



## *A Sacred Story*

Rabbi Isaac Luria (1534-1572), also known as The Ari, was a rabbi and mystic in Safed. His teachings are referred to as Lurianic Kabbalah. He taught the following story:

Before God created the world, the entire universe was filled with a holy presence. God took a breath to draw back and make room for the world. From that first breath, darkness was created. And when God said, "Let there be light," lightness was created filling vessels with holy light. God sent those vessels to the world, and if they had each arrived whole, the world would have been perfect. But the holy light was too powerful to be contained, and the vessels split open sending sparks flying everywhere. Some of God's holy light became trapped inside the shards of the vessels. It is our job to release and gather the sparks. When enough sparks have been gathered, *tikkun olam*, repair of the world will be complete.

How do we gather sparks? By doing *mitzvot*, *tzedakah* and acts of *gemillut chasadim* (loving kindness).

### *Suggested Activities:*

Draw a picture of the broken shards and sparks of light. Include at least five large shards in your picture. Then, write one mitzvah you can do on each of your shards. Those are the ways you will help gather the light together.

Read *Gathering Sparks* by Howard Schwartz.

Create a class mitzvah project. Check with a local food bank, homeless shelter or nursing care center to find out what assistance is needed.

Fulfill the mitzvot of *talmud torah* (Jewish study) and *tefillah* (prayer) during your religious school day!