

Parashat Devarim for Kids

Torah reading: Deuteronomy 1:1-3:22

Read on Shabbat: July 18, 2026 · August 7, 2027 · July 29, 2028 (diaspora)

THE STORY IN TWO MINUTES

What happens in this parasha?

With this portion we open the fifth and final book of the Torah: Devarim — “Words.” The whole book is one long, loving speech. Moshe is 120 years old. He knows he will not cross the Jordan with the people. So in his last weeks, he gathers everyone and gives them the thing they will need most: their story.

Because here is the thing — almost nobody standing there remembers Mitzrayim. The people listening are the children of the generation that left. They were babies in the desert, or born along the way. So Moshe retells it all: the mountain where the Torah was given, the scouts who were afraid, the forty years of walking, the kindnesses and the mistakes. He doesn't pretend the hard parts didn't happen — he tells the truth, gently, so the next generation can learn from a story they never saw with their own eyes.

Inside the retelling sits a memory about fairness. Long ago, the work of guiding the people grew too heavy for one person — “How can I carry you all alone?” Moshe says. So judges — shoftim — were appointed to help: wise, patient people, told to listen to the small person and the great person exactly the same, because being fair is Hashem's own way of seeing.

And Moshe begins handing the people their courage: do not be afraid. Hashem who carried you “the way a parent carries a child” — all the way here — is coming with you across the river. The land is waiting. Yehoshua will lead. The story you just heard is yours now; carry it in.

THE ONE BIG IDEA

Stories are how one generation hands its heart to the next. Moshe's greatest gift wasn't the splitting sea — it was sitting the children down and telling them who they are. (That's exactly what a parent does at the Shabbat table with the parasha.)

READY TO TEACH · AGES 5–9

The 30-minute lesson

1 Tell the story

6 MIN

Set the scene first: an old, beloved teacher, his last weeks, and a crowd of young people who never saw Mitzrayim. Then: why retell a story to people who weren't there? Because now it becomes THEIRS.

2 Wonder together

5 MIN

Ask: “Moshe told the new generation even the embarrassing parts — like the scouts being scared. Why didn't he just tell the good parts?”

3 Learn the Hebrew word

4 MIN

This week's word: *devarim* — “words.” The whole last book of the Torah is named for words, because words are how love and memory travel.

4 Play “Tell Me My Story”

10 MIN

Moshe-style: tell your child the story of THEIR life so far — the day they were born, a funny toddler story, a hard thing they got through. Then flip it: they tell YOUR story as they know it. (This is the whole book of Devarim, in a living room.)

5 Wrap up with “carried like a child”

5 MIN

Share Moshe's picture: Hashem carried the people through the desert “the way a parent carries a child.” Ask: “When have you felt carried?” End with one family story you want them to one day tell their own kids.

HEBREW, ONE WORD AT A TIME

This week's Hebrew words

SAY IT	WHAT IT MEANS	HEBREW
<i>devarim</i>	“Words” — the name of the fifth book and this portion	דְּבָרִים
<i>dor</i>	A generation — Moshe speaks to the children of the desert	דּוֹר
<i>shofet</i>	A judge — appointed to listen fairly to everyone	שׁוֹפֵט
<i>tzedek</i>	Fairness, justice	צְדָקָה
<i>midbar</i>	The desert — forty years of the family story	מִדְבָּר
<i>al tira</i>	“Do not be afraid” — Moshe's gift of courage	אַל-תִּירָא

AT THE SHABBAT TABLE

Three questions to ask

- If you could hear one story from our family's “desert years” — before you were born — what would you ask about?
- Moshe told the new generation their whole story, including the mistakes. Why are the mistakes worth telling too?
- A shofet had to listen to a small kid and a king exactly the same way. Who listens to you like that?

A GENTLE NOTE FOR PARENTS

Parashat Devarim is always read on the Shabbat before Tisha B'Av, the saddest day of the Jewish year. For K–3 we keep the connection light: this is a season when the Jewish people remembers sad things gently, the way Moshe retold hard parts of the story with love. There's no need to introduce the Temple's destruction in detail at this age unless your family observes it together — “a sad day when we remember the Beit HaMikdash, and we comfort each other afterward” is plenty.

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