

GREAT ESCAPES!

Barbara Biran

SESSION SUMMARY

Escape the Room games are not only online, but also springing up everywhere. The question is whether they can be applied to Jewish education, and the answer is YES! Get your kids and adults involved in an interactive learning adventure as they seek to “escape” within 40 minutes! Session participants began with an actual escape based on the Binding of Isaac - the *Torah* reading for the second day of *Rosh Hashanah* - then moved on to brainstorming and some game design.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Barbara Biran serves as the Ritual Director as well as an educator at Congregation Beth David. She tutors all the *b'nai mitzvah* students, leads the Youth Congregation, and, when time permits, leads adult services and *leyns Torah* and *Haftarah*. Barbara also teaches in the Religious School and facilitates all ritual needs not requiring clergy.

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Game Set Up and Instructions

Game Time

a) Find the answers only (younger grades) 20 minutes max

b) Find the answers and then discussion: 60 minutes

Supplies – see next page for pictures

a) Lockable box; bag; briefcase

b) Locks – resettable combination locks – there are a variety of these available on Amazon

c) Lock Hasp

Set Up – again influences game time; if you have more time then use the stations

a) Locked box – can fill with a prize or not (I use kosher candy) plus “We Escaped” stickers

b) Locks – the solution for this escape is 5162

i) Can be one lock; can be multiple locks however for this game all will be set with the same answer; I will have 4 locks – color coded to match the 4 teams

ii) What if I don’t have locks? Use a deck of playing cards

c) Give all clues to each team all at once or

d) Stations (takes longer – especially if you “hide” the clues

i) Assign each team a color

ii) Color Code each clue – teams may only open their correctly colored envelope

e) This is Shabbat/Ḥag friendly meaning no writing so give each team a Ljumash to use, they’ll need one anyway.

i) Explain that since writing is not allowed, they must use the page numbers to help keep track of the totals of the numbers they will find

f) Charts on Wall

i) Gematria

ii) Books of Torah – Hebrew & English

iii) Hebrew Numbers

iv) Throw in a few red herrings (these are not necessary but add to the fun)

(1) Alef bet

(2) Colors

(3) Rashi Script

(4) Be creative

g) Timer

i) Be sure to have a clock available in the room; wear a watch or use a sand timer;

(1) If this was not for Shabbat/Ḥag or if you are able to use electronic devices use a countdown timer

h) Tickets – unlocking locks

i) Color coded – don’t have to be actual tickets, use small post-its or colored index cards (cut into 1x1 squares) that match the team color

(1) Each team gets 3 tickets good for trying to unlock their lock, 30 seconds/ticket, if using playing cards – still only 1 try per ticket

(2) Should a team need more tries have challenges prepared i.e.

(a) Name all the Books of the Torah in English in the correct order

(b) Name all the Books of the Torah in Hebrew in the correct order

(c) Count to 10 in Hebrew

(d) Say the Alef-Bet



Master Lock 178D Set-Your-Own Combination Padlock, Die-Cast, Black



iGotTech Heavy Duty Gym Lock: 4 Digit Combination Padlock



Master Lock 653D Set-Your-Own-Combination 2-inch Padlock, 1-Pack - Colors May Vary



Master Lock Lockout Hasp with Vinyl Coated Handle, 1" Inside Jaw Diameter

My Locking box, one of my congregants made two of these this for me!



100 = ק

200 = ר

300 = ש

400 = ת

10 = י

20 = ט

30 = י

40 = מ

50 = נ

60 = ס

70 = ע

80 = פ

90 = צ

1 = א

2 = ב

3 = ג

4 = ד

5 = ה

6 = ו

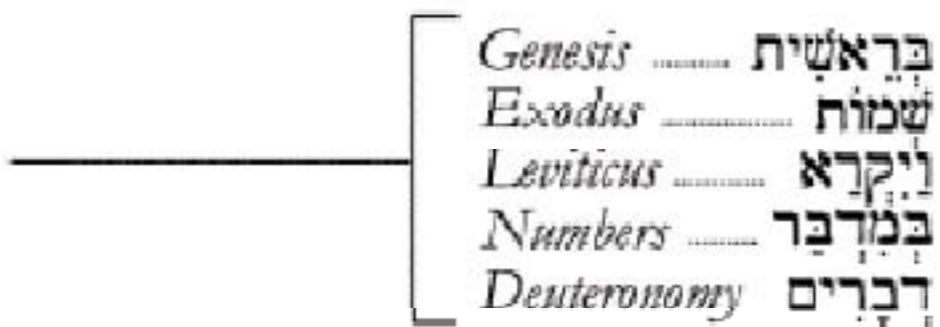
7 = ז

8 = ח

9 = ט



Torah
תּוֹרָה



The narrative read on the second day of Rosh Hashanah is the story of Avraham who follows the voice of God and takes his son Yitzhak (Isaac) into the land of Moriah in order to offer him as a burnt offering to the God. While on the journey, Yitzhak realizes that there is no ram for the sacrifice. Instead, unbelievably, Avraham places him on an altar, ties him on top of a pile of wood, and then knife in hand prepare to sacrifice him! Avraham only stops his action when a Messenger of God from heaven calls out to him and prevents him from slaughtering his son.

What!!!!!!! The story of the Binding of Isaac known as the Akeidah is a scary story that has long been debated. Work together to discover some details in the story. To succeed you will need to talk, listen and work together. Be the first team to find the answers and help save Yitzhak!



***References: Summary & Clues**

1. Etz Haim Humash
2. Rabbi Allan Berkowitz – Understanding the Akeidah; High Holy Days 5778
3. Maimonides Heritage Center; Rabbi David Silverberg; <http://www.mhcny.org/parasha/1108.pdf>

Rashi, Rabbi Shlomo ben Yitzhaki was born in Troyes, France

He lived from 1040-1105 and was well known for taking a stance

His ability to present the basic meaning of the text

Will lead you to your first clue which is coming up next.

According to Rashi, the Akeidah occurred just before Sarah died

Use this information to figure out Yitzhak's age which can be found inside

Any Humash, or book of Torah in B'reishit or Genesis which is a "book"

To figure out the answer it is in here you will need to look

The first clue is in the portion before Vayera, from the root meaning "appear"

Find chapter 17 verse 17 and your first number will be clear

Then go to chapter 23 verse 1 in the next portion or parasha

Which is called Hayei or Life of Sarah

Do a little math and you'll have Rashi's point of view;

A question to ponder later on, do you think this is true?

Only 8 times in the entire Torah does the Hebrew word "Hincini – Here I am" appear

Every time it occurs there is something pivotal to hear

This very small phrase is a very important word

And in the story of the Akeidah is the first time it is heard

Actually you'll need to give the Hebrew a very close read

In order to count how many times it occurs as this is the number you need

The Binding of Isaac known as the Akeidah begins in B'reishit – Genesis chapter 22
verse 1

Read through verse 19 and then you'll be done.

Question to ponder when the game is over –

what was being said when this phrase occurred?

Gematria is a code in which ever letter in the Hebrew Alef-Bet
Is assigned a numerical equivalent
Sometimes the words and the equivalent sum can be intriguing
Other times not so much but it is still interesting
To see what the letters add up to
Use the Hebrew word Hineini – this is your clue.

The story of the Akeidah is in Genesis Chapter 22 verses 1 – 19

Do a close reading there is a discrepancy to be seen

Read carefully verses 6 and 8

Then read verse 19 – it seems almost the same but wait!

Do you see the difference between them?

Is there something significant in the words that are written?

Again, something to ponder after the game

For now, the answer to the clue is a specific name

It is the name of the city mentioned that I seek and it still exists today

Translate the second half of the name to a number and you'll be on your way!

Chapter 22 verses 1-19 in the Book of Genesis, B'reishit in Hebrew
 God gave Avraham a test – a really horrible thing to do
 God told Avraham to take his son, his favored son
 Finally clarifying that Isaac was the one
 That he was to take to the land of Moriah and there sacrifice
 Isaac as a burnt offering, first killing him with a knife.
 As Avraham, Isaac and their 2 servants travelled on
 Isaac did wonder and question his father as something was wrong
 They had the knife, the firestone and the wood
 But no sheep for the burnt offering as they should
 Avraham told Isaac, God will provide
 Finally, at their destination, the reality Avraham could no longer hide
 He bound his son Isaac and laid him on the altar
 And took up the knife – no he did not falter
 When God saw that Avraham was following his command
 He sent a messenger to stop him, and provided a ram.
 God then rewarded Avraham for keeping the promise he swore
 Making his descendants as numerous as the stars and the sand on the
 shore.
 Since it is impossible to count the stars and the grains of sand
 The answer for this clue is the 1st number in the current Jewish year which
 is in the thousands.
 Something to contemplate for later on
 Would you willingly let yourself be bound up and an altar tied on?



We Succeeded!

*We Almost
Succeeded!*

