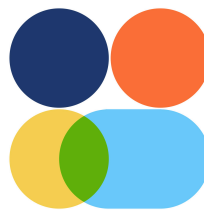


LESSON PLAN



Theme Caring for the Land

Grade Level(s)

3rd-5th grade

Time of lesson 40 Minutes

Key Ideas

- During Tu B'Shevat Jews are encouraged to think about their natural environment and how to protect it.
- Reclaiming the land by planting trees became the work of Jews in Israel and around the world.
- Trees were planted throughout the year, but the holiday of Tu B'Shevat became a special time for planting trees in Israel.

Learning Outcomes

Students will:

- be able to connect the Tu B'Shevat theme of caring for the world with their responsibility to take care of the earth.

Materials & Resources

- be ready with sentence starters, blessings and visuals.
- provide copies of the reading material for each student.

Warm-up and Overview

- To start the lesson, play the following game with students:
 - "I came to Israel and planted a..."
- Each person adds one kind of tree or thing to plant. Each person must also repeat all the things previously planted.

Introduction

In the description of the creation of the world in the book of Genesis, G-d explains our responsibility to the environment in this way:

Bereshit 2:15 says:

וַיִּקַּח יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶת־הָאָדָם וַיִּנְחֵהוּ בְּגַן־עֵדֶן לְעַבְדָּהּ וּלְשָׁמְרָהּ:

"Vayikakh Adonai Elohim et-ha'adam vayanikheihu b'gan-eden l'ovdah u'leshamrah."

The Lord God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to work it and to keep it.

Explain that this is why we celebrate Tu B'Shevat, the birthday of the trees! Trees and nature are important in Judaism because we know that trees grow our food and keep us alive.

Specific Accomodations

- Students who need early access to sentence starters or a word bank should be provided access.

Activity

- Introduce the blessing over seeing a blossoming tree. Explain that trees are so important in Judaism that we say a prayer every year when we see a tree blossom for the first time:
 - ברוך אתה יהוה אלהינו מלך העולם שלא חסר בעולמו כלום וברא בו בריות טובות ואילנות טובות להנות בהם בני אדם
 - **Transliteration:** Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam sheh-lo chee-sar b'olamo kaloom u'vara vo briyot tovot v'eelanot tovot lay-ha'note bahem b'nai adam.
 - **Translation:** Blessed are You, Lord our God, King of the universe, Who has made nothing lacking in His world, and created in it goodly creatures and goodly trees to give mankind pleasure.
- Discuss with students the significance of both these texts. Discussion questions:
 - What does it mean to “work the land”?
 - Does working the land make it more important to us?
 - How do we all take part in “working” the land or taking care of it in today's world?
 - Is simply saying a blessing over the land and seeing trees bloom enough, or do we have an obligation to do more to protect the land? If so, what is that obligation?
- Next have students write, draw, or build using model magic what they would grow if they were a tree with the following sentence starters:
 - If I were a tree, I would be...
 - I would live...
 - In my branches there would be...
 - I would feel...

Specific Accomodations

- transliteration provided as needed.

Options for Extensions

- Have students explore Jewish poems and writings about trees.
- Have students think about examples of when a tree is included in a Jewish story or text.
- growtorah.org/anafim (Tu-bishvat trivia)

Options for Remediation

- Consider sharing the book and/or visuals ahead of time for those that might benefit from previewing the lesson.
- Download this reading guide at <https://pjlibrary.org/books/dear-tree-weber/if60> - it offers easy to understand information about the Jewish concepts that are explored in the book.

Review and Closing

- Have students share their drawings/ideas with the group.

Specific Accomodations

- 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

- Ask probing questions during closing activity.
- Ensure that each student completes the sentence starters.



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We say a prayer every year when we see a tree blossom
for the first time:

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁלֹּא חָסַר בְּעוֹלָמוֹ כְּלוּם וּבְרָא בּוֹ
בְּרִיּוֹת טוֹבוֹת וְאֵילָנוֹת טוֹבוֹת לְהַנּוֹת בָּהֶם בְּנֵי אָדָם

Baruch ata adonai eloheinu melech ha'olam sheh-lo chee-
sar b'olamo kaloom u'vara vo briyot tovot v'eelanot tovot lay-
ha'note bahem b'nai adam.

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made nothing lacking in His world, and created in it goodly
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I would live...

In my branches there would be...

I would feel....