

2nd Grade Concepts

Torah

(All Torah concepts excerpt from *Child's Bible*, published by Behrman House)

- The Torah contains the first five books of the Hebrew Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy.
- The Torah scroll contains the first five books of the bible.
- The Torah scroll is made of parchment and is kept in the ark.
- Some of the things we love about our favorite books and stories are the same things the Jewish people have loved about the Torah for more than two thousand years!

Creation

- The first story in the Torah is the creation story. It is contained in the book of Genesis.
- In the Creation story in Genesis, G-d gives humans the earth to rule and take care of. What do you think are our responsibilities as human beings regarding taking care of the earth? What are some things you can do at home to show that you care for the animals and the plants?
- The words of the first five books of the bible are in the Torah that is kept in the ark. The Torah is written on a scroll made of parchment. The words of the first five books of the Torah are also written out in English in a book called a chumash. Chumash sounds like the Hebrew word for "five" – chamaish.

Adam and Eve – In the Garden

- It is not good for people to be alone.
- We all struggle with our yetzer ha tov (our good inclination) and our yetzer ha ra (our bad inclination).
- Human beings have free will.
- We must take responsibility for our actions.

Jacob and Esau - Twins and Tricks

- Each person in the world is different. We have different interests, strengths and weaknesses. It is important to respect each other's differences.
- When we make decisions that are good for us right now, sometimes those decisions are not best for us in the future.
 - All actions have consequences.
 - We must be sure that the consequences of our actions are worth the risk

Noah and the Ark

- Noah was a righteous (good) man in his time.
 - There are many things we can do to be good people today. Some of the righteous (good) things we can do are to visit the sick, feed the hungry and speak kindly to our friends and family.
- A brit (covenant) is a partnership. Being partners with God means that we are involved in taking care of the people and the world around us.
- Jewish symbols help us remember Jewish teachings. Examples of Jewish teachings are: a rainbow, a mezuzah, a menorah, and the Star of David.

Tower of Babel

Tower of Babel Concepts:

- All the people on earth had one language. Everyone lived together in a land called Shinar. The people decided to build “a tower with its top to the sky.” The tower would keep them from being scattered all over the earth. When God saw what the people were doing, God babbled their language so that they would not understand each other. They stopped building the city and God scattered them all over the earth.
 - It is wrong to think that all humans should be one and the same, or all speak the same language. We are all many and different.
- The building of “a tower with its top to the sky” can be seen as an act of being superior, conceited or self-important.
 - God makes each of us special, so every person is important. Every person has something special to offer the world. “Looking down” on people is always a mistake.

We need to remember what is really important. Bricks can never be more important than people. That is what the builders in the Tower of Babel story forgot, and that is what we must always remember.

Abram Walks With God

- Families should live at peace – in Hebrew, *shalom bayit*.

Rebecca

- Kindness is an important trait when choosing a friend or a life partner.
- Taking care of animals is also important.
- When we choose to do chores on our own, we feel good about helping.

Jacob and Esau - Twins and Tricks

- Each person in the world is different. We have different interests, strengths and weaknesses. It is important to respect each other's differences.
- When we make decisions that are good for us right now, sometimes those decisions are not best for us in the future.
 - All actions have consequences.
 - We must be sure that the consequences of our actions are worth the risk.
 -

Joseph's Coat

- Bragging can give rise to envy and jealousy.
- Envy and jealousy have dangerous results.
-

Joseph and the Dreamers

- Joseph was a good listener. He listened carefully to Pharaoh's dreams. Good listening is an important skill for us to learn.
- Doing good for others changes the entire world for the better.
- We must plan ahead to get ahead.

Rosh Hashanah Concepts for Second Grade

- Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year. It marks the "birthday of the world."
- The words "Rosh Hashanah" literally mean the "Head of the Year."
- Rosh Hashanah begins on the first day of the Hebrew month of Tishri.
- The traditional greeting on Rosh Hashanah is "Shanah Tovah," which means "Good Year" in Hebrew.
- We celebrate Rosh Hashanah at home with a holiday meal, the lighting of the candles, and blessings.
- We eat a round challah on Rosh Hashanah.. This reminds us that the year has come full circle. The challah is also round because it looks like the crown that kings and queens wear.
- We dip apples in honey for a sweet and happy New Year.
- The shofar is a ram's horn. The sound of the shofar awakens us to think about our behavior during the past year.
- We send New Year's cards to family and friends on Rosh Hashanah.
- After services on Rosh Hashanah, we go to a stream, river or ocean. We throw crumbs of bread into the water to symbolize that we are throwing away the bad things we have done. We think about our behavior during the past year, and decide what we want to improve for next year.

Yom Kippur Concepts for Second Grade

- During the week prior to Yom Kippur (between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur) we think about how we acted during the past year. Even though we did many good things, we are sorry we did not do more. For ten days, beginning on Rosh Hashanah, we say we are sorry to all the people we have treated unfairly or unkindly. We ask for forgiveness from G-d. This holy day is called Yom Kippur. *Let's Celebrate*, Behrman House, pg.12.
- Adults do not eat or drink anything on Yom Kippur. They feel so sorry for the things they have done wrong that they fast for the whole day. Children don't have to fast on Yom Kippur. But you can try skipping a meal or snack. After the blowing of the shofar (at the closing service of Yom Kippur), family and friends share a "break the fast" meal. This is a happy time where everyone enjoy eating together. It is nice to invite people who might be alone to come to your home to break the fast with your family. On Yom Kippur, we are full of hope. We know that we can be better people in the new year. And we hope the new year will be good for all people everywhere. *Let's Celebrate*, Behrman House, pgs. 14 and 16.

Sukkot Concepts for Second Grade

- Sukkot falls on the 15th day of the Hebrew month of Tishri. Reform Jews celebrate Sukkot for seven days.
- On Sukkot, we express our thanks for a good harvest and other gifts from God.
- We build a sukkah (a temporary outdoor booth) on Sukkot. The sukkah reminds us of the booths the Israelites built thousands of years ago when they were wandering through the desert to the Promised Land. It also reminds us of the booths the Jewish people built when they were farmers in the field and needed to harvest their crops quickly.
- The roof of the sukkah is made of branches. We must be able to see the stars through the roof of the sukkah.
- We decorate the sukkah to make it look beautiful.
- Jews eat, play, study and sleep in the sukkah.
- We wave the lulav and etrog on Sukkot. The lulav has three parts: the palm branch, the myrtle branch and the willow branch. The etrog looks like a big lemon. It smells sweet. We shake the lulav and etrog in every direction to show that God is everywhere.

Simchat Torah Concepts for Second Grade

- Simchat Torah is the day when we complete one reading of the Torah and roll the scroll back to the beginning to start over.
- The words "Simchat Torah" mean "Joy in Torah."

- The Torah is Judaism's most important book. It is written on a parchment scroll. It contains the stories of the early Jewish people and includes God's commandments, which teach us how to live our lives.
- The Hebrew word for the person who creates new Torah scrolls is called a sofer, which means scribe.
- On Simchat Torah, we parade and dance the Torah scrolls during the Simchat Torah services. Each procession with the Torah is called a *hakafah*, a circling. We wave flags and sing songs at services on Simchat Torah.
- It is traditional to stay up and study all night on Simchat Torah!

Shabbat Concepts for Grade

- Shabbat is a special and important Jewish holiday.
- Shabbat is celebrated every week from sundown on Friday until three stars appear on Saturday night.
- It is written in the Torah that all people, rich and poor, are commanded to rest of Shabbat.
- On Shabbat, we spend time praying, studying and being with our families and friends.
- We prepare for Shabbat by cleaning the house, baking challah, setting a special table and serving a big meal.
- On Friday night, we say blessings over candles, children, wine and challah to welcome the Shabbat.
- God created the world in six days. When God finished creating the world, God was pleased. So God set aside a day to enjoy the world - Shabbat.
- Shabbat is one of the oldest holidays and is the only one mentioned in the Ten Commandments. "Observe the Sabbath day and keep it holy." *My Jewish Year*, Behrman House, pg. 59
- Shabbat is a time to think about how we can be better people.
- We say good-bye to Shabbat with a ceremony called Havdalah.

Chanukah Concepts for Second Grade

- Long ago, Jews from all over the land prayed at the one big Holy Temple in Jerusalem. 2,000 years ago, a mean King Antiochus ruled over Israel and would not let the Jews celebrate the holidays at the Holy Temple. King Antiochus and his soldiers defiled the Holy Temple. A Jew named Mattathias formed a Jewish army (the Maccabees) and drove Antiochus out of Jerusalem.
- When Judah Maccabee and his army re-entered the Holy Temple after the battle, they only found enough oil to burn for one day. When they lit the oil, it burned for eight days. We celebrate Chanukah for eight days to remember the miracle of the oil that burned for eight days.
- We eat potato latkes on Chanukah because they are fried in oil and they remind us of the oil that burned for eight days.

- The special menorah we light on Chanukah is called a chanukiah. It holds candles or oil, and has a shamash (helper) to light each night.
- The dreidel game is played on Chanukah. The Hebrew letters on the dreidel are gimmel, nun, shin and hay. They stand for "Nes gadol hayah sham," which means "A great miracle happened there (in Israel)."

Tu Bishvat Concepts for Second Grade

- Tu Bishvat is called "The Birthday of the Trees."
- Tu Bishvat means the 15th of the Hebrew month of Shevat.
- It is a time to plant trees.
- Trees give us food, shade, wood, shelter, help prevent erosion, improve the climate, make the soil richer, break the wind to stop the spread of desert sand, provide homes for birds/animals and give us clean air.
- When we plant a tree, it is a mitzvah.

Purim Concepts for Second Grade

- On Purim, we hear the story of how Queen Esther saved the Jewish people. It is written on a scroll called a Megillah.
- Haman, the king's wicked advisor, ordered that all Jews be killed, because they would not bow down to him. Mordechai overheard the plot to kill the Jews and sent word to his cousin, Queen Esther, warning of Haman's wicked order. Queen Esther risked her life by telling King Ahasuerus of Haman's plot, and telling the King that she was Jewish too. King Ahasuerus order Haman killed instead of the Jews.
- A gragger is a noisemaker we use to drown out Haman's name during the Megillah reading.
- Hamentaschen are three-cornered cookies/cakes that are in the same shape as Haman's hat. We eat hamentaschen on Purim.
- When Esther and Mordechai saved the Jews, they celebrated by sending gifts. Today, we deliver gift baskets to our friends and family on Purim. These gift baskets are called mishloach manot. We also send money to the poor. On Purim, we dress up in costumes and attend a Purim Carnival.

Passover Concepts for Second Grade

- Long ago, a cruel king called Pharaoh ruled the land of Egypt. He made the Jewish people who lived there his slaves. They had to work very hard building cities and palaces for Pharaoh...Pharaoh was especially cruel to Jewish children. One mother, Yocheved, hid her baby in a basket on the riverbank, so Pharaoh wouldn't find him. When Pharaoh's daughter, the princess, came down to the river to bathe, she found the baby and decided to take him home to the palace. Miriam, the baby's sister, saw the princess rescue her brother and asked if she needed a baby nurse. The princess said yes. Miriam told her mother, and so it happened that Yocheved was able to care for her son and teach him about his

people. The princess named the baby Moses. In Hebrew, his name means “brought out of the water.” Moses could have lived at the Pharaoh’s palace forever, but he could not bear to watch the suffering of the Jewish slaves. He left Egypt and became a shepherd in a faraway land. One day when Moses was taking care of his sheep, he saw a burning bush and heard God’s voice coming from the bush. God told Moses to go back to Egypt to free the Jewish slaves and take them away from cruel Pharaoh. Moses returned to Egypt. He went to see Pharaoh and told him, “Let my people go!” But Pharaoh refused to listen to him. God was angry with Pharaoh and punished him ten times. These punishments were called plagues...Each punishment frightened Pharaoh, and each time he promised to free the slaves. But he did not keep his word. God brought even more terrible punishments upon the Egyptians. Finally, Pharaoh agreed to let the Jewish slaves go. The people got ready very quickly. They didn’t have time to bake the bread for their journey. Instead, they put raw dough on their backs. The sun baked it into hard crackers called matzah. The Jewish people followed Moses. When they got to the sea, God told Moses to hold up his walking stick. When he did, a strong wind parted the sea and the people were able to walk across on dry land. When the people were safely out of Egypt, Moses led them in songs of thanks to God. (*My Very Own Haggadah*, Kar-Ben Copies, Inc., pages 12-20)

- The Passover story is so important that we tell it every year. We want each person to feel as though he or she had actually gone out from Egypt.
- On Passover the whole family comes together for a wonderful feast called a *seder*. At the *seder* we read the Passover story out loud from a book called the *Haggadah*. *Haggadah* is the Hebrew word for telling.
- On the *seder* table is a plate with three pieces of matzah. One small piece is hidden. This piece is called the *afikomen*. The child who finds it gets a present.
- On the *seder* table is a plate with five foods on it: A lamb bone, parsley, bitter herbs, charoset and a roasted egg. These are the symbols of Passover. They help remind us of Passover’s many messages. (*Let’s Celebrate*, Behrman House, pages 3-14)
- At the end of the *Seder* a door is opened, in the hope that Elijah, a great prophet, will come and drink the wine that has been poured into a cup for him

Lag B’Omer Concepts Second Grade

- Lag B’Omer means “The 33rd day of the Counting of the Omer.”
- Lag B’Omer is a joyous spring festival.
- When Israel was ruled by Rome, the Romans would not let the Jews study Torah. Rabbi Akiva, a famous Jewish teacher, hid in a cave in the mountains

because he was not allowed to study or teach Torah. His Jewish students went to the caves to study with him. When the Roman soldiers saw them, the students said they were going hunting and having a picnic. Then the soldiers went away and the students were able to study Torah!

- We picnic in the park on Lag B'Omer.

Shavuot Concepts for Second Grade

- God gave us a book that teaches us how to live a Jewish life. This book is called the Torah. It is God's most precious gift to us. On Shavuot, we remember the time when God gave us the Torah. *Let's Discover the Holidays, Celebrating Shavuot*, Behrman House
- The holiday of Shavuot celebrates the giving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai. *Read, Learn and Discover*, KTAV, pg. 32
- On Shavuot, the Ten Commandments are read in the synagogue. We hear the story of Ruth too. *Let's Discover the Holidays, Celebrating Shavuot*, Behrman House
- Every Torah has a different cover, [breastplate and crowns]. But the words written inside the Torah are always the same. *Let's Discover the Holidays, Celebrating Shavuot*, Behrman House
- Shavuot is the time of the barley harvest in Israel. Shavuot also celebrates the harvest of the first fruits in Israel. *Read, Learn and Discover*, KTAV, pg. 32
- We eat dairy foods made with milk, cheese and eggs on Shavuot. This reminds us that Torah is like "milk and honey," or health and sweetness.