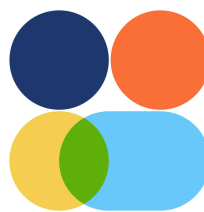


LESSON PLAN



Theme *Hakafot* on Simchat Torah

Grade Level(s)

Middle School - High School

Time of lesson 45 Minutes

Key Ideas

- The highlight of this holiday (which means “The Joy of the Torah”) is the *hakafot*, held on both the eve and the morning of Simchat Torah, in which we march and dance with the Torah scrolls around the reading table in the synagogue.
- Dancing is one means of expression that everyone can do in their own way and that everyone can be included in the celebration.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- Define *hakafot*
- Know and give examples of how individuals can support others in the Jewish community

Materials & Resources

- Chart paper
- Writing utensils
- Pre-written table cards
- Seat assignments
- Print outs of the Chabad.org [article](#)

Warm-up and Overview

- Students will meet each other as they arrive in class by finding table cards in order to engage in “getting to know each other” conversations.
- Questions:
 - What are some things you do to have fun?
 - What are some things you have done during Simchat Torah?
 - Do you remember doing some of those things every year?

Introduction

- Start by having students read the article from Chabad.org about the Simchat Torah *hakafot*.
- Point out the line in the article that states that that the reason we dance on Simchat Torah is that “the Torah scrolls wish to dance, so we become their feet” and that the celebration of *hakafot* is meant to encompass every Jewish individual.

Specific Accomodations

- Cross out parts of the article and highlight the specific paragraphs that you want students to focus on
- Read the story aloud as a class and have students follow along to take pressure off of students that are uncomfortable reading independently

Activity

- Students will engage in a group discussion. A scribe will record answers on chart paper. The discussion will focus on the fact that everyone has strengths and weaknesses; we can all help each other. We are part of a community and we can all be each others' feet.
- Questions:
 - What do you think is the meaning of: "The Torah scrolls wish to dance."? What do you think it means to "become their feet"?
 - What is a situation in which you wanted to participate, or you wanted someone to "be your feet"?
 - How does the tradition of *hakafot* promote inclusion?

Specific

Accommodations

- Allow students who do not want to share out to write down or draw their answers
- Give multiple choice answers for students are feel stuck on a question

Options for Extensions

- Challenge students who finish early to read about the origins of the *hakafot*
- Have students plan how they are going to celebrate Simchat Torah and how (if at all) they'll participate in the *hakafot* in their celebration

Options for Remediation

- Give students who need it time to process the article and check in with you or their peers about what it meant
- Summarize the article and allow students to read or listen to your summary instead of reading the whole article

Review and Closing

- Have the students think about how this lesson relates to their own experiences

Specific Accommodations

- Allow students to answer out loud, or by writing down their answers
- Give students the option to share with a peer instead of with the whole class

Checking for Understanding

- Check for understanding throughout the lesson by noting who is answering questions and sharing thoughts.
- Ask students as they are reading the article if they understand it and if they need clarification.