

Shavuot: שבועות The Big Idea



Shavuot marks the anniversary of Revelation, the receiving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai. And so we celebrate with tasty food (dairy) and Torah study.

In the Western world, “Bible study” conveys an intellectual experience, like taking a religion course in college. But in the Jewish tradition, “Torah study” is much more. Sure it’s intellectual. But it’s also a spiritual experience, one that strengthens the relationship between us and G-d. And an emotional experience, meant to inspire us to elevate our behavior and morals. “Torah study” touches the head, hand, heart, and soul.



Rabbi Freedman's Two Shekels



Shavuot doesn't just mark the anniversary of the desert Israelites receiving the Torah long ago. Instead it's a chance for each of us today to receive the Torah anew. We do this by re-committing to its values and re-engaging in study.

This is similar to Passover in that the Seder reminds us that in every generation each of us today must see ourselves as if we personally left Egypt.

These holidays take the past and make it present. The challenge of Torah study - and its highest level of success - is to do the same.



TABLE TALK Food for Thought

DISCUSSION WITH CHILDREN

1. What is your favorite dairy meal? Dairy dessert?
2. Who is your favorite character in the Torah? Why?
3. Why do you think we continue to read Torah stories that happened thousands of years ago?

DISCUSSION WITH ADULTS

1. What is a Torah verse or character that makes you proud? Why?
2. What is a Torah verse or character that makes you uncomfortable? Why?
3. What is a part of the Torah you understand differently now as an adult?

DIRECTIONS:

Stand your “Table Talk” up, and tape the open ends together to form a triangle. Put in the center of your dinner table to prompt a great discussion!

