



CREATING SPACES
TO SHARE OUR STORIES
AND BUILD FRIENDSHIPS ACROSS DIVIDES

What makes a Good Leader? – JUDAISM

Background:

Moses is undoubtedly the greatest leadership model for Jewish people. Moses is known in Judaism as being the most humble person that walked on the earth. He was sent by God to rescue the Israelite people from slavery in Egypt and lead them on a journey to the Promised Land.

He deals with lots of obstacles, many from his own grumbly and demanding people, and he makes many mistakes. He is about to be told that after everything he has done to lead the people out of slavery into the promised land, he won't himself get to enter this land. Look carefully for his reaction, how does he respond to this devastating news?



Moses and the Promised Land - (Story can be found on back)

Follow up questions:

1. Even great leaders make mistakes - it is their response which makes them true leaders. Have you ever felt like you messed something up? How can this be an opportunity for learning?
2. Sometimes, when a leader is in a position of responsibility, one mistake can mean the end of their leadership. How would you feel to be told that one wrong decision had cost you your life's work?
3. What traits did Moses want to see in the leader who comes after him?
4. Why do you think this was the job description he chose?

Moses and the Promised Land

For many years Moses had led his people, the Israelites, on a long journey through the desert. During this journey, God had always provided food and water for the Israelites, although sometimes they had become very hungry and thirsty as they learned to trust God to keep them safe. In fact, on one occasion when they were very thirsty, God asked Moses to speak to a rock and promised that water would come from it. However, instead of speaking to it as God had asked, Moses struck it with his stick in frustration. The promised water flowed from the rock, but Moses knew that he had not trusted God as he should have done.

Towards the end of this long journey, God said to Moses, "Climb the Abarim mountain and look at the land that I have given to the Israelite people. When you have seen it, your life here will be over and you will join your ancestors, just as your brother Aaron has. For, in the wilderness of Zin, when the community was rebellious, you disobeyed My command by means of the water and because of you, the people did not respect my holiness."

Moses replied to God, saying, "Let God, Source of the breath of all flesh, appoint someone over the community who can go out before them and come in before them, and who can take them out and bring them in, so that God's community may not be like sheep that have no shepherd."

And God answered Moses, "Single out Joshua son of Nun, an inspired man, and lay your hand upon him. Have him stand before Eleazar the priest and before the whole community and pass the baton on to him in their sight. Give him some of your authority, so that the whole Israelite community will obey."

(This story has been adapted from the Torah - Numbers chapter 27)