Continue activities following the story - Signs in the Well – Based on a Talmudic tale



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הוֹצָאָה: כנרת
Age Group: **Preschool (4-6)**

כְּלָלִי

Suggested Family Activities

- Look through the illustrations accompanying the story, and note the many things Akiva the shepherd knew before he learned to read and write. Then you can remind your children of the many things **they** know and can do.
- Many Jewish leaders started out as shepherds. You can discuss with your children the tasks involved in shepherding and consider the attributes that characterize a good shepherd. You might ask your child what it is in the essence of the shepherd's work that helped Rabbi Akiva become a wise teacher and great Jewish leader.
- "One who is shy does not learn" (Avot 2,5): When Akiva saw the signs on the walls of the well and did not know how they were created, he went to the beit midrash (Jewish study hall) for answers. Where do you and your children seek answers to your questions? Are there things that your children know and you don't? Don't be shy – ask them!
- You can prepare a clay or Play-Do model of the well with your children. Using a knife or toothpick, you can make signs in the sides of the well – just like in the story.
- Many young children have heard of Rabbi Akiva and his wife Rachel from stories and songs. You can share other tales of Rabbi Akiva with each other and, if you

know the tune, sing together “Rabbi Akiva said: Love your fellow as yourself”.

הַעֲשָׂרָה

Who was Rabbi Akiva?

Rabbi Akiva, one of the most important sages in Jewish tradition, lived in the land of Israel between the years 17-137 CE. He played a role in editing the Mishna and in designing Halacha, and was the spiritual leader of the Bar-Kochva uprising against the Romans. Many stories and tales were written about Rabbi Akiva, and well-known sayings are attributed to him. One of his more famous sayings is “Rabbi Akiva said: ‘Love your fellow as yourself’: This is a great principle of the Torah” (Breishit Rabba 24,8). According to tradition, Rabbi Akiva was the son of converts and did not learn Torah until he was an adult. The story of his life, like that of other leaders and wise people in Jewish tradition, emphasizes that the Torah is accessible to everyone, even those who didn’t have the opportunity to study when they were young.

The source of the tale about Rabbi Akiva can be found in Avot D’Rabbi Natan 6,2.