

Shalom, Kids!

The holiday of Shavuot is here! I really love this holiday because it reminds me that summer vacation is almost here. Every year I make a special calendar called "The I'm Going Crazy Calendar." I cross off each passing day, until the end of the school year. It's so hard to wait! In fact, it must be just like the Children of Israel who counted the days, from the time they left Egypt until they reached Mount Sinai and received the Torah. They counted 50 days (the counting of the Omer). I really know how they felt! How about you?

מגילת רות - THE SCROLL OF RUTH



1 And it was in the days of the Judges that there was famine in the Land of Israel. Elimelech and Naomi journeyed with their two sons to Moab.



2 After some time, Elimelech passed away and his sons married Moabite women



3 Ten years passed and the two sons, Mac'hlon and Kilyon, died too. "I will return to my land," decided Naomi. "The famine has ended and the Land of Israel is my home!"



4 But Orpah and Ruth, the wives of Naomi's two sons, didn't want to leave Naomi. Naomi spoke to them and said, "Moab is your country - here you both were raised and grew up, and you belong to this nation!"



5 Orpah listened to Naomi and returned to her parents, but Ruth refused to listen and remained. "We will go together, for your people are my people! Only death can separate us!" said Ruth.



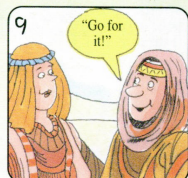
6 "Could this be Naomi?" the people of the city asked. Naomi replied in a bitter voice. "Call me Marah (which, in Hebrew, means 'bitter'), for in Moab I lost my whole family. All that's left is pain and suffering."



7 Ruth and Naomi had returned at the end of the barley harvest, and so Ruth went to gather grain in the fields. She came to the field belonging to Boaz, who asked his workers who she was. The workers told him of Ruth's fine character and how she had stayed with Naomi.



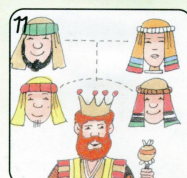
8 "Ruth," called Boaz, "Please come and collect your grain only in my field ... eat my food and drink water from my jug!"



9 that had happened. Naomi was overjoyed. "Boaz is a relative! If you were to marry him, you would continue our family line!"



10 Ruth and Boaz did get married, and the whole Kingdom of Judah rejoiced. Not long after, Ruth gave birth to Obed.



11 Ruth's reward for her loyalty to Naomi was her great grandson. You'll never guess who he was! Well, Obed's wife gave birth to Yishai and Yishai's wife gave birth to David - the very same David who later became King David who we sing about all the time!



12 Perhaps you are wondering why we read the Scroll of Ruth on Shavuot. The reason is that David, Ruth's great grandson, was born exactly on Shavuot day and died on Shavuot as well. And that's the truth!

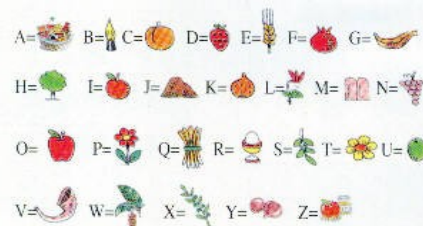
The Torah, which we received at Mount Sinai, contains many words and ideas, but Hillel summarized the entire Torah in a few words. In order to know what Hillel said, read the story below and decode the secret message.

During the period of the Second Temple, there were two wise men - Shammai and Hillel. Shammai was a difficult type of person, who was quick to anger, whereas Hillel was kind and friendly to all. Once a foreigner came to Shammai and said, "I would like to become Jewish and learn the Torah, but on one condition ... if you can teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Shammai's face reddened from anger and he bellowed: "One cannot learn the Torah so quickly. A man can study Torah all of his life and still not know the whole thing!" Then he expelled the man from his house, still fuming at his 'Chutzpah'. Meanwhile, the foreigner went to Hillel and repeated his request. This time, Hillel pleasantly answered, "I will gladly do as you request." Then the foreigner stood on one foot and Hillel said to him:



This is the whole Torah! And now go and study all the details and explanations." The foreigner was amazed by Hillel's tolerance and went to learn the Torah as he had been advised.

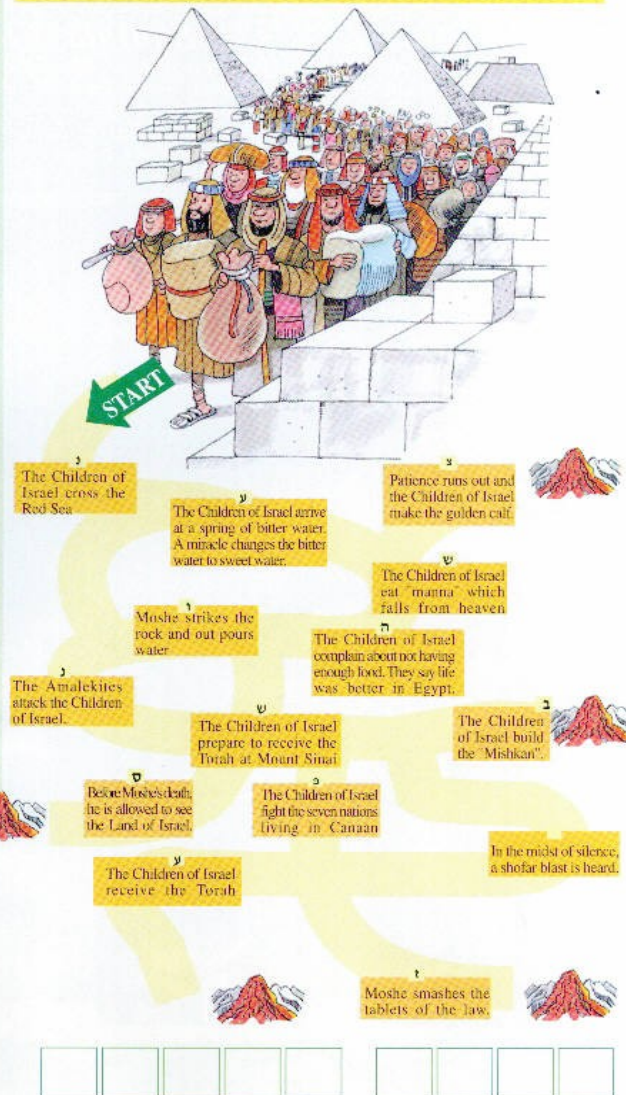
(From tractate Avot).



An agadah tells about different mountains, in the Land of Israel, that were having a fight: On which mountain would the Torah be given? As we now know, Mount Sinai won the argument.

In order to reach Mount Sinai, begin at the same point from which the children of Israel began their journey - Egypt, and then proceed according to the events which occurred leading up to their experience at Mount Sinai.

Along the way, take the letters written in the rectangles through which you pass, and write them in the blank squares below.



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If you proceeded correctly, you would have written in the squares what the children of Israel answered G-d.

Holiday Customs

ON THE HOLIDAY OF SHAVUOT, JEWS WOULD BRING GIFTS OF THEIR FIRST RIPENED FRUITS TO THE TEMPLE IN JERUSALEM. THE FRUITS WOULD BE OF THE SEVEN SPECIES.

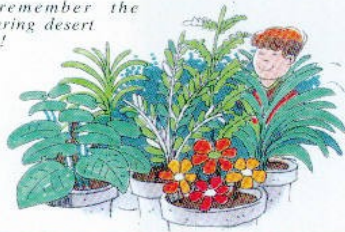
Answer the riddles below

After you answer them all, fold the pages along the dotted line, and check your answers.

How did this happen,
What can I do?
Today I'm feeling really blue.
It's Shavuot and they're eating all
the cheese.
Couldn't they save
me a little,
please?
They do this to
remember how the
Children of Israel,
By the foot of the mountain, ate
a milky meal.
But really this is getting
me quite upset!
Not a drop left for an
adorable pet!



This is a custom I truly admire,
For of nature and scenery I'll never tire.
And so I'll decorate my house with plants so
green,
To remember the
flowering desert
scene!



The Children of Israel fell asleep, it appeared,
Instead of preparing for the Torah as time neared.
Ever since, we've been trying to make it right,
And so we stay up and study all night.
Tonight I will learn, not a moment to sleep,
For this is one custom I surely will keep!



Of the seven species,
it's number one,
Without it - no bread,
no pizza, not even a
bun!



Among the family of
grains it does appear,
And is very important
in the making of beer.



Round and small, it
grows on a vine,
Without it we couldn't
say Kiddush over wine.



Green when fresh, brown
when dried, This fruit has
leaves large and wide. Adam
and Eve used them as a
cover, When their
nakedness they did discover.



At Rosh HaShana
time it's ready to eat,
Through to count its
seeds is quite a feat!



Though this fruit is
rather small, Its leaves
are a symbol of peace
for all.



Found way up high in a
tree, Its branches are a lulav
to be.
This fruit shares its name
With a girl of biblical fame.



חג שבועות ! שנה





אֶרֶץ חֵטֶה



וְשַׁעוֹרָה



וּכְפֹן



וְתֵאֵנָה



וְרִימון



אֶרֶץ זֵית שֶׁמֶן



וּדְבַשׁ



(דברים ח' 8)

PRIVATE EYE PETE

Pete loves to solve riddles and mysteries. Read the story below and try to solve the riddle at the end. (You will be able to solve the riddle only after reading the entire newspaper!).

One day, as Pete was returning from playing basketball, he thought to himself: "Great! Tomorrow is Shavuot!" Pete especially liked the holiday of Shavuot because his birthday came out on the same day. He also really enjoyed the holiday because he could eat lots of special foods and not the usual holiday meal of chicken and rice!

As Pete got closer to his school, he saw a bunch of kids standing together. As he approached, he heard Josh's voice. Josh, a boy from his class, always seemed to be the center of attention. He was always bragging about himself, which the younger kids seemed to admire. But sometimes he got carried away, exaggerating to the point of even lying!

Pete stood outside the circle of kids surrounding Josh, and listened.

"Shavuot is the holiday I observe the most. I follow all the customs because my grandmother's grandfather, who passed them down to us, made us swear to continue observing them," he said. There was a rustle of excitement among the other kids.

Josh's grandmother's grandfather swore them to it! Wow! What a wonderful tradition!

Then, Josh continued, "A Shavuot never passes in my home without me eating dairy foods, wearing white clothing and even decorating my house with flowers and branches to make it look like Mt. Sinai. I keep it all ... every single custom!"

Just then, Tom asked Josh, "Are you coming to the school program tonight?"

"Of course not!" answered Josh, with an air of self-confidence. "I'll have to go to bed early tonight, the eve of Shavuot, so that when it comes time to have our big holiday meal, I'll have plenty of energy!"

It was now Pete's turn to comment. "Josh, I think you're exaggerating a bit and by the way, you forgot one very important custom ...

Maybe because it's difficult for you to keep this one." The other kids turned towards Pete with confused expressions.

Which custom did Josh forget?
Can you guess?

