



Lesson 1: Shavuot Spring Surprises

Retelling the story: Moses visits with God

Shavuot (or Pentecost) is one of the seven feasts of the Lord described in Leviticus 23. It is traditionally celebrated by the Jewish people as the time when Moses received the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai, and it also celebrates the first wheat harvest of the spring in Israel.

The Israelites had finally left Egypt after celebrating the first Passover. God had delivered them from many years of slavery and led them into the desert, where He provided for their every need with shelter, bread (manna), water and meat. God poured down His mercies and grace on His chosen people, preparing them to receive God's Word and obey it as a people set apart and a holy nation.



Fifty days after Passover, Moses went up Mount Sinai in the desert to receive God's Word. There was thunder, lightening, and smoke as God spoke, saying, "I am the Lord your God!" Moses and the Israelites shivered with fear as God spoke to His people, as they knew that this was a holy moment. Moses was with God on Mount Sinai for 40 days as God gave him the Law (the Ten Commandments) and the ability to write down the first five books of the Bible. When Moses returned to the people, his face shone as though with a bright light, because he had been with God! He read the Word of God to the Israelites and they rejoiced.

Main Points

1. The people had been freed from slavery in Egypt at Passover, and now they were freed from disobeying God because they received the Law.
2. Never before had the Israelites had the Word of God written down to read and remember. By giving them a written record, the Lord was calling the Israelites to act more like a holy nation; one chosen and separated from the other nations to obey God.

3. When we read God's word, it should make us happy! *Shavuot* reminds us to be thankful for God's Word and to take delight in it, as His Word is sweet to our lips. On *Shavuot*, we eat sweet dairy things like cheesecake and cheese-filled pancakes. The Word of God provides us with nourishing spiritual food!
4. Jewish people often decorate their house of worship with pleasant-smelling branches and flowers to remind of God's sweetness. Another tradition is staying up all night to study the Bible, since the Israelites were so excited to get God's Word (like when you get a new toy and you want to play with it all the time!)



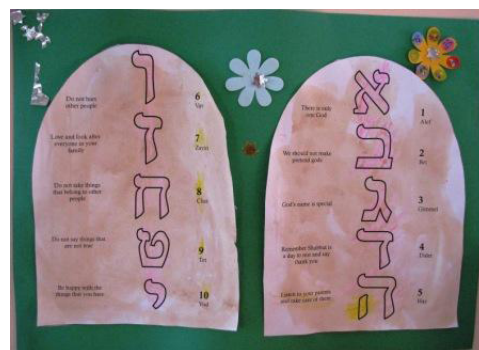
Crafts:

You can make baskets just like the Israelites would have used as they brought their *Shavuot* thanksgiving offerings to the Lord from their homes to the Temple in Jerusalem. These baskets should be bright and sparkly, with some gold and lots of color.

You can either decorate a pre-made wicker basket or use an alternative:

- If using a wicker basket, you can use gold paper, stickers, felt, cotton, etc to decorate the outside and inside of the basket.
- If using a plastic pint box (like the ones strawberries, blueberries, mushrooms come in), you can use any of the above materials to cover the box nicely inside and out.
- If using a milk or juice carton, cut out one side (leaving 3 sides of the carton) to create a basket. You can then glue or poke holes in the cardboard to decorate it with the materials.

Another craft idea is to make poster-board tablets with the Ten Commandments. Depending on the age of the children, they can either write out the commandments themselves or paste sheets on the boards with the commandments already written on them. The children can then decorate their tablets.



Hebrew words:

Shavuot - (sha-voo-OAT) is the word for "weeks" in Hebrew. To say "have a good week" in Hebrew, you can say "Shavuah tov!"

Gavinah – (ga-vin-ah) is the word for ‘cheese’ in Hebrew. Sweet cheese treats are eaten at *Shavuot* because God’s Word is like delicious spiritual milk that nourishes the soul.

Torah – (tor-rah) is the word for “Bible” or “God’s Word” in Hebrew.

Bible Verses:

1. Exodus 19:16-25

2. **Ten Commandments - (Exodus 20)**

3 “You shall have no other gods before Me.

4 “You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; 5 you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, the Lord your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, 6 but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

7 “You shall not take the name of the Lord your God in vain, for the Lord will not hold him guiltless who takes His name in vain.

8 “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. 9 Six days you shall labor and do all your work, 10 but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: you, nor your son, nor your daughter, nor your male servant, nor your female servant, nor your cattle, nor your stranger who is within your gates. 11 For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day. Therefore the Lord blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it.

12 “Honor your father and your mother, that your days may be long upon the land which the Lord your God is giving you.

13 “You shall not murder.

14 “You shall not commit adultery.

15 “You shall not steal.

16 “You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

17 “You shall not covet your neighbor’s house; you shall not covet your neighbor’s wife, nor his male servant, nor his female servant, nor his ox, nor his donkey, nor anything that is your neighbor’s.”

3. Song of Solomon 4:11 – “Honey and milk (God’s word) are under your tongue.”

Game/Song

Have the children memorize and name as many of the Ten Commandments as they can. Reward them with a small sweet treat.

Sing “Thy Word is a Lamp unto my Feet”

Eat something sweet and milky, such as chocolate milk, cheesecake, yogurt, or honey and apples.





Lesson 2: Shavuot (Pentecost) Celebrations

Retelling the story – The Plentiful Harvest

In our last lesson, we learned how the holiday of *Shavuot* (Pentecost) is celebrated by Jewish people in remembrance of God giving His Word to the Israelites in the desert. It is a sweet and joyous holiday.

In biblical times, families walked from their homes in Israel to Jerusalem, bringing an offering to the Lord to say “thank you.” The roads were full of people coming to praise God in God’s holy city. They walked singing and rejoicing in the Lord, they ate special holiday foods, they decorated their homes and the baskets in which they brought their offerings.

In their baskets, they would bring the first plants picked at harvest time. *Shavuot* falls in late May or early June, during the year’s first harvest of wheat (which you use to make bread, cakes, and cereal). People had prayed all spring for a big, healthy harvest and it was God’s blessing to provide. By giving the Lord the first of the harvest, the Israelites were saying that God gets the first and the best parts of our lives, and they rely on Him to provide. What are ways we can put God first and give Him the best things in our lives?



Another *Shavuot* tradition is to read the book of Ruth, which talks about how Ruth was in need and trusted God for her provision. As she picked wheat to make bread for herself and her elderly mother-in-law, she was noticed by Boaz, her future husband. Boaz married Ruth and provided for her, just as God provides for His people.

Hundreds of years later, Jesus’ disciples were in Jerusalem celebrating *Shavuot*. They were all praising God together, when suddenly the Lord sent His Holy Spirit to help the disciples preach and proclaim the Gospel. Many people heard about Jesus and

believed that He was the Messiah who conquered death to give us eternal life. The disciples, by a miracle, were even able to speak in other languages so that everyone – all the people who had come from far away to Jerusalem – could hear the Gospel. Over 3,000 people (most of them Jewish) became believers that day!

In the New Testament and in our churches today, we call this holiday Pentecost as it is celebrated 50 days after Passover. Pentecost is a Greek word and *Shavuot* is a Hebrew word for the same holiday.

It was a true harvest – not just physically through the wheat harvest, but a spiritual harvest as well!

Main Points:

1. *Shavuot* is the holiday when Jewish people celebrate the giving of God's Word and the Lord's provision through the first spring harvest. We also celebrate God's gift of the Holy Spirit.
2. The Israelites wanted to praise God, so they traveled to Jerusalem singing, dressed in their best and bringing something to give back to God to thank Him. How can we thank God and acknowledge how He provides for us?
3. Through the story of Ruth, we see how God sees the smallest things and provides for His people. Ruth had great faith in God, and He sent her someone to provide for her family – a husband – and their family line continued to the birth of Jesus.
4. Jesus had promised His disciples to send someone to help and guide them until He returns again. The Lord sent the Holy Spirit on *Shavuot* to help the disciples – and we too receive the Holy Spirit when we ask Jesus into our hearts! The Holy Spirit helps us to understand God's Word as we read the Bible, and helps us to follow Jesus.
5. The disciples were filled with excitement and wanted to tell everyone about the gift of salvation Jesus had given to everyone. Jerusalem was filled with all the people who came for *Shavuot*, and as the disciples preached without fear, more 3,000 people received Jesus.
6. *Shavuot* is a holiday to celebrate the first harvest of wheat, but it also became a harvest of new believers. Matthew 9:37-38 speaks of sending workers to the field because the harvest is ready to be picked. There are many people in the world who



are ready to receive the Gospel, but just need someone to come and tell them? Are you ready to tell people about Jesus?

Craft:

The children can finish their decorative baskets started last week. They can also make or bring offerings to the Lord – perhaps something special from home that they can treasure and remember to give thanks to the Lord when they see it (a picture of the family, a special memory, a memory verse, a card). Talk about these items the children are adding to their basket, and what it means to offer them to the Lord in thanksgiving.

Hebrew words:

Katzir (kat-zir) is the Hebrew word for “harvest.”

Aish (aysh) is the Hebrew word for “fire.”

Ruach HaKodesh (roo-ah ha ko-desh) means “Holy Spirit” in Hebrew.

Bible Verses:

Acts 2

Matthew 9:37-38