

Building Jewish Literacy

That's what it's all about!



Session 1 : September

ROSH HASHANAH

Focus on the symbols: apples and honey for a sweet new year, the round challah to show the seasons and months goes around and around and it looks like a crown and we imagine God as Ruler, and the shofar which reminds us to wake up and change our behavior.

Give each child/family if possible a shofar (they cost \$25 a piece).

Give each child/family a Jewish calendar. Point out the month. **Look up** Hebrew birthdays and put a sticker on the child's Hebrew birthday (need to know if the child was born before or after sunset).

Give a honey lollipop to each child.

Make Happy New Year Posters with stickers and symbols. Try to bring really interesting and unusual art supplies.

Draw a shofar, apples and honey, and a round challah.

*Write on the poster: **Shana Tova! Happy New Year!***

*Under the word **Shana** write **year** and under the word **tova** write **good**.*

*Write on the poster: **Rosh Ha-Shanah***

*Under the word **Rosh** write **head** and under **Ha** write **The** and under **Shanah** write **year**.*



Session 2 : October

YOM KIPPUR

Focus on the idea of chet as missing the mark. This is our time to say sorry and try again for better behavior this new year.

Give each child/family the book *The Hardest Word*.

Give each child/family a Velcro dart ball toss board.

Read *The Hardest Word*. Talk about why saying sorry is so hard. Talk about how it's so happy and good that we get to think about how we act, say sorry and try better.

Make a new board game using the *Sorry* game.

Give out little cards and have the children write what they are sorry about on their cards.

*Then, play the game *Sorry* and talk about how we can work on the things we feel badly about.*

Play with the Velcro ball toss game and aim for the middle target. Talk about how chet means missing the mark and how we need to aim each day for our best selves and then see at the end of the day how close we got. Then, we re-aim and make new strategies and try again the next day.



Session 3 : November

THANKSGIVING

Focus on the idea that in Hebrew the word for **Thanks** is **Todah** and it's a prayer book word, too. We are thankful for many things and when we speak about thankfulness, it helps us.

Read *The Thankful Book* by Todd Parr. Talk about whether those are things we are thankful for. What else would we add to the book?

Make Todah Thanksgiving Placemats.

Go to the BJE and cut out dye cuts of the Hebrew Todah. Have the child glue it to a card stock placemat. Around it write all the words and draw pictures of what they are most thankful for. Use clear contact paper for the front and back so that the placemats are sort of waterproof.



Session 4 : December

CHANUKAH

Focus on the story of Chanukah. Make sure to teach that the word Chanukah means re-dedication and comes from the same word as chinuch (education). Make sure the children know about the Chanukah symbols — the Chanukah menorah, the oil, and dreidel.

Read a pop-up story book about Chanukah. Make sure to point out the Maccabees and the Antiochus, the Temple and the miracle.

Give each child an emoji dreidel or an unusual one.

Make a book using a blank soft cover book that can be bought from Amazon of the Chanukah story. Tell the story slowly and as you tell it, they draw the main things happening. It can be like a Chanukah Comic Strip.

At the end, have them draw the menorah, a latke and donut, and a dreidel with the rules.



Session 5 : January

TU BISHVAT

Focus on taking care of the earth as a Jewish practice and loving nature and the cycle of the seasons.

Read the book *10 Things We Can Do to Take Care of Our World*.

Talk about what we do to take care of our earth and natural resources.

Make flower pots with stickers and sharpies. Plant parsley seeds in the hopes they will sprout in time for Passover.

Give each child a clear plastic cup and fill it with a little white grape juice (ask parents first if they can try the grape juice or just observe like a science experiment).

Explain that the word Seder means order, and we also have a Passover seder, which is the order of the meal, and a Siddur is a prayer book because that is the order of the prayers.

Make a Tu Bishvat Poster on which they should draw the four cups in front of them.

They should match the crayons/blend with the color of the white grape juice (buy the big box of crayons to give a lot of choices).

Ask them what season this looks like. Winter! They should draw winter next to the white cup.

Next, add in a little red grape juice and it's Spring! They should draw flower buds and match the pink in their cup.

Next, add a little more red and it's Summer. They can draw the hot summer sun.

Last is all red and it's Fall. They can draw the deep red leaves.

On the back have them draw a tree and write all around it all of the things trees give us.



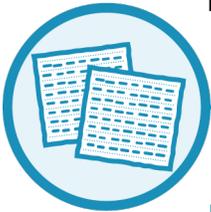
Session 6 : February

PURIM

Focus on the story of Purim and who is a hero.

Make a poster showing the Purim story by doodling as you listen to the story of Purim told slowly and with lots of emotion.

Make puppets of the main characters and act out the main scenes. Use blank hand puppets and fabric markers. Talk about which characters were heroes. Remind everyone about the hamantachen cookie.



Session 7 : March

PASSOVER

Focus on the story of Passover and the Seder plate items. Teach about the three 4s in Passover.

Show the Seder plate from a wooden set. Talk about what each item represents and go through the whole Passover story — from how we got to Egypt to baby Moses to the burning bush, the plagues — and talk about how it's a hard holiday in many ways.

Make posters showing The Number 4 in Passover!

Using stickers of all different people — from witches to clowns to babies (Melissa and Doug has a good set) — let the children put the 4 children down (mean, smart, clueless, and checked out) and talk about how we are all of these things at different times.

Using cool wine glass and grape stickers, make the four cups. Talk about what each cup means, and about how they represent that God took us out, helped us, and made us into a community

Using neat question mark stickers, have four of them and draw next to each question: matzah, bitter herbs, two dips, and a pillow.



MITZVAH MANIA

Session 8 : April

Focus on what a mitzvah is and how we can do acts of kindness as part of the way we practice and live our Judaism and Jewish values.

Read the book *It's a Mitzvah*.

Make a Mitzvah Mania Wall Hanging with pictures of kids doing various mitzvot. Next to the picture they can write when they did these things and what they did.

It should be on a chart that says: Mitzvah, What, Where, When, How/Why



The 10 Commandments

Session 9 : May

Focus on Shavuot and the 10 Commandments. Explain that eating dairy is a symbol of Israel being the land of milk and honey and nourishing our bodies like Torah nourishes our soul. Explain that we have flowers on Shavuot because the rabbis said that when we received the 10 Commandments, the bottom of Mount Sinai burst into bloom and the Israelites were told not to let their cattle graze, so grass must have grown!

Show how the 10 Commandments look in the Torah. Explain that there are two versions, which are very similar.

Read the book *The 11th Commandment*.

Make 10 Good Rules Posters shaped like the tablets of the most important rules we live by.

Extra Activities:

Shema Pillowcase

Listen to Rabbi Darby's YouTube where he teaches the Shema in sign language.

The Golden Rule

Read Ilene Cooper's The Golden Rule and make gold posters with everything gold — gold stickers, stampers, tape, etc. — to show one version of the Golden Rule.

Mezzuah

Using sharpies and stickers, decorate clear plastic tubing from Home Depot. Put in a Xerox copy of the mezzuah Shema, and on the back have the child write their own prayer for their home or their room.

Make sure the kids know the Shema.

Extra, extra is to teach the Alef Bet as you have extra time each session!