

Lesson 8: Building a Welcoming Tent

Time needed: 30 minutes

Recommended Age Range: K-3rd grade

Objective: Students will use biblical text explore the fundamental values of welcome and inclusion

Materials: Copies of the text, one per each pair of students



Keshet is a national organization that works for full LGBTQ equality and inclusion in Jewish life.

Lesson 8, Text Study 1

1. בראשית פרק יח

(א) וירא אליו יקוק באלני ממרא והוא ישב פתח האהל כחם היום: (ב) וישא עיניו וירא והנה שלשה אנשים נצבים עליו וירא וירץ לקראתם מפתח האהל וישתחו ארצה (ג) ויאמר אדני אם נא מצאתי חן בעיניך אל נא תעבר מעל עבדך: (ד) יקח נא מעט מים ורחצו רגליכם והשענו תחת העץ: (ה) ואקחה פת לחם וסעדו לבכם אחר תעברו כי על כן עברתם על עבדכם ויאמרו כן תעשה כאשר דברת: (ו) וימהר אברהם האהלה אל שרה ויאמר מהרי שלש סאים קמח סלת לושׁי ועשי עגות: (ז) ואל הבקר רץ אברהם ויקח בן בקר רך וטוב ויתן אל הנער וימהר לעשות אתו: (ח) ויקח חמאה וחלב ובן הבקר אשר עשה ויתן לפניהם והוא עמד עליהם תחת העץ ויאכלו:

Genesis Chapter 18

And the Lord appeared to him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; 2. And he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself to the ground, 3. And said, My lord, if now I have found favor in your sight, pass not away, I beseech you, from your servant; 4. Let a little water, I beseech you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree; 5. And I will fetch a morsel of bread, and you comfort your hearts; after that you shall pass on; seeing that you are come to your servant. And they said, So do, as you have said. 6. And Abraham hurried to the tent to Sarah, and said, Make ready quickly three measures of fine meal, knead it, and make cakes. 7. And Abraham ran to the herd, and fetched a calf tender and good, and gave it to a young man; and he hurried to prepare it. 8. And he took butter, and milk, and the calf which he had prepared, and set it before them; and he stood by them under the tree, and they ate.

Discussion Questions:

- 1 What do you think the three travelers are feeling as they pass the tent? What do you imagine they are thinking?
- 2 What is Abraham's response? Why is it so important?
- 3 What does this story say about the Jewish attitude toward people in need?
- 4 What does it mean to be the kind of person who is thinking about the need of your neighbor, your classmate, your friend?
- 5 What are some of the details of the story that you notice? What do they reveal about the message of the story?
- 6 In your world, when do you have the opportunity to meet the needs of other people?
- 7 Why do you think the travelers are people in need? What do they need? Even if the travelers have plenty of money, might they still be in need? Can you think about other ways that people who have money might still be in need?
- 8 When is it hard to welcome a traveler? What makes us care about someone who is not a friend or family member? What about someone who is different from us?

This text study was created by Rabbi Steve Greenberg for Keshet. We encourage you to download this resource and share it with others, as long as you credit Rabbi Steve Greenberg and Keshet.