

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators presents

An Interactive PARSHA EXPERIENCE



Parsha: Vayakhel

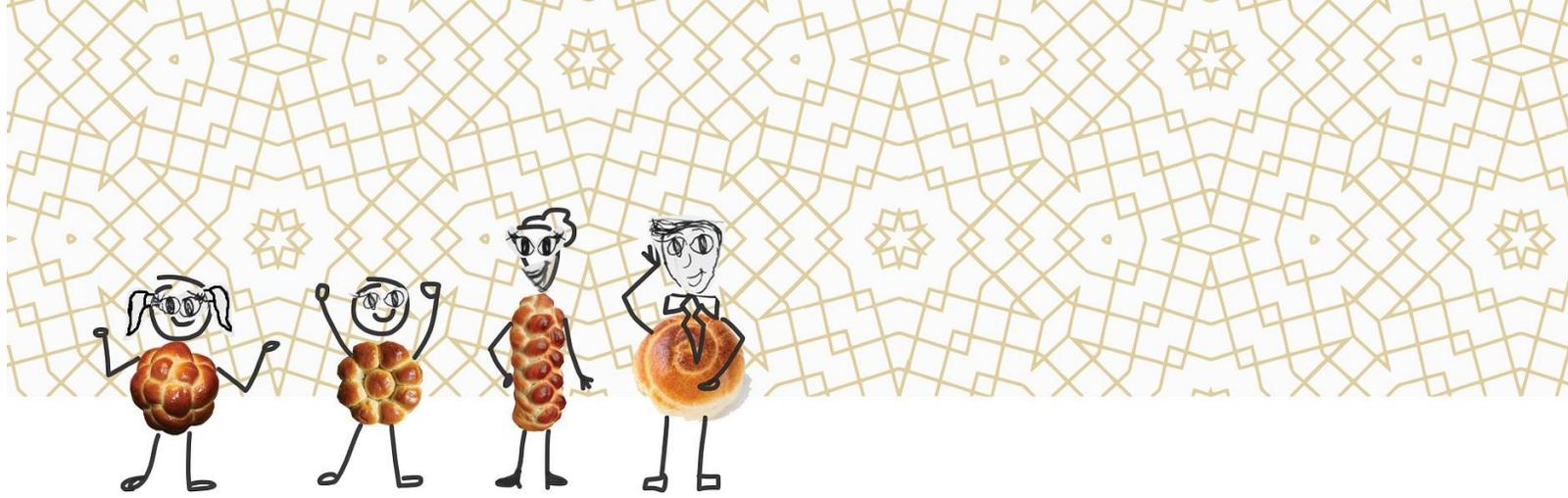
Title: Time for 'Timeout'

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The Parsha at First Glance

Spotlight on the Parsha:

At the beginning of our *parsha*, Moshe gathers all the Jews together and tells them about *Shabbat* - that for six days one can do work, but that the seventh day is Holy, so no work can be done on it. After a quick intro about *Shabbat*, the rest of the *parsha* goes into detail about the construction of the Tabernacle (*Mishkan*)



and its sacred objects (Ark of the Covenant, Menorah, Table of the Showbread, and Incense Altar).

Zooming In:

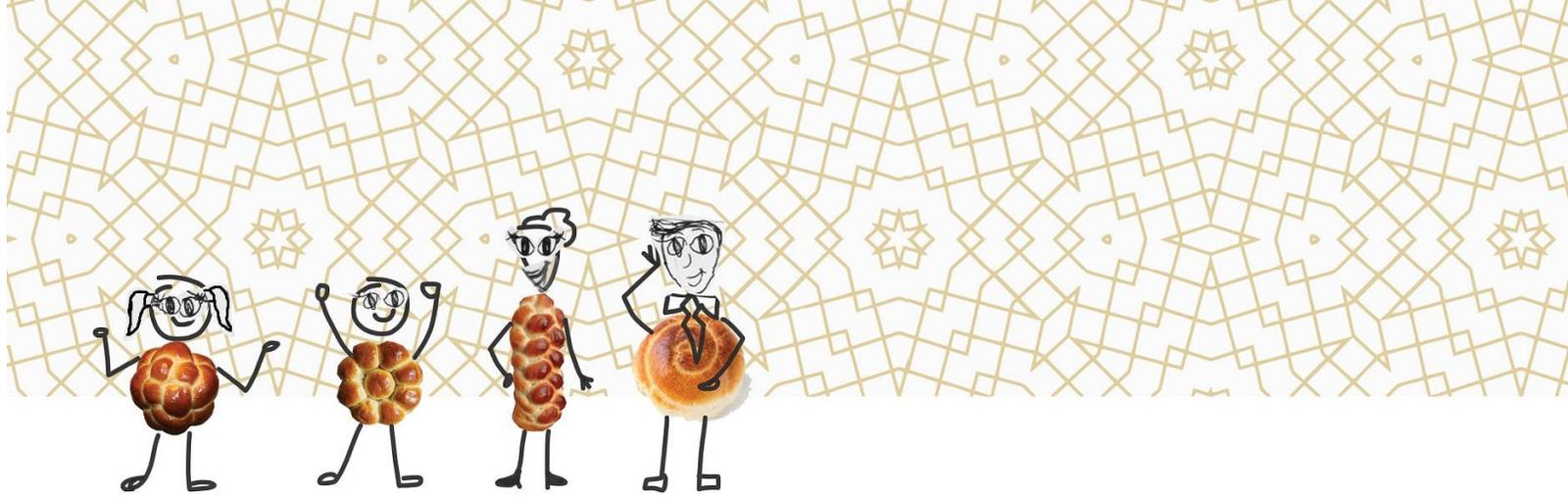
There is a glaring question about this week's parsha that spends over 97% of its words talking about the items of the Tabernacle. Why does the parsha begin by talking about Shabbat? What is the Torah trying to tell us by placing a reminder to keep Shabbat before the construction of the Tabernacle?

Rashi, a famous 11th-century French commentator of Torah, in Shemot 35:2, points out the simple meaning of the text by saying: *The Sabbath was put before the command about the building of the Tabernacle in order to hint that it does not set aside the Sabbath.* This means that when the Jews were busy preparing and constructing the Tabernacle, they stopped all the 39 different kinds of creative work they were doing in order to celebrate Shabbat. Basically: keeping Shabbat is more important, or of more value, than building the Tabernacle.

But we can ask: *why* does Shabbat override building the Tabernacle? The Tabernacle represents *holy space*, the places and spaces that inspire us to become great people (like synagogue, school, or Israel). Shabbat represents *holy time*, a chance to not be so busy and creative, and gives us the ability to breath, think and just be.

Holy *space* (Tabernacle) can only be effective if we have *time* to enjoy it. Sometimes we can be so busy rushing through the day that we never get time to sit back and enjoy the day. How tragic it would be if we were so super busy in our lives that we never got a chance to enjoy the things that matter the most to us!

Shabbat is a Godly gift of time to enjoy all the amazing things around us. It is more important than earning money, making things, or even building a Tabernacle. Shabbat is the ultimate 'timeout'!



Questions for Consideration:

- How, for you, is Shabbat different from the rest of the week?
- Have you seen people who are always busy and do not stop and take time to appreciate what is around them?
- How often do you stop, pause or take a 'timeout'?

The Parsha Through Another Lens

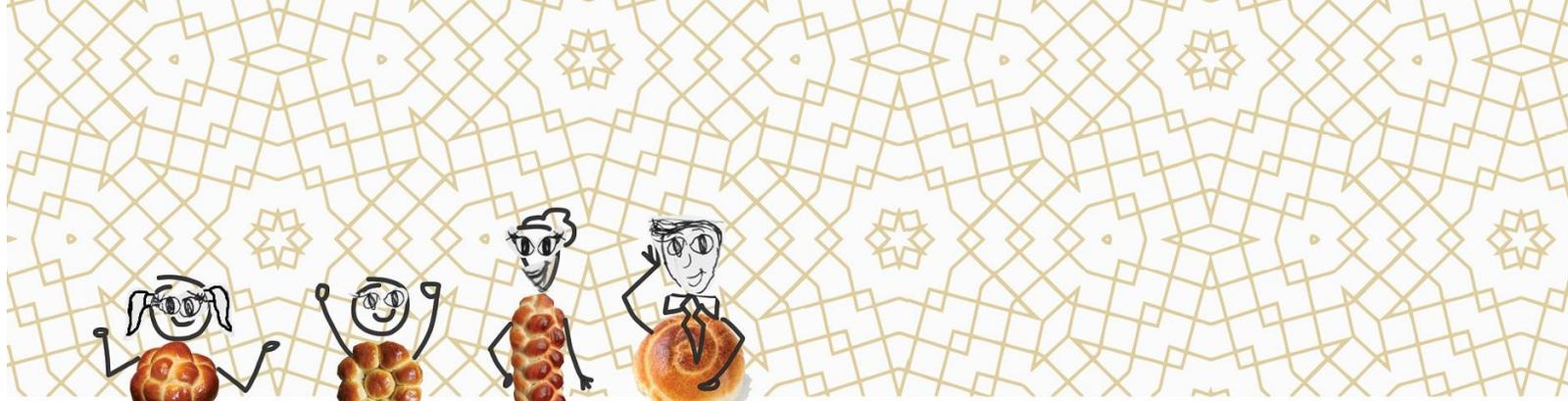
Game On: Timeout!

Too often we don't see the amazing and the wonderful things around us.

In this game, everyone around the table takes a 'timeout' (30 seconds) to think about something that happened to them this week that they may have taken for granted, but was actually a wonderful moment. Everyone goes around and shares that moment.

Variation: Play a game called 'Awesome' (inspired by [The Book of Awesome](#)), where you take time to think of something from the week you thought was ordinary but, upon reflection, realize was actually awesome. Here are some examples:

- If you forgot your text book and someone shared theirs with you? Awesome!
- When you made your cereal there was just enough milk left to fill the bowl. Awesome!



- The teacher asked for a volunteer for something fun and they picked you. Awesome!

If you want to make this a regular activity then consider buying The Book of Awesome, which is filled with great examples that will get your table's awesome juices flowing.

Game On: Be a Giver

During the week most people on focus on what they have, on owning things and controlling people or situations. Shabbat gives us a break from these ways of thinking and directs us to use the gifts we have been given, to share with people around us, to give and to contribute. The following games focus on what we can give, rather than receive.

Each person around the table needs to think of how they can contribute to the Shabbat experience. This might include: clearing the table, playing a game with a younger sibling for 10 minutes, leading a Shabbat song, making everyone's bed in the morning, sharing a dvar Torah, tidying up toys, reading a book to a sibling, etc.

Variation: Before Shabbat, everyone thinks of one thing they can give specifically to another person during Shabbat (a shoulder massage, play a game with them, sharing some candy, etc.). Write each thing on a piece of paper with the giver's name. Collect the papers and place them in a bag/envelope. During the Shabbat meal, have each person who wrote something take one of the pieces of paper from the envelope. At the following meal discuss whether they were more excited to give or receive a gift.

Shabbat Shalom!