

6th Grade Family Education Day
We Are All Care Takers of The Earth
By Daniel Freedman
Temple Beth Hillel Education Intern

Lesson Topic: The Torah inspires us to have a greater connection with the land we live in, specifically Israel. On Tu BiSh'vat, we celebrate this relationship each year. This lesson is meant to make students and their parents not only recognize this relationship, but also think about the way their action can impact the earth's environment now and for future generations.

Students: These are about 20 students who regularly attend Sunday or Tuesday sixth grade religious school class. Some of them are actually in 5th grade but are in the 6th grade class due to logistical reasons. This session will be a family education day, which means their parents will also be students.

Milieu: Temple Beth Hillel is a medium sized synagogue in the suburbs of Los Angeles. The family programs are meant to provide a learning opportunity that will engage both the students and their parents together.

Enduring Understandings:

1. Each person (adam) has a special relationship with the earth (adama).
2. Our actions impact the environment at home and beyond
3. Tu BiSh'vat is a holiday when we both celebrate our relationship with the earth and think about how we can better take care of it.

Essential Questions:

1. What is the earth's impact on me?
2. Why should I care about my impact on the earth?
3. How can I be a steward for the earth?

Objectives: *Students will be able to...*

1. Describe the relationship between humans and the earth
2. Explain how each person has an impact on the earth
3. Create their own definition of what it means to be stewards for the earth

Materials:

- Food for each of the 7 species, enough for 15 people
- Projector
- Screen
- I Pad or Computer
- Paper for blue prints
- Daf with texts and questions- See Appendix C
- Permanent Markers
- Sticky notes
- Soil
- Clay Planters- for 10, go to Home Depot
- How do we decorate the pot?- use oil based paint and paint pens, sharpie, home depot, soil- may be in the cage
- Seeds- for 10
- Action Plan Templates- See Appendix B
- Beyond Activity Ideas-See Appendix A
- Birthday decorations (balloons, streamers)
- Mercaz North



Learning Plan

Set Induction: The 4 Representations of Relationships with The Earth- 0-35 minutes – Divide each of the fruits by teacher/ozeret

- The room will be set up with some balloons and decorations.
- Students and their parents will sit down at a table. At each table, there will be food separated into three categories; Fruits with shells, fruits with pits and fruits that are entirely edible.
- Daniel says, “Today, we are celebrating a very special birthday in the house. Today is the birthday of the trees! I need everyone to sing loudly so that our birthday guests will be able to hear us from near and far. Daniel sings, Happy Birthday and then Yom Huledet Sameach.”
- Daniel says, “In just a few days, we will celebrate the Jewish holiday called TuBiSh’vat. Many people think of this holiday as the Birthday of the trees. You might think it is silly to celebrate the birthday of the trees, but trees represent a very very important relationship in our life. The relationship that we have with the Earth.”
- Daniel says, “When the Israelites made their way to the Promised Land, Moses said to the Israelites (should be projected on the screen) *For Adonai your God is brining you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.* In the Torah, Moses wants the Israelites to recognize how special the environment is. Today, we not only eat fruit from these trees to celebrate the our relationship with the environment, but also we think more deeply about what we have to do to build our relationships.”
- Daniel says, “Just like for Passover, we have a Seder on Tu BiSh’vat that helps us think more intentionally about our special relationship with the Earth. It is going to be your job to figure out how the Seder makes us think more about our relationship with the earth.”
- Morin says, “The First fruit everyone is going to eat is something with a shell.” Before we eat this fruit, take a moment to discuss question 1 with your adult.” See attachment question 1
- Morin says blessing, *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Haolam Borei Pri Haetz.* Everyone eats the fruit
- Ty says, “Next we eat a fruit which has a pit. Before we eat this fruit, take a moment to discuss question 2 with your parents.” See attachment question 2
- Ty says blessing, *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Haolam Borei Pri Haetz.* Everyone eats the fruit
- Daniel says, “Finally, we eat a fruit which can be eaten in its entirety. Before we eat them, take a moment to discuss question 3. See attachment.

- Daniel says blessing, *Baruch Atah Adonai Eloheinu Melech Haolam Borei Pri Haetz*. Everyone eats the fruit.
- Enjoy food for 10-15 more minutes. (During this time, students and parents should eat the rest of their food and clean up so that we are ready to begin activity 1- answer discussion question 4. Daniel, Morin and Ty should circulate.)



Activity 1: Honi The Circle Maker: 35-55

- Daniel says, “One of the fruits that we could eat in entirety was a carob. Now, we will learn the story of a man and a carob tree, where he will learn how powerful our relationship with the earth can be.”
 - Daniel explains, “Blessing and recognizing the ways we relate to the earth are important. But now, we must turn to one of our essential questions, how do my actions impact the earth, at home and beyond? To begin to answer our question, we turn to the Talmud to learn about a man named Honi Ha Me’aegel- Honi the Circle Maker.
 - On the projection screen, a video of Honi the Circle Maker will show. This video lasts for four minutes.
 - <https://www.bimbam.com/honi-the-circle-maker/>
- Structured Discussion In Two Groups (Daniel and Morin/Ty lead)
1. What did Honi do to get the rain to fall in the land of Israel?
(Knowledge/comprehension)

2. How does what Honi did (pray) connect to what we talked about earlier with regards to TuBshevat? (Linking Question)
3. What do you think Honi was missing in his relationship to the earth? What evidence would you give for this interpretation? (Analysis)
4. If we take Honi's Circle to represent the influence we have on the earth, we should figure out what falls in our circle influence so we know how best to exercise it. Do you think Honi fully understood his own circle? Why or why not? (Evaluation)

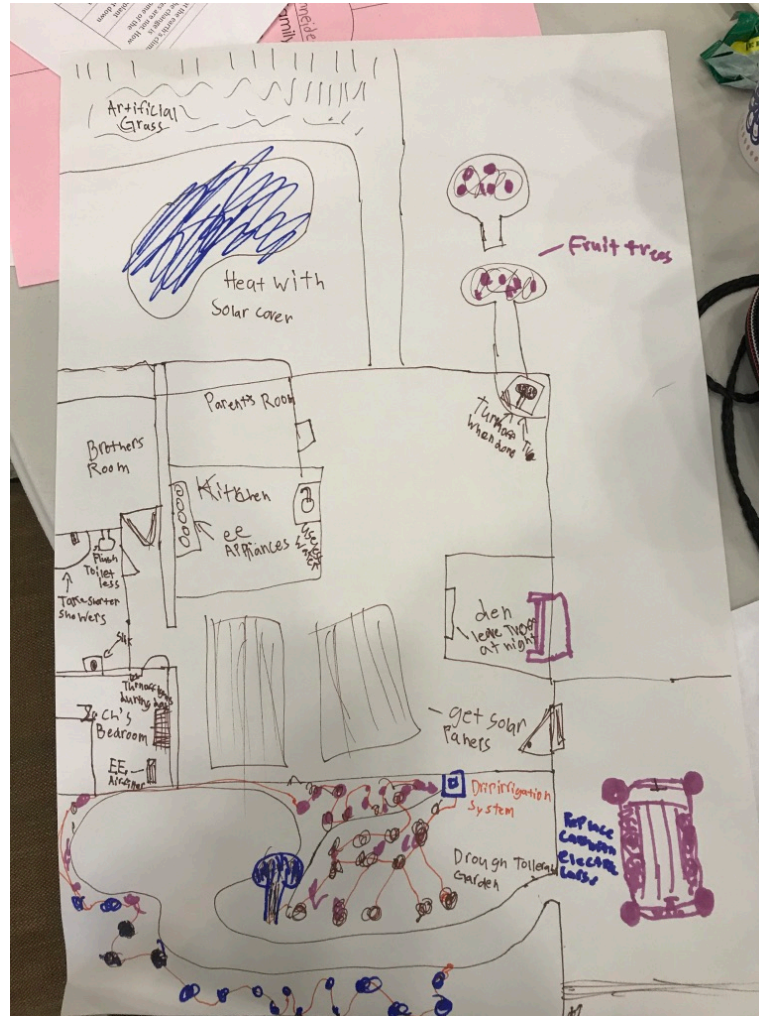
Activity 2: The Home and Beyond: 55-1:45

Intro- 5 minutes

- There will be two stations where students and parents will learn how to be stewards in the home and outside of it. The will begin with the home.
- As an introduction, Daniel says, "take the stencil and draw your circle of influence. Then draw a line down the middle. On one side write, "at home" and on the other write, "beyond." You will add to it as you learn about stewardship at home and beyond it.
- "A circle of influence= all that you individually have control over-how you can affect the Earth. The more things that we can put in our circle of influence, the more pro active we become for taking care of the environment. In order to do so, we must think about what we can do for the earth at our home and outside of it"

Taking Care of the Earth, "Our Home" 20 minutes

- Daniel says, "In Judaism we have a principle called, "Baal Tashcit. This principle can come to mean a lot just inside of our own homes. Before we learn about how to uphold this principle in our home, we need to know what it means. With your parents, take a minute to study these two verses from Deuteronomy, which is where we derive the important principle Baal Tashcit. Then, try and figure out together what you think Baal Tashcit means. (See Appendix).
- Daniel says, "Ok, now I would like to hear some ideas of what you came up with for Baal Tashcit"
- Daniel says, "Now that we understand that Baal Tashcit means do not waste, talk with your parents about practices you could instill to make your family home more sustainable! Write them in your "circle of influence". Then, take a blank sheet of paper and draw a diagram of your home. Take the ideas you had and insert them into your blue print. Next to each one, write how the action will impact the environment today. For instance, turning off lights when not being used will conserve electricity instantly!"
- When everyone is finished, each family will exhibit their blueprints for a more sustainable family home. As the families look at them, the students can take sticky notes and make hashtags to represent what is trending.
- Daniel asks, "What are some of the trending ideas for sustainable family living?" Each one of us has a part to play in building a better relationship with



Beyond-20 minutes (Differentiated)

- Daniel says, “Sometimes, there are things we can do in our circle of influence which may be directed to an even bigger arena than our home. These things may seem outside of our circle of influence, but they do not have to be
 - Daniel says, “Think about one thing you want to do to take care of the world which extends outside of your home. If you have an idea, you can get started by skipping step one and moving to step 2. If you need some help coming up with one, please take a resource paper and read through them with your parents. Once you have selected, go on to the next step.” See Appendix A
 - Daniel says, “Complete an action plan template or worksheet- shows how while it may seem far fetched for us to make an impact on the environment on a larger scale, we can do so if we both plan and commit to something. See Appendix B for resources.
- Daniel asks, “How does the action plan make a world related action seem more realistic?”
 - Each family will now add more actions into their “circle of influence”

Authentic Assessment- Circle of Influence Plant- 1:45-2:25

- Each family will come back together and look at their circle of influence. Daniel says, "Is there anything you want to add or subtract? Take a few minutes to discuss and edit."
- Daniel says, "We are all going to take our circles of influences and glue them to the bottom of our recycled pots. Now when you see this pot you will remember what you can do at home and outside of it to care for the earth." In



addition, as a family, take some time to decorate the outside of your pot to represent some of the ideas that you put into your circle of influence.

- Daniel says, "We are going to plant something in our pots that should hopefully grow within our home and cultivate our connection with the earth. Each day you will need to water and care for your plant, reminding you of the

things that you can do to care for the earth, which are in your circle of influence. However, hopefully with love and care, the plan will grow each day from your care and eventually you will have parsley to eat. This plant will symbolize your relationship with the earth. Take good care of it."



Educational Closure- 2:25-2:30

There is a Midrash that says, "Upon creating the first human beings, God guided them around the Garden of Eden, saying, "Look at my creations! See how beautiful and perfect they are! I created everything for you. Make sure you don't ruin or destroy my world. If you do, there will be no one after you to fix it."

- Daniel says, "Today we started our day by tasting the beautiful creations of God and the earth, thinking about how each one made us think more about our relationship to the earth. However, we realized that was not enough. We have to not only act to maintain the earth's bounty but act to renew it."
- We all have a circle of influence that we draw around us. Let us all tap into that circle so that our relationship with the earth will continue to grow. Amen



Appendix A

Beyond Activity

Causes	Description
Climate Change	Scientists concur that the earth's climate is changing. Some of the change is natural, but other changes are not. How can you help slow down some of the unnatural changes?
Deforestation	We use trees faster than we replant them. Entire forests are being cut down quickly. What can you do to help?
Water Shortage	In many parts of the world, there is a shortage of water. What can you do to help?
Air Pollution	Some of our biggest cities like Los Angeles become more polluted everyday. This pollution is bad for humans, living things and animals. What can you do to help?
Food Justice	We impact the environment everyday from the way food is produced to the choices we make in eating to the way we deal with food waste. What can you do to help in this area?

Appendix B

**Action Plan Templates
Graphic Organizer**

Objectives	Tasks	Success Criteria	Time Frame	Resources

Appendix B

Action Plan Worksheet

Goals:

1.

2.

If I have more than one goal, what should I focus on first?

How can I achieve this goal? What do I need to achieve it?

How will I know when I have reached some level of success?

Appendix C

Text Sheet

*For Adonai your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey.
Deuteronomy 8:7-8*

1. What does a fruit which you can only eat the outside of say about our relationship with the earth?
2. What does a fruit, which bears seeds in the inside of say about our relationship with the earth?
3. Why do you think we eat an entire fruit? What does that say about our relationship?
4. What do you think about the order of the Seder? Would you switch it if you could? Why or why not?

Deuteronomy 20:19-20

19) When in your war against a city you have to besiege it in a long time in order to capture it, you must not destroy its trees, wielding the ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down. Are trees of the field human to withdraw before you into the besieged city?

20) Only trees that you know do not yield food may be destroyed; you may cut them down for constructing siege works against the city that is waging war on you, until it has been reduced.