

Shabbat Club at Home

Dear Families,

Shabbat is a time for you and your kids to relax, take a break from your normal weekday pursuits, and try different kinds of activities together. In true Shabbat Club fashion, read through to the last page for an activity with prizes.

For Parents and Children: This week's parasha is Naso (Elevate). The parasha begins with the completion of the census (counting of the population) that Moses started in last week's parasha (Bamidbar). Here, God tells Moses to count the Levites from ages 30 to 50, because they're the ones who will do the service of carrying the parts of the Mishkan (the portable sanctuary), and he gets a total of 8,580 men. The family of Gershon carries the curtains, the Mishkan's coverings and the screens for the courtyard; the family of Merari carries the planks and pillars of the walls; and the family of Kehat carries the vessels.

We also read about a nazir—a person who wants to be extra holy and therefore agrees to keep away from certain things, even though they are technically allowed. The nazir is not allowed to cut his or her hair, drink wine or grape juice, or become impure through contact with a dead person.

Next God tells Moses about a special mitzvah that Aaron and his sons have: to bless the People of Israel. The last thing the parasha tells us is about how each nassi brings an offering for the opening of the altar. The offering brought by each of them is exactly the same, but the Torah repeats every one to show that God values each offering as special.

Let's Count Together!

Counting our blessings is not something that comes naturally. Often it is easier to count our problems: We are late on a homework project. Our cell phone needs repair. There's a pandemic in the world. Focusing on our problems, we sometimes overlook our blessings. Sometimes we need a little push to remind us of our blessings.

Questions to Discuss Together:

1. Can you think of something good that happened to you this week? How did you feel about it?
2. What are three things that make you feel blessed, or extra special, that you might want to thank God for?

Story Time to Share:

Here is a story about a man who lived in a one-room hut with his mother, his wife and six children. The hut, as we can imagine, was filled with crying and quarreling. It was noisy and hard to live. One day, when he felt he couldn't take it anymore, the man went to his rabbi.

“Rabbi,” he said, “things are bad and getting worse. I live in a one-room house with my mother, wife and six children. It is too crowded and noisy. Help me find some peace, Rabbi. I’ll do whatever you say.”

The rabbi thought for a moment. “Do you have a chicken?” he asked. “Yes, of course I do,” the man replied. “Good,” said the Rabbi, “take the chicken and bring it into your home.” “Well, okay.” said the man, though he was a bit surprised.

Imagine what the house sounded like now. In addition to the man, his mother, his wife and six children, there was a chicken clucking continuously. Frustrated, the man returned to the Rabbi. “Rabbi, I did what you said, and it’s much worse than before. Help me please.”

“Tell me,” the rabbi asked, “do you have a goat?” “Yes, I do,” the man replied. “Excellent,” said the rabbi. “Go home and bring him in to live with you.” A couple of days later, life in the hut was even worse. There was crying, quarreling, clucking, and a goat pushing and butting everyone with its horns.

The man returned to the rabbi. To his shock, the rabbi then instructed him to bring his cow into the hut. This Rabbi must be crazy, the man thought. But he did as he was instructed. The house became an utter chaos.

When he returned to the rabbi for the fourth time, the man screamed, “Help me rabbi, the end of the world has come. There is no room in my house even to breathe.” The rabbi listened and said, “Go home now, my friend, and let the animals out of your hut.” The man rushed home and did so.

That night was the sweetest and most relaxing night he ever had. Every member of the family slept comfortably and peacefully. When he returned to the rabbi, the man said “Rabbi, you have made life sweet for me. With just my family in the hut, it’s so quiet, so roomy, so peaceful..,What a blessing.”

What a blessing. When we feel overwhelmed, we can gain perspective by counting the blessings we enjoy each and every day!

Fun Activity: Counting your Blessings Game!

Here is a fun game you can play:

Gather the following objects from your home and backyard to count your blessings:

- 1 – An object that shows or reflects sunshine - bringing light into the world
- 2 – Two pillows showing thankfulness for restful sleep
- 3 – Three fruits that show gratefulness for nourishment
- 4 – Four books that show how important it is to keep on learning

- 5- Five flowers that show beauty in this world
- 6 – Six pictures of people that you love
- 7 – Seven favorite tee shirts – showing we are grateful to be clothed
- 8 – Eight favorite pieces of candy – showing the sweetness in life
- 9 – Nine small stones to show the wonder of nature
- 10 – Ten hugs for the people who make your life happy and safe!

Parasha Quiz for Prizes! Email Rabbi Marder at RabbiM@bethelnj.org after Shabbat with the answers:

1. What is the name of this week's parasha and what does it mean?
2. How many men were counted in the sons of Gershon? Merari?
3. What does a person have to do to become a Nazir?

We are keeping a list of those who answer the Parasha Quizzes. When we are together once again, we will be able to give out the prizes. Meanwhile, keep sending in your answers and accumulating prizes