not cause grief to our fellow! (Maimonides)

In truth, this is not an issue of compassion, for it would be better for the mother if she were taken together with her offspring. Because of her longing for her offspring, her life is embittered. Rather, God has commanded to send away the mother for the preservation of the species and from this we learn that the preservation of the group takes precedence over the preservation of the individual. (HaRaMaH)

The ruling on the mother bird is not based on the Almighty’s pity for the animal. Otherwise, God would have forbidden their slaughter! The reason, however, for the prohibition is to teach us compassion and the avoidance of cruelty.... These precepts of not slaughtering the mother and young on the same day and sending away the mother bird are not inspired by feelings of consideration for their suffering but are decrees to inculcate humanity in us. (Nachmanides)

This is the moral lesson taught us by the observance of the commandment to send away the mother bird before taking the young from their nest. You may have captive in your hands the large mother bird and could use her for food for other personal gain. But the law of the Torah commands you to consider the welfare of others and send her away so that she should be able to produce more young and the species should not become extinct. Thus, the observance of this commandment teaches one to fight his/her egotism for the sake of the common good and it is for this reason that the reward for its fulfillment is so great. (Avnei Ezel)
Ki Tavo — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 26:1-29:8

Jerusalem teachers Rav Raz and Leah Hartman describe our covenant with God as an intimate relationship: a marriage.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Ki Tavo means “when you come.”
2) The Israelites are commanded to bring their first fruits to the Temple.
3) The people received blessings and curses on Mt. Gerazim and Ebal.
4) The relationship between God and Israel can be compared to the relationship between husband and wife.

PARSHA SUMMARY

● The mitzvah of Bikkurim (bringing the first fruits to the Temple) is given.*
● The laws of tithing are given.*
● The Israelites are commanded to gather large stones when they cross the Jordan and engrave them with the words of Torah*
● Blessings and Curses on Mt. Grizzim and Ebal take place.*
● A description is given of the blessings that will be bestowed on the Israelites if they are obedient and the curses that will befall the Israelites if they are not.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

1) What is the translation of the words Ki Tavo?
2) What were the Israelites commanded to do with their first fruits?
3) What happened at the mountains of Gerizim and Ebal?
4) The narrators compare the relationship between the Israelites and God to what human relationship? How is it similar?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) The narrators describe the human relationship with God as one of mutuality. Do you agree? What do you give God? What does God give you?
2) Do you believe in divine reward and punishment?
3) The video ends with the commandment to serve God “in joy and gladness.” What aspects of Judaism do you truly enjoy? Do you think that it is important to live a Jewish life with joy?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Reenactment (30 minutes)

Stage a dramatic reenactment of the scene on Mt. Gerezim and Ebal. Assign the students the different parts listed below:

- Levites
- The tribes
- Moshe and Aaron

Use the text in Parshat Ki Tavo for the script. It doesn’t need much embellishment to be dramatic! As the teacher or group leader, you can serve as the narrator and cue each group’s lines.

2) Text Study/ Chevruta (20 minutes)

Answer the questions with each text:
The Israelites are warned in this parsha that they may be punished if:

you do not serve the Lord your God with joy and with a happy heart (Deuteronomy 26:1)

- Is being unhappy a sin?
- What role does joy play in Judaism?
Rabbi Nachman of Breslov coined the popular phrase: *Mitzvah gedolah l’hiyot b’simcha tamid.* ("It is a great mitzvah to always be in a state of happiness.") He also wrote the following:

*For all ailments come only from sadness and depression. Therefore we must rejoice with all that we can, even with words of nonsense.*

- Do you agree that it is a mitzvah to be happy?
- Can someone really be happy all the time?
- How do you "make yourself" happy?
Writer and editor Dahlia Lithwick compares God’s covenant with the Israelites to a high stakes deal in which the consequences for failure are rough, but the rewards are amazing.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Every Israelite was present at this final covenant ceremony.
2) God called Heaven and Earth as the witnesses to this contract.
3) The covenant was binding on all generations, past and future.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Moses gathers all the people to enter an eternal covenant with God.*
- Moses warns the people not to practice idolatry.
- Moses foretells a future rebellion where they will be exiled but ultimately will repent and return. *
- Moses tells the people that they have the ability to choose life or death and that they should choose life.*

*included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) Who was present at the covenant described in this parsha?
2) What are the consequences to keeping or breaking the covenant?
3) Who are the two “witnesses” that God calls upon to witness the contract?

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS**

1) The storyteller explains that the covenant that was made thousands of years ago was binding for all Jews eternally. Do you think that you are bound by this covenant even though you weren’t there?
2) Describe the ways in which you do – or don’t - feel a connection with your Jewish ancestors. What kind of responsibility, if any, do you feel to the Jewish future?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEA

“Choose Life” Vision Boards (30 minutes)

The narrator says that the prizes of choosing life are “Kids! Cattle! Crops!” These are not necessarily the rewards that we all want out of life.

Have students make a list of what they want out of life in terms of family, friends, health, wealth, career, education, etc. Then, have them cut out images and words from magazines that represent those hopes. Finally, have them glue these pieces onto a poster board and present them to those around them.
TV star Mayim Bialik explains several beautiful ways to fulfill the commandment of writing your own Torah.

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

After watching this video, students will know that...

1) Moses does not enter the Land with the people; Joshua continues as their leader.
2) Moses completes the written Torah and stores it in the Ark.
3) This parsha includes the mitzvah to write a Torah.

**PARSHA SUMMARY**

- Moses is 120 years old and will not enter the Land; instead, Joshua will lead the people.*
- God promises to destroy the enemies of Israel.
- Moses encourages Joshua to be strong.*
- The commandment of Hakhel is given, which says that every seven years everyone will assemble to hear the Torah read. *
- Moses gives the completed written Torah to the Levites.*
- The commandment to write a Torah is given.*
- God tells Moses that the people will rebel in the future and instructs him to write down a song (look for the text in next week’s parsha) that will bear testimony to the people about the cause of their misfortunes. *

* included in this video

**COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS**

1) What will Moses not be able to do with the people?
2) Who will be the leader after Moses dies?
3) What does Moses complete in this parsha?
4) Where is the written Torah stored?
5) What are some ways that can one fulfill the mitzvah to write his or her own Torah?
DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) In this parsha, we are introduced to the concept of reading the Torah publicly. Why do you think reading the Torah publicly is so important? Why is that the main act of the bar/bat mitzvah?
2) The storyteller, Mayim Bialik, is an actress living in Hollywood. Are you surprised by her interest and knowledge in Judaism? Why or why not?
3) Why do you think the Torah is compared to a tree? What would you compare it to?

ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS
1) Writing a Sefer Torah (15 minutes)

The very last mitzvah found in the Torah - that every individual should write his or her own Torah – is derived from this verse:

*Now therefore write ye this song for you and teach thou it the children of Israel; put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for Me against the children of Israel.*

*(Deuteronomy 31:19)*

Discuss with your students some of the laws of writing a Sefer Torah:
- It must be written by a trained Sofer (scribe)
- It must be written with organic black ink.
- It must be written with a quill
- It must be written on parchment made from a kosher animal.
- It must be written in Hebrew block script.

Provide the following materials for your students: black ink, parchment-like paper, feathers or bamboo pens, copy of the Hebrew alphabet in Torah script. Ask each student to select a word or phrase from this parsha that is meaningful to them. Write it carefully with their “quills” and “parchment.”
2) Your Last Day (30 minutes)

In this week’s parsha, Moses “takes care of business” on the last day before he dies. He has a list of things he has to get done and things that he has to say. Ask students to consider these questions, quietly, for a few minutes:

- What would your schedule look like on your very last day?
- What would you have to do?
- Who would you want to talk to and what would you want to say to them?

Then, have each student design a “planner” to list their goals, hopes and plans for that last day. Each planner page should have a space to include meetings, a To Do list and any calls, emails or messages that need to be sent.
Ha’azinu — Devarim (Deuteronomy) 32:1-32:52

Bass guitarist Anthony Rogers-Wright puts Moses’s song to the Israelites music, giving his final words even more weight.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) Moses ascends Mt. Nebo, overlooking the Land of Israel.
2) In his last speech, Moses warns the Israelites and gives them hope.

PARSHA SUMMARY
● Heaven and earth are called upon as witnesses to this song/poem.*
● There is a review of the Israelites’ sacred history.*
● There is a warning to the Israelites not to stray from God’s commandments.*
● Moses ascends Mt. Nebo to view the Land of Israel.*

*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) How old is Moses when he dies?
2) Where is he buried?
3) What does he get to see before he dies?
4) What name for God does the singer/songwriter use repeatedly?
5) How are the Israelites characterized in this section?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) How do you think Moses felt as his last day approached?
2) Why do you think that God is referred to as “the Rock”? What are the implications of this name?
3) The singer/songwriter says that there is “Nowhere for you to hide, nowhere for you to run” – do you think that there is someone who sees and cares about everything you do?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Write a Poem (15 minutes)

In this parsha, Moses speaks to the people in the form of a song or poem. The songwriter chose to reflect on this parsha in the form of a song-poem as well. Specifically, he uses the technique of rhyming, like in the final stanza:

I beseech you all to lend an ear as I leave
Allow these words into your soul and your life you could retrieve
Never forget the One in who you should believe.
Who makes it possible for all that you achieve.

Have your students write four lines of a song-poem using this rhyming technique. Their song, like Moses’, should be a reflection on the past, present and future of the Jewish people.

2) Names of God (20 minutes)

In this video, the narrator uses the term “the Rock” as a name of God because this is the term that is used repeatedly in this parsha. In Hebrew, the word is HaTzur. Why would God be referred to as a rock? What associations come to mind when you think of a rock?

Ask the students for other names/titles/epithets for God. (master, father, creator, presence, king, Lord, Holy One, shepherd, lover, friend, king, warrior, teacher). Hand out a list of the traditional names for God:

- Y-H-V-H - often translated as “Lord”
- Elohim – often translated as “God”
- El: from which ELOHIM is derived
- El Shaddai: translated as either “God Almighty” or “God of Heaven”
- Adonai: “My Lord”
- Y-H-V-H Tzeva’ot: “the Lord of Hosts”
- Hakadosh Barukh Hu: “the Holy One, blessed be He”
- Ribono shel Olam: “Master of the Universe”
Discuss which names most resonate with the students’ personal understanding of God. Do they have alternative names that they prefer to use? If you want the students to become more familiar with the different names of God, you can use the names to play a memory game or bingo.
Best-selling novelist David Levithan points out in this BimBam video that a lot happens over the course of a life and that endings are, in a way, beginnings.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES
After watching this video, students will know that...
1) Moses dies at the age of 120 atop Mt. Nebo.
2) Moses blesses all of the tribes before he dies.
3) Moses sees into the Land of Israel before he dies.

PARSHA SUMMARY
- Moses blesses each of the tribes.*
- Moses dies at the age of 120. His burial place is unknown.*
- The Israelites mourn for 30 days.*
- Joshua assume leadership over the Israelites.
- Moses is the greatest prophet to know God face-to-face.*
*included in this video

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS
1) What does Moses do before he dies?
2) How old is Moses when he dies?
3) What does Moses see before he dies?
4) Where is Moses buried?

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS
1) This is the end of the Torah. How would you have written the ending?
2) What does the narrator mean when he says that “the end” is not really the end? When have you thought that something was over but you later understood that it was really just the beginning?
3) Who is the oldest living person that you know? What wisdom or experience do they have that you admire?
ACTIVE LEARNING IDEAS

1) Text Study/Chevruta (15 minutes)

The Rabbis debate who wrote the last eight verses of the Torah, which describe the death of Moses:

Now is it possible that Moses being dead could have written the words, ‘Moses died there’? The truth is, however, that up to this point Moses wrote, from this point Joshua wrote. This is the opinion of R. Judah, or, according to others, of R. Nehemiah.

Said R. Simeon to him: Can [we imagine the] scroll of the Law being short of one word and is it not written, Take this book of the Law? No; what we must say is that up to this point the Holy Blessed One, dictated and Moses repeated and wrote and from this point God dictated and Moses wrote with tears (Baba Bathra 15a)

- Does it matter to you who the author of the Torah was? What difference does it make?
- What does it mean that “Moses wrote with tears”?

2) Centenarians (homework, plus 20 minutes of class time for presentations)

Moses died at the ripe old age of 120. Sometimes Jews bless each other on their birthdays Ad Mea Ve’Esrim, which means, “Until 120!”

In this video, the narrator describes a remarkable woman named Gertrude Baines who recently died at the age of 115. “Centenarians” is the word for people who live until 100.

Divide the students into three groups. Each group will study the biography of a famous centenarian and then present the person’s life story to the rest of the class.

Since this is a BimBam activity, consider asking students to present highlights from the person’s life in a storyboard format – with simple drawings and fragments of text under each one. They can use plain white paper for each “frame” of the storyboard, or get fancy and do the assignment on a computer in Powerpoint or art software like Illustrator. It’s up to each group.

Chazak Chazak V’nitchazek!!