

WE'RE HERE TO CHANGE THE WORLD!

More than a School. A Movement.



Lessons from Lech Lecha

A Great Parsha-based Story to Read To Your Children

"Please take out your chumashim," Morah Fine said to her students. The girls had just finished Parshas Noach and were eager to begin Parshas Lech Lecha.

We are going to learn about Avraham Avinu," Morah Fine continued. "We were already introduced to Avraham and his family at the end of Parshas Noach. Now, let's begin Parshas Lech Lecha. HaShem commands Avraham to leave the place he was born and to travel to Eretz Yisrael."

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

"What do you mean, Miriam?" asked Morah Fine. "Which stories?"

"I remember the story of Avraham discovering HaShem when he was only three years old. Our teacher taught us that in kindergarten."

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

"Or when Nimrod threw him into the furnace?" added Sheina. "Why doesn't the Torah begin teaching us about Avraham before the time HaShem tells him Lech Lecha?"

Morah Fine turned to Miriam with a smile. "Good for you, Miriam. Your question got the whole class thinking. Let me explain.

"Avraham Avinu believed in HaShem and dedicated his life to teaching others to do so too. Many things

happened during his lifetime. The first story that the Torah tells us about Avraham teaches us the most important lesson we should learn from the way he served HaShem."

"But how does this story teach us any more than the other ones that happened before?" asked Miriam.

"There really is a difference between these stories and the others," replied Morah Fine. "You see, this is the first time that HaShem speaks directly to Avraham and commands him to do something. Avraham does it immediately, believing in HaShem without question. In the other stories, Avraham does things on his own. He discovers HaShem, he breaks the idols, he chooses to be thrown into the furnace.

"The Torah is not just telling us stories. The Torah wants to teach us that a Jew's highest honor is to dedicate his or her life to listening to HaShem. So the first story about Avraham Avinu, the first Jew, is that HaShem tells him to do something and he does it.

"When a person does good deeds on his own, that is very important. But here the Torah is teaching us what it means to be a Jew: HaShem tells us what to do and we do it. This is exactly what Avraham did and Torah is teaching us to follow his example."

(Adapted by Malka Touger from Sichos Shabbos Parashas Lech Lecha, 5752)

Shabbat

Candle Lighting Times

Erev Shabbat

October 15, 2021 | 9 Cheshvan 5782

Light Candles at 5:36 PM

Shabbat

October 16, 2021 | 10 Cheshvan 5782

Shabbat Ends at 6:30 PM

Daily Thought

The Spiral Staircase

The Baal Shem Tov described life as a spiral staircase, constantly deflecting away from your target in order to attain it. In Yiddish it's called a "swindling staircase." Life swindles you into believing you are going in circles when really you are traveling higher each day. This is the way of every true and lasting ascent: Just as you're making some progress upward, you see yourself falling away and stumbling in the dark. If you could see the whole picture, how all things resolve in the end, you would see how those periods of darkness and failure are truly steps higher and yet higher. They must be. Because we did not create life. G-d did. And for Him, there are no failures—only a constant ascent upward.

We can't wait to see how much we can learn by the end of the year!

This week in the ELC, our Littles finished their Parsha on Noach and what a good listener he was to Hashem. We had plenty of time to re-enact the story of Noach with the Taivah (ark) we built and they learned all about the Mabul (flood), and how on the 17th day of Cheshvan, the great flood began and lasted 40 days and nights. To emphasize how the Taivah was able to float, we did our own experiments with various objects on our sensory table and the children made their own hypothesis on whether the objects would float or sink. After our experiment, we went back over our objects, (penny, rubberband, pencil, popsicle stick, crayon, and cotton ball), and discussed why those objects did what they did and then discussed how the Taivah was able to float with all of those animals, food, trash, and people on board! It was an exciting hands-on activity that was loved by all.

Of course, the story of Noach would not be complete without learning about rainbows. We learned how many colors form a rainbow and how if you mix colors you can come up with a different one, like Yellow + Blue = Green. Parsha, Art, Science, English, and Math all rolled into one lesson! The Littles enjoyed painting their own rainbows remembering Hashem's promise that He would never destroy the earth again because He loves us so very much! Whenever we see a rainbow we say a special blessing: "Zocher Habris, ViNe'eman Bivriso, ViKayam BiMa'amaro" - "Blessed are You, Hashem our G-d... who remembers the promise, who is faithful to His promise, and keeps His Word."

For the latter part of the week and the beginning of next, our focus turns to Avraham, who was also a great listener and the world's first Jew! He spent his entire life teaching people about Hashem and that He is the only G-d to worship instead of false idols. After winning the great war against the four



kings, Hashem came to him in a dream and promised him a son. Not only that, Hashem told him that he would have countless descendants. To make sure, he understood Hashem told him to look up in the sky and count the stars and that's how many descendants he would have! Our project for this Parshah was making a sheet of stars with a picture of each child in the center reminding them that Avraham's children would inherit Eretz Yisroel, the land of Israel.

Each day we focus on our feelings and how to navigate them through experiences, books that are read, or songs that are sung. Math and language skills are practiced through the daily calendar by counting to 31 (although this week our goal was 40 and beyond!) Our Littles already know the days of the week and are learning the months of the year along with recognizing simple sight words and shapes that we see all the time. And our older students in the ELC are learning how to write sentences by sounding out and spelling her words phonetically. They are learning to read, do simple math problems and moving forward very quickly. They already know how to count past 100, count by tens to 100, and recognize their numbers both numerically and written! And did I mention that we are only in the middle of October? We can't wait to see how much we can learn by the end of the year!



REMINDER

Even though our days are cooling off, we still emphasize the importance of drinking plenty of water. Please make sure that your child always comes to school with a water bottle that is labeled with his or her name. Thank you for your partnership!



Integrated Parsha Art Project

How are we as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore?

In this week's Parsha, G-d tells us that he will make our descendants numerous like the stars of heaven and the sands of the seashore. Now, the Jews only comprise 0.2% of the world. How are we as numerous as the stars in the sky or the grains of sand on the seashore? The answer is rather beautiful. Chassidus tells us that we light the way for the world during the darkest nights, and we pave the path towards the ocean of

Torah and proper middos. In this way, our lights shine an abundance of peace, calm and joy to the world around us. Therefore, our boys had a special art project this week. We made star and sand paintings, and they boys each collected their own sand to create their artwork from scratch. It was truly a blast!



Dear Parents,

This has been an amazing week, filled to the brim with growth and excitement. We've gone more in-depth into geography with globes, a compass rose, and map grids. We have new spelling words and have started working on our penmanship as well! Math has quickly become the class's favorite subject. We're focused on reading and associating the words we read with various parts of grammar law. And, our Learning Adventure Day at the Wildlife Zoo has definitely opened up our eyes to a whole world of Zoology and fun exploration.

In Kodesh studies, we are soaring through Ksiva. Our boys are growing from strength to strength in terms of their script writing.

Kriah is going strong and each boy is reading to the best of their ability. We most certainly have some Parsha masters in our primary program! These boys are a constant source of inspiration for me whenever we learn Parsha. Not only do the boys learn the Parsha, they apply it to their lives. Their Middos are becoming more refined and each boy is seeing the world through the lens of heroes. Every single person in the world has a superpower to transform the world around them. Each and every one of our students has abilities and qualities that make them unique. This is what I strive to nurture throughout their schooling process. Great job boys, keep making me proud.

All the best, Reb Shmuel

MMA Family Features

What IS Customized Curriculum?

And why are we so excited about it for your kiddos at MMA?

At a Glance

- **Personalized learning is an educational approach that aims to customize learning for each student's strengths, needs, skills, and interests.**
- **Each student gets a learning plan that's based on what they know and how they learn best.**
- **Personalized learning doesn't replace an IEP**

In preparation for our upcoming parent meetings, I want to share an excerpt from Amanda Morin, a renowned author, speaker, education advocate, and former early childhood educator.

To get an idea of what personalized learning is, try to picture a classroom that doesn't have a "one size fits all" approach to education. The teacher doesn't lead all students through the same lessons. Instead, the teacher guides each student on an individualized journey. The what, when, where and how of learning is tailored to meet each student's strengths, skills, needs, and interests.

Students may learn some skills at different paces. But their learning plans still keep them on track to meet the standards for a high school diploma and higher education.

That kind of classroom isn't the reality for most students. But it's the end goal of personalized learning, which is already being used successfully in some schools and is expanding in several states. Here's what you need to know:

- *Kids learn in different ways and at different paces. Personalized learning is a teaching model based on that premise. Each student gets a "learning plan" based on how they learn, what they know, and what their skills and interests are. It's the opposite of the "one size fits all" approach used in most schools.*
- *Students and parents work with their teachers to set both short-term and long-term goals. This process helps students take ownership of their learning.*
- *Teachers make sure learning plans or project-based learning match up with academic standards. And they check to see if students are demonstrating the skills they're expected to learn as they progress through their education.*
- *Personalized learning is not a replacement for special education. It's an approach to general education that can work with an Individualized Education Program (IEP), a 504 plan, response to intervention, or other specialized intervention programs.*

When done well, all students will be more engaged in their learning and feel more confident in themselves. Yes, it requires a LOT more work on behalf of the teacher and school administration, and we are pouring laborious amounts of time and effort into building this program for our students. Why? Because our kids are worth it.

Customized curriculums also allow parents to give significant input to the goals and progress of their children's education. We are very much looking forward to collaborating with you in detail at our Parent Meetings at the end of the month.

At MMA, we believe that in order for our children to thrive, we must work together in great partnership, as a school-home team. As an MMA Family, we are committed to create a world in which we're proud for our children to live, grow, and lead.

Chaya Mushka Ben-Shabat
Co-Founder & CEO

Special Reminder

Parents,

Your kiddos are very active during the day. We give them time to refuel in the morning (snack), lunch and afternoon (snack) to keep their energy levels balanced.

Please be sure to pack enough food to keep them going strong all day long!

Let us know of any announcements you'd like included in our school newsletter!

Email us at: info@mmafamilly.org

Mazal Tov

Mazal Tov to Mrs. Ashmore on her recent birthday.

Mazal Tov to our Grounds Manager, Gershon, on his recent birthday.



Important Dates

Parent Meeting Dates:

October 25 - 28, 2021

Announcements

Kippahs for Sale in the Office

Limited availability \$9 each

MMA Hoodies for Sale

Coming Soon!