

TORAH FOR K-3 · PARASHAT HASHAVUA

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Parashat Ki Teitzei for Kids

Torah reading: Deuteronomy 21:10-25:19

Read on Shabbat: August 22, 2026 · September 11, 2027 · September 2, 2028 (diaspora)

THE STORY IN TWO MINUTES

What happens in this parasha?

Most parshiyot tell a big story — a journey, a miracle, a brave person who speaks up. This week is different. Moshe stands before the people and teaches them mitzvah after mitzvah — more than in any other parsha in the whole Torah! And when you look closely at so many of them, you find the same warm thread running through: they teach us to notice the people and creatures around us, and to be kind.

Imagine you are walking down the road and you spot your friend's lost backpack lying in the grass. The easy thing is to keep walking. But the Torah says: stop, pick it up, and bring it back — this is hashavat aveidah, returning a lost thing. If you don't know whose it is, you keep it safe until they come looking. The Torah also teaches us to be gentle with animals: before taking eggs from a nest, you first shoo the mother bird gently away so she isn't frightened — that is shiluach haken. And if you see a donkey that has stumbled and fallen under a heavy load, you don't walk past — you stop and help lift it up.

Other mitzvot this week teach us to keep people safe and to be fair. When you build a house with a flat roof where children might play, you put a little fence or railing around the edge so nobody falls — that fence is called a maakeh. And fairness is everywhere: when an ox is working hard pulling the plow, you let it nibble the grain as it goes — you don't tie its mouth shut. When someone works for you all day, you pay them that very same day, so they can buy supper and not go to sleep worried.

And here is one of the gentlest mitzvot of all. When a farmer gathers the harvest and accidentally leaves one bundle of wheat behind in the field, the Torah says: don't go back for it. Leave that forgotten sheaf — shich'chah — for someone who has no field of their own, so they can come and gather food. Even a mistake, a thing you forgot, can become a gift! That is the big idea of the whole parsha: Hashem notices every small kindness — so we learn to notice too.

THE ONE BIG IDEA

Ki Teitzei is the parsha of noticing. With more mitzvot than any other portion, it shows us that being a good person isn't only about giant moments — it's the small, everyday kindnesses: returning a lost thing, being gentle to an animal, building a safe fence, paying a worker, leaving food for someone in need. Hashem notices every little kindness, so we learn to notice too.

READY TO TEACH · AGES 5–9

The 30-minute lesson

- 1 Tell the story** 6 MIN

Open with the surprise: this parsha has MORE mitzvot than any other in the Torah. Then walk through the kindness ones as little pictures kids can see: the lost backpack you bring back (hashavat aveidah), shoos the mother bird gently (shiluach haken), helping lift a fallen animal, the safety fence (maakeh), letting the working ox eat, paying a worker the same day, and leaving a forgotten bundle of wheat for someone hungry.
- 2 Wonder together** 5 MIN

Ask: "So many of this week's mitzvot start with NOTICING something other people might walk right past. Why do you think the Torah cares so much about the small things we notice?"
- 3 Learn the Hebrew word** 4 MIN

This week's word: maakeh — a little fence or railing you build so nobody falls and gets hurt. Say it together, ma-a-KEH. It teaches that keeping other people safe is a real mitzvah, not just being nice.
- 4 Build a maakeh (craft + game)** 10 MIN

Give your child craft sticks (or blocks) and a square of cardboard as a pretend flat roof. Build a little maakeh railing all the way around the edge. Then play "lost and found": hide a few household items, have your child find them and cheerfully "return" each one to its owner, saying hashavat aveidah as they hand it back.
- 5 Wrap up with a kindness we noticed** 5 MIN

Go around and each name one kind thing you NOTICED this week that you could do — a lost thing to return, an animal to be gentle with, a person to help. End by reminding them: Hashem notices every small kindness, and this whole parsha is here to help us notice too.

HEBREW, ONE WORD AT A TIME

This week's Hebrew words

SAY IT	WHAT IT MEANS	HEBREW
<i>mitzvot</i>	Mitzvot — this parsha has more of them than any other in the Torah	מצוות
<i>hashavat aveidah</i>	Returning a lost object — bring back the thing your friend lost	השבת אבדה
<i>shiluach haken</i>	Shooing the mother bird gently away first — being kind to animals	שלוח הקן
<i>maakeh</i>	A little fence or railing on a roof so nobody falls — keeping people safe	מעקה
<i>shich'chah</i>	A forgotten sheaf left in the field for someone who is hungry	שכחה
<i>chesed</i>	Kindness — the warm thread running through this whole parsha	חסד

AT THE SHABBAT TABLE

Three questions to ask

- You are walking and you find something a friend lost. What is the hard part about stopping to bring it back — and how would you feel if someone did that for you?
- The maakeh is a little fence that keeps people from getting hurt. What is one thing in our home that helps keep our family safe?
- The farmer leaves a forgotten bundle of wheat for someone hungry, even though it was a mistake. Can a mistake ever turn into something good?

A GENTLE NOTE FOR PARENTS

This parsha holds many, many mitzvot — more than any other in the Torah — and a number of them are grown-up topics meant for older students. For your K–3 child we have chosen the kindness mitzvot, which is exactly what Ki Teitzei is most loved and remembered for: returning lost things, gentleness to animals, keeping people safe, fairness to workers, and leaving food for those in need. If your child wonders about the parts we didn't include, “those are grown-up parts of the Torah that we'll learn together when we're older” is a calm, honest, and complete answer at this age.

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