

NCYI Youth Groups Parshas Lech Lecha

Parsha Outline

Lech Lecha

- Avram journeys to Kenaan
- Pharaoh takes Sarai
- Avram battles the kings
- The Covenant with G-d
- The birth of Yishmael
- Avram's & Sarai's name change
- Circumcision

(http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

Sefer Bereishit is divided into twelve parashiyot (weekly readings). The first two parashiyot cover 1,948 years of history and twenty generations. The third and fourth parashiyot focus only on one hundred years of Avraham's life. The message is - what Avraham stood for is what Creation is all about - what Avraham represented is what concerns the Torah. The Torah therefore dwells on the lives of the forefathers.

The balance of Sefer Bereishit (eight week parashiyot) is devoted to following the course of Avraham's descendants - Yitzchak, Yaakov, and the Twelve Tribes - as they further develop the philosophy and approach to live of their ancestor, Avraham. The ideology developed by Avraham becomes the basis for a unique nation, the further evolution and progress of the nation is presented in the following sefer - Shemot.

Sefer Bereishit not only describes the origin of the Jewish people, but traces the origins of all peoples of mankind.

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Parsha Summaries

Family Parshah

Lech Lecha Roundup

Lech-Lecha – Go unto you

By [Chani Benjaminson](#)

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/320783/jewish/Lech-Lecha-Roundup.htm

Abram was the first person to realize that G-d is a Supreme Being and that G-d is not dust, an idol, the sea or the sun. He spreads this message all the time in the city of Charan where he lives. One day G-d tells him to leave his city and his father's home and to go to the land which G-d will show him. So Abram and his wife Sarai together with his nephew Lot leave Charan and travel to the Land of Canaan where G-d reveals Himself to him and tells him that He will give this land to Abram's children. Abram builds an altar there.

Abram and Sarai love having guests. Their tent is open from all four sides so that people could come in from any direction in which they are traveling. Abram and Sarai feed and take care of all their guests and teach them about G-d.

A short while later a famine comes onto the Land of Canaan so Abram and Sarai have to travel to Egypt to get food. There they say that they are brother and sister, because Sarai is so beautiful that Abram fears the palace guards will kill him to give Sarai to Pharaoh as a wife. Sarai is indeed taken prisoner to the palace, but overnight G-d sends a plague to Pharaoh, who gets the message and frees Sarai. He also gives many gifts of animals, gold and silver to the couple and sends them on their way.

Back in Canaan, Lot goes to live in the city of Sodom. He is captured during a local war and Abram runs to his rescue with a small army and miraculously defeats a big army of four kings. G-d makes a covenant – a pact or deal - with Abram and tells him that his children will suffer in exile – *galut* – but will then be freed and brought to the Holy Land which will be theirs forever.

Sounds good? Sounds great! But...Abram and Sarai were married for a long time and do not have children, and they are getting older...so Sarai encourages Abram to marry her

maid Hagar, who was a converted Egyptian princess (at the time men were allowed to marry more than one wife), to give Abram the chance to have a child. Hagar becomes pregnant and has a child Yishmael. But Hagar is disrespectful to Sarai and runs away, then returns to Abram's home after an angel convinces her to go back.

Finally, G-d promises Abram that his children will be as numerous as the stars in the sky and the dust of the earth. G-d makes a covenant with Abraham and commands him to circumcise himself--do a brit milah--as a sign of the covenant. From that day on, all Jewish boys do a brit milah at 8 days old. G-d changes Abram's name to Abraham and Sarai's to Sarah and tells Abraham that they will have a child who they should name "Isaac" and that from Isaac will come the nation to which G-d promised the Holy Land. At this time, Abraham is 99 years old and Sarah is 89.

Lech Lecha Aliya Summary

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/576513/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm

General Overview: Abram and Sarai travel to Canaan. Due to a famine in the land they temporarily relocate to Egypt, where Pharaoh unsuccessfully attempts to add Sarai to his harem. They return to Canaan with great wealth and Abram parts with his nephew Lot. Abram defeats the armies of the four kings who had taken his nephew Lot hostage. G-d seals a pact with Abram, bequeathing the lands of Canaan to his descendants. Childless Abram marries Hagar and she gives birth to Ishmael. G-d changes Abram's name to Abraham, and Sarai becomes Sarah. Abraham is circumcised at the age of 99.

First Aliyah: G-d commanded Abram to leave his father's house and homeland, and travel to the land that He will show him. As reward for doing so, G-d promised to make Abram the patriarch of a great nation. Abram obeyed, taking along his wife Sarai and his nephew Lot. Once Abram arrived in Canaan, G-d informed him that He will eventually give that land to his descendents. Abram traverses the length of the land until a famine forces him to travel to Egypt. Fearing that the Egyptians would kill him in order to take Sarai, Abram asked her to allege that he was her brother.

Second Aliyah: And indeed because of her beauty, Sarai was taken captive and brought to Pharaoh. G-d struck the members of Pharaoh's palace with a plague, causing Pharaoh to hastily release Sarai. Pharaoh loaded Abram and Sarai with gifts and riches, and had them escorted out of his land. Abram returned triumphantly to Canaan.

Third Aliyah: Lot, who had accompanied Abram and Sarai, was independently wealthy. When Lot's shepherds quarreled with Abram's shepherds, the two parted ways, with Lot settling in the province of Sodom, which was renowned for its evil inhabitants. After Lot departed, G-d spoke to Abram again, reiterating His promise to bequeath the land to his descendants, and promising to make his descendants numerous as the soil of the earth.

Fourth Aliyah: The southern region of Canaan was embroiled in a major war involving many kings. When the dust settled, the victorious kings took captive all the inhabitants of the Sodom region -- Lot included. When Abram was informed of Lot's plight he rushed to the rescue along with a handful of men, engaged the victorious kings in battle, soundly defeated them, released all the captives and returned all the spoils.

Fifth Aliyah: Abram rebuffed the king of Sodom's wish to award him with all the war's spoils. When G-d reassured Abram that he would be greatly rewarded for his righteousness, Abram broaches his childlessness. "What is the point of all the reward and wealth," Abram cried, "if I have no heir to inherit it?!" G-d assured Abram that he will indeed have a child, and promised that Abram's descendants will be as numerous as the stars of the heaven.

Sixth Aliyah: Abram requested a sign from G-d that his descendants would inherit the land of Canaan. G-d responded in the famous "Covenant Between the Parts." Abram and the Divine Presence passed between an assortment of halved animals, and G-d told Abram that his descendants would be exiled and in bondage for four hundred years. At the conclusion of this period, Abram's descendants would leave with great wealth, G-d would punish the nations which enslaved them, and Abram's children would inherit the lands of Canaan. Following this pact, Sarai -- seeing that she and Abram were still

childless -- suggested that Abram father a child with her Egyptian maid, Hagar. Hagar conceived and began to mistreat her mistress Sarai, who responded with a heavy hand, prompting Hagar to flee. Hagar encountered an angel who encouraged her to return to Sarai, promising her that the child she will bear will become a great nation. She obeyed, and gave birth to Ishmael. At the very end of this section, G-d added the letter *hey* to Abram's name, making it "Abraham."

Seventh Aliyah: G-d sealed a covenant with Abraham and his descendants; the sign of the covenant is the circumcision of all males when they are eight days old. Sarai's name is changed to Sarah, and G-d promises a delighted Abraham that he will father another son, this time from Sarah. At the age of 99, Abraham circumcised himself, his son Ishmael, and all the members of his household.

Overview

http://ohr.edu/this_week/torah_weekly/4478

By Rabbi Yaakov Asher Sinclair

Ten generations have passed since Noach. Man has descended spiritually. In the year 1948 from Creation, Avram is born. By observing the world, Avram comes to recognize G-d's existence, and thus merits that G-d appear to him. At the beginning of this week's Torah portion G-d tells Avram to leave his land, his relatives and his father's house and travel to an unknown land where G-d will make him into a great nation. Avram leaves, taking with him his wife Sarai, his nephew Lot, their servants, and those whom they converted to faith in G-d. When they reach the land of Canaan, G-d appears to Avram and tells him that this is the land that He will give to his descendants. A famine ensues and Avram is forced to relocate to Egypt to find food. Realizing that his wife's beauty would cause his death at the hand of the Egyptians, Avram asks her to say that she is his sister. Sarai is taken to Pharaoh, but G-d afflicts Pharaoh and his court with severe plagues and she is released unmolested. Avram returns to Eretz Yisrael (Canaan) with much wealth given to him by the Egyptians. During a quarrel over grazing rights between their shepherds, Avram decides to part ways with his nephew Lot. Lot chooses to live in the rich but corrupt city of Sodom in the fertile plain of the Jordan. A war breaks out between the kings of the region and Sodom is defeated. Lot is taken captive. Together with a handful of his converts, Avram rescues Lot, miraculously overpowering vastly

superior forces, but Avram demurs from accepting any of the spoils of the battle. In a prophetic covenant, G-d reveals to Avram that his offspring will be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed for 400 years, after which they will emerge with great wealth and return to Eretz Yisrael, their irrevocable inheritance. Sarai is barren and gives Hagar, her Egyptian hand-maiden, to Avram in the hope that she will provide them with a child. Hagar becomes arrogant when she discovers that she is pregnant. Sarai deals harshly with her, and Hagar flees. On the instruction of an angel Hagar returns to Avram, and gives birth to Yishmael. The weekly portion concludes with G-d commanding Avram to circumcise himself and his offspring throughout the generations as a Divine covenant. G-d changes Avram's name to Avraham, and Sarai's name to Sarah. Hashem promises Avraham a son, Yitzchak, despite Avraham being ninety-nine years old and Sarah ninety. On that day, Avraham circumcises himself, Yishmael and all his household.

Parsha Songs

[For the tunes, please click on the link]

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/761410/jewish/Parshah-Songs.htm

LECH LECHA SONG

Selected from the following website:

<http://chinuch.org>

(To the tune of Vesain Banu)

by Rabbi Yoel Klugman

HASHEM TOLD AVRAHAM, LECH LECHA
TO A NATION HE WOULD GIVE BIRTH,
AND HE WAS ZOCHE TO A BRACHA
TO BE AS MANY AS THE DUST OF THE EARTH.

HASHEM TOLD AVRAHAM, LECH LECHA
HE WENT WITHOUT ASKING "WHY",
AND HE WAS ZOCHE TO A BRACHA
TO BE AS MANY AS THE STARS IN THE SKY.

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Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following website:

<http://chinuch.org>

Name _____

Parshas Lech Lecha Questions by Rabbi Shlomo Spiro

- 1) What number Parshas is Lech Lecha? _____
- 2) How many generations passed between Noach and Avraham? _____
- 3) How did Avram come to believe that there is one G-d? _____

4) At the beginning of the Parsha what did Hashem command Avram to do?

5) What did Hashem promise Avram? _____

6) What special Bracha did Hashem give Avram? _____

7) Who was Avram's wife? _____

8) Who was Avram's nephew? _____

9) When they arrived in Canaan Hashem appeared to Avram and told him

10) Fill in the blanks:

“Before long, there was a _____ and Avram was forced to relocate to _____ to find food. This was one of the _____ tests that Hashem gave to Avram.”

11) What was Avram scared that would happen when he came to Mitzrayim?

12) What did Avram do to prevent this from happening? _____

13) What did Hashem do to Pharaoh and why? _____

14) Why did Lot act like he owned Canaan? _____

15) What was the difference between Avram and Lot in the way they acted with their sheep? _____

16) After Avram and Lot split up where did Lot go to live and why?

17) When Lot was kidnapped and Avram went to save him, how was it that Avram was able to beat a superior army? _____

18) After the war was over what did Avram refuse to take? _____

19) Fill in the blanks:

“Hashem revealed to _____ that his descendants would be exiled to a strange land where they will be oppressed for _____ years, after which they will leave with great wealth and return to _____, their inheritance.

20) Who could not have children and what did she do to sort of fix this problem? _____

Extra Credit

21) Who else did Avram marry and what was the name of their son?

22) Fill in the blanks.

“The parsha concludes with Hashem commanding Avram to give a _____ to himself and to his descendants throughout the generations. Hashem changed Avram's name to _____, and Sarai's name to _____. Hashem promised Avraham a son, _____, despite Avraham being _____ years old and Sarah _____. On that day, Avraham circumcised himself, _____ and his whole household.”

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Questions By Rabbi Normie Lowenthal

Where did Hashem tell Avrom to go?

Where Hashem would show him. He did not tell him to what place. He went to אֶרֶץ כְּנָעַן Knaan, which is now called אֶרֶץ יִשְׂרָאֵל (Eretz Yisroel).

Who came along with Avrom?

His wife Sarai, his nephew Lot (Horon's son), and others he had taught about Hashem.

Why did Avrom have to leave Knaan, and where did he go?

There was a hunger, which forced them to go down to מִצְרַיִם (Egypt).

Why did Avrom have Sarai say she was his "sister"?

He was afraid that if they knew she was his wife, they'd kill him and take her.

How did Avrom settle the dispute between his shepherds and Lot's?

He had them each choose lands in different parts of Knaan, and they stayed apart.

What did Hashem promise Avrom after Lot moved away?

That all the land he sees would be his and his children's forever, and that his children would be compared (in number) to the sand of the earth.

Who told Avrom that Lot had been captured during the war between the nine kings?

Og (the giant who climbed on Noach's תֵּיבָה), who hoped Avrom would be captured so that he could take Sarai.

Together with whom did Avrom attack the kings?

318 of his men. Some say he was aided by one man, his servant Eliezer, whose name in גְּמַטְרִיָּה (numerical value) equals 318.

What did Hashem promise Avrom after the battle with the kings?

Much reward, and a son who would inherit the reward.

What did Hashem compare the children of Avrom to at this time?

כּוֹכְבֵי שָׁמַיִם - stars.

What ברית (Bris-pact) did Hashem make with Avrom?

The הַבְּרִית בֵּין הַחֲבָרִים (Bris Bein Habsarim), that all this land (Eretz Knaan) would be his, his children would one day be strangers and slaves in a strange land, but they will leave it rich, return to Knaan, and Hashem will judge the nation that enslaved them.

Who was Avrom's other wife?

Hagar, the former princess of Mitzrayim.

Why did Hagar run away?

Sarai upset her after she was wronged by Hagar who mocked her, saying that she was good enough to bear Avrom children, while Sarai was not.

Who met Hagar as she ran away, and what did he tell her?

A מלאך (an angel) came and told her that her son, who would be called Yishmael, would be a wild hunter and robber who would be hated and found a nation.

What were Avrom and Sarai's names changed to?

אַבְרָהָם (Avraham)- אָב הַמּוֹן גוֹיִם (Father of Nations) and שָׂרָה (Sara)

How old was Avrohom at his Bris Milah?

99 years old.

Who else had a Bris Milah when Avrohom did?

Yishmael, at age thirteen, and all the males in Avrohom's household.

Why did Hashem compare the children of Avrom specifically to stars?

Stars look small from the earth but in reality, if we could get closer to them, we would see that they are really colossal. To the people of this world, we look very small, as the Jews are such a small percentage of the populace.

However, in the world to come, everyone will see that we are really "big."

Parsha Quiz

1. Where did Hashem tell Avrom to go?
2. How did Avrom settle the dispute between his shepherds and Lot's?
3. Together with whom did Avrom attack the kings?
4. What two things did Hashem compare the children of Avrom to?
5. Who was Avrom's other wife and Why did she run away?

Extra credit

How old was Avrohom at his Bris Milah?

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Parsha Stories

Family Parshah

Lech Lecha Parshah Lesson

By [Malka Touger](#)

http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/321841/jewish/Lech-Lecha-Parshah-Lesson.htm

“Please take out your books,” Mrs. Fine said to her students. The girls had just finished learning the Torah portion of Noah and were eager to begin the next portion.

“We are going to learn about our forefather Abraham,” Mrs. Fine continued. “We were already introduced to Abraham and his family at the end of Noah. Now, let’s begin the next portion. G-d commands Abraham to leave the place he was born and to travel to the land of Israel.”

“But what happened to all the rest of the stories?” Yael called out in surprise. The puzzled students turned to look at her.

“What do you mean, Yael?” asked Mrs. Fine. “Which stories?”

“I remember the story of Abraham discovering G-d when he was only three years old. Our teacher taught us that in kindergarten.”

The class nodded at Yael in agreement. Other girls raised their hands too. “And,” asked Esty, “how about the time he broke his father’s idols when he was taking care of his shop?”

“Or when Nimrod threw him into the furnace?” added Sheina. “Why doesn’t the Torah begin teaching us about Abraham before the time G-d tells him *'lech lecha'*?”

Mrs. Fine turned to Yael with a smile. “Good for you, Yael. Your question got the whole class thinking. Let me explain.

“Abraham believed in G-d and dedicated his life to teaching others to do so too. Many things happened during his lifetime. The first story that the Torah tells us about Abraham

teaches us the most important lesson we should learn from the way he served G-d.”

“But how does this story teach us any more than the other ones that happened before?” asked Yael.

“There really is a difference between these stories and the others,” replied Mrs. Fine. “You see, this is the first time that *G-d speaks directly to Abraham and commands him to do something*. And Abraham does it immediately, believing in G-d without question. In the other stories, *Abraham does things on his own*. He discovers G-d, he breaks the idols, and he chooses to be thrown into the furnace.

“The Torah is not just telling us stories. The Torah wants to teach us that a Jew should dedicate his life to listening to G-d. So the first story about Abraham, the first Jew, is that G-d tells him to do something and he does it.”

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LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

http://ohr.edu/this_week/kinder_torah/4474

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Parashas Lech Lecha

The Ketores

“**A**bbba, why do we read the parasha of Ketores (incense) every morning?”

“That is an excellent question, Avi. Our recitation corresponds to the actual compounding and offering of the Ketores in the Mishkan and Beis HaMikdash. The Torah informs us that the Ketores was burned on its own special Mizbeach (altar) in the morning and in the late afternoon when the Kohen cleaned and lit the lights of the Menorah (Shemos 30:7,8).

This special part of the Avodah (service) was very dear to Hashem.”

“Why was that, Abba?”

“The Medrash Tanchuma (Parashas Tetzaveh 15) quotes the verse ‘Oil and incense gladden the heart’ (Mishlei 27:9). This refers to the Creator of the universe and His beloved nation Yisrael. Our Avodah with Ketores makes Hashem’s heart happy (so to speak). How? The Medrash cites several examples of how the Ketores are endearing to Hashem. The Kohen Godol entered into the Holy of Holies on Yom Kippur and offered Ketores. When the smoke of the Ketores billowed up, this was a sign that the Kohen Gadol was alive, his Avodah had been accepted, and Klal Yisrael received their kapora. They became filled with joy, and so did the Almighty.

The Medrash continues to explain that all of the other korbonos were brought for sins or kapora. The offering of the Ketores, on the other hand was only for simcha (joy). Similarly, the korbonos that received the most praise ever in history were the korbonos of the Nesiim (Princes). Why were they so praiseworthy? Because the first portion that they offered was ketores. That brought merit to their entire offering. The Medrash then cites an awesome event that occurred after the sin of Korach. The day after Korach and his followers were swallowed up by the earth, the nation complained against Moshe and Aharon saying, 'You have killed the people of Hashem!' (Bamidbar 17:6). The Almighty responded to this by telling Moshe to remove himself from the assembly, for He was going to destroy them in an instant. The plague of death began and Moshe told Aharon to take a censure, place fire and Ketores in it, and go out to the nation. The Angel of Death was killing every Jew in his path, just as the harvester cuts down every stalk of wheat. Aharon Ha-Kohen stood between the living and the dead, with the censure in hand, opposite the Angel of Death, and would not allow him to continue killing. What stopped the plague? The Ketores. Lastly, the Medrash speaks about the inauguration of the Mishkan. The structure was erected, the korbonos were offered, and the shulchan was arranged along with the menorah. Even after all of this exalted avodah, the Shechina (Divine Presence) still did not descend to the Mishkan. Lastly, the Ketores was burned and the Shechina filled the Mishkan."

That is incredible, Abba! In those days we had the zechus (merit) to offer the Ketores. How can we relate to them nowadays?"

"I will tell you Avi. Rabbeinu Bechaye, in his peirush on parashas Tetzaveh (Shemos 30:8) cites several verses from Tehillim, in which Dovid HaMelech requests that his tefillos be accepted by Hashem like the Ketores. Why does Dovid single out Ketores over all other Korbonos? The answer is as we said before – all other korbonos are brought as a result of some type of sin. Ketores was burned solely for simcha. Additionally, the other burnt offerings took some time to begin burning and emanate a pleasing fragrance. The Ketores, on the other hand, began burning and giving off smoke immediately. Therefore it was the quickest korbon to give a rayach nichoach (pleasing aroma) to Hashem. We also can request that Hashem accept our daily prayers like Ketores.

"Additionally, many meforshim on the Siddur cite passages from the Zohar which extol the virtues of Ketores. A decree stands before the Holy One, that anyone who reads the parasha of Ketores every day will be saved from all wicked things, witchcraft, harmful occurrences, bad thoughts, evil accusations, and death. He will not be harmed the entire day, because the sitra acheres will hold no power over him. Furthermore, a special protection rests upon every locality that the people say the parasha of Ketores with kavannah (intention) and a heartfelt desire. Death and the nations of the world can cause no damage or destruction there, because they do not reign upon that place. The verse states, 'Ketores is constantly before Hashem' (Shemos 30:8). The Zohar darshens that the Ketores stands before Hashem more than all of the other avodos. The act of offering the Ketores is more cherished and dear to Hashem than all of the other avodos in the world! It ties us to Him with bonds of emunah."

Do people know this, Abba?"

"Rebbe Shimon speaks about this, Avi. If people knew how exalted the Ketores is to Hashem, they would take each and every word of it, and place it as a crown upon their heads, and wear it

like a crown of gold. We must make the proper effort to understand it and say it with kavannah every day. When we succeed, we have a portion in this world and the next world. We remove death from ourselves and the world. We will be saved from all evil decrees, traps, and even gehennom!"

"That is absolutely wonderful, Abba! You have really motivated me to learn the parasha of Ketores, understand it, and say it with kavannah every day."

"With the Almighty's help, you should have spectacular success!"

"Amen!"

Kinderlach . . .

The Shulchan Aruch (Rema Orach Chaim 132:2) instructs us to say the Pitom HaKetores after the daily afternoon and morning prayers. We should first say 'Ein Kelokeinu'. Why? The Shaare Teshuva (4) cites the Noda Bi'Yehuda who explains that the Pitom HaKetores brings wealth to a person. Therefore, he must first proclaim the incomparable greatness of Almighty – his G-d, King, and Savior. He then thanks Him, and blesses Him. In this way, we will not be tempted to think that 'my power and the might of my hand got me this wealth' (Devarim 8:17). Kinderlach, our Korbonos prayers are all that remains of the exalted service of the Beis HaMikdash. Of all the Avodos, the Ketores was the dearest to Hashem. To this very day, learning and reciting it with kavannah strengthens our emunah, provides special protection for our Holy Nation, and makes us wealthy. Say Pitom HaKetores with kavannah every day, kinderlach. Help and protect yourself and your nation. Give Hashem nachas ruach and come close to Him.

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Family Parsha Lech Lecha

by [Nesanel Yoel Safran](#)

This article can also be read at: <http://www.aish.com/tp/pak/fp/104663659.html>

Lech Lecha(Genesis 12-17)

Friends to the End

From this week's Torah Portion

Real friends stand with each other even when it's not easy. In this week's Torah portion (Gen. 14:12-14), Abraham puts himself on the line to defend Lot, who's in trouble. We can learn from here the value of being loyal to the people we're close to.

Story

In our story, a kid has to decide how far to go for a friend.

ON THE REBOUND

Mike expertly dribbled the red-white-and-blue basketball on the hard asphalt, cut smoothly toward the hoop and made an easy lay-up shot, swishing the ball through the net.

"You win again. Big surprise!" his buddy, Larry, shrugged with a smile. While the two boys were best friends as long as either of them could remember, when it came to athletic ability, they were as different as night and day.

Mike was a tall, lanky gazelle of a kid who seemed to have been born with a pair of sneakers on his feet. The shorter, rounder Larry, while he tried hard, was built ... let's say ... more like he should be spending his time in front of a classroom chalkboard than a basketball-court backboard. While both of them knew how these games - which had been a Sunday morning ritual between them for months - would almost always end, they enjoyed each other's company so much that neither of them cared.

"Okay, let's play again!" Larry said cheerfully, passing Mike the ball.

The tall kid was about to start the game off when he felt a tap on the shoulder.

"I see you've got some pretty good moves on the court, kid." It was Sam, an older boy, and the best ballplayer in the whole neighborhood.

"Uh, thanks," Mike muttered, feeling tongue-tied by the sudden 'celebrity' attention.

"Y'know, me and the some of my friends from the school team are on our way to have a pick-up basketball game over at the big indoor court," Sam said. "And I couldn't help noticing that you've got what it takes. How about comin' over and joinin' us?"

Mikes eyes lit up. "What do you say, Larry? Should we go play..."

"Scuse me..." cut in Sam. "I said I invited *you* to come with us. As for your pal over there ... I think it's time for him to be callin' it a day."

The two friends looked at each other.

"Go ahead with him, Mike. It's no big deal," whispered Larry. "It's a great chance for you."

Mike didn't disagree. He and all the younger kids looked at Sam and his crowd as sort-of neighborhood 'heroes'. And an offer to hang with them was no small thing.

"Let's go," Sam said, as if the matter was already a done deal, signaling with his head and getting ready to walk.

Mike was about to follow. Why shouldn't he? Every muscle in his well-conditioned body wanted to play ball with guys this good and getting invited by them had swelled his head so much he thought his sweatband would pop.

"Have a great time," Larry said, with a half-wave, and started walking away. Mike waved back, trying not to notice the sad, abandoned eyes his friend was trying to hide behind his smile...

Larry, his basketball cradled under his arm, was about to walk through the gate of the chain link fence leading out of the playground, when he felt someone snatch the ball away.

He turned to see Mike's smile-lit face.

"Hey, you and I have got a lot more one-on-one to play today, buddy," Mike said.

"But ... I thought you were going with Sam and the guys from the team?"

"What?" Mike answered with a grin. "And send my favorite 'home' team, home alone? No way!"

Discussion Questions

Ages 3-5

Q. How did Mike feel at first about going off with Sam?

A. He wanted to go, even if it meant leaving his friend.

Q. How did he feel in the end?

A. He realized it wasn't right to go off and leave his friend behind.

A. That it wasn't right not to help when everyone else was, and was glad he joined in.

Ages 6-9

Q. What life-lesson do you think Mike learned that day?

A. He'd been so swept off his feet by the chance to play with the 'big boys' that he was willing to leave his friend in the dust. Then he realized that being loyal to a friend was important enough to give up something for.

Q. Do you think Mike gained or lost-out by being loyal?

A. While he might have lost out on a chance to boost his status and have some fun, he gained much more by building the important value of loyalty into his character.

Ages 10 and Up

Q. Do you think a 'fair weather friend' is a friend at all? Why or why not?

A. A 'fair weather friend' - that is one who only remains a friend when things are easy - may be an enjoyable acquaintance, but is not a friend. A friend is someone who is ready to put himself on the line and be there even when it would be more comfortable or fun not to do it.

Q. Should the same degree of loyalty apply to family members?

A. Absolutely and in a way, even more so. Families that are loyal and supportive give each family member a priceless gift of security and stability.

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Parsha Games

Lech Lecha

Brit Puzzle

Props:

-*Pictures of cows, goats, and rams, cut unevenly in half.

-Fire (something orange)

Activity: Explain that when Hashem promised Avraham Israel, they couldn't shake hands on it, or even sign a document. So instead, Avraham cut up these animals and laid them out on the ground with the two halves facing each other. Then, Hashem sent a fire to walk between them.

Drop all the half-pictures on the floor, and challenge the group to match each half with its pair. You may want to time them and see how fast they can get it down to. Then, have everyone watch while the fire passes through the middle.

Walking to the Promised Land

Props:

-Blindfold

-Something to represent Israel (a flag, a map)

Activity: Blindfold Avraham. Explain to the group that Avraham had to trust in Hashem to lead him to Israel, because Avraham didn't know where it was. Have the group lead Avraham to Israel.

Discussion: Ask Avraham if he trusted the group. Discuss how that would have been different if Hashem was the one leading him.

Courtesy of parshaactivities.com