Dear Youth Directors, Youth chairs, and Youth Leaders,

**NCYI is excited to continue our very successful Parsha Nation Guides.** I hope you’re enjoying and learning from Parsha Nation as much as we are. Putting together Parsha Nation every week is indeed no easy task. It takes a lot of time and effort to ensure that each section, as well as each age group, receives the attention and dedication it deserves.

**We inspire and mold future leaders.** The youth leaders of Young Israel have the distinct honor and privilege to teach and develop the youth of Young Israel. Children today are constantly looking for role models and inspirations to latch on to and learn from. Whether it is actual sit down learning sessions, exciting Parsha trivia games, or even just walking down the hall to the Kiddush room, our youth look to us and watch our every move.

**It’s not always about the things we say, it’s about the things we do.** Our children hear and see everything we do whether we realize it or not. This year we are taking our Youth Services to new heights as we introduce our Leadership Training Shabbaton. This engaging, interactive shabbaton will give youth leader’s hands on experience and practical solutions to effectively guide your youth department.

**Informal education is key.** What the summer shows us as educators is that informal education can deliver better results and help increase our youth’s connection to Hashem. More and more shuls are revamping their youth program to give their children a better connection to shul and to Hashem. The NCYI is here to help you reconnect with your youth departments and bring more participation.

**Thank you for being a light to future generations.** You are doing incredible work that should not be taken lightly. You should be proud to call yourself a Young Israel Youth Leader as you have the unique opportunity to make a real difference in so many young people’s lives. Keep up the amazing work.

We are looking forward to hearing great things from everyone.

Our doors are always open.

**NCYI Department of Synagogue Services**

[Youth@youngisrael.org](mailto:Youth@youngisrael.org)
Program Guide Breakdown

**Theme** - Each year our curriculum will focus on a theme. By centering the entire year around one overarching theme, our youth group participants will understand different characteristics and concepts that will help them achieve this lofty goal. This year’s theme is Manhigut (leadership). Our goal is for our children to view themselves as leaders and to inspire them to play a leadership role every day.

**Parsha Review** - Each week group leaders will have the opportunity to roundup the parsha in two or three paragraphs. By giving over the parsha in a short and simple way, group participants will be able to grasp the parsha as a whole and to get them to think globally and conceptually.

**Parsha Questions** - No Shabbat morning group is complete without a list of parsha questions. These questions allow group participants the opportunity to win fun prizes while increasing their Torah knowledge. Questions vary from basic understanding of story line to challenging source-based material. The answers are provided as well.

**Tefillah Treasure** - Many youth directors have asked for help when it comes to teaching tefillah to children. This is a problem that not only shuls are dealing with. Schools, camps, and youth organizations are having trouble developing creative ideas to help children understand tefillah. Over the course of the year, this section will highlight one aspect of davening by providing both the Hebrew and English text, and one explanatory idea. The older the age group, the more we delve into the idea. This section is designed to help group participants follow the flow of tefillah while understanding what they are saying.

**Group Activity** - Now the fun begins! We start off with a GOAL. Each game has a purpose. The youth leaders should familiarize themselves with the goal before implementing the game.

**Discussion Portion** - After the game is over and the participants are settled down, the youth leaders should facilitate a discussion. The guidelines for this discussion are broken down into easy to use instructions. Youth leaders should review the discussion topics and goals before the start of morning groups.

**Story** - Each week we will include a story that addresses a modern day concern with lesson taken from that week’s parsha.

**Jewish Leader of the Week** - In keeping with our theme of Manhigut, every week a different Jewish Leader from modern Jewish history will be highlighted. This will allow group participants to expand their knowledge of history and to learn how they can be a Jewish leader in today’s society.

**Teen Minyan Packet** - This packet is filled with stories, riddles, points to ponder, and more.

**Leader Tip** - Each section has some great tips for leaders and how they should conduct that section.
# Shabbat Morning Groups Lesson Plan

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time Duration</th>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Notes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Registration</td>
<td>Welcome parents and children in to the group room.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-35 min</td>
<td>Davening</td>
<td>Depending on your group size and level.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Introduction to Yearly Theme (Manhigut)</td>
<td>Refer to Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Parsha Review</td>
<td>Prep participants for parsha questions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Parsha Questions</td>
<td>Prizes and awards should also be given out if participants answer correctly</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2 min</td>
<td>Understanding the Goal</td>
<td>Leaders should start prepping for Shabbat activity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>30 min</td>
<td>Activities</td>
<td>Your choice of two games to play</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Follow Up Discussion</td>
<td>Refer to materials</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10 min</td>
<td>Parsha Song</td>
<td>This is for younger groups only.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20 min</td>
<td>Free Game Play</td>
<td>Groups can break for free game play or continue their own programing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Story</td>
<td>Assemble in a circle and have participants read sections of the story out loud.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5-10 min</td>
<td>Discussion</td>
<td>Refer to handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 min</td>
<td>Jewish Leader of the Week</td>
<td>Refer to handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 min</td>
<td>Tefillah Treasures</td>
<td>Refer to Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Parent Pick up/Dismissal</td>
<td>Parents pick up their children.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Total Time:</strong></td>
<td><strong>2 hours &amp; 40 min of programing!</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Bechukotai Review

In Parshat Bechukotai, we read about the promises that G-d gives us if we keep the Torah and do the mitzvot:

**Rain** will come when we need it to make the crops grow

There will be enough **food** and everybody will eat until they are satisfied

We will have **peace** and security in the land

No wild **beasts** or **armies** will pass through the land

We will be successful in our battles and **victorious** over armies much larger than ours

And **G-d** will be with us.

But, then the Torah tells us that if the people don't keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never **forget** or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the **value** of different types of **gifts** that people promise to G-d.

**LEADER TIP:** This week we read the **tochacha**, which is about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don’t listen to the Torah. We read it in a low voice. When explaining the parsha, use a soft voice as well and explain why!
Questions

1. To what do the words "bechukotai telechu" (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvoth of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?
3. What is one of the most important berachot?
4. What is temurah?
5. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
6. What happens if you do this?
7. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesh?
8. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesh?
9. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
10. Where must "ma'aser sheini" be eaten?

Answers

1. Laboring in Torah learning.
2. 
   a. Rain in its time
   b. When people aren’t outside (like Friday night)
3. Shalom (peace)
4. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesh animal.
5. NO
6. Both animals become holy.
7. Kohen
8. He should add a fifth
9. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 shemita and yovel years.
10. In Jerusalem

LEADER TIP: As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!
GOAL: In this week’s parsha we read about the tochacha. The tochacha is where Hashem tells us all the bad things that will happen to us if we don’t follow the Torah. In this activity, we will be discussing why following rules are so important.

ACTIVITY: Type/write up a list of games or activities and a number of rules that go along with those games. For example:
Basketball- must dribble/no walking, shoot the ball in the hoop, only have 24 seconds to shoot, etc.
Tag- the person who’s it must tag other people, if you touch safe you can’t be tagged, etc.
Checkers- red pieces, black pieces, jump other players, move diagonal, etc.
Cut the “rules” up into slips of paper and hide them around the room. Place the “games” in different sections of the room. Have the kids find the rules and places them with their respective games. You can make it into a competition where you split the kids up into different teams and the first team to complete it wins, do it as one big group with all the kids working together, or you can just do more of a discussion style without the running around. Whichever way you do it, make sure to explain the rules clearly. (You can also add another category in addition to the rules— “what happens if you don’t follow the rules”. Such as the ball goes to the other team, you lose a turn, etc.)
After the kids get all the games and rules all together, discuss with them about the games and why they think the rules are a part of them. Ask them what they think would happen if there weren’t rules in the game.

DISCUSSION: The idea of this activity is to learn why rules are so important. They give meaning to what we do. If the games we play or activities we do didn’t have rules and were just a free for all, we wouldn’t be able to play them and it wouldn’t be fun. Sometimes there are rules we understand and sometimes there are rules we don’t understand, but at the end of the day it’s important to follow them because we know that they’re for our own good. In this week’s parsha, Hashem gives us a lot of rules and tells us what happens if we don’t follow them. It can be scary to hear about punishments, but it’s important to remember that the rules Hashem gives us is for our own benefit and He is always looking out for our best interest.

LEADER TIP: Rules and the tochacha are both very difficult concepts for young kids to understand. If you shift the attention more to how fun rules can be as opposed to how limiting they may be, it can be easier for kids to understand the importance.

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Before you read: 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

LOST AND FOUND

Jon could hear his heart pounding even over the blaring loudspeaker music as he looked out into the crowded fairgrounds. While most people around him were smiling and having fun, he was panicking, because even though he was just with them, now his family was nowhere in sight!

Meanwhile...

"Will you look at that slowpoke!" huffed Maya, pointing at Jon, standing 20 feet behind them down the fairground lane. "Dad, it's not fair. We all want to go on to the next exhibit and Jon's holding us up. Can't we just move on?"

"You know, Maya, your brother just moves at a different pace than you do," her father said. "You know the rule. Mom and I have to be able to keep our eyes on all of you at once. But, I agree, it is about time to move on... Jon!" he called out, waving at the boy who was looking in their direction, "Come on, it's time to move on."

"Jon! If you don't come right this minute, I'm eating your whole cotton candy!" Maya added, certain that would get her brother chugging their way faster than a bullet train. But it didn't.

What should I do? Jon thought, nervously. Maybe my family is already on the other side of the park! Maybe they've forgotten all about me and left for home! He turned, looking this way and that.

"Hey, why did Jon just turn around the other way?" little Amy asked. "Doesn't he want to come?"

"You know...even though we can see him, I don't think he can see us. And the music must be too loud for him to hear us calling him," their father said. After making sure their mom was safely watching Amy and Maya, he began jogging Jon's way.

This is terrible! This is horrible! I'll be stuck here all my life -- alone! Jon shuddered.

The music was playing on the loudspeaker, "Don't worry--be happy!" the song was singing. Though Jon was way too scared to be paying much attention to tunes, the words did remind him of something his dad had once said to him: "When God is watching you, there's nothing to worry about. And since He's always watching you, you never have to worry." 'Never have to worry'... Maybe it was true...Maybe he really wasn't alone?

Still feeling tense, but a lot calmer than a moment ago, Jon realized his parents were certainly trying to find him and the best thing to do was to wait where he was and...

"Jonathan!"

The boy turned to see his father's concerned but happy face.

"Didn't you hear us calling you?"

The relieved boy shook his head.

"And you didn't see us waving?"

"Uh, uh. I just saw a lot of people."
"We were so close by, I was sure you could still see us," his dad said softly, putting his comforting hand on his son's shoulder. "I hope at least you weren't too worried and realized you were being watched?"
"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

**Discussion Questions**

Q. How did Jon feel at first?
A. He was very scared and worried.

Q. How did he feel in the end?
A. He felt calm and knew that God, and his parents were taking good care of him.

**LEADER TIP:** Print out the song “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” and teach it to the kids!
Nechama Leibowitz
(September 3, 1905 – April 12, 1997)

Nechama Leibowitz was born in Riga, educated in Berlin, and moved to Israel in 1930. She taught for many years at the Mizrachi Women Teachers Seminary, at Tel Aviv University, and at numerous other schools, including Hesder yeshivot. In 1942 she began to distribute pages of questions on the weekly parsha, and over the years the “Pages,” which became her trademark, reached increasingly wider audiences. Leibowitz was a frequent radio commentator on the Israel Broadcasting System, and she was awarded the Israel Prize for Education in 1956. She died in Jerusalem in 1997.

LEADER TIP: Not only did Nechama Lebowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? Is there ways learning can be more fun and enjoyable?
Boruch… Sheh-ahsa Li Kol Tzarki.

"Blessed are You… Who has provided me my every need."

He provided me with my every need- expresses two foundation stones of a Jew’s faith. First, that all we have comes from Hashem. Second, the blessing reminds us that Hashem leaves nothing out of His provision for us. “Every need” required for us to succeed at our Hashem-given mission in life is provided to us by Hashem. It means that Hashem has given each of us exactly what we need to live the lives we are meant to live. Therefore, if Hashem has not provided you with a particular benefit, it is by definition not something you need for your spiritual growth.

Boruch… Ozer Yisroel Bigevura.

"Blessed are You… Who girds Israel with might."

"Gird" what's a gird? It's really a play on words. "Gird" means belt. It also means to protect. Just like a belt holds up your pants, Hashem is the protector and supporter of Israel's strength. Hashem constantly surrounds us. He girds His black belt on us, and gives us more strength than we ever thought we could have. When we feel week and unstable, He gives us the extra push that we need to go on. Don’t underestimate yourself. Because with Hashem’s strength, we can do anything. We just need to recognize it.

LEADER TIP: You can play different trust games such as “The Trust Fall” to emphasize the point of Hashem always being there for us.
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- we will have **peace** and security in the land
- no wild **beasts** or **armies** will pass through the land
- we will be successful in our battles and **victorious** over armies much larger than ours
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QUESTIONS

1. To what do the words "bechukotai telechu" (walk in My statutes) refer?

2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvoth of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?

3. What is one of the most important berachot?

4. How do we know that klal Yisrael have more strength when many people do the Mitzvoth than when a few do them?

5. What mitzvah is given immediately after the tochachah (rebuke)?

6. What is Eruchin?

7. What is temurah?

8. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?

9. What happens if you do this?

10. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesh?

11. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesh?

12. How much does one pay if he wants to redeem his maser?

13. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?

14. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 "Torot" (plural) and not "Torah" (singular)?

15. Where must "ma'aser sheini" be eaten?

ANSWERS

1. Laboring in Torah learning.

2. 
   a. Rain in its time
   b. When people aren’t outside (like Friday night)

3. Shalom (peace)

4. 5 pursue 100 (1:20 ratio), 100 pursue 10000 (1:100 ratio)

5. Eruchin

6. This means that if a person pledges to donate “his value” to the Beit Hamikdash, then he must contribute a certain amount, depending on his gender and age.

7. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesh animal.

8. NO

9. Both animals become holy.

10. Kohen

11. He should add a fifth

12. Add a fifth

13. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 shemita and yovel years.

14. To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on Har Sinai.

15. In Jerusalem

LEADER TIP: As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!
**PARSHA ACTIVITY**

**GOAL:** In this week’s parsha we read the tochacha. The tochacha is where Hashem tells us about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don’t follow the rules. Right after we read the tochacha, the Torah discusses the laws pertaining to the values of people in various stages of their lives if they are excited to donate to the sanctuary. Why is it that these seemingly opposite messages are written one after another? We will discuss the reason in this activity.

**ACTIVITY:** “BINGO!”

Prepare a number of bingo boards using whatever theme you’d like (sports, chagim, parsha, entertainment, all of the above, or any other things you’d like. There are plenty of sites online to make them). You can also use the classic bingo boards with numbers, although if you use more fun categories you can make it more exciting than just calling out letters and numbers.

Hand out pieces for the kids to be able to cover a spot when they get it right. Have the group leader ask questions where the answer is the “bingo square”. For example, this item is what we put on top of our sukkahs... SCHACH! Keep playing until someone gets five boxes in a row. The first person to get five in a row wins! You can keep the group leaders as the ones calling out the “words”, or you can let the person who wins become the “caller”.

If you want to spice things up, give each kid a bunch of pieces of candy or coins or something they’d be excited to have. If they get five in a row and win the game, they get a certain amount of extra pieces for their taking. Once the round ends, whoever didn’t get five in a row, has to give back a certain amount of pieces to the group leader.

**DISCUSSION:** After reading the tochacha and the terrible things that will happen if we don’t follow the Torah, one may lose all sense of his personal worth. How can he feel that his life has any value if such disastrous and dreadful predictions threaten him?

Hence the Torah sends a word of encouragement. Every person has value. The tochacha is a declaration of what will happen to him for disregarding the Torah, but it does not diminish the value of a person. We must all live up to the potential we are granted when we are born. Everyone is different and everyone is obligated to live up to his own promise.

In this game, it makes no difference how many bingo spots we don’t get, nor does it make a difference if we get places on the board that don’t connect in a row. No matter what, we still can always have a chance to win the game. Even if we get “punished” for the mistakes we’ve made, and we have to give
back our pieces, Hashem still loves us and will give us another chance. We all make mistakes, no one is perfect, we’re human. It’s important to remember that no matter what flaws we have, no matter what mistakes we make, we still always have an opportunity to be the best people we can and make Hashem proud.

**LEADER TIP:** Especially as young kids, sometimes we don’t recognize the true value we have and importance we really play in the world. Compliment and point out good qualities of each kid and make them feel good and special. Not only that, but explain to them the importance they have in making the shul such an amazing place as well.
Before you read: 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

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"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

Discussion Questions

Q. What life-lesson do you think Jon learned that day?
A. When he first lost sight of his parents at the fairground, he panicked. But he came to realize that God was watching over him and he didn't have to let his worries get the best of him.

Q. Is their ever a good reason to be worried?
A. Sometimes, we can hear about or even be in situations that are difficult and in such cases, it's normal to feel tense and concerned. But even then, we can realize that worrying doesn't help us in any way and remember that God is still with us and taking care of us.

Have you ever felt that God was watching and taking care of you?

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Leibowitz’s “Pages” were translated into many languages and reached students and educators alike around the world. They were later collected into book form and published as *Studies in the Weekly Sidra and Studies in Bereshit* (with similar volumes for the other books of the Torah). She is recognized as one of the leading teachers of the Torah of the twentieth century, as well as a role model for Orthodox women who are professional Jewish scholars and teachers.

**LEADER TIP:** Not only did Nechama Lebowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? Is there ways learning can be more fun and enjoyable?
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But, then the Torah tells us that if the people don’t keep the commandments, and forget about their agreement with G-d, then many unfortunate things will happen. But even if G-d is angry at the Jews and must punish them, he will never forget or abandon them.

The last thing we learn in the Parshah is how to calculate the value of different types of gifts that people promise to G-d.

**LEADER TIP:** This week we read the tochacha, which is about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don’t listen to the Torah. We read it in a low voice. When explaining the parsha, use a soft voice as well and explain why!
QUESTIONS

1. To what do the words "bechukotai telechu" (walk in My statutes) refer?
2. What is the reward for observing the mitzvot of the Torah? What is the correct time for rain? Why?
3. What is one of the most important berachot?
4. How do we know that klal Yisrael have more strength when many people do the Mitzvot than when a few do them?
5. What are the seven steps which cause a person to stray from Hashem?
6. What mitzvah is given immediately after the tochachah (rebuke)?
7. What is Eruchin?
8. What is temurah?
9. Can one switch an animal which has a mum for an animal without a mum?
10. What happens if you do this?
11. Who decides the value of a house that a Jew gives to hekdesh?
12. How much does the owner have to pay if he wants to redeem it from hekdesh?
13. How much does one pay if he wants to redeem his maser?
14. What is the blessing of "v'achaltem lachmechem l'sova" (and you shall eat your bread to satisfaction)?
15. What was the duration of the Babylonian exile and why that particular number?
16. Why does the Torah say in 26:46 "Torot" (plural) and not "Torah" (singular)?
17. Where must "ma'aser sheini" be eaten?
18. When a person redeems "ma'aser sheini" what happens to the food? What happens to the redemption money?
19. How does a person tithe his animals?

ANSWERS

1. Laboring in Torah learning.
2. 
   a. Rain in its time
   b. When people aren’t outside (like Friday night)
3. Shalom (peace)
4. 5 pursue 100 (1:20 ratio), 100 pursue 10000 (1:100 ratio)
5. 
   a. Not learning Torah
   b. Stop doing mitzvot
   c. Be upset with others doing mitzvot
   d. Hate the Rabbis
   e. Prevent others from being observant
   f. Deny that Hashem gave mitzvot
   g. Deny the existence of Hashem
6. Eruchin
7. This means that if a person pledges to donate “his value” to the Beit Hamikdash, then he must contribute a certain amount, depending on his gender and age.
8. Switching one animal in place for a hekdesh animal.
9. NO
10. Both animals become holy.
11. Kohen
12. He should add a fifth
13. Add a fifth
14. You will only require a little bread to be completely satisfied.
15. No foreign army will travel through your land on their way to a different country.
16. 70 years. Because the Jewish People violated 70 shemita and yovel years.
17. To teach that both the Written Torah and the Oral Torah were given to Moshe on Har Sinai.
18. In Jerusalem
19. The food becomes permissible to him outside of Jerusalem. The redemption money must be brought to Jerusalem and used to purchase food to be eaten there.
20. He passes them through a door individually and every tenth animal he marks with a rod smeared with red dye.

LEADER TIP: As opposed to screaming out the answers, make the kids whisper them!
GOAL: In this week’s parsha we read the tochacha. The tochacha is where Hashem tells us about all the bad things that will happen to us if we don’t follow the rules. Right after we read the tochacha, the Torah discusses the laws pertaining to the values of people in various stages of their lives if they are excited to donate to the sanctuary. Why is it that these seemingly opposite messages are written one after another? We will discuss the reason in this activity.

ACTIVITY: “BINGO!”

Prepare a number of bingo boards using whatever theme you’d like (sports, chagim, parsha, entertainment, all of the above, or any other things you’d like. There are plenty of sites online to make them). You can also use the classic bingo boards with numbers, although if you use more fun categories you can make it more exciting than just calling out letters and numbers.

Hand out pieces for the kids to be able to cover a spot when they get it right. Have the group leader ask questions where the answer is the “bingo square”. For example, this item is what we put on top of our sukkahs... SCHACH! Keep playing until someone gets five boxes in a row. The first person to get five in a row wins! You can keep the group leaders as the ones calling out the “words”, or you can let the person who wins become the “caller”.

Once you play an introduction round of simple asking questions to get the answer, turn the game into “Bingo Charades”. In this version, the “caller” isn’t allowed to use his/her voice at all. They must act out the object/action without using any words or sounds. Make sure to set a time limit to each square so it doesn’t get out of hand.

If you want to spice things up, give each kid a bunch of pieces of candy or coins or something they’d be excited to have. If they get five in a row and win the game, they get a certain amount of extra pieces for their taking. Once the round ends, whoever didn’t get five in a row, has to give back a certain amount of pieces to the group leader.

Additionally, to spice things up even more, let the winner of the round pick someone who must get up and either share something embarrassing about themselves or do an embarrassing challenge. If it’s a small enough group, make everyone do the embarrassing challenge/admit something embarrassing.

DISCUSSION: After reading the tochacha and the terrible things that will happen if we don’t follow the Torah, one may lose all sense of his personal worth. How can he feel that his life has any value if such disastrous and dreadful predictions threaten him?
Hence the Torah sends a word of encouragement. Every person has value. The tochacha is a declaration of what will happen to him for disregarding the Torah, but it does not diminish the value of a person. We must all live up to the potential we are granted when we are born. Everyone is different and everyone is obligated to live up to his own promise.

In this game, it makes no difference how many bingo spots we don’t get, nor does it make a difference if we get places on the board that don’t connect in a row. No matter what, we still can always have a chance to win the game. Even if we get “punished” for the mistakes we’ve made, and we have to give back our pieces, Hashem still loves us and will give us another chance. The idea behind “embarrassing” someone is to teach the kids that we all make mistakes and we shouldn’t put ourselves down because of the mistakes we’ve made or the things we’d be embarrassed about. We all make mistakes, no one is perfect, we’re human. It’s important to remember that no matter what flaws we have, no matter what mistakes we make, we still always have an opportunity to be the best people we can and make Hashem proud.

LEADER TIP: Especially as young kids, sometimes we don’t recognize the true value we have and importance we really play in the world. Compliment and point out good qualities of each kid and make them feel good and special. Not only that, but explain to them the importance they have in making the shul such an amazing place as well.
Before you read: 'Don't worry, be happy!' is the Torah way of living. In this week's Torah portion (25:19) God assures us that He's always watching over us, and even when things look tough, we don't have to be afraid. Once we realize that God is like a loving, caring parent to us, we will truly be happy - and not worry.

LOST AND FOUND

Jon could hear his heart pounding even over the blaring loudspeaker music as he looked out into the crowded fairgrounds. While most people around him were smiling and having fun, he was panicking, because even though he was just with them, now his family was nowhere in sight!

Meanwhile...

"Will you look at that slowpoke!" huffed Maya, pointing at Jon, standing 20 feet behind them down the fairground lane. "Dad, it's not fair. We all want to go on to the next exhibit and Jon's holding us up. Can't we just move on?"

"You know, Maya, your brother just moves at a different pace than you do," her father said. "You know the rule. Mom and I have to be able to keep our eyes on all of you at once. But, I agree, it is about time to move on... Jon!" he called out, waving at the boy who was looking in their direction, "Come on, it's time to move on."

"Jon! If you don't come right this minute, I'm eating your whole cotton candy!" Maya added, certain that would get her brother chugging their way faster than a bullet train. But it didn't.

What should I do? Jon thought, nervously. Maybe my family is already on the other side of the park! Maybe they've forgotten all about me and left for home! He turned, looking this way and that.

"Hey, why did Jon just turn around the other way?" little Amy asked. "Doesn't he want to come?"

"You know...even though we can see him, I don't think he can see us. And the music must be too loud for him to hear us calling him," their father said. After making sure their mom was safely watching Amy and Maya, he began jogging Jon's way.

This is terrible! This is horrible! I'll be stuck here all my life -- alone! Jon shuddered.

The music was playing on the loudspeaker, "Don't worry--be happy!" the song was singing. Though Jon was way too scared to be paying much attention to tunes, the words did remind him of something his dad had once said to him: "When God is watching you, there's nothing to worry about.
And since He's always watching you, you never have to worry." 'Never have to worry'... Maybe it was true... Maybe he really wasn't alone?

Still feeling tense, but a lot calmer than a moment ago, Jon realized his parents were certainly trying to find him and the best thing to do was to wait where he was and...

"Jonathan!"

The boy turned to see his father's concerned but happy face.

"Didn't you hear us calling you?"

The relieved boy shook his head.

"And you didn't see us waving?"

"Uh, uh. I just saw a lot of people."

"We were so close by, I was sure you could still see us," his dad said softly, putting his comforting hand on his son's shoulder. "I hope at least you weren't too worried and realized you were being watched?"

"Sure." The boy nodded and happily taking his father's hand. Why did he have to worry, when he was being watched by them -- and by God.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Q. Does worrying ever solve anything?
A. Not only doesn't it ever solve anything, but it causes many problems of its own. It can negatively affect a person's health and make it hard to think clearly, which is essential for effective problem solving.

Q. What is the difference if any between 'worry' and 'concern'?
A. Although the words are similar, they are worlds apart. Worry is just an ineffective waste of emotional energy--feeling anxious but unfocused on finding solutions. Concern is recognizing that a situation might be difficult and mobilizing ones inner and outer resources to handle it in the most effective way.

Have you ever felt that God was watching and taking care of you?

**LEADER TIP:** Print out the song “Don’t Worry, Be Happy” and teach it to the kids!
Nechama Leibowitz

(September 3, 1905 – April 12, 1997)

Nechama Leibowitz was born in Riga, educated in Berlin, and moved to Israel in 1930. She taught for many years at the Mizrachi Women Teachers Seminary, at Tel Aviv University, and at numerous other schools, including Hesder yeshivot. In 1942 she began to distribute pages of questions on the weekly parsha, and over the years the “Pages,” which became her trademark, reached increasingly wider audiences. Leibowitz was a frequent radio commentator on the Israel Broadcasting System, and she was awarded the Israel Prize for Education in 1956. She died in Jerusalem in 1997.

Although appointed professor at Tel Aviv University in 1968 and recognized publicly on numerous occasions, Leibowitz, known simply as “Nechama” to her students, preferred the title of teacher to other titles. Her approach to Tanach was an active one, and through her thought-provoking questions, she demanded that her students adopt a similar active role towards the text. For many years, Leibowitz's “Pages” consisted only of questions, and it was only because many students requested that she later agreed to publish answers along with the questions, yet still adding additional questions for further study. Her interpretations reflect her huge knowledge of traditional and modern Tanach commentaries, and display a sensitivity to the religious, literary, and psychological meanings of the text. She tried to infuse her students with a love of the Torah as well as the belief that its levels of meanings were to be explored by its readers.
Leibowitz's “Pages” were translated into many languages and reached students and educators alike around the world. They were later collected into book form and published as *Studies in the Weekly Sidra and Studies in Bereshit* (with similar volumes for the other books of the Torah). She is recognized as one of the leading teachers of the Torah of the twentieth century, as well as a role model for Orthodox women who are professional Jewish scholars and teachers.

**LEADER TIP:** Not only did Nechama Lebowitz have a strong passion and love for learning and teaching Torah, but she used her own creative and interesting ways to spread that passion and love. What kind of things do you like to learn about? Is there ways learning can be more fun and enjoyable?
"Blessed are You... Who has provided me my every need."

He provided me with my every need—expresses two foundation stones of a Jew’s faith. First, that all we have comes from Hashem. Second, the blessing reminds us that Hashem leaves nothing out of His provision for us. “Every need” required for us to succeed at our Hashem-given mission in life is provided to us by Hashem. It means that Hashem has given each of us exactly what we need to live the lives we are meant to live. Therefore, if Hashem has not provided you with a particular benefit, it is by definition not something you need for your spiritual growth.

"Blessed are You... Who girds Israel with might."

"Gird" what's a gird? It's really a play on words. "Gird" means belt. It also means to protect. Just like a belt holds up your pants, Hashem is the protector and supporter of Israel's strength. Hashem constantly surrounds us. He girds His black belt on us, and gives us more strength than we ever thought we could have. When we feel week and unstable, He gives us the extra push that we need to go on. Don’t underestimate yourself. Because with Hashem’s strength, we can do anything. We just need to recognize it.

LEADER TIP: You can play different trust games such as “The Trust Fall” to emphasize the point of Hashem always being there for us.
This Week in Jewish History

May 13th, 1948

Kfar Etzion Massacre

The Kfar Etzion massacre refers to a massacre that took place after a two-day battle between Jewish settlers and soldiers of Kibbutz Kfar Etzion and a combined force of the Arab Legion and Arab villagers, on May 13, 1948, the day before the Israeli Declaration of Independence. Of the 129 Haganah soldiers and Jewish combatant kibbutzniks who died during the defence of the settlement, Martin Gilbert states that fifteen were murdered on surrendering. Controversy surrounds the responsibility and role of the Arab Legion in the killing of those who surrendered. The official Israeli version maintains that the settlers and soldiers were massacred by villagers and the Arab legion as they were surrendering. The Arab Legion version states that it arrived too late to prevent the villagers' onslaught, which was motivated by a desire to revenge the massacre of Deir Yassin, and the destruction of one of their villages several months earlier. The surrendering fighters are said to have assembled in a courtyard, only to be suddenly fired upon, and that many died on the spot, while most of those who managed to flee were hunted down and killed.

Four prisoners survived the massacre and were transferred to Transjordan. Immediately following the surrender on May 13, the kibbutz was looted and razed to the ground. The members of the three other kibbutzim of the Gush Etzion surrendered the next day and were taken as POWs to Jordan. The bodies of the victims were left unburied until, one and a half year later, the Jordanian government allowed Shlomo Goren to collect the remains, which were then interred at Mount Herzl. The survivors of the Etzion Bloc were housed in former Arab houses in Jaffa.

FIND...
- Vayikra
- Tzav
- Shmini
- Tazria
- Metzora
- Acharei Mot
- Kedoshim
- Emor
- Behar
- Bechukotai

STAT LINE OF THE WEEK– BECHUKOTAI
- 33rd of the 54; last of 10 in Vayikra
- Written on 131 lines in a Sefer Torah
- 5 parshiyot; 3 open, 2 closed
- 78 p’sukim, ranks 46th (7th)
- 1013 words, ranks 47th (7th)
- 3992 letters, ranks 4
- B’chukotai contains 12 mitzvot; 7 positive, 5 prohibitions
- The Book of Vayikra is written on 36.5 of the Torah’s 245 columns; it contains 10 sedras, 859 p’sukim, 11950 words, 44790 letters, and 247 mitzvot (95 pos. 152 prohibitions)
TRIVIA QUESTION OF THE WEEK

HOW MANY PLANT SPECIES ARE THERE AT THE JERUSALEM BOTANICAL GARDENS?

Email your answers to YOUTH@YOUNGISRAEL.ORG along with your NAME and AGE for a chance to win AWESOME PRIZES! Each correct answer will enter your name into a raffle that will happen once a month. Behatzlacha!

THIS JUST IN!

- Polar bears are left handed.
- A duck’s quack doesn’t echo, and no one knows why.
- An ostrich’s eye is bigger that it’s brain.
- The longest recorded flight of a chicken is thirteen seconds.

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

Parsha Points to Ponder...

We read this week what is known as the Tochacha, dire warning of the evil and misfortunes that will befall the Jewish people in the Land of Israel if they abandon the Torah and do not follow its practice. After all these dreadful and disastrous tragic events befall the country and the Jews do not repent, the Torah goes a step further and warns that the cities will be destroyed and enemies will inhabit the land.

The Torah warns that the land would become desolate: “...and your foes who dwell upon it will be desolate.” (Lev. 26,32) Rashi, quoting the Sifra (BeChukotai 2) maintains that this statement is a kind benefit for the Jews. The land will be so desolate that no enemy will be able to prosper on it.

History has proven this to be true. All the conquerors of Israel throughout the ages, and there were many, were never successful in making the land flourish. The land was a barren expanse for centuries with very few people living on it. It was only when the Jews started coming back, and started rebuilding it, did it start thriving and prospering.
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