

# NCYI Youth Groups Parshat Nitzavim

[http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh\\_TorahSummary.htm](http://www.headcoverings-by-devorah.com/HebEngTaNaKh_TorahSummary.htm)

## Parsha Outline

- The Covenant with G-d
- Returning to G-d
- Life's choice

## Parsha Summaries

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/424595/jewish/Nitzavim-Roundup.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/424595/jewish/Nitzavim-Roundup.htm)

### Nitzavim Roundup

Moses speaks to the People of Israel, and he says some very important things for us to learn from:

#### **Jewish Unity**

Everyone is standing together, the great scholars with the woodcutters and water-drawers. This teaches us that every single person is important in G-d's eyes, and everyone has a vital role to play. It also shows us the importance of unity--the Jewish people are one and must be always united.

#### **The Future Redemption**

If the Children of Israel sin, the G-d will punish them and their land will become dry and barren and stop producing its beautiful fruit. The Jews will have to suffer in exile. But a time will come when they will realize how wrong they've been and will turn back to G-d, and then he will bring them back to the land. This will bring in a new, special time when everyone will want to do only good and the whole world will become a good place--there won't be any evil. This is called the time of Moshiach, the future redemption.

#### **We Can Do It!**

Sometimes it seems as if the Torah is very hard, and there are so many things we must do, and so many that we may not do, that it feels like the keeping the Torah is like crossing a great big ocean--almost too hard to be done. But G-d told us keep the Torah

because we really can. Because if we try, the Torah is not across the ocean, rather "the Torah is very close to you" and it's possible for us to do it right. And it's not just possible--it may even be easy! (In middle of all the mitzvot we've been learning these past few weeks, that's some much needed encouragement.)

### **It's Our Choice**

The world is made up of good and bad, and the Torah tells us what is the good path to follow. But we must make the choice to do good. It's our choice what we want to do with our lives--and every moment of our day. And when we think about it, of course we will want to do only the best. So make the right choice--choose good.

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/560258/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/560258/jewish/Aliya-Summary.htm)

### **Nitzavim Aliya Summary**

**General Overview:** In this week's reading, *Nitzavim*, Moses gathers the Israelites on the day of his passing to enter them into a covenant with G-d. He warns of the exile and desolation of the Land that will result when Israel abandons G-d's laws, but assures them that they will eventually repent, and G-d will then return His people to the Holy Land. This portion also talks about freedom of choice and the mitzvah of *teshuvah* (repentance).

---

**First Aliyah:** On the final day of his earthly life, Moses gathered all the Israelites -- men, women, and children -- to enter them into a covenant with G-d.

---

**Second Aliyah:** This covenant established the Israelites as G-d's exclusive nation. The covenant, Moses explained, was not limited to those who were physically present on that day, rather it included all future generations of Jews, as well.

---

**Third Aliyah:** Moses warned the Israelites not to be tempted by the idolatrous lifestyles of the Egyptians and the other sundry nations through which they had passed in the course of their travels. Moses warned of the dire consequences which will befall the individual, family, or tribe, which would forsake their covenant with G-d. This section concludes with the concept of communal responsibility for not appropriately punishing individual sinners.

---

**Fourth Aliyah:** Moses informed the Israelites what will occur after they are exiled from their land due to their sins. Eventually they will wholeheartedly return to G-d, and G-d will gather them from the furthest reaches of the heavens and return them to the land of their forefathers. At that point, Moses says, "G-d will 'circumcise' your heart and the heart of your offspring, so that you may love the L-rd your G-d with all your heart and with all your soul."

---

**Fifth Aliyah:** When G-d gathers His people's exiles, the curses which accompanied them throughout their sojourn in foreign lands will be placed upon their enemies who persecuted them. The Israelites will once again serve G-d, and will be blessed with abundance in the work of their hands, the fruit of their wombs, the fruit of their land, and the fruit of their livestock.

---

**Sixth Aliyah:** Moses enjoins the people to follow the mitzvot, informing them that "it is not beyond you nor is it remote from you. It is not in heaven... It is not across the sea.... Rather, it is very close to you, in your mouth, in your heart, that you may do it."

---

**Seventh Aliyah:** Moses tells the Jewish people that they have been given free choice to choose between good and evil, life and death. Their choice will determine whether they are the beneficiaries of G-d's blessings or curses. Moses implores the Israelites to choose life.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/3659>

On the last day of his life, Moshe gathers together all the people, both young and old, lowly and exalted, men and women in a final initiation. The covenant includes not only those who are present, but even those generations yet unborn. Moshe admonishes the people again to be extremely vigilant against idol worship, because in spite of having witnessed the abominations of Egypt, there will always be the temptation to experiment with foreign philosophies as a pretext for immorality. Moshe describes the desolation of the Land of Israel which will be a result of the failure to heed G-d's *mitzvos*. Both their descendants and foreigners alike will remark on the singular desolation of the Land and its apparent inability to be sown or to produce crops. The conclusion will be apparent to all - the Jewish People have forsaken the One who protects them, in favor of idols which can do nothing. Moshe promises, however, that the people will eventually repent after

both the blessings and the curses have been fulfilled. However assimilated they will have become among the nations, eventually G-d will bring them back to Eretz Yisrael. Moshe tells the people to remember that the Torah is not a remote impossibility; rather its fulfillment is within the grasp of every Jew. The Parsha concludes with a dramatic choice between life and death. Moshe exhorts the people to choose life.

---

## Parsha Songs

[The lyrics are supplied here. For the tunes, please click on the link]

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/573785/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/573785/jewish/Parshah-Song.htm)

Lyrics:

MISSING

## Parsha Questions & Answers

Selected from the following websites:

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=7078](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=7078)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=4160](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=4160)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=4043](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=4043)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=393](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=393)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=394](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=394)

[http://www.chinuch.org/item\\_details.php?mid=1687](http://www.chinuch.org/item_details.php?mid=1687)

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/2333>

The following are a selection of questions obtained from the above mentioned websites.

K-2

Questions

1. When did Moshe gather the Bnei Yisrael to bring them into the Brit?
2. With whom does HaShem make this Brit?
3. What would happen to Eretz Yisrael if Bnei Yisrael sin?
4. If the Bnei Yisrael sin and HaShem sends them out of Eretz Yisrael, what do they have to do to return to Eretz Yisrael?
5. If the Bnei Yisrael do teshuvah, where will HaShem place His curses?
6. Why is this parsha always read the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah?
7. What does Lo Bashamayim Hee teach us?
8. What choice do each of us have?
9. What did Moshe tell the Bnei Yisrael to choose?

10. Why can Hashem never "swap" the Jewish people for another nation?

### Answers

1. Zayin Adar; the day that Moshe was going to die
2. All future generations
3. Eretz Yisrael will become empty of its inhabitants
4. Teshuvah (repentance)
5. On the enemies of Bnei Yisrael
6. It reminds us to do teshuvah
7.
  - a. The Torah is not in some far away place, but is rather right here before us
  - b. Even if a voice comes from heaven to teach a law we do not listen to it!
8. To do good and be rewarded or to do bad and be punished
9. Life
10. Because Hashem swore to their ancestors that He would never do so.

3-4

### Questions

1. When did Moshe gather the Bnei Yisrael to bring them into the Brit?
2. With whom does HaShem make this Brit?
3. What would happen to Eretz Yisrael if Bnei Yisrael sin?
4. If the Bnei Yisrael sin and HaShem sends them out of Eretz Yisrael, what do they have to do to return to Eretz Yisrael?
5. Where is the hint to Chodesh Elul in this week's Parsha?
6. If the Bnei Yisrael do teshuvah, where will HaShem place His curses?
7. Why is this parsha always read the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah?
8. "The hidden things are for HaShem and the revealed things are for us." What does this mean?
9. From where will HaShem gather us?
10. What does Lo Bashamayim Hee teach us?
11. Moshe warned the Bnei Yisrael not to leave the Torah. He did this in front of two eidim (witnesses). Who were those two eidim?
12. What choice do each of us have?
13. What did Moshe tell the Bnei Yisrael to choose?
14. Why can Hashem never "swap" the Jewish people for another nation?
15. How do the earth and sky remind us to keep the mitzvot?

### Answers

1. Zayin Adar; the day that Moshe was going to die
2. All future generations
3. Eretz Yisrael will become empty of its inhabitants
4. Teshuvah (repentance)

5. "Oomal HaShem Elokecha Es Levavcha Va'es Levav Zarecha"
6. On the enemies of Bnei Yisrael
7. It reminds us to do teshuvah
8. There is a collective culpability only for open sins, but not for hidden ones
9. Everywhere
10.
  - a. The Torah is not in some far away place, but is rather right here before us
  - b. Even if a voice comes from heaven to teach a law we do not listen to it!
11. The shamayim and the aretz (heaven and earth)
12. To do good and be rewarded or to do bad and be punished
13. Life
14. Because Hashem swore to their ancestors that He would never do so.
15. The earth and heavenly bodies, although receiving neither reward nor punishment, always obey Hashem's will. How much more should we, who stand to receive reward or punishment, obey Hashem.

## 5-6

### Questions

1. When did Moshe gather the Bnei Yisrael to bring them into the Brit?
2. With whom does HaShem make this Brit?
3. With whom does HaShem become angry with?
4. What would happen to Eretz Yisrael if Bnei Yisrael sin?
5. The destruction of Eretz Yisrael is compared to the destruction of which two cities?
6. If the Bnei Yisrael sin and HaShem sends them out of Eretz Yisrael, what do they have to do to return to Eretz Yisrael?
7. Where is the hint to Chodesh Elul in this week's Parsha?
8. Will the nations of the world understand why the Bnei Yisrael and Eretz Yisrael were punished so severely?
9. If the Bnei Yisrael do teshuvah, where will HaShem place His curses?
10. Why is this parsha always read the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah?
11. "The hidden things are for HaShem and the revealed things are for us." What does this mean?
12. From where will HaShem gather us?
13. Is the Torah we need to learn very far away from us?
14. What does Lo Bashamayim Hee teach us?
15. Moshe warned the Bnei Yisrael not to leave the Torah. He did this in front of two eidim (witnesses). Who were those two eidim?
16. What choice do each of us have?
17. What did Moshe tell the Bnei Yisrael to choose?
18. Why can Hashem never "swap" the Jewish people for another nation?
19. How do the earth and sky remind us to keep the mitzvot?
20. How do we cling to HaShem?

## Answers

1. Zayin Adar; the day that Moshe was going to die
2. All future generations
3. Anyone who goes astray and worships Avodah Zarah (idols)
4. Eretz Yisrael will become empty of its inhabitants
5. Sedom and Amorah
6. Teshuvah (repentance)
7. "Oomal HaShem Elokecha **Es Levavcha Va'es Levav Zarecha**"
8. YES! At first they will wonder, then they will realize that it was because the Bnei Yisrael broke their brit.
9. On the enemies of Bnei Yisrael
10. It reminds us to do teshuvah
11. There is a collective culpability only for open sins, but not for hidden ones
12. Everywhere
13. NO
14.
  - a. The Torah is not in some far away place, but is rather right here before us
  - b. Even if a voice comes from heaven to teach a law we do not listen to it!
15. The shamayim and the aretz (heaven and earth)
16. To do good and be rewarded or to do bad and be punished
17. Life
18. Because Hashem swore to their ancestors that He would never do so.
19. The earth and heavenly bodies, although receiving neither reward nor punishment, always obey Hashem's will. How much more should we, who stand to receive reward or punishment, obey Hashem.
20. By loving Him and doing His mitzvot

## Parsha Stories

[http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article\\_cdo/aid/422358/jewish/Living-with-the-Parshah.htm](http://www.chabad.org/parshah/article_cdo/aid/422358/jewish/Living-with-the-Parshah.htm)

### Living with the Parshah: One Group Together

By [Mendy Loewenthal](#)

"Okay, please, everyone quiet." Dan as usual was taking the stand. His three friends fell silent. The four boys had been voted in by their classmates to head the class play. This was the script-writing meeting, in a garden shed. "Alex has suggested doing a story about Marrano Jews in Spain. Do we all agree this is what we should do?" Nobody disagreed. So the scriptwriting began, helped by frequent drinks of fruit juice.

Four hours later, Adam proclaimed "I think we're done." Everybody else was fed up with being cooped up in the rather stuffy shed at the back of Misha's garden. Misha picked up the script, which was full of crossing-outs, and had various corners missing, vital scraps used to draw lots. But the actual script was readable. Dan had promised to type it up to be used for the auditioning of parts that Monday.

"Before we leave, I think we should discuss who we think would be good for each part," Dan said in his serious, this-is-a-very-important-point voice. Misha looked at him.

"Actually, there's some food if we go inside," he said. They all left the shed and trooped inside the house.

"Just wash your hands please, before you come in my kitchen," Misha's mother said, looking warily at Adam's ink-stained hands. After the boys had washed and were seated at the supper table Dan managed to steer the conversation from sports back to the play.

"I think we should talk about the parts," Dan began. "I think David H. would be great for the bad priest guy who chases them to the port when they are escaping. You know, he can give that sinister-eye look."

Everyone chuckled. "What about making a list of the boys in the class who can be in the play," said Adam. The others looked questioningly at him. "What I mean to say is," Adam began again, "not everyone in the class can act." The other boys looked thoughtful. They didn't like leaving people out.

Misha's father, who until now had been sitting quietly at the table, looked up. "Have you boys been studying the Torah portion at all this week?" he asked.

Alex looked up. "Mmmm, I was also thinking about that." The other boys looked a little perplexed. "I'm not sure if this is what you were referring to, but Rabbi Cohen was telling us about the beginning of the portion today." Alex's voice trailed off uncomfortably. He wasn't usually the one to make speeches, but Misha's father nodded smilingly at him and Alex continued.

"Well basically it says that all the Jews were standing together before they entered the Land of Israel: the heads of the tribes, the elders, the men, women, children, and then it mentions the wood-choppers and the water-carriers. It seems funny to mention these two types as well, but actually it is saying that all the Jews, even the ones who have simple jobs and may not be able to study much Torah, or be good at things that some of the other

people are, they are all significant, each one important in G-d's eyes, and they are all standing together as one people."

"How's that relevant to our play?" Adam asked.

"I get it," said Dan. "I agree, I think that everyone should have a role in our play. Of course we only have a few leading parts, but there are other smaller parts, and there will be drawing and building scenery, doing advertising to parents and other people at school. In fact if every one joins in, we can make this a really big success! We could invite everyone to view it, and make it really professional. As one group together we can make a much bigger impact."

Alex and the others nodded in agreement. Misha's parents exchanged glances, and smiled.

<http://ohr.edu/yhiy/article.php/Parshat-Netzavim.pdf?docid=3657&ie=1&showobject=1>

## LESSONS FROM THE PARSHA

### CHOICES

"Abba, I am not sure what I should do." "What is the question, Avi? What are you unsure about?" "It is complicated, Abba. I wish that someone would clarify it for me and tell me what to do; which decision to make; which path to choose." "Avi, may I share with you a few words from the parasha about decision making?" "Yes, please, Abba." "Hashem gave us a choice, and told us what to choose. He called heaven and earth as His witnesses. The Almighty placed before us life and death, blessing and curse. Then He told us to choose life, in order that we and our offspring shall live (Devarim 30:19). This choice seems simple. Who, after all, would choose death? The Malbim explains that life is keeping the Torah, and death is the opposite. The Chofetz Chaim, in his sefer Shmiras HaLashon (Chapter 9), adds that the Torah is referring to eternal life. These are the words of the blessing that we recite after reading the Torah, 'You placed eternal life within us.' When a person chooses to keep the Torah, he is choosing eternal life. The Ohr HaChaim HaKadosh adds that the Torah brings blessing and reward in both this world and the next."

"It sounds wonderful, Abba." "It is, Avi. The Ramban explains that every person has free choice. There is nothing to prevent him from choosing either path. The choice seems clear, however, the yetzer hora is an expert at confusing a person. He offers all sorts of reasons why a person should abandon the Torah. He has the ability to get us very confused. Therefore, Hashem tells us what path to choose. Choose life! Take the path of

the Torah! Choose what is good for you and for your offspring both in this world and the next.” “How inspiring, Abba.” “Yes, Avi. You have many choices in your life. You must always keep on thing in mind. Hashem told you to choose life. Always choose the Torah path. Always make the decision which will uphold the Torah. Sometimes it is complicated. You may need to ask a Rav who is rich in Torah knowledge and experience to help you clarify the issue. He may even tell you which is the correct path to take. Then the decision is up to you. Choose life! Follow the Torah and its wise men. Hashem will give you blessing and reward in this world and forever.”

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Rosh Hashanah is coming in just a few days. On that day, Hashem decides who will live and who will die. He has given us the option. We can choose life. When we accept upon ourselves the mitzvos of the Torah, and crown Hashem as King of the world, we are choosing life. Follow Hashem’s advice, kinderlach. Make the right decision. Choose life.*

## WEALTHY FOREVER

“Abba, that is a magnificent home. Just the gardens alone are worth more than our house.” “Eli, I know the owner, personally.” “Really? He must be a very wealthy man.” “I knew him before he was rich. He had a regular job. However, he had a burning ambition to be rich. He saved all of his salary money, and lived like a poor man. In a few years, he bought a business. He continued to live very poorly, putting all of the profits back into the business. The business grew and he became very wealthy. Now he no longer has to live like a poor man.” “He was willing to be poor temporarily in order to have long-term wealth.” “Exactly, Eli.” “The Chofetz Chaim zt”l speaks along similar lines, Abba.” “I cannot believe that the holy Chofetz Chaim advocates amassing a fortune of money, Eli.” “No, Abba. He advises us to amass a fortune of Torah.” “Now that sounds more like Rav Yisrael Meir.” “He writes in his commentary on parashas Nitzavim that the only fortune to be earned in this world is the Torah.”

“It is not in heaven” (Devarim 30:12). There is no Torah in heaven. Torah was given to be learned down here, to purify our souls. Without the Torah, we would be poor forever. When we learn Torah, we amass a great fortune. Even if we are poor in this world, it is only temporary. Like the man in the story, who was willing to undergo temporary poverty to receive great wealth. Torah riches are beyond comprehension.

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Now is the time to work hard. You will have plenty of time to enjoy your Torah fortune later. However, you only have a short amount of time to work at learning Torah. Do not waste even one minute. Fabulous wealth awaits you.*

## LONG TERM CONTRACT

“For you pass into a covenant with Hashem . . . whoever is here with us today, and whoever is not here with us today” (Devarim 29:11,14). This *bris* was for all future generations of the Jewish people. The Malbim asks a startling question. How can we, who are living 3000 years later, be obligated to an agreement made by our forefathers? A contract made without the consent of one of the parties is not binding. We were not there to agree to this. To answer this question, we first must realize that The Almighty does not need our agreement. The All Powerful One can impose His terms upon anyone at any time. This *bris* is an advantage for us, not an obligation. Without this *bris*, punishment would come swiftly for those who go against Hashem’s will. He is patient, disciplining slowly, hoping that the sinner will realize his mistakes and do *teshuva* (repentance). *Teshuva* is for our good, to purify our souls, and earn us eternal reward. Hashem is assuring us that He will never forget us. He will never let us sink so low that we are lost. We have mutually committed to a *bris* (covenant) binding us together forever.

*Kinderlach . . .*

*Rosh Hashanah is almost upon us. It marks the beginning of a new year. A time of renewal. Now is the time to renew and strengthen our relationship with Hashem. When we come close to Him by doing teshuva, He will come close to us. Those are the terms of the bris that we entered 3000 years ago. Do your part. Hashem is waiting for you.*

<http://www.aish.com/torahportion/pArchive.asp?eventType=51&eventName=Nitzavim>

There are other stories available as well at the above website.

[http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Good\\_Excuse.asp](http://www.aish.com/torahportion/family/Good_Excuse.asp)

**Nitzavim** (Deuteronomy 29:9-30:20)

**Good Excuse**

## From this week's Torah Portion

Making excuses can seem like the easy way out, but in the end, it never gets us anywhere. This week's portion (30:12-13) acknowledges how tempting it is to find excuses to avoid doing something positive, and urges us to overcome them and reach our goals.

---

## Story

*In our story, some kids have to decide whether to let a good excuse, excuse them.*

**NO EXCUSE**

Debby, Gail and Amy sat beneath the gray, darkening sky at the corner, waiting for the volunteer van that was going to take them to their weekly after-school 'cheer-up' visit to the local nursing home.

"You know, I really have a ton of homework to do this afternoon," Gail complained. "I wish I hadn't agreed to do this visiting thing."

"Yeah, I know what you mean," Amy chimed in. "I know it's a good deed and everything, but I'd really rather go check out the clearance sale at Best-Dressed. I hear they have some really good clothes on sale cheap."

As they were speaking, they noticed the familiar, blue volunteer van approach, but instead of slowing down it drove right past them.

"Hey, what happened?" Amy called out.

"I'll bet it's that new driver again who forgot we were part of the pick-up route!" Gail huffed. "Now what do we do?"

"We go bargain hunting!" Amy's face lit up like a light bulb.

"Huh?"

"Well, look, it's not our fault the van didn't stop for us, and now we're off the hook. Come on, guys, let's go across the street to the mall!"

"I guess really I don't have *that* much homework, why not?" Gail smiled.

"C'mon, Debby," Amy called. "You said you wanted a new fall outfit."

Debby crossed her arms, then scrunched her face and shook her head. "You know, I just don't think we should miss our nursing home visit. The old people really enjoy it," Debby said, thinking of Mrs. Katz, the patient who'd she'd been assigned to visit.

"Maybe, but the van drove right by us. So we have a good excuse not to show this week," Amy scowled.

"I don't know. My mom always says 'a good excuse is still an excuse.' It's really only a ten-minute walk away. Why don't we just go for it?"

Debby's two friends looked at her like she was out of her mind.

"*Walk* it? It's enough that we agree to go at all. Forget it - you coming or not?"

"Um, no," Debby said. "You guys go ahead if you want. I'm going to keep trying."

Debby watched her friends walk off, sighed, and started on her way. After a moment, she felt a drop of rain on her face, which soon grew into a light but steady rain.

*Hmm, maybe I should forget about this crazy idea? Debby thought. After all, no one would expect me to walk in the rain. I do have a legitimate excuse.*

She was about to do an about-face and join her friends at the mall when the thought crossed her mind: *But a legitimate excuse is still an excuse.*

Pulling her hood up over her head, Debby valiantly marched on through the rain until she arrived. She'd barely had a chance to take off her coat when Sharon, the home manager, came running her way.

"Oh, Debby! You made it after all! Mrs. Katz was so disappointed when the van showed up without you. She said she waits all week for your visit." The young woman lowered her voice to a whisper and added, "You know, it's unfortunately the only visit she ever gets ... her family never comes."

Suddenly, despite her wet clothing, Debby felt a sunny, warm feeling inside and knew she'd done something very good by not letting an excuse - even a good one - stop her.

---

## Discussion Questions

### Ages 3-5

Q. How did Debby's friends feel when the van didn't stop for them?

A. They felt that since they had a good excuse not to go to the nursing home, they didn't have to go.

Q. How did Debby feel?

A. She felt that even if you have a good excuse, you should still do what's right.

### Ages 6-9

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

A. Many times when we set out to do something worthwhile, it won't be easy and it is tempting to quit, especially if there seems to be a good excuse to do so. But we gain and grow so much by pushing on, nevertheless.

Q. Do you think Debby would have been wrong not to have gone to the nursing home visit after the van passed them, etc.?

A. No, she would have been within her rights. It really was a legitimate excuse. But she became great - and we can too - by not letting 'good excuses' stop us from reaching our goals.

### **Ages 10 and Up**

Q. Who do you think lives a happier life - someone who allows good excuses stop her or one who doesn't? Why?

A. There is no dream, no worthwhile accomplishment, that doesn't at some point present itself with a good excuse to give up. Only a person who keeps going anyway will achieve the great joy of accomplishing her dreams.

Q. What does it mean to rationalize?

A. It is a process of using our mind to generate excuses to allow us to do what we want even if it's not right. This type of excuse-making can really hold a person back from spiritual growth and we should always be on the lookout to avoid it.

## **Parsha Games**

<http://www.aje.org.uk/harayon/>

### **K-2**

This is the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah

#### **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Learning about Rosh Hashanah**

#### **Activity**

**Explain the difference in the length of the blasts and what they are called, the difference between the Tekiah and Tekiah Gedolah especially. Designate some kids to represent tekiah, some to represent shevarim, and some to represent teruah. Call out the names of the different blasts one at a time e.g. 'Tekiah!' and have the kids who represent that blast mimic the blast**

### **3-4**

In this parashah we read about 'Teshuvah' - commonly translated as 'Repentance'. It is always read on the Shabbat before Rosh Hashanah

## **Middah/ Jewish Value**

**- Being sorry for any bad things we have done and trying to do more mitzvot**

## **Activity**

**Read the story 'Fire! Fire!' to the group. Ask those in the group who want to speak what 'good' things they will try to achieve in the coming year and how they will go about it.**

### **'Fire! Fire!'**

A story from the Dubno Maggid

Long, long, ago, before fire engines were invented, when a fire broke out in the town someone would raise the alarm by blowing loudly on a trumpet. Then all the people would form a human chain from the nearest well to the scene of the fire. They would pass buckets of water to each other and try to put out the fire.

One day a young boy from a tiny village came to town. All of a sudden he heard the sound of a trumpet blaring through the village.

'Why is someone blowing so loudly on a trumpet?' he asked a passer-by.

'It's to tell everyone there is a fire in the town so that it can be put out quickly.'

'That's wonderful,' thought the boy. 'I will buy a trumpet and take it back to the village.'

Not long after his return a fire broke out in the village. The young boy ran to the scene of the fire and called out 'Don't panic. I will put the fire out. Listen!'

He put the trumpet to his lips and started blowing loudly. But the flames just leapt from one roof to another and soon half the village was burnt to the ground.

'You stupid boy,' yelled the villagers. 'Do you think that just blowing a trumpet will put out the fire? The trumpet is just an alarm to warn everyone that there is a fire in the village. Then everyone can run to the well to help carry water to put out the fire.'

The trumpet is just like the shofar. The shofar is just an alarm signal to warn us that Hashem will only forgive us if we do teshuvah, if we are sorry for the bad things we have done, and if we try to do mitzvot and kind deeds.

## **5-6**

Moshe gathers the people together and tells them that they all have a responsibility to keep God's commandments at the time and in the future

## **Middah/ Jewish Value**

- **Individual Jews are part of a bigger community**

### **Activity**

Part of the strength of the Jewish people over thousands of years is how they help each other within a community.

Write some titles on cards and distribute to pairs of children to decide how these subjects contribute to keeping the Jewish community together, and then bring their ideas to a whole group discussion. The following are a few suggestions:

Education  
Tzedakah  
Shabbat

Family  
Welfare organisations  
Hebrew (language)

Add some more for a bigger group