

Mechina K (Gan) Curriculum

Overview

Gan aims to provide a fun, comfortable and welcoming experience which helps students become more connected with their Jewish identity and heritage. Being Jewish is fun, unique and special; it makes life meaningful and richer. In keeping with the notion that young children thrive on consistency, sessions are structured so that schedule/routine of each session remains relatively constant, while specific themes for that day's discussions, activities and projects vary during the course of the year. Our Gan teacher follows the public schools' methodology of classroom management. This helps the child adjust quickly to the religious school. Connections are threaded among the weekly Torah portions, holidays, or community events and the experiences the students are likely to have had in their own lives. Learn three pillars of Jewish life: Torah study, prayer and mitzvot.

Notes to Parents: This curriculum contains the knowledge, skills and attitude Jewish students are expected to learn. It provides the learning objectives that students are expected to meet; the units and lessons that teachers teach; the books, materials, technology and readings used in a course; and the assessments methods used to evaluate student learning.

Some units have a large amount of material that on a given year may be modified in consideration of the Jewish calendar, lost school days due to weather (snow days), and give greater flexibility to the teacher to accommodate students' pre-existing level of knowledge and skills.

Leap Year: Every 2 or 3 years, around February, there is an additional Jewish month called Adar I. During this month, a teacher would change the sequence and teach a unit which is typically covered in April / May (e.g. Israel.)

Total number of sessions: 28

September – Unit 1: 4 sessions Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will be able to extend the Hebrew greeting for both Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur.
- Students will be able to identify a shofar and of what it is made, as well as the three different types of blasts it produces.
- Students will be able to share an example of something they are sorry for and what they will do (positively) in the coming year.
- Students will be able to explain why we eat apples and honey on Rosh Hashanah and articulate the Hebrew words for each.

Key Words:

- Shofar
- Bereishit
- Tashlich

Key Concepts:

- Rosh Hashanah is the Jewish New Year or birthday because it is when G-d created the world.
- Rosh Hashanah is a time when we hear the shofar and “wake up” to say we’re sorry and have better behavior in the new year.
- There are 10 days in between the two holidays to ask for forgiveness from G-d, our family and friends.
- When we perform the custom of tashlich, the bread represents the bad behaviors that we want to throw away and not repeat again in the coming year.
- On Rosh Hashanah we eat apples and honey to represent that the year ahead will be a sweet one.
- Yom Kippur is a very serious holiday. Adults fast, and we pray in the synagogue, ask for forgiveness, and say a prayer called the Alchet, where we put our hand on our heart for each behavior that wasn’t nice or kind.
- G-d keeps a book with everyone’s name written in it. It’s called the **Book of Life**. He writes in the book all the good things we’ve done and the not-so-good things too. On Rosh Hashanah, when we say that we will do more nice things during the year, that we also get written in the Book of Life for a good, happy year.

Key Terms:

- Teshuva, tefillah, tzedakah
- Shanah tovah u’metukah
- G’mar tov
- Fasting
- Shofar blasts: tekiyah, shevarim, teruah
- Mitzvah/avera

Books/Stories:

- The Story of the Stars
- The World’s Birthday, A Rosh Hashanah Story by Barbara Goldin
- The Hardest Word: A Yom Kippur Story by Jacqueline Jules

Worksheets:

- Teshuva Fun Facts
- Forgiveness Calendar
- Rosh Hashanah Coloring Pages
- Yom Kippur Coloring Pages
- Teshuva Mission Card

Special Activities and Projects:

- Forgiveness-gram. Students will fill out at least one forgiveness-gram (with teacher assist if necessary) and deliver it.
- Tashlich game. Students use a ping pong ball or bean bag with a picture of bread on it. Students throw the ball inside a hula hoop, which is laying on the floor with fish pictures in it. The hula hoop with fish represents a moving body of water. Encourage students to hit a fish, so it can take the “bad behavior” away with it. Before throwing in the bread, students will say what behavior they want to get rid of.
- Create Rosh Hashanah greeting cards using the phrase, Shanah Tovah U’metukah and at least one Rosh Hashanah symbol, such as: apple and honey, a pomegranate or a shofar.
- Create a class mitzvah/avera list. When listing mitzvot, encourage students to say what they “will” do, as opposed to what they “will not” do.
- Make a shofar book. Each page will have a different sound name (in Hebrew and English), the number (1, 3, 9) and a number of stickers or symbols to represent the numeric value.
- Sew a shofar. Using construction paper and a shofar template, students will “sew” two sides of the shofar together. Once finished, students can hold the shofar up to their mouths and, on the teacher’s Hebrew command, practice the different shofar blasts.
- Listen to a real shofar and, if possible, let students try to blow a real shofar.
- Eat the foods of Rosh Hashanah: apples, honey, round challah, pomegranate and recite brachot.
- Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur broken telephone. Have children sit in a circle. Choose a person to whisper a phrase/sentence related to Yom Kippur into the next child’s ear. Each person continues to pass on what he or she thinks they heard. The last person in the circle says out loud what he or she heard. The first child then confirms if the message was passed around correctly.
- Mitzvah charades. The teacher whispers the name of a mitzvah into a student’s ear. The child then has to act out the mitzvah. The other children call out what they think she is acting out. The child who guesses correctly gets to be the next actor.
- I’m Sorry game. Have children sit in a group on the floor. Pick a child to turn around and cover his eyes. Then you point to one child in the group who says “I’m sorry.” Encourage the students to use funny voices. The child with the covered eyes then turns around and has three chances to correctly guess who said “I’m sorry.”

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a “student teacher” to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the “teacher.”

"I'M SORRY" DAYS

Between Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur

September 28 First Day of Rosh Hashanah	September 29	September 30	October 1	October 2	October 3	October 4

October 5	October 6	October 7 Kol Nidre, beginning of Yom Kippur



Use these days well. It's an opportunity to ask for forgiveness from family and friends.
Who will you ask this year?

October – Unit 2: 3 sessions

Sukkot, Simchat Torah

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will learn the meaning of the holidays of Sukkot and Simchat Torah.
- Students will learn the symbols and customs of the holiday, including:
 - Etrog, lulav, aravot, hadassim (Hebrew names).
 - The body parts (in English and Hebrew) and mitzvot related to each of the 4 species.
 - Students will be able to explain what a sukkah is and why we build it.
- Students will be able to recite the “mizonot” bracha over their food at the party (see below).
- Students will be able to demonstrate and recite what it means to be a good host and ways to welcome guests.
- Students will know if Simchat Torah is a happy or sad holiday.
- Students will be able to identify certain items in the sanctuary: aron kodesh, ner tamid, torah, yad.
- Students will be able to demonstrate respectfulness and mindfulness while in the sanctuary by: sitting quietly, wearing a kippah, keeping siddurim in laps or put properly away, participating when able.
- Children will learn the simple meaning of Parshat Bereshit, and how it relates to Simchat Torah.
- Children will learn about the meaning and customs of Shabbat and how to prepare for Shabbat.
- Children will recite which day of the week Shabbat falls on, including the phrase “sundown.”
- Students will recite all 3 Shabbat brachot.
- Students will recite how many days it took G-d to create the world.

Key Words:

- Etrog
- Lulav
- Hadassim
- Myrtle
- S’chach
- Shabbat
- Torah
- Yad
- Aron kodesh
- Ner Tamid
- Siddur
- Mitzvah
- “lev” (heart)
- “aynayim” (eyes)

- “peh” (mouth/lips)
- “xxx” (spine)
- “yom” (day)

Key Concepts:

- Sukkot is a happy holiday. We celebrate the harvest.
- On Sukkot, we follow Avraham’s ways, and the mitzvah of bruchim haba’im, to welcome guests. We feel good when we make others feel good.
- Each of the four species relates to a part of the body. The etrog reminds us of our heart. We can do mitzvot with our heart. Any time we have empathy for someone and act on it, that is a mitzvah of the heart. The lulav reminds us of our spine. We can do mitzvot with our whole body, like walking to synagogue, or even praying. The aravot remind us of our lips. Speaking kind words and davening are mitzvot we can do with our lips. Use lesson from “Words Can Hurt” document. The hadassim remind us of our eyes. To look at the good and see where we can help are mitzvot we can do with our eyes.
- Mitzvah of zerizut: to do a mitzvah, run!
- When Jews all around the world build a sukkah, we’re all connected in a way...we’re all looking at the same sky/stars. Similarly, we’re all dancing with Torahs on Simchat Torah.
- G-d asked Avraham to leave his home and everything he knew to “a land he would show him.” With little to go on, Avraham didn’t ask any questions. Because he had such strong faith in G-d, he just went.
- Simchat Torah is a happy holiday that comes at the end of Sukkot. On Simchat Torah we finish reading the entire Torah and begin again. We dance with the Torahs.
- “Bereishit” is the first word in the Torah. It means, beginning, when G-d created the world.
- G-d created the world in 6 days. On the seventh day he rested, and that day is Shabbat. It is a very special days when we do things differently than other days of the week.
- We welcome Shabbat with blessings over candles, wine and challah.
- The synagogue sanctuary is a place where we act respectfully. We think about G-d’s presence, and we honor the Torah as we would a king. Mitzvah of derech eretz: acting the way we should.

Key Terms:

- Shabbat Shalom
- Blessings for shaking the lulav and etrog and for sitting in the sukkah.
- Blessings for Shabbat.
- Bruchim Haba’im

Books/Stories:

- Sammy Spider’s First Sukkot
- It’s Sukkah Time

Worksheets:

- Words Can Hurt
- Sukkot coloring book
- Shabbat coloring page
- Welcome Guests coloring book (add pics)
- Parshat Avraham coloring book
- Shabbat Blessings
- Avraham maze

Special Activities and Projects:

- Use “lift the flap” poster to learn about the 4 species and their related mitzvot.
- Make sukkah decorations.
- Say the blessing and shake a real lulav and etrog.
- Eat in the sukkah and say the blessing.
- Invite the students to a tea party. Half the class are hosts, half are guests. Make invitations. With a tent in the room, guests will be invited in, hosts will use good manners, take their coat, invite them to the table, serve food, etc. Students can switch roles. Say “motzi” and “mizonot” before eating.
- Lech L’cha Game: Pick one person to represent the finish line (Canaan) and have her stand on a chair at one end of the room. Next, choose someone to be at the start, Charan. Have him stand blindfolded at the other end of the room. Everyone else plays “rocks,” standing, sitting, or lying on the floor in random spots between the two. The person who is Canaan calls out directions to guide Avraham through the obstacles (rocks) of his journey until he gets safely to Canaan. But no peeking!
- Sing Sukkot songs. “On this Sukkot Morning”
- Play “Pin the species on the person”. Outline one of the children’s body on butcher or brown craft paper. Once outlined, hang it up so that the children will be able to reach the face. Cut out each of the four species. Taking turns, blindfold each child and have them pin the species (etrog, for example), on the body part that it correlates to (the heart, “lev”). Introduce Hebrew words for body parts.
- Make flags for Simchat Torah
- Explain the parts of the Torah/Bimah/ark using the Torah coloring book and then visit the sanctuary with them. Show them a closed Torah and an open one. Find the first letter of each child’s Hebrew name and point it out with the yad.
- Sing “Torah Tziva Lanu Moshe.” Also do it as a “cheer” with hand motions.
- Sing the song “Days of Creation” by Jammin with Jew or Shir LaLa.
- Using representative pictures, review what G-d created on each day: light, heaven and earth, water and land, sun moon & stars, birds and fish, big animals and humans.

- Make a tortilla Torah: spread cream cheese and chocolate chips (representing the sweet words of the Torah) on the tortilla. Put four thin pretzel rods as eitz chayim and roll them toward each other. Wrap them together with a red licorice string.
- Make a classroom Torah. Each page is a depiction of what was created on a particular day. The number of the day is evident, as well as the Hebrew name of the day (e.g. Yom Rishon).
- Play “Days of the week hopscotch”. Draw a hopscotch board on the sidewalk. Taking turns, students play hopscotch, but when they land on a number, they recite what was created on that day.
- Play “Shabbat Matching Game”.

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a “student teacher” to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the “teacher.”

October and November – Unit 3: 4 sessions

Parshat Noach, Mitzvot, Thanksgiving, Shabbat/Havdalah

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will hear the story of Noach and the ark.
- Students will be able to recite three colors of the rainbow in Hebrew.
- Students will be able to retell a simple version of Noach and the ark, including why Noach was chosen to build the ark, how he warned people of the flood, three birds were sent out, how they knew there was land, and the rainbow as G-d's promise.
- Students will learn about mitzvot having to do with animals.
- Students will be able to recite the Hebrew names of 3-4 animals.
- Students will be able to recite the phrase "Todah Hashem" and its meaning.
- Students will be able to recite the Hamotzi blessing.

Key Words:

- Ark
- Keshet (rainbow)
- Rainbow Colors in Hebrew: Adom, Yarok, Kachol, Sagol, Katom, Tzahov
- Compassion
- bisamim

Key Concepts:

- Adam disobeyed Hashem. Noach believed Hashem when he said there was going to be a flood and so Noach was saved.
- The Torah says to feed our animals before ourselves.
- Mitzvah of compassion for animals
- Compare Thanksgiving to Sukkot
- Being thankful
- Shabbat begins at sundown on Friday and ends at sundown on Saturday.
- Havdalah means "separation".

Key Terms:

- Shabbat Shalom
- Blessings for shaking the lulav and etrog and for sitting in the sukkah.
- Blessings for Shabbat.
- Bruchim Haba'im
- Todah Hashem
- Shavuah Tov

Books/Stories:

- Sammy Spider's First Sukkot
- It's Sukkah Time
- The Perfect Thanksgiving by Ilene Spinelli

Worksheets:

- I Promise postcards
- Noah's Ark song
- Catch a Rainbow Science Experiment
- Crayons worksheet
- Rainbow heb colors
- DIY Dog Biscuits
- My Pledge to the Animals
- Thanksgiving coloring pages
- Happy Thanksgiving
- Todah Placemat example
- Blessings over food

Special Activities and Projects:

- Tell the story of Noach and the ark.
- Color animals; create a poster of Noach on the ark with animals pasted on. Have students retell the story once the poster is completed.
- Make a "rainbow" candle holder using tissue paper and glue on a glass votive holder.
- Make a large classroom rainbow out of handprints or collage technique. Include the Hebrew name of the color on the finished rainbow.
- Sing "Rainbow Song" by Sheldon Lowe.
- Rainbow Face Paint Game: Hide popsicle sticks on the playground. There should be one stick of each rainbow color for each child. Instruct them only to find one of each color, one at a time. Each time they find the color that the teacher calls out (in Hebrew), the student goes to the teacher, says the color in Hebrew, and gets that color of the rainbow painted on their face/hand/etc. They keep going until they collect all colors, recite all colors, and get a complete rainbow face paint.
- Make a fruit loop/rainbow necklace by stringing colored cereal. Say the bracha "shehakol".
- Make a lion graham cracker snack. Spread cream cheese on graham crackers to make a triple decker sandwich. Place pretzel sticks randomly into the cream cheese from the sides to create the mane. Using cream cheese as glue, place a small pretzel twist in the middle for the nose and mouth. Use 2 chocolate chips for eyes. Say the "mizonot" bracha.
- Have the children make their own promises (like G-d made to Noach) and create a promise bulletin board.
- Sing: "Mi Banah Noach" and "The Noah's Ark Song"
- Catch a Rainbow science experiment
- Make a book of colors. Each page will be a different color. Each page should have the name of the color in Hebrew (transliteration) and hebrew letters, as well as english. Cut out pictures from magazines and make a collage on each page.

- Find out what animals the students have or are interested in. Teach those in Hebrew. Ex: kelev/dog, chatool/cat, peel/elephant, parah/cow, tzfardayah/frog.
- Sing “Old MacDonald Had a Farm” using Hebrew animals.
- Sing “Itsy Bitsy Spider” using the Hebrew word akaveesh. You can add the words for water (mayim) and sun (shemesh).
- Have a discussion about ways to be kind to animals. Teacher can hold up a pictures of different animals to elicit discussion, or children can take turns, tossing a beanie baby (stuffed animal) to one another in a circle. When a student catches the beanie baby, it is his turn to give an idea about compassion to animals.
- Make DIY dog biscuits to give to your own dog or someone else’s as a treat.
- Visit the Jerusalem Biblical Zoo website. www.jerusalemzoo.org. Also online, explore the animals of Israel; discuss differences between animals there and here, in different habitats.
- Take a trip to the local zoo or have a visitor come to the class with animals to teach their importance to our environment.
- Donate class tzedakah to Jerusalem Biblical Zoo.
- “Todah Hashem” Placement. Each child will make a placemat to use on Thanksgiving. On the front it will say “Todah Hashem” with a depiction of what the child is thankful for. Teacher can write the child’s words on the front as well. On the back will be the motzi. Encourage the children to say this blessing at their Thanksgiving table.
- Sing: “Baruch Atah Adonai, Thank You G-d.” Sing the Shabbat verse, and make up more verses together as a class. Don’t forget to use rhyming words!
- Begin learning “Shema” and “Modeh Ani.”
- Review hamotzi and mizonot, and begin to learn shehakol, using examples from the Thanksgiving table.
- Make a challah out of nylon knee high stockings and pillow stuffing.
- Review Shabbat: Set the Shabbat table as you sing the song, “These are the Things We Need for Our Shabbat Table.”
- Make a unique bisamim holder with model magic or other clay. Add cloves into the creation in whatever way the child wants. Children can make a typical spice “box”, or they can create an animal, a bowl, a house, etc. The only limit is the student’s imagination.

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a “student teacher” to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the “teacher.”

December – Unit 4: 3 sessions

Chanukah, Mitzvot

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will be introduced to the story of Chanukah, including the main “characters”: The Syrians, Antiochus, Judah Maccabe, the children who find the oil in the Temple
- Students will be introduced to the customs of Chanukah
 - The menorah (chanukiyah): 8 candles plus the shamash (helper), light near a window if possible
 - Dreidel: nun, gimel, hay, shin (English and Hebrew translations to the phrase), how to play dreidel game, why the game was played originally
 - Latkes, sufganiyot: why we eat fried foods
 - Gifts: not the most important
- Students will be introduced to the miracles of Chanukah
 - A small army (the Maccabes) beat a large army (the Syrians) because of strength and G-d’s help
 - Oil that should have lasted one day lasted for eight days
- Students will be able to name all the Hebrew letters of the dreidel and the phrase they denote
- Students will be able to name the miracles of Chanukah.
- Students will be able to identify the central characters of the Chanukah story and tell each one’s role.
- Students will be able to recite at least the first Chanukah blessing over the candles of the menorah.
- Students will be able to say the name of the “helper” candle.
- Students will know from which end you light the menorah each night.
- Children will be able to set up and show how they light the menorah for any given night.

Key Words:

- Nes
- Gadol
- Haya
- Sham
- Latkes
- Sufganiyot
- Dreidel/s’vivon
- Maccabe
- Chanukiyah
- Ner tamid
- L’histovev

Key Concepts:

- The Jews were told by the Syrians not to believe in or practice their religion.
- Some Jews chose to disobey the Syrians orders because they loved their religion and they wanted to believe in one G-d.
- Big and powerful (strong) v. Small with powerful belief
- Miracles
- Why we light chanukiyah in front of a window if possible
- The children's role in the Chanukah story
- During Chanukah, many think about getting gifts. This is also a great time to give gifts...Discuss tzedakah, thanking Israeli soldiers, bikur cholim (visiting the sick) and gemilut hasadim (acts of kindness).

Key Terms:

- Nes, gadol, haya, sham (po)

Books/Stories:

- Hannah's Chanukah
- It's a Miracle: A Hanukkah Storybook by, Stephanie Spinner
- Sammy Spider's First Chanukah

Worksheets:

- Chanukah blessings
- Chanukah coloring pages
- Penny game
- Frying Pan game
- Jelly Donuts recipe
- Chanukah Matching game
- Hebrew Chanukah words
- Chanukah Scavenger Hunt
- Chanukah songsheet
- Judean Times Newspaper
- Dreidel, Dreidel, What Do You See? book

Special Activities and Projects:

- Tell the story of Chanukah, including the "cast of characters," the miracles, and the dedication of the Temple.
- Each student colors one page of the Chanukah story, to be hung up and read aloud once completed.
- Chanukah poster that can be hung near the menorah. It will include all the blessings, instructions on how to light. Candles are numbered right to left, light newest candle first.
- Music – sing and learn Chanukah music and blessings to be performed in front of parents at party.
- Read Chanukah books.

- Practice lighting the menorah with students' help putting candles in where they belong and pretend to light or really light if students are comfortable with a lit candle.
- Make thank you notes for gifts received.
- Make "melted candle" art with Chanukah candles and blowdryer.
- Practice writing the Hebrew letters "nun," "gimel," "hay," "shin."
- Make a winter scene to learn the word "choref" (winter). Make sure the Hebrew word, English transliteration and translation are also on the page.
- Make and play the "frying pan" game.
- Play Chanukah matching game.
- Sing: Chanukah Lights, Maoz Tzur, Many Years Ago, and Not by Might Not by Power (Debbie Friedman)
- Twinkle, twinkle Chanukah lights, Shining brightly for eight nights. See the shamash staright and tall, He's the one who lights them all. (Repeat line 1).
- Make a magnetic menorah with individuals candles that can be placed in the correct spot each night.
- Have a Chanukah scavenger hunt
- Color "Dreidel, Dreidel, What Do You See?" book. Add a picture of the class as the last page.
- Participate in school-wide Chanukah party.
- Make cards and gifts to send to Israeli soldiers.

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a "student teacher" to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the "teacher."

January – Unit 5: 3 sessions Mitzvot, Tu B'Shevat

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will be introduced Hebrew words for the 4 seasons
- Students will be able to recite the name of their favorite season in Hebrew
- Students will be introduced to the mitzvah of taking care of our earth and the living things around us.
- Students will learn about the holiday of Tu B'Shevat:
 - When it falls on the Hebrew calendar
 - Why we celebrate
 - Another name for the holiday (birthday of the trees)
 - 7 species and their associated mitzvot
 - why trees are important
 - ways in which trees are like humans
- Students will be able to recite the blessing for fruit from a tree
- Students will be able to say a way in which they will take care of the earth.

Key Words:

- Choref
- Stav
- Aviv
- kayitz
- etz/ilanot

Key Concepts:

- Taking care of our earth: recycling, saving electricity and water, preserving our natural resources.
- We take care of earth for future generations.
- Trees are important and also like humans in many ways (see attached doc "Tu B'Shevat facts")
- Tu B'Shevat is the birthday of the trees; a time to celebrate trees/nature

Key Terms:

- Environment

Books/Stories:

- Honi (see attached)
- Sammy Spider's First Tu B'Shevat

Worksheets:

- Trees and seasons project
- Honi story pages 1 & 2
- Coloring pages
- Worksheet pages

- 7 species pics and mitzvot

Special Activities and Projects:

- collage picture: students make pictures out of recycled materials. You can have them collect things in advance and/or provide them
- practice writing the letter “ayin” that begins the Hebrew word “etz”, meaning “tree”
- plant something to bring home. Parsley will usually grow in time for Pesach, or anything else can be planted. Children can decorate pots or cups in a variety of ways.
- Make a class tree out of paper. Have a discussion about why trees are important and put each idea on a leaf to make the tree full and beautiful. You will need pre-cut leaf shapes for this.
- Make a 3-D picture of trees in each season. Use Hebrew and English labels for each season in each quadrant of the paper. Use materials that have texture, such as Q-tips for winter branches, small pieces of crumpled tissue paper for flowers (spring) or apples (fall), and so on. You can collect very small twigs as a class to add branches to the pictures. These can also be done on canvas to make a more permanent piece of artwork. A low temperature hot glue gun may be necessary for the twigs to stick down. (see attached)
- Have a picnic under the shade of a beautiful tree. Eat fruit from trees and say the “borei pri ha-etz” blessing.

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student, or have a sticker quiz. When asked a question, the student that answers correctly gets a sticker. It is important that each child be asked a question at some point that he or she can answer correctly. The teacher can also appoint a “student teacher” to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the “teacher.” Students will be able to recite the blessing for fruit from a tree.

February/March – Unit 6: 3 sessions

Purim

Goals and Objectives:

- Introduce the Purim story. Include:
 - The 4 main characters and which were Jewish, which were not
 - Esther's bravery and how she, along with Mordechai, saved the Jews
 - The story of Esther is told in the Megillah. It is the only story without G-d's name in it so there are pictures in it.
- Introduce the Hebrew letter "pay"
- Introduce Purim customs:
 - Loudly stomp out Haman's name during the Megillah reading
 - Dress in costume
 - Have a fun time (for a happy holiday)
 - Eat hamantashen in the shape of Haman's hat
- Explain the 4 mitzvot of Purim
 - Giving tzedakah
 - Making and giving shalach manot
 - Having a festive meal and enjoy a happy holiday
 - Reading/listening to the Megillah to give the Jewish people courage and hope that they could overcome an enemy.
- Students will be able to tell the names of the 4 central Purim characters, their religious affiliation, and why they are important to the story.
- Students will be able to identify and explain some Purim symbols, including: gragger, hamantashen and megillah.
- Students will be able to identify the four mitzvot of Purim.

Key Words:

- la-atzor
- gragger
- hamantashen

Key Concepts:

- Haman was not a nice man and wanted to get rid of all the Jewish people.
- 4 mitzvot of Purim
- Esther hid her Jewish identity until she knew she had to reveal it, even at the risk of terrible punishment. Esther saved the Jewish people. She was a heroine.
- Why we are loud during Haman's name, but not during other parts of the megillah reading

Key Terms:

- Shalach manot
- Hero/heroine

Books/Stories:

- The Better Than Best Purim by Naomi Howland
- Sammy Spider's First Purim
- When It's Purim by Edie Zolkower
- Barnyard Purim by Kelly Terwilliger
- The Purim Superhero by Elisabeth Kushner
- Queen Esther Saves Her People by Rita Golden Gelman

Worksheets:

- Purim scavenger hunt
- Purim scavenger hunt rules
- Purim story
- Hamantashen recipe
- Purim coloring pages
- Purim play
- My Hero worksheet

Special Activities and Projects:

- Each student will color "Purim pages" with images relating to the holiday. Pictures will be discussed for significance to the holiday.
- Tell the Purim story. Give students a chance at another time to become part of the retelling of the story, using costumes, or use puppets to retell the story.
- Make masks: use paper plates, construction paper, and other materials to make masks.
- Make graggers: fold paper plate in half, put dry beans inside and staple shut. Have students decorate and show.
- Practice using noisemakers at the right time (only when Haman's name is mentioned). Once graggers are made, have children hide them around the room. At random times during the day, chant out loud the name "Haman". Children will run to their gragger and start making noise. At some point, yell "la-atzor!" (stop). See how many times they can do it without continuing after you ask them to stop.
- Bake hamantashen. Give recipe out.
- Make shalach manot baskets to give to friends. Have students identify the person they would like to receive it.
- Make puppets of the 4 central characters of the Purim story. Put the first letter of each character's name on the puppet. This helps children identify the character.
- Sing and learn Purim music: Hakovah sheli, and more (see attachment)
- Make a Megillah. Note the difference(s) between Torah and megillah.
- Discuss heroes. Ask children who their heroes are and why. Identify "mitzvah heroes" that the students can relate to.

- Purim is a silly holiday. Have an “open mic” time where students can tell jokes. Be prepared with a pretend microphone and some jokes (knock, knock or otherwise) to give them if they don’t have their own.
- Have a Purim talent show.
- Attend the Purim carnival.
- Make the Hebrew letter “pay” (for Purim) out of pizza dough.
- Have a relay race. Children go to different stations in the fastest time possible. Each station has something to do with Purim. (see attached)

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a “student teacher” to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the “teacher.” Students will take turns being different characters of the Purim story.

By the 3rd week, if not sooner, students will be able to recite some of the lines (or the idea of the lines) of the story without teacher assistance. Students will be able to tell the 4 mitzvot of Purim when asked, and demonstrate that they know the word “la-atzor” by stopping their graggers when the teacher says to do so.

April – Unit 7: 3 sessions

Pesach

Goals and Objectives:

- Introduce the many different aspects of the Pesach holiday:
 - When Pesach arrives (spring in Israel)
 - The story of Pesach, from baby Moses to freedom
 - The seder, incl. explanation of the seder plate and its components, the order of the seder, plagues, and each step of the order in detail.
 - Getting ready/cleaning for Pesach.
- Children will be able to recite at least one of the four questions in Hebrew.
- Children will be able to say what at least two of the four questions are in English.
- Children will be able to say why we eat matzah on Pesach, and identify different foods as “Chametz” or “Not Chametz”.
- Children will be able to say the bracha over matzah.
- Children will be able to tell two things that make them free and not slaves.

Key Words

- Afikomen
- Chametz
- Matzah
- All items on the seder plate (in Hebrew)
- Aviv (spring)
- Haggadah

Key Concepts:

- Freedom – what does it really mean? To the Jewish that left Egypt, and to us today?
- G-d saved the Jewish people from plagues and the Egyptians; lamb’s blood on doorpost

Key Terms:

- Bedikat chametz
- Next Year in Jerusalem

Books/Stories:

- The Matzah that Papa Brought Home by Fran Menushkin
- Sammy Spider’s First Pesach
- Dinosaur on Passover by Diane Levin
- Five Little Gefiltes by Dave Horowitz
- The Littlest Levine by Sandy Lanten
- Matzah Ball Boy by Lisa Shulman
- Nachshon Who Was Afraid to Swim by Deborah Bodin Cohen

Worksheets:

- Pesach Coloring Pages
- Freedom Stamps 1, 2 and 3
- Pesach Counting Book
- Pinky Prints Placemat sample
- Haggadah
- Chametz Free Zone sample

Special Activities and Projects:

- Each student will color “Pesach pages” with images relating to the holiday. Pictures will be discussed for significance to the holiday.
- Tell the Pesach story. Introduce the important players: Moshe (Moses), Pharaoh
- Bag of Plagues: Each child can put representative items in their bag to be used at their own seder. Some ideas:
 - Blood – red finger paint
 - Frogs – toy frog
 - Vermin – toy snake
 - Beasts – bendable animal
 - Cattle disease – cow eraser
 - Boils – silly putty made into balls
 - Hail – cotton balls
 - Locusts – rubber bugs
 - Darkness – flashlight or sunglasses
 - Slaying of first born (small baby toy)
- Pesach Counting Book (see attached): this will review Hebrew counting and reinforce writing numbers. Use pictures to represent each item. Children will use folded construction paper staples together into a book. On each page will be a separate number, along with the word in Hebrew and the representative picture.
- Freedom stamps (see attached): cut out cardboard to look like a postage stamp. It should be big enough so that the students can make a picture inside of it. Ask the children individually what they think freedom is. Write their idea on the stamp and ask them to represent their words with a picture. If done as a class, try to avoid repeats ideas. Help the children think about freedom in new ways.
- Chametz-Free Zone Door Hanger: Cut out oaktag in the shape of a door hanger. This is a cut and glue project. Each hanger should include: the words “Chametz Free Zone,” a plastic spoon, a feather, and a picture of bread/challah with an x through it. Encourage students to make an effort to clean a room in their home of their choice, say the blessing, hang up the door knocker, and not to eat chametz in that room until Pesach is over.
- Pyramid bulletin board: cut out large rectangles from a brown paper bag. Wrinkle them up to resemble bricks. Talk to students about things they already know about Passover/Pesach. Each contribution gets written on a brick. Use the bricks to create a pyramid on the bulletin board. Over the 3

week period, add bricks as the students add knowledge until the pyramid is complete.

- Pinky Prints Placemat: To reinforce the idea of using the pinky finger during the seder while counting plagues, create a picture out of fingerprints using stamp pads and paper. Pictures can be laminated and used as placemats at the seder.
- Grass Heads: to help celebrate spring. Instructions at: <http://www.homemade-gifts-made-easy.com/grass-heads.html>
- Have a model seder. Use Shir LaLa's music to accompany the different steps. Make it interactive, with children helping with each step. Make a poster of #s, (as many as steps in the seder). Under each #, when the children lift it, they will see a picture and a hebrew word so they can guess the next step of the seder. (see attachment haggadah and order of seder)
- Springtime bulletin board: make a spring scene and label things with Hebrew words (butterfly/par par, aviv/spring, etz/tree, etc.) Ask the children to decide what they want on their bulletin board.
- Chametz Swap: participate in Beth El's food swap or create one for the classroom.
- Make Matzah: make matzah in the classroom. Use an 18 minute timer to show how fast it has to be done.
- 18 minute mitzvah game: see how many mitzvot can be done in 18 minutes, making the point that it is easy to do a mitzvah!
- Afikomen bag or pillow case: decorated with any medium you like: markers, stencils, glitter glue, etc. See ideas here: <http://www.kveller.com/traditions/Holidays/Afikomen-bag-craft.shtml>; <http://www.allfreeholidaycrafts.com/Passover/Watercolor-Afikomen-Bag>
- Matzah taste test: have the kids try different types of matzah – egg, whole wheat, regular, onion, chocolate. Make a chart of the different kinds of matzah and have the students check which one is their favorite. Make sure to say the blessing over the matzah before eating.

Assessments

Much, if not all, of the assessment will be done orally and when games are played repeatedly. The teacher can use a large die with words on it (who, what, where, when) to prompt questions for each student. The teacher can also appoint a "student teacher" to ask the questions. Students can take turns being the "teacher." During many of the activities and discussions (e.g. what do you know about Passover/bricks & pyramid bulletin board, model seder, pinky prints), students will demonstrate their knowledge of the materials. When doing all of the activities, teacher can ask questions to assess learning.

April – Unit 8: 3-4 sessions

Yom H'Atzmaut, Israel, Mother's Day

Goals and Objectives:

- Introduce students to Israel as our homeland, describe its contributions (eg exports, scientific discoveries, etc) and review a map, depicting and describing important landmarks/cities/places of interest.
- Teach students more Hebrew letters vocabulary, including the key words below.
- Students will learn and recite the 3 meanings of the word “Shalom”.
- Explain the importance of mothers, reminding them of the Commandment to honor mother/father
- Students will hopefully spend an enjoyable day thinking about their mothers and making them special gifts.
- Students will be able to identify where at least two places in Israel are on the map (and on their bodies-see Activiites), in addition to the capital of Israel.
- Students will be able to identify at least 3 body parts in Hebrew.

Key Words:

- imah
- abbah
- eretz yisrael
- yerushalayim
- the kotel
- bayit (house)
- etz (tree)
- kveesh (road)
- gesher (bridge)
- shir (song)
- hatikvah (hope)
- body parts review: rosh, beten, hak'tayfayim, raglayim, oznayim

Key Concepts:

- Yisrael is the Jewish homeland. Yom Ha'atzmaut is Israel Independence Day, the day it became a state.
- The Kotel is a special place to pray and connect with G-d.
- Honor your mother and father.

Key Terms:

- Yerushalayim shel zahav
- Derech eretz
- Shalom

Books/Stories:

- Dinosaur Goes to Israel by Diane Rauchwerger

- Ella's Trip to Israel by Vivian Newman
- Snow in Jerusalem by Deborah Da Costa
- Tikvah Means Hope by Patricia Polacco (may be a bit old; may need to summarize or delete sections as you read)
- Sammy Spider's First Trip to Israel

Worksheets:

- Israel coloring pages
- Morph Into Israel instructions
- Hatikvah song sheet

Special Activities and Projects:

- Israel coloring pages
- Share by reading aloud: "Shalom" poem
- Morph Into Israel: make a class map of Israel, using our bodies as location points for places of interest.
- Write notes to go into the Kotel; send them with the Shaliach when he/she goes back to Israel. Or, use the website: israelforkids.com to send a note.
- Sing: "This is my head, it is my rosh." Add as many body parts as possible.
- Israel Day stations: each station represents a place in Israel with an activity that coincides. For example: sand art (negev), squeeze orange juice (Yaffa), paint a hamsa (Tsfat), write a note to kotel (Yerushalayim), magnetic fishing (Eilat).
- Sing: "Eretz Yisrael Sheli" and "Hatikvah"
- Make a Sammy Spider snack using foods of Israel: pita with hummus on top, sliced olives for eyes and Israeli pickles for mouth. Use Israeli sesame pretzel sticks for legs. Snack can include a side of Yaffa oranges.
- Speak in "Ivrit" (Hebrew) the whole day.
- Play: Toss the falafel in the pita. Make 2 large half circles out of brown construction paper or cardboard. Staple together along the rounded edges to make your pita. Leave the straight edge open. Make a "falafel" out of a tape ball or crumpled up paper. Students take turns trying to throw the falafel into the open pita.
- Play "Haifa, Haifa, Yerushalayim" (Duck, Duck, Goose). Students can choose the names of places in Israel.
- Take a virtual tour of Israel by visiting: <http://www.inisrael.com/3disrael/> or 3D tour of Jerusalem <http://www.3disrael.com/jerusalem/>
- Play Hebrew videos for the class: למה לבשה הזברה פיגמה
- Mother's Day Art project – Decorate and plant flower pots for Mother's Day
- Mother's Day Art project – Make cards for Mother's Day
- Mother's Day Art project – Fill in the following: "I like to (blank) with my mother" and draw accompanying picture
- Mother's Day Art project – make bottle cap necklace with photo inside and beaded cord, lanyard or string.

Assessments

The teacher will assess Hebrew vocabulary and ability to follow Hebrew directions during the entire day of speaking only in Hebrew. Students will be able to discuss the importance of the mitzvah of Honor Your Mother & Father; they will be able to recite that it is one of the 10 Commandments and give a reason why it is an important one. Students will be able to play and/or lead the game Simon Sez or song "This is My Head It is My Rosh" and identify body parts.

April – Unit 8: 3-4 sessions **Yom H'Atzmaut, Israel, Mother's Day**

Goals and Objectives:

- Explore Jewish values, mitzvot and middot. They can be a lesson on their own and/or incorporated into lessons almost every week. Encourage and incorporate these Jewish values so that they are the lens through which the children see life. There are always opportunities to reinforce and remind students of them after the first exposure. Even if you don't provide a full lesson on the mitzvah, as the list is quite long, there are many opportunities through regular classroom interaction to find the "teachable moment" and regarding these values. Another way to compartmentalize the mitzvot is by "category" for example, mitzvot at school, at home, for the elderly, for animals, for strangers, etc.
- Learn basic tefillah, including Shemah (also in sign language), Modeh Ani (Hebrew and English translation), Torah Tziva Lanu Moshe (with hand motions/cheer), Adon Olam (pretend to play instruments)
- Learn all the brachot for different types of food.
- Learn a rich vocabulary of Hebrew words, including nouns and verbs, and to be able to address students in Hebrew and have them understand and reply also in Hebrew. Grammar is not a focus as much as is hearing and speaking the Hebrew language; getting an "ear" for it and building a vocabulary. Use "Hebrew Through Movement" curriculum, as well as words/phrases/commands that come spontaneously from other parts of the curriculum or student interests.
- Students will be able to identify mitzvot that they do at home and other places.
- Students will be able to identify their favorite mitzvah and also what they feel is the most powerful mitzvah in the world and explain why.
- Students will be able to sing and/or lead the tefillot noted above.
- Students will be able to identify at least 4 body parts in Hebrew, as well as understand the commands "lalechet," and one other.

Key Words:

- Emet/truth
- Derech eretz

Key Concepts:

- Mitzvot are the basis of Torah and Jewish life.
- There are 613 mitzvot/commandments in the Torah.
- 100 Brachot per day
- Being a mensch is living a Jewish life.
- Tefillah is a time to talk to G-d. It is individual and special.

Key Terms:

- Shalom bayit
- Acts of loving kindness/gemilut chasadim
- Compassion/rachamim
- Courage/ohmetz lev
- Enhance the commandment; it's a mitzvah to make the mitzvah more beautiful/
he-dur mitzvah
- Honesty/yosher
- Ethical treatment of animals/tza'ar b'alay chayim
- Gratitude/Hakarat hatov
- Forgiveness/selicha
- Friendship/chaverut
- Yosher/honesty
- Hospitality/hachnasat orchim
- Peace in the home/shalom bayit
- Proper behavior/derech eretz; be a mensch
- Righteousness, charity/tzedakah
- Truthfulness/emet
- Uniqueness of every human being/Adam yachid
- Visiting the sick/bikkur cholim
- Avoiding waste/
- Speak kind words
- Celebrating Shabbat and other Jewish holidays

Books/Stories:

- Bagels for Benny by Aubrey Davis
- Chicken Soup by Heart by Esther Hershenson
- The Secret of the Shabbat Fish by Ben a Ronin
- You Can Do a Mitzvah by Judge Groner
- It's a it's a it's a Mitzvah
- The Penny Harvest
- What Zeesie Saw on Delancey Street by Elsa Okon Rael

Worksheets:

- Mr. Mitzvah Story (Pesach)

- Tzedakah songsheet
- Mitzvah mission examples
- 8 levels of tzedakah
- Is It a Mitzvah?
- DIY Dog Biscuits Recipe
- Positive Behaviors of Derech Eretz
- Bumper sticker examples
- Hebrew words for common animals
- Coloring pages
- My Pledge to the Animals
- Words Can Hurt

Special Activities and Projects:

- Mitzvah tree/chain/other visually additive project of mitzvot. The key to this is helping children give a name to the mitzvot they do and expanding their vocabulary of mitzvot. Often, with a mitzvah tree, the same mitzvot get repeated week after week, often by the same few students. Remedies for is problem: even if students don't bring in a mitzvah note, every student should be encouraged to share a mitzvah. They may need help figuring out what they did. Ask them questions to figure it out. Ask what they did at school or over the weekend, if they visited friends or family, etc. They might not realize that returning library books on time or returning a friends toy, celebrating Shabbat, taking time to do daily hygiene, or even doing something the first time someone asks, is a mitzvah! Over the weeks, notice how the mitzvah tree/chain is "growing"; make children feel good about doing more and more mitzvot. Every so often, give them challenges to do more mitzvot than they did the previous week.
- Bumper sticker bulletin board: using a general mitzvah like "derech eretz," have students come up with "sayings" that could be bumper stickers promoting derech eretz. This project could work well using older partners. Doing it in conjunction with first grade might help expand the vocabulary of what kindness and proper behavior can be. Older children can also help with spelling and writing. The message is what's most important; don't sweat correct spelling! It's more important to let them have control over the process. Have the children create a mural with a road and vehicles (which can be coloring pages the cut out). Have them put the bumper stickers all around the mural.
- Write cards to Israeli soldiers. (Gratitude, Compassion)
- Discuss the "Power of Mitzvot." This should be a guided discussion, but it will be interesting to see what the children thinks is powerful...what could have the greatest impact on the world.
- Field trip to jewish home for elderly (Visiting the sick, Compassion)

- Any Activities that involve making a ritual object can include this mitzvah. It can be presented as: “It’s a mitzvah to make the mitzvah more beautiful.” (Enhance the commandment)
- Interview parent. Show kavod (respect) by listening to what the parent has to say and being interested in them. Share the interview with the class the following week.
- Compliment Jar. Each student picks the name of another student out of a hat, and keeps it a secret. They have to write (by dictating to a teacher or using inventive spelling) a compliment to that person. Once all compliments are written they either get read out loud, or they go into a jar to be read anonymously by the teacher. The name of the person being complimented should be on the paper as well. (Power of kind words.)
- Discuss the 8 levels of tzedakah and the importance of anonymity and read the book “What Zeesie Saw on Delancey Street” by Elsa Okon Rael.
- Make a tzedakah box. Ideas can be found here:
<http://www.pinterest.com/stroumjcc/tzedakah-boxes/>
- Mitzvah Heroes. Talk about what a hero does. Have children share some of their heroes. Teacher can also share Jewish heroes. Make the bridge to being a Mitzvah Hero. Each week, before they leave class, students will choose a strip of paper from a jar or box. Each strip of paper has a mitzvah written on it. For example, “Invite a friend over for Shabbat,” or “Ask your mother how her day was,” or “Share a toy with a friend.” Encourage children to do the mitzvah some time before the next religious school session. They can use it to add to the mitzvah chain. At the end of the year, children will receive a mitzvah hero certificate.
- Recite brachot over food at every snack time or whenever children will be eating food in the classroom. Make a point to wear kippot during snack as well. Begin with mizonot (someone always has pretzels), and as the year progresses, add other brachot depending on which foods are at the table.
- Brachot posters. Cut out pictures of food from magazines. Write the Hebrew blessing for each food category (ha-adama, mizonot, shehakohl, ha-etz, hamotzi) at the top of each page. Have the children select and glue foods to the appropriate page.
- Discuss the 100 brachot per day. This can be started during Unit 3 (the Thanksgiving curriculum). Create a class list of 100 brachot over the course of a few weeks. Encourage students to think outside the box when they are coming up with ideas of what they are thankful for.

Assessments

Tefillah skills can be assessed by giving each student the chance to be tefillah leader. Likewise, knowledge of brachot can be assessed by giving each student the chance to be bracha leader. Sticker quizzes continue to be used as an assessment tool, as well as class discussion.

List of Prayers and Blessings (K – 3rd)

Note: Not all students begin their Jewish education in K-3rd grade.

Shabbat

Lehadlik ner shel shabbat
Bore Pri Hagafen
Hamotzi lechem min haaretz

Sukkot

Al netilat Lulav
Leishev Basukah

Hanukkah

Lehadlik ner shel Hanukah
She'asa nisim laavoteinu bayamim ha'em bazman haze
She'hecheyanu
Bore Pri Ha'adama (for Latkes)

Tu Bishvat

Bore Pri Haetz

Pesah

Mah Nishtanah
Al Achilat Matza
Bore Pri Ha'adama

Food, Drink, Snack

Bore Pri Haetz (see Tu Bishvat)
Bore Pri Ha'adama (see Hanukah and Pesah)
Bore Miney Mizonot
Shehakol Nihya Bidvaro

Prayers

Begin learning "Shema" and "Modeh Ani." (K)
Reinforce "Shema" and "Modeh Ani." (1st – 2nd)

Additional Prayers and Blessings for 1st – 3rd grade

Havdalah Blessings
Shalom Aleichem (1st grade)
Kiddush for Friday night (auditory learning every Tuesday)
Adon Olam (3rd)
Attend and follow Tefillah prayers (Sunday, Tuesday) in the spring of 3rd grade

Change Control

August 11, 2014 [List of Prayers and Blessings \(K-3\)](#)
[Overview](#)
[Notes to Parents](#)

June 2, 2015 [Added note about Leap Year](#)

[Updated total sessions to 28](#)

[New web sites with 3D tours of Israel and Jerusalem](#)