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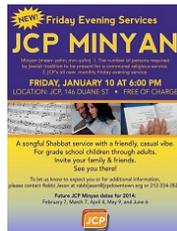
THE NEWSLETTER OF JCP'S CENTER FOR JEWISH LIFE

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This Week

JCP Minyan
Friday, January 10
6:00 PM



Take advantage of the early registration rate and sign up by January 17 for **Saturday Night Recess**



Dear Friends,

If you enjoy a good Broadway musical, there is no place like New York.

There is also no Torah reading quite like this one.

This week's Torah portion, *Beshalach*, is a mini-musical. The Israelites have been enslaved in Egypt for centuries, ten plagues have come and gone, and 600,000 households and some of their neighbors have been led by Moses, Aaron, and Miriam out of bondage, across a divided Sea of Reeds, only to have their pursuers not be so lucky.

Once the Israelites have crossed to the other side, Moses and the Israelites break into song and then Miriam leads them dancing with *tambourines*, thankful to God for triumphing over their enemies. And each year, the week we read this Torah portion is called *Shabbat Shirah*, the Shabbat of the Song, referring to this song at the sea.

Sometimes I like to imagine what it would be like if real life were more like musicals—if it were common for people to spontaneously erupt into song and dance to express their questions, their sorrows, and their joys. Though planned in advance by the performers, *flash mobs* from Grand Central Station to suburban malls have brought this idea to life in recent years, but perhaps for all the absurdity of the idea, there is also something to be said for spontaneously expressing our emotions.

In this week's Torah portion, the song and dance may be at the most extreme circumstance—living when you thought you might die—but perhaps one of the lessons we can learn from the story is that sometimes there's no time like the present to communicate anger, sorrow, relief, happiness, or love.

Best wishes for a happy and healthy 2014.

Warmly,

Upcoming Events January 10–February 1

Friday, Jan 10, 6:00 PM
[JCP Minyan](#)

Monday, Jan 13, 8:00 PM
[Soul Food with Rabbi Elianna](#)

Saturday, Jan 18, 10:00 AM
[Shabbat Shindig](#)

Saturday, Jan 18, 10:00 AM
[Tot Shabbat](#)

Friday, Jan 24, 6:00 PM
[Friday Night Lights:
HSP & Community Youth](#)

Saturday, Jan 25, 5:00 PM
[PJ Havdalah](#)

Sunday, Jan 26, 2:30 PM
[Tzedakah Sunday](#)

Friday, Jan 31, 6:00 PM
[Friday Night Lights: All Ages](#)

Saturday, February 1, 5:30 PM
[Saturday Night Recess](#)

For the JCP Center for Jewish Life
2013–2014 calendar, please [click here](#).

Featured Photo Friday Night Lights: All Ages



Rabbi Jason

Rabbi Jason Klein
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Ask Rabbi Jason

Q. This week's Torah portion is about the Exodus from Egypt, but we don't celebrate Passover until April this year. Why is that?

A. The Torah, the Five Books of Moses, is divided into 54 portions from which we begin reading at the conclusion of the High Holidays around September or October, and conclude at the end of the next High Holiday season.

The Torah's narrative begins with the creation of the world, continues through the stories of the flood, the generations of patriarchs and matriarchs, through slavery in Egypt and the story of the Exodus, receiving the Ten Commandments at Mount Sinai, the wandering in the desert, and nearly entering the land of Israel, when Moses dies. We read through it all once over the course of a whole year, Shabbat by Shabbat, but these weekly Shabbat readings are not dictated by what holiday is coming up next—it is simply a progression of traveling through these 54 portions, week by week.

On holidays themselves (even when major holidays fall on Shabbat), the portion of the Torah we read is not the regular portion of the week, but rather a section specific to that holiday.

So, in the northern hemisphere, we arrive at the Exodus story during the winter in the cycle of weekly Torah readings, even though we do not celebrate Passover until early spring. But if you go to services on Passover itself, the special Torah reading for the holiday will include the story of the Exodus, such as parts found in this week's Torah portion.

