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 Roundup**- 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.

**Parsha Song (K-2)**- For the youngest groups, we have included a parsha song. This is a wonderful opportunity to engage young children through lyrics with concepts from this week’s parsha. A link is provided to the tune.

**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.

**Parsha Riddle**- A cute, short riddle will allow for more prize winning opportunities.

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

**Leader Tips**- Throughout the packet you will find some great leader tips on how to affectively run your group.
## 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) &amp; Relate it to this weeks Parsha</td>
<td>Refer to Handout</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5 min</td>
<td>Parsha Roundup</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 programming.</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>
</tbody>
</table>

**Total Time:** 2 hours & 40 min of programing!
At the end of last week's Parshah, Shemini, we began to discuss the laws of purity. These laws, called the laws of *Tumah* and *Taharah*, are continued in this week's portion.

The first topic discussed is a woman who has given birth. She is impure for a set amount of days, then she immerses in a mikvah (as mentioned last week, this is a special body of water that makes a *tameh* [impure] person *tahor* [pure]) and brings a sacrifice.

All baby boys are to be circumcised at eight days old; we call this the *brit milah*.

Next topic of discussion is a unique disease called *tzaraat*. It is different from other illnesses because it has a spiritual cause and makes a person impure. If a person thinks he may have this affliction, he must go to a kohen and the kohen looks for signs to see whether it's the impurity of *tzaraat* or just a regular illness. The Torah teaches the kohen which signs to look for to identify the disease as *tzaraat*.

**Leader Tip:** Roundup is a way for leaders ready to prep the participants for the Parsha Questions. Many of these topics the kids already learned in school. Try doing a round robin session to have the kids more engaged.
Questions

1. How old does a child have to be to receive a bris milah?
2. Who was the first person commanded to have a bris milah?
3. What does a woman who gave birth bring after she is no longer tameh?
4. Why does she bring a karbon Olah?
5. Why does she bring a karbon chatas?
6. What is tzoraat?
7. What is one reason Hashem gives someone tzoraat?
8. If someone thought he had tzaraat, who did he show it to?
9. Why did Hashem sometimes bring tzaraat on a person’s clothes?
10. What happened if a person had tzaraat?

Answers

1. 8 days
2. Avraham Avinu
3. A karbon Olah and a karban Chatas.
4. To thank Hashem for a healthy delivery.
5. Because during her labor she might have said something improper; she may have sworn that she would not have any more children.
6. Tzoraat is a disease, similar to leprosy, in which one found unusual spots on his body, hair, house, etc.
7. For speaking lashon hara.
8. The kohen.
9. To warn the person to do teshuvah.
10. He had to leave the camp for seven days.

Leader Tip: Don’t just ask and answer. This should be a time where you gauge to see if the kids understand basic ideas in this week’s parsha. If a kid doesn’t know answers have him/her phone a friend or use a lifeline. Be creative!
GOAL: To teach the kids about Lashon Hara and how much talking badly about someone can hurt.

ACTIVITY:

**Game 1**- Everybody will stand in a circle on the floor and will hold hands. The group leader will start by squeezing the hands of both kids next to him/her, they will pass on the squeezing around them. The kid that got squeezed in his/her both hands at the same time gets out of the game. Continue with the game as much as you want.

**Game 2**- First, pick 3 kids (or if you think you have time, 4) and send them out of the room. Next, work with the kids to create a VERY detailed story (for example: Bob the policeman went to the store on Thursday afternoon at one o'clock to buy pasteurized skim milk because he is having the police chef over for dinner that night at 7:30....) Make it nice and long, with *lots* of details. Repeat it once or twice for the kids so they know the story well, then bring the first kid back in. Tell him/her the story once -- don't tell it to him/her so carefully (but make sure you have all the details right), and *do not* repeat anything for him, even though he will probably ask you to. Once you've told him the story, bring the next kid in. He will tell that kid the story, and if all goes well he will mess it up a little bit, and by the time we get to the last kid (who repeats the story for the whole group), it'll be really messed up. Make sure that the other kids don't correct them.

**DISCUSSION:** Have everyone sit in a circle, and go around having the kids say something nice about everyone in the circle (example: so-and-so is always willing to help me if I have trouble on something, so-and-so is a talented artist, etc.) Then ask them how they felt when people said nice things about them. Explain that lashon hara has the opposite effect, and when we talk about
The idea behind the games is that rumors just like the squeeze spread fast and can hurt a lot. That means you have to think before you speak, and try not to say “Lashon Hara” because it will hurt somebody.

Leader Tip: Stories are great ways to have your participants focus on this week's parsha. Have the kids sit in a circle. For this age group have the leader read a small passage and then explain it outside to that every child understands. After each passage ask a follow up question to see if the participants understand what you read.

Before Your Read: A wise person doesn't judge people or things by the way they first appear. In this week's Torah portion, we learn how the Jewish priests, the Cohanim, wouldn't judge whether a person had a spiritual malady called tzara'at until they had examined him twice. We can learn from this that one should be willing to give people and situations a 'second look' before passing judgment about them.

I don't know why, but I sort of took it on myself to be the neighborhood 'welcoming committee.' Whenever a new kid moves in and shows up on the scene, I make the effort to say 'hello' and help her blend in with the crowd.

So it really wasn’t unusual for me to go up to this new kid, Allison, (I asked one of the teachers what her name was) and give her one of my smiley 'welcome to the neighborhood' speeches.

What was unusual was how the kid reacted to me - or should I say didn't react...

"Hi Allison!" I had said to her in a loud, friendly voice, walking up to her from behind. The kid didn't say anything or even turn her head. Okay, I know some kids are the more shy, quiet type (not like me!) so I figured I'd try again.

"Welcome to the world's greatest neighborhood!" I said, in a big friendly voice - sure this time she'd turn around and smile. But she didn't even turn around and just kept on walking away from me, I think even faster than before.
Now if there is one thing I can't stand it's a snob. And this Allison kid just made it into my book as Snob #1. As far as I was concerned, she could just stay by herself forever, if that's how she wanted it. I certainly wasn't going to be the one to make her feel at home.

The next day when I saw her sitting on a bench in the playground looking really lonely, my first thought was, 'it serves her right!' After all, I gave her the chance to make a friend and she obviously didn't want to see my face.

I walked past her, about to join the gang, when - I don't know why - something about her lonely look got to me and I figured maybe she just had a bad day yesterday and what would it hurt to give her one more chance? Things aren't always the way they first look. So I walked back her way, only this time I made sure to walk straight up to her, so if she wanted to do her 'snob' thing again, she'd have to do it right to my face.

"Hi," I said, giving her a little wave. I thought she'd either turn her head or look embarrassed after yesterday, but this surprising kid surprised me once again by giving me a warm, friendly smile back and inviting me to sit down!

We traded names (I knew hers already, but it was only polite) and soon we got chatting friendly enough that I felt okay to ask her why she hadn't answered me back the day before. But before I could do that, she gave me the answer in a way that made me glad I hadn't asked...

"Oh, Debby," she said "I'm sorry, but could you please make sure you look straight at me when you talk. You see," she smiled sort of uncomfortably "I'm hearing impaired and I have to read people's lips to have any idea what they're saying and to see their faces to even know if they're talking to me at all."

Wow - that explained everything! She didn't ignore me because she was a snob or even shy. She just didn't hear or notice me because I never caught her eye!

Well, Allie and I are just about best friends now. She's a great, down to earth kid. I think a lot about how close I came to writing her off as a snob - which would have been a big shame for both of us, and how glad I am that I was smart enough to give her a second look.

**DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:**

Q. How did the girl in the story feel at first about the kid who didn't answer her?
A. She felt like she was acting snobby and unfriendly.
Q. How did she feel in the end?
A. She found out that the kid hadn't heard her speaking to her and felt glad she had given her a second chance.

**JEWS LEADER OF THE WEEK**

**Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook**

(September 8, 1865—September 1, 1935)

Rav Kook was the first Ashkenazic chief rabbi (in modern times) of the Religious Zionist Jewish community in Israel. He believed that by living in and building up the land of Israel was the groundwork of the bringing of Mashiach. He is the founding father of the “Religious Zionist” movement and he started “Merkaz HaRav”, a very popular and central yeshiva, in Yerushalayim.

**Leader Tip:** Ask the kids if they know any Rabbis’ they might say the rabbi of the shul, or teacher. Have some participants explain what a rabbi does and how they are leaders in their community. Try to see if they understand why Rav Kook was so important.
Boruch .....Sheh-lo Ah-sah-ni Goy.

"Blessed are You.....for making me proud to fulfill my obligations as a Jew."

A Jew has been given a special mission in this world. With the Torah to guide him (and her), a Jew is guided by the 613 Mitzvot. Hashem loves ALL mankind and a Jew must respect ALL of Hashem's creations. This Bracha helps us understand that in this world Hashem has chosen the Jewish people to guard the laws of His Torah.

Leader Tip: This is one of the most important sections in Parsha nation. After davening has taken place in your group and you are up to this section have all the kids take a siddur and open it. Show them which page the brachot are on. Be confident, and don’t mumble when reading the brachot in Hebrew. Ask for participation from the kids. I’m sure they know how to read some of the words. And of course always ask follow up questions.
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The first topic discussed is a woman who has given birth. She is impure for a set amount of days, then she immerses in a mikvah (as mentioned last week, this is a special body of water that makes a tameh [impure] person tahor [pure]) and brings a sacrifice.

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QUESTIONS

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7. What is one reason Hashem gives someone tzoraat?
8. Where could a person find tzaraat?
9. If someone thought he had tzaraat, who did he show it to?
10. What disqualifies a kohen from being able to give a ruling in a case of tzara’at?
11. What did tzaraat look like?
12. Why did Hashem sometimes bring tzaraat on a person’s clothes?
13. What happened if a person had tzaraat?
14. What happens if the kohen is not certain whether the spot is tzoraat?
15. What must be done if the tzoraat stays or spreads on clothing?

ANSWERS

1. 8 days
2. Avraham Avinu
3. A karbon Olah and a karban Chatas.
4. To thank Hashem for a healthy delivery.
5. Because during her labor she might have said something improper; she may have sworn that she would not have any more children.
6. Tzoraat is a disease, similar to leprosy, in which one found unusual spots on his body, hair, house, etc.
7. For speaking lashon hara.
8. House, clothes, or skin.
9. The kohen.
10. Poor vision.
11. A white spot on the skin or a green or red spot on clothes.
12. To warn the person to do teshuvah.
13. He had to leave the camp for seven days.
14. The person must be placed in isolation for seven days, and he is examined again.
15. The clothing must be burned.

Leader Tip: Don’t just read the questions and give the answers. If the kids don’t know the answers, that’s fine use it as a learning opportunity. Note: it will be very helpful to review the questions and the parsha before showing up to groups.
GOAL: To learn about the dangers of lashon hara, to understand the speech is precious, and to understand the power that speech holds.

ACTIVITY:

SCREAMING MESSAGES
Divide the players into two teams, and each team into two parts. Each part of a team stands in opposite corners of the room. Each 1/2 team is given two messages to shout to its other half. At the signal both teams begin to shout their messages. The first team to relay all of its messages to the other half of its team wins.
Hint: Try to make up messages that have repetitive sounds (i.e. Mickey Mouse is a louse).

SYLLABLES
One player is chosen to leave the room. The leader then chooses a multi-syllable word (or words) to use in the game. The remaining players are divided into groups corresponding to the number of syllables in the chosen word, and one syllable is assigned to each group. The player returns and all the groups say their syllables simultaneously, three times. After each time the player has a chance to guess the word. If the player guesses correctly, he/she wins.
Example #1: Word: Jerusalem
Group #1 says JE
Group #2 says RU
Group #3 says SA
Group #4 says LEM

DISCUSSION: Discuss how sometimes we hear things and think we know everything, when really we don’t know most of what’s going on. We only hear certain parts of a situation and we automatically infer everything that happened. Were very quick to assume were right and that what we hear is always correct. Ask the kids why people speak? Why did Hashem give us the power to speak? How can we use our speech positively? Speech is a very powerful tool when used right and very dangerous when used not right. Teach the kids to be patient when listening and not always jump to conclusions.
**Leader Tip:** Story Time is one of the best activities we do. Try to have kids sit in a circle, and have each person read a small portion. This will keep engagement up.

**Before You Read:** A wise person doesn't judge people or things by the way they first appear. In this week's Torah portion, we learn how the Jewish priests, the Cohanim, wouldn't judge whether a person had a spiritual malady called tzara'at until they had examined him twice. We can learn from this that one should be willing to give people and situations a 'second look' before passing judgment about them.

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Discussion Questions

Q. What life-lesson do you think someone could learn from this story?
A. Often, our first impressions of people or situations can be inaccurate. A wise person is willing to withhold judgment and give things a second look.

Q. Can we ever be sure that how we look at things is true?
A. While it's smart not to jump to conclusion and to give people and things a second look, that doesn't mean we can't understand how things are or rightfully decide that they're true. God put definite truths in the world and gave us the ability to perceive them when we honestly try.
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A Jew has been given a special mission in this world. With the Torah to guide him (and her), a Jew is guided by the 613 Mitzvot. Hashem loves ALL mankind and a Jew must respect ALL of Hashem's creations. This bracha helps us understand that in this world Hashem has chosen the Jewish people to guard the laws of His Torah. We also want to start off by praising Hashem that we have mitzvoth. Before we start our day, we first acknowledge what Hashem has given us and who He has made us.

Leader Tip: This is one of the most important sections in Parsha nation. After davening has taken place in your group and you are up to this section have all the kids take a siddur and open it. Show them which page the brachot are on. Be confident, and don’t mumble when reading the brachot in Hebrew. Ask for participation from the kids. I’m sure they know how to read some of the words. And of course always ask follow up questions.
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QUESTIONS

1. How old does a child have to be to receive a bris milah?
2. Who was the first person commanded to have a bris milah?
3. For how long is a mother not permitted to enter the Mishkan (Sanctuary) after having a baby?
4. What does a woman who gave birth bring after she is no longer tameh?
5. Why does she bring a karbon Olah?
6. Why does she bring a karbon chatas?
7. What is tzoraat?
8. What is one reason Hashem gives someone tzoraat?
9. Why must a metzora call out “Tamei! Tamei!”?
10. What happened if a metzora entered a house?
11. What signs of mourning must a metzora (someone afflicted with tzoraat) display?
12. What is one reason that the metzora must have his mouth covered?
13. Where could a person find tzaraat?
14. If someone thought he had tzaraat, who did he show it to?
15. What disqualifies a kohen from being able to give a ruling in a case of tzara'at?
16. What did tzaraat look like?
17. Why did Hashem sometimes bring tzaraat on a person’s clothes?
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19. What happens if the kohen is not certain whether the spot is tzoraat?
20. What must be done if the tzoraat stays or spreads on clothing?

ANSWERS

8 daysAvraham Avinu
1. If she gave birth to a boy, she must wait forty days, if she had a girl, she had to wait 80 days.
2. A karbon Olah and a karban Chatas.
3. To thank Hashem for a healthy delivery.
4. Because during her labor she might have said something improper; she may have sworn that she would not have any more children.
5. Tzoraat is a disease, similar to leprosy, in which one found unusual spots on his body, hair, house, etc.
6. For speaking lashon hara.
7. So people will know to keep away from him.
8. The house, and everything in it, became tameh.
9. He must tear his garments, let his hair grow wild, and cover his lips with his garments.
10. To remind him that tzoraat came because of his mouth.
11. House, clothes, or skin.
12. The kohen.
13. Poor vision.
14. A white spot on the skin or a green or red spot on clothes.
15. To warn the person to do teshuvah.
16. He had to leave the camp for seven days.
17. The person must be placed in isolation for seven days, and he is examined again.
18. The clothing must be burned.

Leader Tip: Don’t just read the questions and give the answers. If the kids don’t know the answers, that’s fine use it as a learning opportunity. Note: it will be very helpful to review the questions and the parsha before showing up to groups.
GOAL: To teach the kids to think before they speak and to care for others.

ACTIVITY:

**Game 1** - The kids will stand in a circle. The madrich/a group leader will go to one of the kids and whisper in his ear- “go to the smartest kid in the room”. This kid will go to the smartest kid and whisper in his ear- “go to the funniest kid in the room. The smartest kid will go to the funniest kid and whisper in his ear- “go to the kindest kid in the room” and so on... you can think about different kinds of characters. Very important: Ask the kids to choose just good characters, that they won’t hurt each other. It’s also very important that the other kids won’t know what the kid whisper, and why they choose to go to that specific kid. After that, all the kids in the game will tell why they choose those kids (because he/she smart, funny,...). Ask your kids: - Do you like when people say good things about you, and what if it a bad things, especially when it is behind your back?

**Game 2** - *The Moo Game* – Just one little word, but oh the embarrassment it can cause. Send a volunteer who hasn’t played this before out the room and tell them they are judging a ‘moo competition’ (who can scream ‘moo’ the loudest) and that they should try to win. Tell the rest of the group the same except that on the third try no one should say anything and the poor volunteer will be left shouting ‘moo’ alone.

**Game 3** - *Taboo* – A kid is given words that they need to give over to the rest of the group and a list of words that they are not allowed to use e.g. if the word is school, they can’t say lesson, teacher, work, break or exam.

DISCUSSION: Speech is a very powerful tool! It can be used for so much good, yet at the same time, it can be the cause of much evil. THINK BEFORE YOU SPEAK. Don’t put your mouth into motion, until your brain is in gear! Talk to the kids about the importance of caring about something. Encourage them to feel more responsible to the members of the group. Caring about someone starts with saying “good morning “or asking, “How are you”. You can give your kids an example of someone in history that changed something in the world because he cared.
Before Your Read: A wise person doesn't judge people or things by the way they first appear. In this week's Torah portion, we learn how the Jewish priests, the Cohanim, wouldn't judge whether a person had a spiritual malady called tzara'at until they had examined him twice. We can learn from this that one should be willing to give people and situations a 'second look' before passing judgment about them.

I don't know why, but I sort of took it on myself to be the neighborhood 'welcoming committee.' Whenever a new kid moves in and shows up on the scene, I make the effort to say 'hello' and help her blend in with the crowd.

So it really wasn't unusual for me to go up to this new kid, Allison, (I asked one of the teachers what her name was) and give her one of my smiley 'welcome to the neighborhood' speeches.

What was unusual was how the kid reacted to me - or should I say didn't react...

"Hi Allison!" I had said to her in a loud, friendly voice, walking up to her from behind. The kid didn't say anything or even turn her head. Okay, I know some kids are the more shy, quiet type (not like me!) so I figured I'd try again.

"Welcome to the world's greatest neighborhood!" I said, in a big friendly voice - sure this time she'd turn around and smile. But she didn't even turn around and just kept on walking away from me, I think even faster than before.

Now if there is one thing I can't stand it's a snob. And this Allison kid just made it into my book as Snob #1. As far as I was concerned, she could just stay by herself forever, if that's how she wanted it. I certainly wasn't going to be the one to make her feel at home.

The next day when I saw her sitting on a bench in the playground looking really lonely, my first thought was, 'it serves her right!' After all, I gave her the chance to make a friend and she obviously didn't want to see my face.

I walked past her, about to join the gang, when - I don't know why - something about her lonely look got to me and I figured maybe she just had a bad day yesterday and what would it hurt to give her one more chance? Things aren't always the way they
first look. So I walked back her way, only this time I made sure to walk straight up to her, so if she wanted to do her 'snob' thing again, she'd have to do it right to my face.

"Hi," I said, giving her a little wave. I thought she'd either turn her head or look embarrassed after yesterday, but this surprising kid surprised me once again by giving me a warm, friendly smile back and inviting me to sit down!

We traded names (I knew hers already, but it was only polite) and soon we got chatting friendly enough that I felt okay to ask her why she hadn't answered me back the day before. But before I could do that, she gave me the answer in a way that made me glad I hadn't asked...

"Oh, Debby," she said "I'm sorry, but could you please make sure you look straight at me when you talk. You see," she smiled sort of uncomfortably "I'm hearing impaired and I have to read people's lips to have any idea what they're saying and to see their faces to even know if they're talking to me at all."

Wow - that explained everything! She didn't ignore me because she was a snob or even shy. She just didn't hear or notice me because I never caught her eye!

Well, Allie and I are just about best friends now. She's a great, down to earth kid. I think a lot about how close I came to writing her off as a snob - which would have been a big shame for both of us, and how glad I am that I was smart enough to give her a second look.

**Discussion Questions**

Q. Our sages teach that the proper way to relate to a new person we meet is to simultaneously respect and suspect him. What do you think this means and why might such an approach be wise?

A. When we meet someone new, we have no way of really knowing what he's about. Some people make a great first impression and turn out to be monsters, others look bad but are really good as gold. Therefore, until we know someone and are able to decide what he's truly like; respecting him gives us the chance to make a close connection, while suspecting him protects us from getting burned.

Q. Is there ever a point that we should stop giving someone 'another chance'?

A. While it's right to be patient and forgiving with people, when we see that continually giving them another chance becomes seriously destructive for us, them or others, the ethical thing to do is to say (and mean) 'no more chances.'

**Leader Tip:** Use the story as a guide. If you have another story or that's also fine. Make sure you have the kids read a section. Keeping them engaged is the key.
Rav Avraham Yitzchak Kook

(September 8, 1865—September 1, 1935)

Rav Kook was the first Ashkenazic chief rabbi (in modern times) of the Religious Zionist Jewish community in Israel. He believed that by living in and building up the land of Israel was the groundwork of the bringing of Mashiach. He is the founding father of the “Religious Zionist” movement and he started “Merkaz HaRav”, a very popular and central yeshiva, in Yerushalayim. Jewish thinker, Halachist, Kabbalist and a renowned Torah scholar. He is known in Hebrew as HaRav Avraham Yitzchak HaCohen Kook, and by the acronym HaRaAYaH or simply as "HaRav." He was one of the most celebrated and influential Rabbis of the 20th century. In Rav Kook’s thought Kodesh and Chol (sacred and profane) play an important role: Kodesh is the inner taam (reason / meaning) of reality, while Chol is that which is detached from Kodesh and is without any meaning; Judaism, then, is the vehicle "whereby we sanctify our lives, and attach all the practical, secular elements of life to spiritual goals which reflect the absolute meaning of existence - G-d Himself"

Leader Tip: This is the first week we are introducing a Rabbinic figure as our Leader of the week. This would be a great way to recap the other three leaders. Try to engage the kids in discussion on rabbis and leadership. You will be surprised what you hear.
Boruch .....Sheh-lo Ah-sah-ni Goy.

"Blessed are You.....for making me proud to fulfill my obligations as a Jew."

A Jew has been given a special mission in this world. With the Torah to guide him (and her), a Jew is guided by the 613 Mitzvot. Hashem loves ALL mankind and a Jew must respect ALL of Hashem's creations. This bracha helps us understand that in this world Hashem has chosen the Jewish people to guard the laws of His Torah. We also want to start off by praising Hashem that we have mitzvoth. Before we start our day, we first acknowledge what Hashem has given us and who He has made us.

We are appreciative that we have a greater level of obligation of mitzvot. A non-Jew is only obligated in seven mitzvot commanded to Noach. By expressing the bracha in the negative it highlights the various categories of levels of obligation. Thus giving a greater praise to Hashem.

Leader Tip: You may want to bring in some outside sources here. It may be up to the leader or Youth Director to be a little more creative here.
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