



JUDAISM, RELATIONSHIPS AND SUSTAINABILITY

The program is intended for grades 7-9

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| RATIONALE |

Have you ever tried to stop the sun from rising or the moon from waxing and waning throughout the month? The rhythms of nature are not affected by human decisions. Still, people live in nature, and we can see that human decisions and actions have a cumulative effect on global processes, changing how nature works.

Yarok, is a connection program between Israeli and Diaspora Jewry, which will explore the tension between the unchanging, fixed laws of nature and human influence on the environment. We aim to enable students in Israel and the Diaspora to see the wonder and beauty of nature and its role in our lives, and to internalize the idea that human actions impact the environment. This sense of wonder and awareness of nature will encourage us to live our lives according to principles of sustainability, in both partner classrooms here and in Israel. Sustainability, in this context, means protecting the environment so that it will continue to be functional and productive in the long term, or, in other words, leading a way of life today that will not prevent future generations from enjoying the same conditions that we do.

In order to live sustainably, we have to understand and act according to several principles: a) all living things on this planet have a purpose and a place in the world; b) the earth's resources are limited so we must use them wisely; c) the earth has certain renewal capabilities and our consumption impacts those capabilities; and d) our choices as human beings are the key to sustainability.

Judaism provides us with social and environmental laws that reflect these principles: laws regarding trees, animals, land, agriculture, and more. As early as the Bible, there are laws that form the basis of the relationship between people and the environment. Later, in the Mishnah and the Talmud, we see how the sages and leaders of each generation apply these laws on a practical level. It is natural, therefore, that the world of Jewish tradition, and particularly the commandments regarding nature, will be the common ground between us and our friends, the students in Israel. But Judaism is not our only source of common ground; the earth that we live on is one and the same, whether we live in the Middle East, Australia, Africa, or the US. As a result, our actions on one side of the earth influence our friends on the other side. We will begin the **Yarok** program together on the basis of our shared Jewish heritage regarding the environment, and our understanding of the shared responsibility we have to protect the earth.

Even though we cannot make the sun change course or stop the moon's progress, we do have the power to pause for a moment in the rush of life, in order to rest and enable all of nature to rest in turn. The most well-known form of rest is the Shabbat, which is described at the end of the biblical creation story: "God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day God rested from all the work that God created" (Genesis 2:3).

Another form of rest in Judaism is the Shmita year (Sabbatical): "When you come to the land that I will give you, the land will observe a Sabbath rest to God" (Leviticus 25:2). Just as Shabbat is the seventh day, Shmita is the seventh year. In the Shmita year, Jews are commanded to rest from agricultural work, which in the past was their main source of livelihood, and allow those who are less fortunate to gather the produce that is left.



These two forms of rest, Shabbat and Shmita, are important and have a great impact on the environment. We are happy to see that even early on, the sages of Judaism were blessed with the wisdom to help us better support nature and the diverse forms of life on earth.

Yarok is structured according to the Jewish rhythm of rest – six units of activity, and afterwards a rest in which each group is invited to continue building its relationship according to their own rhythm. The six units focus on the following topics:

Unit One: “God divided the light from the darkness” (Genesis 1:4) – This unit will shine a light on the program. We will get to know the other participants and explore what unites and divides us in our relationship to nature and the environment.

Unit Two: “Let it divide the waters from the waters” (Genesis 1:6) – This unit will focus on water, sources, prayers, influences and experiences.

Unit Three: “Fruit trees giving fruit each according to its kind” (Genesis 1:11) – This unit will focus on trees, roots, branches, and fruit.

Unit Four: “Let them be signs, for the festivals, days, and years” (Genesis 1:14) – This unit will focus on the awareness of nature and our sense of wonder, nature and its influence on holidays, Jewish and non-Jewish.

Unit Five: “God blessed them saying: Be fruitful and multiply” (Genesis 1:22) – This unit will focus on consumption, consumerism, recycling, and related topics.

Unit Six: “God saw all that God had made, and behold, it was very good. There was evening and there was morning, the sixth day” (Genesis 1:31) – This unit will focus on the Shmita year and thankfulness.

Hakhel (literally, to assemble) – At the end of the Shmita year, the Jewish people is commanded to gather together and learn Torah from the sages. Similarly, we suggest that at the end of their learning together, students will produce a presentation for the entire school, describing what they have learned and the friends they made.

As citizens of the world, both we and our friends in Israel, inhabit one planet. Yarok's first and foremost goal is to connect us with friends from Israel. We seek to use our shared learning, based on the Jewish heritage that we share, as a means of building these relationships. We also aim to explore together our thoughts on sustainability. In addition, the program has the following goals:



| PROGRAM GOALS |

Students will:

1. **Get to know their peers in the partner class and build relationships based on their shared learning experience.**
2. **Study and understand concepts related to sustainability and its implementation in their community, in Israel, and around the world.**
3. **Look at sustainability as it relates to their lives through a Jewish, value-oriented lens.**
4. **Identify and discuss environmental issues in the two communities.**
5. **Share different ways of dealing with environmental issues and dilemmas relevant to Jewish life in the parnters' respective communities and gain a deeper understanding of these issues and how their friends in Israel deal with them.**
7. **Develop a sense of connection between the two schools, mutual responsibility, and responsibility to the environment through shared activities applying what they have learned together.**

| PROGRAM STRUCTURE |

The partnership program includes six 90 minute units. Each unit focuses on content related both to sustainability and the connection between the two classes. At the end of each unit, there are one or more recommendations for enrichment activities to deepen the connection between the two classes. The program uses diverse methods and includes dynamic and engaging activities, enabling a broad range of expression and creativity for each individual student.

All of the lessons will be held in computerized classrooms to enable students to experience online interactive learning.





YAROK

Let There Be Light!

"And God divided the light from the darkness." (Genesis 1, 4)

Sunrise is like creation on a much smaller scale. In the beginning, a line of light rises, that grows larger and divides night and day, darkness and light. The line of light becomes a little stronger, dividing the heavens and the earth. As the sun rises and the light becomes stronger, we can see more details on earth – we begin to see trees, bushes, and grass. The first living creatures to wake up are the birds, which begin to sing. After them, the larger animals begin their activity; the mammals stretch and yawn, and begin their day. Finally, human beings wake from their sleep, pushing their way into the world, possessing the strongest presence.

Sunrise is like creation in order to teach us that every day is a new day during which anything can happen. Every day is a whole world on its own; it is in our power to destroy the day or to build it up as we see fit, to learn something new or to create something new that didn't exist the day before. Most importantly, sunrise teaches us that even after the darkest night, in the end the light will rise (Eliad Lapidot). The first unit is the sunrise of this program, in which we will shine a light on our lives so that that we can introduce ourselves.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. To introduce the program and concepts of sustainability.
2. To introduce ourselves to the partner class.
3. To begin to develop students' order of priorities regarding their relationship to the environment.

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Introduction to the Program (3 minutes)

Explain to the students that we are beginning a partnership program with a class from Israel. Describe the partner class - where it is located, how many students there are, and so on. Explain that in this program we will discuss issues of ecology and sustainability from a Jewish perspective. At the same time, we will get to know our new friends and learn what they think about these topics. We will send some of the things that we make in this class to them, so that they can get to know us better. We will receive things that they made for us, so that we can get to know them and learn from them about how people view sustainability where they live. Give the students an opportunity to ask questions.

You can use Google maps to locate your partner class's school. Start with a map of the world, and narrow in on Israel, then on the city in which they live, and finally the street. If possible, use Google street view to see the street and even the school.

2. Getting to Know Our Partner Class (10 minutes)

Break up the students into pairs or groups of three, according to where they are sitting. Project the questions about their new friends on to the Smart Board. Each group looks for the answers to these questions on the internet. The group that answers all the questions first, wins. (See Appendix A for questions).

| Suggestion |

In classes where there is no Smart Board the questions can be handed out on a sheet of paper.



3. Our Relationship to the Environment (15 min)

Project statements on to the Smart Board (see Appendix B for examples of statements). For each statement, ask all students who agree with the statement to raise their hands, and count how many students raise their hands. Write the number of students who agree with each statement on the board. Ask students why they agree with each statement or why they disagree.

At the end, calculate the percentage of students who agree with each statement, and send the numbers to your partner class. Ask them to send us their numbers, and we will look at the similarities and differences between the classes.

In classes where there is no Smart Board the statements can be written on the board or hung on printed pieces of paper.

You can also make a video of the discussion or a video of the students reading the percentages out loud, and send the video to the partner class.

4. Defining Sustainability (5 minutes)

Write the word “sustainability” on the board and ask the students to say their associations with the word. Write their answers on the board. If there are students who know how to explain what sustainability means, ask them to do so. Add to their explanation: Sustainability, in this context, means protecting the environment so that the system will continue to be functional and productive in the long term, or, in other words, leading a way of life today that will not prevent future generations from enjoying the same conditions that we do. It is important to remember that nature supports human life on this earth – through providing rainfall, clean drinking water, and oxygen; enabling agriculture; and preserving climate stability. All of these are “free services of nature.” Nature doesn’t demand something from us in return. But without these things, we would have to deal with extreme situations like drought and the inability to find food to sustain us.

5. Havruta Study (20 minutes)

For hundreds of years, Jews have been studying in pairs – *havruta*. *Havruta* enables us to learn in greater depth, and to create small groups of learners where every voice is equally important. We are going to see what it is like to learn in *havruta*. Split the class into five groups (or fewer, if the class is too small). Each group will receive a text from the Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Ta’anit, that tells the story of Honi the Circle-Drawer (see Appendix C). Ask the students to read and discuss the text together, and to answer the attached questions (see Appendix C). When they are done answering the questions, ask each group to share some of the insights they gained from reading the story.



The following are the questions for the students to answer in havruta:

- **Compare and contrast the approaches of Honi the Circle-Drawer and the man who planted the carob tree.**

(Honi the Circle-Drawer is focused on the present and immediate enjoyment. He doesn't understand why he should work if he will not enjoy the fruits of his labor. The man who planted the carob tree is thinking about future generations. He expresses his thanks for what previous generations did for him by taking care of future generations.)

- **Why do you think Honi the Circle-Drawer got upset when he went to the *beit midrash* (study hall)?**

(Honi is so focused on the present that he can't enjoy the fruits of his spiritual work that he did seventy years ago. He only wants to get respect right now, in the present. But he is not given respect in the present, so he is upset.)

- **What is the connection between this story and sustainability?**

(Sustainability means that we lead our lives today in a way that will enable future generations to survive. The man who plants the carob tree acts according to the principles of sustainability. Honi is not able to act in a sustainable way, and therefore he is ultimately unable to survive.)

6. Class Discussion (10 minutes)

Discuss: What do we, as human beings, need to do in order to continue to enjoy the “free services of nature”?

Possible student answers:

- Don't litter in public spaces.
- Conserve water.
- Conserve electricity.
- Recycle.
- Use public transportation.
- Participate in political rallies in support of protecting the environment.

Write the students' answers on the board, and ask who feels that they live in a sustainable way, and what do they do to live sustainably. Try to allow as many students as possible to express themselves, including those students who do not feel that they live sustainably. Ask those students what they do (or don't do)



to not live sustainably. Discuss: How do you think our new Israeli friends lead their lives – are they more or less environmentally aware than we are? Do they live their lives more or less sustainably than we do? Why?

7. A Deeper Understanding of Sustainability (15 minutes)

Explain that each one of us may personally believe that he is more or less living according to the principles of sustainability. Ask several students to describe a typical day in their lives and write on the board every action they do. We suggest that you start from when they get home from school. For example, you returned home from school and decided to spend the afternoon in the mall. You walked around for a while, bought a shirt, then bought some food and returned home.

As the students are speaking, ask them detailed questions to help them understand the environmental impact of their actions. For example, how did you get to the mall? Did you walk, bike, drive, or take public transportation? What was the shirt that you bought made out of? What did you buy to eat? Where do they make that food?

Explain that every choice we make is important, and has implications on the environment. Let's say you bought a cotton shirt. That cotton grows somewhere. When it is ready, people use agricultural machinery to pick the cotton, and other machinery to process the cotton in order to make your shirt. Each of these things has a price for the environment. If the shirt is made outside of your area, it needs to be flown to where you live, which uses a lot of fuel, and so forth.

Scientists have found a more exact way to calculate how much of the environment (measured as the amount of biologically productive land and sea area) is necessary to support a particular action of the individual. The result of these calculations is called the "ecological footprint." Just as when we are walking on the beach we leave a footprint in the sand, so too when we choose what to do and what to use, we leave a footprint on the earth. Unlike a footprint on the sand which can be easily erased by the wind and waves, our ecological footprint cannot be erased, and it impacts the quality of life of future generations.

Building on their understanding that the actions of every individual or group impact the environment, scientists measured the ecological footprint of different countries, and compared it to the area that each country has to support its population. In other words, they measured the area of the earth that is necessary for that country to grow its food and make its clothes, the area of trees necessary in order to clean the air as a result of the cars used in that country, and so on.

The following are some of the scientists' findings:



Country	Ecological footprint in gha* per person	Area in gha* per person	Does the country have a large enough area to provide for its current ecological footprint?
USA	8	3.87	No, there is a shortage of 4.13 gha per person.
Canada	7.01	14.92	Yes, there is an extra 7.91gha per person.
Netherlands	6.19	1.03	No, there is a shortage of 5.16 gha per person.
Japan	4.73	0.6	No, there is a shortage of 4.13 gha per person.
Israel	4.82	0.32	No, there is a shortage of 4.5 gha per person.
Switzerland	5.02	1.24	No, there is a shortage of 3.78 gha per person.
Egypt	1.66	0.62	No, there is a shortage of 1.04 gha per person.
China	2.21	0.98	No, there is a shortage of 1.23 gha per person.
India	0.91	0.51	No, there is a shortage of 0.4 gha per person.
International Average	2.7	1.8	No, there is a shortage of 0.9 gha per person.

*We use the unit global hectare (gha) to measure ecological footprints of people and activities and the biocapacity of the earth or its regions.

Ask the students to respond to the findings in the chart:

- What do you understand from the chart?
- What do these findings mean for us?
- What do you think about these findings?

If not already discussed, raise the following points:



- Note the differences between the ecological footprints of different countries (USA – 8, India – 0.91, Switzerland – 5.02, Egypt – 1.66). What is the meaning of these findings? The differences in the ecological footprints mean that there is a big difference in how much different countries consume. Countries with a higher quality of life (richer countries) generally consume more and therefore have larger ecological footprints per person, while countries with a lower quality of life (poorer countries) generally consume less and therefore have smaller ecological footprints per person. Discuss: Is it better to have more countries that are rich or more countries that are poor?
- Note the differences in area per person in each country. (For example, Canada is a huge country with relatively few people, so there is a large area available per person. This is why Canada has more area than it needs even though it has a relatively high ecological footprint per person.) Discuss: How do you think we can address these differences?
- Note that the international average leaves us with a shortage of area. What does this mean? It is like being in debt. Some countries are living on the expense of other countries, and the whole world is living on the expense of future generations. At some future point – we don't know when – the natural world will no longer be able to provide for our needs. There won't be clean air or clean drinking water; we will suffer from nuisances like mosquitoes who don't have a natural enemy; the weather will become extreme; and so on.

8. Calculating Your Ecological Footprint (20 minutes)

The same scientists, who developed the model for ecological footprints and rated each country according to that model, also developed a questionnaire so that each person can calculate his or her ecological footprint. We are going to fill out that questionnaire now. Each student answers the questions and finds out his or her personal ecological footprint. See here for the questionnaire:

http://www.footprintnetwork.org/en/index.php/GFN/page/personal_footprint/

After the students fill in the questionnaire, ask several students to share their results with the class and to discuss their responses to the questionnaire and their results. Together, you can calculate the class average.

| Suggestion |

You can also make a video of students reading the results out loud or of an interview with one of the students about their responses and results, and send it to the partner class. Alternatively, you can print the screen for the questionnaire.



9. Making a PowerPoint presentation for Our Friends in Israel (20 minutes)

Every student makes a PowerPoint presentation with the student's name, ecological footprint (according to the questionnaire), and thoughts on the results of the questionnaire, including one step that the student will take to improve the situation. If possible, include a picture.

Ask for a volunteer to compile all the information into one PowerPoint presentation with all of the students' projects. All of the students send their projects to the volunteer. We recommend adding different colors and a background song so that the PowerPoint presentation will be fun to watch. Send the PowerPoint presentation by email or using google drive to the partner class. In the next class, we will see the PowerPoint presentation sent them and the one they sent us.

| Suggestion |

If there is no time to compile all the information into one presentation, an other option is to create one PowerPoint presentation with a few slides that are each done in groups of several students together, taking turns on the computer during another activity.

| Suggestion |

You can use the site <http://prezi.com/> to make your PowerPoint.

10. Conclusion (5 minutes)

Today, we learned two important concepts: "sustainability" and "the ecological footprint". We saw that every action a person or country takes, impacts the earth and our environment. We found that the Torah and other Jewish sources already addressed the issue of protecting the environment a long time ago. So we can see of the importance of this issue. In the upcoming lessons, we will talk about different approaches to sustainability and begin to get to know our new friends.





| OUR NEW FRIENDS |

FACTS ABOUT ISRAEL

Number of Citizens: _____

Number of Jews: _____

Size: _____

Currency: _____

Name of the Prime Minister: _____

Amount of Rainfall per Year: _____

Number of Miles from Here to Israel: _____

Number of Hours on a Plane from Here to Israel: _____

Appendix A - Our new friends - Unit 1 - Let There be Light



| STATEMENTS |

“The world was created for me” – people are the purpose of creation and the world is intended to be for their use.

There are harmful and dangerous animals; the world would be better without them.

The earth doesn't belong to me, and I am responsible to take care of it for future generations.

Environmentalists are just trying to scare us; the earth is not really in danger.

There is no connection between Judaism and protecting the environment.

These statements are just examples. The teachers from the two partner classes should feel free to add statements that they choose together.



| HONI THE CIRCLE-DRAWER |

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Taanit 23a

One day he [Honi the Circle Drawer] was journeying on the road and he saw a man planting a carob tree.

[Honi] said to him: How long does it take [for this tree] to bear fruit?

The man replied: Seventy years.

[Honi] said to him: Are you certain that you will live another seventy years and eat from [the tree]?

The man replied: I found [ready grown] carob trees in the world; as my forefathers planted these for me, so I too plant these for my children.

[Honi] sat down to have a meal and sleep overcame him. As he slept a rocky formation enclosed him which hid him from sight, and he continued to sleep for seventy years. When he awoke, he saw a man gathering the fruit of the carob tree.

He asked him: Are you the man who planted the tree?

The man replied: I am his grandson.

[Honi] said: It is clear that I slept for seventy years. . .

[Honi] returned home.

He said: Is the son of Honi the Circle-Drawer still alive?

They said to him: His son is no more, but his grandson is still living.

He said to them: I am Honi the Circle-Drawer!

They did not believe him.

Appendix C - Our new friends - Unit 1 - Let There be Light

[Honi] went to the *beit midrash* (study hall). He heard the scholars say: The law is as clear to us as in the days of Honi the Circle-Drawer, for whenever he came into the *beit midrash* (study hall) he would solve any difficulty the scholars had.

He said to them: I am [Honi the Circle-Drawer]!

But the scholars did not believe him, and they did not give him the respect due to him.

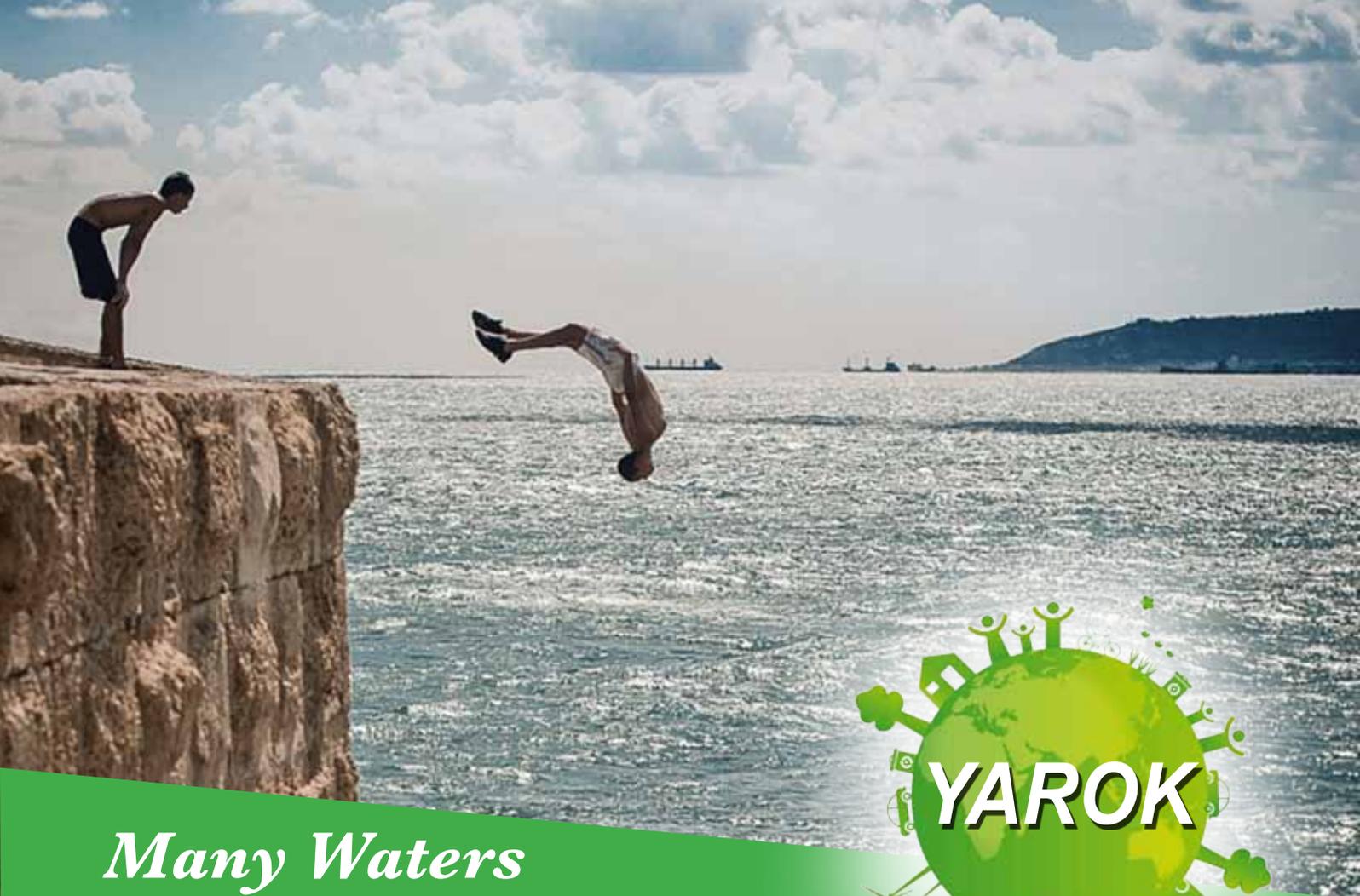
This hurt him greatly, and he prayed for mercy, and he died.

Raba said: This is the saying, "Either companionship or death."

Price of a Plane Ticket from Here to Israel: _____

- Compare and contrast the approaches of Honi the Circle-Drawer and the man who planted the carob tree.
- Why do you think Honi the Circle-Drawer got upset when he went to the *beit midrash* (study hall)?
- What is the connection between this story and sustainability?
- What would you have done were you in Honi's place?





Many Waters

“Let It Divide the Waters from the Waters” (Genesis 1:6)

There is no need to explain what water is. Water is all around us and makes up most of our body. We use it every day. Yet, especially in Israel and other dry climates, we are always longing for rain, and the Jewish tradition is full of prayers for rain. We are always thinking of different ways to increase the amount of available freshwater. Even though water is everywhere, we are still constantly in need of more of it. This makes it difficult to understand how we use water and to make an action plan for water use in our own lives. In this unit, we will focus on the topic of water. We will learn about water sources, its role in our lives, and its environmental and ecological implications.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. To get to know our new friends through the products we have exchanged.
2. To gain theoretical and practical knowledge regarding water use.
3. To make practical suggestions about water use today and evaluate those suggestions.

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Opening (10 to 20 minutes, according to how much time is available)

As a class, watch the presentation we received from our partner class. Ask for the student's initial responses: What drew your attention? What surprised you? What is the most important thing you learned from watching the presentation? Then go into more depth by comparing and contrasting the two classes and particularly their relationship to the environment. What are the differences in our ecological footprint and theirs? Discuss how these differences result from our different cultures, life-styles, and surroundings. (Even within the United States, you would find different ecological footprints.) In addition, the size of the country, and the amount of resources available, impact its people's ecological footprint – whether the country has more or less area than it needs to support its population. We will also look at the percentages of students in our partner class that agreed with the various statements that we discussed in the last class, and compare and contrast those percentages to the percentages in our class.

2. 1 vs. 100 (30 minutes)

Play a game together along the lines of 1 vs. 100. Hand out three pieces of paper to each student (you can use half a piece of paper for each) and ask the students to write on them. On the first, write A, on the second, B, and on the third, C (you can also replace A, B and C with λ , β , α or three different colored pieces of paper). Ask for two volunteers. The first will be the contestant, and the second will be his or her technical assistant.

The Game: Read the question and the three possible answers out loud to everyone. Ask the contestant to leave the classroom for a moment. While s/he is outside, all the students vote on which answer they think is right by holding up the piece of paper with the letter of the answer they chose. The technical assistant counts up the votes, and writes down how many students voted for each answer. Invite the contestant to return to the classroom, and ask him/her to answer the question.

If the contestant is right, then all of the students who gave the wrong answer are eliminated – they do not participate in the next round. The contestant gets points for each student who is eliminated, according to the points for that question.



If the contestant is wrong, s/he goes back to his or her seat and we ask for a new contestant. The number of points that the contestant earned up to now are divided between the students who answered the question correctly.

If the contestant continues to answer correctly, we recommend switching contestants after five questions, in order to bring back the students who were eliminated into the game and to keep up the interest in the game. The winner is the student with the most points at the end of the game.

Questions and answers can be found in Appendix A.

3. Class Discussion (20 minutes)

We will choose a few of these facts to learn about in more depth. Project the facts on the Smart Board (see Appendix B for facts), or write them on the blackboard.

Division of water sources on the earth: 97% salt water (oceans and seas) and 3% freshwater.

Explanation: When you look at the earth, you would think there should be no water shortage problem. After all, the vast majority of the earth is covered in water. But it is important to remember that only 3% of the water on the earth is fit for drinking (freshwater). Not only that; 79% of freshwater is in the form of snow and glaciers, which must melt in order to be used. The other 20% of freshwater is underground, and needs to be pumped up. This means that the amount of water which is available to us is very small and requires work in order to use it. Global warming causing glaciers to melt quicker, and industries polluting underground water sources, both impact the little freshwater we have.

The average American person's water footprint per day is 1,157 gallons of water.

Explanation: In the last lesson, we defined an ecological footprint as the area of the earth used for a particular action of a person or nation. Similarly, a water footprint is the amount of freshwater used for a particular action. The amount of water includes the water that is consumed and the water that is polluted. So for example, to grow one pound of potatoes requires 30 gallons of water, to make one pound of wheat bread requires 154 gallons of water, to grow one pound of chicken requires 815 gallons of water, and to grow one pound of beef requires between 2500 and 5000 gallons of water. Water is used not only for agriculture, but also for making drinks, washing industrial machines, and household tasks, such as showering, cooking, cleaning, etc. Just flushing the toilet can use as much as 35 gallons of freshwater per day per person, depending on how much water your toilet uses (toilet models can vary from 1.28 to 7 gallons per flush).

People living in Israel use four times the amount of water that local water resources supply.

Explanation: There are countries which are overflowing with water, where there is a high amount of rainfall and many lakes and rivers. In these countries, even if their water use is similar to water use in Israel, there is no shortage of water because there is so much water available. But in Israel, there is a low amount of rainfall, and there have not been serious steps taken to limit water use. As a result, today people in Israel use more water than available water resources can supply, so Israel is dipping into ancient water reservoirs. Once these reservoirs are empty, Israel is going to face a very difficult problem. (The United States, in contrast, has some areas which are overflowing with water, such as areas in the Southeast, and other areas which have a climate more similar to Israel, such as in the West.)



Over 1.1 billion people in the world suffer from lack of access to safe drinking water.

Explanation: Water pollution, lack of awareness, and lack of infrastructure have led to a situation where a huge number of people do not have access to clean and safe drinking water. This lack of access causes illness and sometimes death. Some scientists claim that we have already passed the point where simply raising awareness would be enough to solve the problem. As a result, the solution seems to be desalination, a process where salt water from the ocean or sea is converted to freshwater. But the main problem with desalination is that it is a very expensive process, and most people who lack access to safe drinking water live in poor countries that do not have the resources to invest in desalination.

Creating Slogans: After discussing these facts, divide the students into four small groups, and assign each group one of the facts above. Each group needs to come up with an advertising slogan to raise awareness of this fact and the problem it points to. After they finish, ask students to share their slogans. Ask: Why did you choose this slogan? What steps will you take as a result of what you learned?

Recommendation: Write the slogans in large letters on pieces of paper or poster board, and hang them throughout the school. Send the slogans to your partner class.

4. Text Study (20 minutes)

In pairs, students study the texts and answer the questions (see Appendix C). Ask some of the students to share what they learned.

In the class discussion of the first text, from Deuteronomy 11, make sure the students understand that the passage is about reward and punishment. If people behave well, they will receive rainfall and will have plenty of produce as a result. If not, the rain will not fall, and there will be no produce, and no life. Water is our life-force. People need to remember that their actions make a difference. We need to protect our water sources today so that future generations will be able to lead good lives

Regarding the second text, discuss how if there is no earth – meaning there is no respect for the earth – rain will not fall. If there is no rain, there is no earth (nothing will grow on the earth). It is clear that if there is no rain and nothing grows on the earth, there will be no life on the earth, and therefore there will be no people.

The third text is said beginning two weeks after Sukkot until Passover. In the summer, we say “Give a blessing” without adding “rain and dew.” This prayer was written at a time when people’s livelihood was based on working the land, so rain (or lack thereof) had a big impact on people’s livelihood.

5. Making a Video for Our Friends in Israel (20 minutes)

Students vote on which one of the prayers or blessings they wrote they would like to send to their partner class. Then they write the blessing on a poster board (they can translate it into Hebrew if possible), and take a short video, using someone’s phone, of the students holding the poster board and reading the prayer together. Email the video or upload it to google drive to share with their partner class. Also remember that you can hang up their slogans around the school and send them to their partner class.



6. Conclusion (5 minutes)

We have seen that water shortage is not only a result of lack of rain water, but also not using water wisely, and polluting water. Because of lack of time, we have not discussed all the causes of water shortage. Invite the students to continue learning about the topic by looking at websites such as <http://kids.nationalgeographic.com/kids/games/puzzlesquizzes/water-wiz/> and <http://www.gracelinks.org/1297/how-to-save-water>. Most importantly, think about practical steps that each one of you can take in order to help solve the water problem.





| GAME QUESTIONS |



1. When we heat up water or cool it down:

- A) Water boils at 100 degrees Celsius (212°F), and freezes at 0 degrees Celsius (32°F).
 - B) Water boils at 50 degrees Celsius (122°F), and freezes at -50 degrees Celsius (-58°F).
 - C) Water boils at 200 degrees Celsius (392°F), and freezes at 2 degrees Celsius (35.6°F).
- (10 points)*

2. Who is the biggest consumer of water?

- A) Households
 - B) Agriculture
 - C) Industry
- (20 points)*

3. What is the chemical formula for water?

- A) CO₂
 - B) H₂O
 - C) O₂H
- (25 points)*

4. According to the Jewish tradition, on what holiday is the Jewish people judged for water (how much rainfall there will be)?

- A) Rosh Ha-Shana
 - B) Shavuot
 - C) Sukkot
- (50 points)*

5. What are the percentages of salt water (oceans and seas) vs. freshwater (drinking water) on this earth?

- A) 50% salt water and 50% freshwater.
 - B) 20% salt water and 80% freshwater.
 - C) 97% salt water and 3% freshwater.
- (100 points)*

6. What is hydrotherapy?

- A) Fear of water.
 - B) Drinking too much water.
 - C) Using water for pain relief and treatment.
- (200 points)*

7. What is an aquifer?

A) An underground layer of rock saturated with water which acts as a reservoir for groundwater.

B) A natural or artificial lake or pond where water is collected and stored for use.

C) A fast moving river.

(300 points)

8. People living in Israel use:

A) The same amount of water as local water resources supply.

B) Four times the amount of water that local water resources supply.

C) Half the amount of water that local water resources supply.

9. The average African family uses 5 gallons of water per day.

How many gallons does the average American use each day?

A) 35

B) 91

C) 176

(400 points)

10. In the average home, the highest use of water is:

A) Using the washing machine.

B) Flushing the toilet.

C) Taking showers and baths.

(500 points)

11. The average American person's water footprint per day is:

A) 206 gallons of water.

B) 403 gallons of water.

C) 1,157 gallons of water.

(500 points)

12. Which of the below is the best way to make your water footprint smaller?

A) Becoming a vegetarian.

B) Becoming a vegan.

C) Showering only once a week.

(500 points)

13. Population growth in Scotland led to:

A) The swamps drying out, causing the disappearance of many species.

B) The government temporarily shutting down water supply for limited periods.

C) Pollution of water sources in the capitol city.

(500 points)

14. How many people in the world suffer from lack of access to safe drinking water?

A) Over 1.1 billion people

B) Over half a billion people

C) Over two million people

(500 points)

15. How many times does the word water appear in the Bible?

A) 542

B) 452

C) 254

(500 points)





| WATER FACTS |

Division of water sources on the earth: 97% salt water (oceans and seas) and 3% freshwater.

The average American person's water footprint per day is 1,157 gallons of water.

People living in Israel use four times the amount of water that local water resources supply.

Over 1.1 billion people in the world suffer from lack of access to safe drinking water.



If you obey My commandments which I command you on this day, to love the Lord your God, and to serve Him with all your heart and with all your soul, I will grant the rain for your land in its season, the early rain and the late. You will gather in your new grain, wine, and oil. I will also provide grass in the fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied. Take care not to be led astray to serve other gods and bow to them. For the Lord will become angry with you, and He will shut up the skies so that there will be no rain and the ground will not yield its produce, and you will soon disappear from the good land that the Lord is giving you. (Deuteronomy 11:13-17)

- Summarize the message of this passage in one sentence.
- What is the role of water in this passage?
- What is the role of water in our lives?
- What do you think people should do today to avoid the punishment described in this passage?

Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai said: Three things are of equal importance – earth, humans, and rain. Rabbi Levi ben Hiyyata said: ... Without earth, there is no rain, and without rain, there is no earth, and without earth or rain, there are no humans. (Genesis Rabbah 13)

- Explain in your own words why without earth or water, humans cannot exist.
- Add your own idea: Without _____, humans cannot exist.

Bless for us, Lord our God, this year and all the varieties of its produce for good; and give dew and rain for a blessing on the face of the earth. (Amidah morning prayer)

(This prayer for rain is said only in the winter months).

- Write your own prayer or blessing about water that is relevant for us today.

Appendix C - Many Waters - Unit 2



YAROK

A Person is a Tree of the Field

“Fruit trees of every kind that bear fruit” (Genesis 1:11)

“A person is a tree of the field” describes briefly and simply the connection between people and trees. But we know that this connection is deeper and broader: we call our family history our “roots” and call our children the “fruit of the womb.” This unit will explore the importance of trees to our daily existence and possibilities for making real change in our relationship to them.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. To get to know our partner class better.
2. To learn about trees and their role in the ecological system.
3. To encourage a personal sense of responsibility in the students.

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Opening (10 minutes)

As a class, watch the video you received from your partner class. Think about what we did in our video, and what are the similarities and differences between the two videos. Ask: What can you learn from your partner class's video? Has anything changed for you as a result of the last lesson regarding how you think about and use water?

Remind the students that the land of Israel is always in need of water, especially in contrast to the United States, which in most states, often has an abundance of water. This means that our Israeli friends' relationship with water is different than ours. For example, the traditional Jewish prayers include a prayer for rain. Each year we pray that this will be a year full of rain. Jews throughout the world say this prayer, including in North America, where we often do not feel a lack of rain (at least if we live on the East Coast). This is because the focus of prayer is the land of Israel, and Jews throughout the world are praying for rain in Israel, even though in North America we might see rain as a nuisance.

For example, in the popular children's song, we sing "Rain, rain, go away, come again another day" (and according to some versions there is a second verse: "Rain, rain, go away, little Johnny wants to play.") Do you think that there could be such a song in Israel? In Israeli children's songs, children pray for and rejoice in rain (see, for example, Leah Goldberg's song: *Come, Come Clouds, Bring Rain to the Gardens*).

When possible, play the YouTube video of both songs on a Smart Board.

2. Game (10 minutes)

Split the students into two groups. Each group takes turns naming songs about trees, woods, or forest (the songs can also be in Hebrew, if students know relevant songs in Hebrew). The group that names the most songs wins. If the students would like to, and there is enough time, students can sing the songs together.

Alternatively, if you think your students will have difficulty thinking of songs relating to trees, you can teach them a Hebrew song about trees, or play the song on YouTube. See, for example, Shalom Hanokh's *Ki Ha-Adam Etz Ha-Sadeh* (for video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0V-M7h6DGE&list=RDp0V-M7h6DGE>, for Hebrew lyrics: <http://shironet.mako.co.il/artist?type=lyrics&lang=1&prfid=960&wrkid=1680>, and for English lyrics: <http://www.hebrewsongs.com/?song=etzhasadeh>).



3. Learning about Trees as a Class (15 minutes)

We see that songs (and especially Israeli/Jewish songs) are full of trees. There are many reasons for this, the most important of which is that trees play a crucial role in maintaining life on earth. Project on the Smart Board different reasons that trees are important (see Appendix A for reasons). Then explain each reason.

When there is no access to a Smart Board, simply write the reasons on the board.

1) Ecological Importance: Green Lung

Photosynthesis is a process using sunlight that takes place in all green plants. In this process, the plant receives water and carbon dioxide (CO₂), and uses sunlight to convert them into glucose and release oxygen. Since humans need oxygen in order to survive, trees are essential to our survival.

In recent years, there has been increasing concern throughout the world regarding global warming – the rising concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere, and the harm this will cause to people and the environment. Trees, like all green plants, contribute by their very existence to fighting global warming, through the process of photosynthesis, by decreasing the concentration of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere and increasing the concentration of oxygen. The tree that is planted in the middle of a busy city, in an area polluted with carbon dioxide (which is a gas released by cars and machines, as well as people and animals when they breathe) is very important because of its impact on the concentration of carbon dioxide and oxygen in the atmosphere. That is why trees in the middle of the city serve as a “green lung,” creating an environment which sustains itself and us. Trees are the foundation of the ecological pyramid.

One of the most surprising facts is that a single tree is capable of cleaning, filtering, and purifying an enormous volume of polluted air, absorbing many pounds of dust and pollutants, and, throughout its life, producing hundreds of pounds of oxygen and absorbing many tons of carbon dioxide. The bigger and older a tree is, and the more leaves it has, the more it contributes to the environment, and that is why it is particularly important to protect older trees.

2) Ecological Importance: Decreasing Erosion and Water Run-Off and Stabilizing the Soil

Trees help decrease erosion and water run-off through their systems of roots, which spread out around them, enabling better quality water to be absorbed into the soil and stabilizing the soil. Rain that falls on the tree goes first through the treetop, which turns the rain into smaller drops. In this way, the treetop decreases the intensity of the rainfall on the land, and thus decreases the erosion and water run-off that result from it. The tree's benefit to the land is the greatest in those places where the land is exposed and not paved.

3) Ecological Importance: Habitats for Diverse Species

Trees create a habitat for many living things. Many food chains can be found on top of trees and underneath them; trees are the base for all of these. For birds, trees serve as a place to rest and make their nests, a place to hide them and protect them, and also a source of food, either directly or indirectly. Many insects,



such as beetles, bees, and butterflies, help pollinate flowers and produce fruit, and in return enjoy nectar, pollen, and more. Every part of the tree creates a habitat for many different living things. In most cases, every tree creates a habitat for a magnificent food chain of different living things. All of the different living things that live in the habitat of the tree are in equilibrium with one another, just as in any habitat in nature. The larger and more developed the tree, the more diverse the living things that find a home there.

4) Contribution to the Climate

Everyone knows what it feels like to look for shade on a hot summer day, and the feeling of pleasure when you find a tree that provides shade. This feeling can also be measured more exactly through measuring the temperature and the intensity of the light. We can see that by providing shade, the tree creates a more comfortable micro-climate. The evaporation of water from the leaves, and the shade that is created, lower the temperature under the tree by seven to nine degrees Fahrenheit. In addition, the tree lowers the heat index (how hot it feels) and decreases both direct and indirect sunlight, making it feel much more pleasant to sit near or under a tree.

5) Aesthetic Value: Trees as part of our landscape

The tree looks different in every season, and even throughout the day: the leaves' shapes and colors, falling leaves, the growth of flowers and fruit, interesting tree trunks, and fascinating roots all have aesthetic value.

6) Nutritional Value

Fruit trees are important for all the reasons mentioned above, and they are also important because they provide food for us: olives, pomegranates, almonds, apples, oranges, and other fruits that are an essential part of our diet.

7) Healing Value

Some trees have healing elements, such as the oils that can be derived from tea trees or eucalyptus trees. One of the most popular and well-known medicines throughout time, aspirin, was first produced from the bark of a willow tree. Looking at trees, or spending time in a beautiful garden, or hiking in a forest, can make us feel peaceful and calm. Trees are calming, help lower blood pressure, and improve our sense of well-being.

8) Economic Value

The fact that trees are essential to our existence raises their economic value. Beautiful trees have high economic value, because they raise property values, enabling even city people to fulfill their dream of living in a green environment. People are willing to pay a higher price for an apartment that is next to a park or an apartment that has windows looking out to a landscape of trees.



4. Watching a Video (15 minutes)

As a class, watch a video based on the book, *The Man who Planted Trees*, by Jean Giono. Ask students to write down their responses and feelings as they watch the video.

5. Class Discussion about the Video (10 minutes)

Ask students to share their thoughts and feelings in response to the video. Ask if they believed in the beginning of the story that Elezeard would succeed in making such great change through his actions.

6. More Facts (10 minutes)

This story inspired many people in the world to get up and do something like what Elezeard did. In this way, a movement developed of people and organizations throughout the world whose goal was to create as many as possible forests out of nothing. Cut out slips of paper, and write one of the facts in Appendix B on each slip of paper. Fold up each slip of paper and mix them up. Ask students to come up one by one, choose one of the slips of the paper, and read the fact out loud to the class.

7. Hevruta Study and Photos (20 minutes)

Divide the students into pairs or small groups for havruta study. Each group receives a source sheet about trees (see Appendix C). Each group chooses one quote that they particularly like and explains why. In addition, each group thinks of a project that they can do as a class to help trees. It is important to remind the students that even small acts can make a difference. Just as all that Elezeard did was plant acorns, and he made a big change in his environment, so too we can do small acts that will lead to big changes. At the end of the havruta study, gather the students together and ask them to share their ideas for class projects. Together, choose one project to do as a class.

Then, students go outside and find trees near the school. They take photos (selfies) with the trees, while holding up a piece of paper with the quote and their project suggestion. Send the photos to the partner class.

When possible prepare a Prezi presentation with all the photos or a collage that can be uploaded to google drive and then downloaded by the partner class and exhibited both in class and the school.

| PREPARATION FOR NEXT CLASS |

Ask students to bring photos of themselves celebrating one of the Jewish holidays (sitting around the Passover Seder table, dressed up in costume for Purim, decorating the Sukkah, etc.) Gather the photos together to make a presentation for the partner class. Each student can bring more than one photo. Ideally, the photos should be digital rather than printed so that they can easily be included in the presentation.





WHY ARE TREES IMPORTANT?

1. Ecological Importance: “Green Lung”

Cleaning the air through photosynthesis

2. Ecological Importance: Decreasing Erosion and Water Run-Off and Stabilizing the Soil

Through the system of roots

3. Ecological Importance: Habitats for Diverse Species

One can find many living creatures in and around trees.

4. Contribution to the Climate

Lowers the temperature by seven to nine degrees Fahrenheit

5. Aesthetic Value: Trees as Part of the Landscape

Leaves, flowers, and fruit enhance our environment.

6. Nutritional Value

Fruits are full of essential vitamins and minerals.

7. Healing Value

Medicinal and calming effects

8. Economic Value

Trees raise property values.



FACTS

Abdul Kareem, from India, created a forest out of nothing over a period of nineteen years, using the same approach as the man who planted trees.

Jadav Payeng planted a forest over an area of 1,360 acres, and called it the Molai Forest, in Assam, India.

An organization called "Trees for the Future" has assisted more than 170,000 families, in 6,800 villages of Asia, Africa, and the Americas, to plant over 35 million trees.

Wangari Maathai, 2004 Nobel Peace Prize recipient, founded the "Green Belt Movement" which planted over 47 million trees to restore the Kenyan environment.

Shanghai Roots & Shoots launched "The Million Tree Project" in Kulun Qi, Inner Mongolia to plant one million trees to stop desertification and alleviate global warming.

Another modest planter of trees is Professor Marthinus Daneel. Daneel, working together with local churches, led a tree planting project in Zimbabwe, planting millions of trees there. Due to instability in Zimbabwe in recent years, these efforts have been significantly cut back.

Concerned about global warming, Bhausahab Thorat planted 45 million seeds after being inspired by the book. Thorat began his project in June 2006 at Sangamner, Maharashtra, India.

The United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) supports the project.

(See http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Man_Who_Planted_Trees for more information).





HAVRUTA STUDY

The Lord God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and God placed there the person that God created. From the ground, the Lord God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad (Genesis 2:8-9).

When you enter the land, and plant any tree for food... (Leviticus 19:23).

A person is like a tree planted in the water, its roots searching.

A person is like a bush facing the heavens, fire burning within it (Yankele Rotblit).

A person is like the tree of a field – like the person, the tree grows.

Like the tree, the person is cut down – and I do not know where I have been and where I am going – like the tree of the field (Natan Zach).

If you are planting a tree and they tell you the Messiah has come –

Plant the tree, and then go greet the Messiah (Avot de-Rabbi Natan B, 31).

A 70 year-old tree cannot be replaced by any useful new building. There is no replacement for an old tree. Destroying such a tree uproots humanity. There is no building, or electric wire, more important than a thick Eucalyptus, an old sycamore, or a grove of oaks. These are the roots of humanity. A building can be built here or there, but one cannot replace a one hundred-year-old tree. It is not only vandalism; it undermines our future. Yet here people cut down trees so easily. Trees are always in the way of someone or something, whether the straight line of the sidewalk, electric wires, or a small plaza that someone planned with an imagination whose wings were clipped... (David Ben Gurion, the first Prime Minister of Israel, in a speech to the Israeli Parliament in 1962).

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Read the quotes above.
2. Choose one quote that you particularly identify with and explain why.
3. Think of a class project that is easy to do, like the project of Elezeard Bouffier, that can make a big difference. Fill in the following:

The problem that I identified is: _____

My response is: _____

I need the following in order to do my project: _____

My project will take this amount of time: _____

The first step is: _____

What will happen when we finish the project? What change will this project lead to? _____

4. Write down the quote you chose on a poster-board or piece of construction paper, and next to the quote write down (in brief) your suggestion for a class project. Go out to the school yard and find a tree. Take your photograph next to the tree holding up your piece of paper with the quote and project suggestion (a selfie with the tree and poster).





Holidays and Wonder

*“Let them be signs, for the festivals,
days, and years” (Genesis 1:14)*

It is difficult to describe in writing the experience of wonder, no matter how lyrical your words are, because for the most part wonder is an experience beyond words. If so, why is wonder an important part of the educational process? When we are talking about the environmental crisis, many people think only about what we (human beings) do to nature, and this is the starting point for dealing with the topic. But in doing so, they skip a crucial first step. What we allow ourselves to do to nature is a function of what we allow nature to do to us – how we allow nature to affect us. If nature does nothing for us, does not inspire us, then why shouldn't we destroy it? Or, at least, settle and build up the earth without limits? The sense of connection and caring that we are trying to inspire through this educational project – that will ultimately lead to a sense of responsibility – is rooted in the experience of wonder. One of the biggest challenges of environmental education is creating the conditions that make an experience of wonder possible, especially in the small, everyday details of life. It is easy to be thrilled and uplifted as we stand at Niagara Falls or the Grand Canyon. The real challenge is to see “the infinite in a grain of sand, and eternity in a flower.” (From the words of Dr. Ayalon Schwartz)

So that we can actually inspire wonder in our students, this unit is built around resource-based learning. Resource-based learning means that students are active learners, using a wide variety of materials and sources of information in order to research a particular topic in the curriculum. As part of the learning process, we will encourage students to come to their own understanding of the material and be creative problem solvers. Our aim is to enable productive learning that helps the students to become independent learners and to be full of wonder. Students are expected to work with different sources on their topic, to put together pieces of information, and to integrate that information in order to gain meaningful knowledge about the topic. At the end of this process, students share what they have learned, in order to highlight their new understandings, and to enable them to take responsibility for what they have learned and receive positive feedback.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. **To choose a class project**
2. **To experience resource-based learning.**
3. **To gain knowledge about the connection between the Jewish holidays and the seasons in Israel and the Diaspora.**

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Opening (10 minutes)

As a class, look at the photos that we received from our partner class. Look at all the suggestions for class projects (that we made and that they made), and together choose a project. Choose a group of students who will be responsible for the project and make sure it gets done.

Teachers from the two partner classes should coordinate with one another to make sure that the decision is mutual regarding which project to choose from among the students' suggestions.

2. Resource-Based Learning (45 minutes)

Divide the class into six groups. Each group will receive a worksheet (see below) for learning about one of the Jewish holidays and its connection to the environment. Students complete the tasks described in the worksheets in their small groups.

Afterwards we shall divide the class into groups. Each group will receive a worksheet about one of the Jewish Holidays and its relationship to the environment. After the group work, each group will present its products.



At the end of the lesson we will ask the students to regard their presentations and examine together what information was new to them and what surprised them about their work and that of their peers.

We will send the presentations to the partner class. Tell the students that because we are sending them our presentations, it is important to work hard both doing the research and making the presentation. Use colorful, fun fonts and add pictures and links so that the presentation looks good and is interesting, and is also respectful. It is important for the teacher to go around to all the groups while they are working to make sure that they are following these guidelines.

It is important to give students the opportunity to do their own research on the internet, so that they can learn how to process many different sources and choose the ones that are most relevant. If you see that after 15 minutes of research, a group is having difficulty, you can suggest the following websites:

- <http://www.reformjudaism.org/jewish-holidays>
- <http://www.jewfaq.org/holiday0.htm>
- <http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Judaism/holidays.html>
- <http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays.shtml>

Encourage students to think independently and creatively, especially regarding the questions about what is most important to emphasize today, and what date they would choose to celebrate the holiday were they establishing the holiday today.

If the group is not large enough to be divided into six groups, it can be divided into a smaller number of groups and each group will research more than one holiday.

Students can do research on the internet in groups, if there is not access to as many computers as there are students.

3. Presentations (30 minutes)

After completing the group work, each group presents what it made to the class. Each presentation should be five minutes long.

4. Conclusion (5 minutes)

Ask students to share their responses to the presentations. What surprised them? What new things did they learn from their work and their friends' work?

Send the presentations to the partner class.





| SUKKOT |

Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

The sukkah reminds us of the people of Israel wandering in the desert after they left Egypt, when they lived in temporary, hut-like structures. It also reminds us that the property and possessions that we have acquired in our lives are temporary. Living in a temporary structure made out of natural materials can help increase our sense of connection to nature. It is important to try not to decorate the sukkah only with decorations from man-made materials that we will throw out at the end of the holiday, but to use decorations from nature which will be able to return to nature at the end of the holiday and will biodegrade.



| HANUKKAH |

Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

For each menorah, we use 44 candles each year. Most candles that are sold in the stores are made out of by-products from producing oil. Oil is a non-renewable resource, and producing it pollutes the air. In order to minimize the pollution that we create each evening in our home, we recommend looking for candles made out of organic materials, such as soy.



| TU BI-SHEVAT |

Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

In the last few decades, there has been a greater and greater emphasis on the connection between Tu Bi-Shevat and the environment, mainly because this is the holiday when we plant trees. In the last class, we learned about the importance of planting trees. It is important to plant many different kinds of trees. Planting only one variety of trees can destroy the biological equilibrium and, at times of environmental crises, cause great damage, for example by leading to the quicker spread of pests, diseases, and forest fire.

Appendix C - Holidays and Wonder - Unit 4



| PURIM |

Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

One of the most fun parts of Purim is wearing costumes. Many store-bought costumes are made from materials that are harmful to the environment, and we throw them in the trash at the end of the holiday. We recommend making your own costumes from materials that are environmentally friendly and biodegradable.



| PASSOVER |



Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

For those who choose to make their homes kosher for Passover, it involves a lot of work. During this process, it is important to pay attention to two things. First, when cleaning for Passover, make sure to use environmentally friendly cleaning products. Cleaning products that contain a lot of chemicals pollute our water sources and land. Second, buy non-disposable dishes and utensils that you can use every year for Passover. You can also make some of your regular utensils, pots, and pans kosher for Passover through a special “kashering” process described in Jewish law. Using disposable dishes throughout the holiday is harmful to the environment, because we throw them out at the end of each meal.



| SHAVUOT |

Answer the questions below and make a PowerPoint about the holiday using <http://prezi.com>.

Date on the Jewish calendar:

Season:

Connection between the holiday and nature:

One time the holiday is mentioned in the Bible (if at all):

Weather at this time of year:

Country in which this holiday is celebrated during a different season:

If we were instituting the holiday today, what would we emphasize:

I think it makes more sense to celebrate the holiday on this date:

Students in our class whose birthdays are around the time of this holiday:

A short video related to the holiday:

Relevant photos (we recommend also including personal photos of you and/or your friends and family celebrating the holiday):

Make sure to include in your presentation the connection between the environment and this holiday.

Shavuot gives us the opportunity to connect to nature and the environment. The weather is pleasant, and it is a wonderful time to go outside and enjoy nature. There is a tradition of using dairy products for Shavuot meals. In order to minimize damage to the environment, it is better to buy large containers of dairy products (such as yogurt, cottage cheese, and milk) rather than using small disposable containers that are used for one meal and then thrown out.



Consumer Culture

“God blessed them saying: Be fruitful and multiply, and fill the earth” (Genesis 1:22)

“I need...” “I want...” “If only I had...” “I wish I could buy...” We live in a consumer culture. We are bombarded from every side with advertisements trying to persuade us that we NEED to have and buy more and more things. Every company wants to convince us that our lives would be perfect if only we would buy the particular product that they are selling. In this unit, we will learn about consumer culture. We will explore how this culture influences the environment in which we live, and how we are influenced by it. While looking critically at consumption, we will also learn to be grateful for what we have, and see the good that is all around us.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. To understand concepts related to consumption and consumerism.
2. To understand the factors that advertising agencies are dealing with through creating their own advertisements.
3. To develop critical thinking.

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Opening (10 minutes)

Watch the presentations we received from our partner class. Discuss the differences between our experiences of wonder regarding nature and the holidays, and the experiences of our partner class. Go over which season each of the holidays is in and how the natural world looks at this time in Israel as opposed to where we live. Think about our experiences of the holidays this past year, and compare them to our partner class' experiences that we saw in the presentation. Depending on the time we have available, decide how much you want to go into depth in this discussion. If possible, send the students the partner class' presentations before class, so that you can save time during class.

Examples of differences between us and our partner class in Israel: On the East Coast of the United States, there is often snow at Hanukkah time, whereas in Israel, sometimes winter hasn't even really started. Similarly, in Israel on Tu Bi-Shevat there is a tradition of planting trees, whereas in the United States (at least in the northern states), it is too cold to plant trees.

2. Introducing the Topic (15 minutes)

Show the students the presentation about brand-names (see Appendix A). During the presentation, ask students to write the names of the brands that they recognize and the product they make (for example, Toyota – car, Nestle – food). At the end, ask students to share their answers, and figure out how many brands most of the class recognizes.

Show the students two advertisements from around the world:

a) Advertisement for Thai insurance company:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nBobmn_u98w

b) Advertisement for Evian (mineral water):

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rR3BlwTOvMQ>



After watching these advertisements, ask students what they think is the topic of the class. Explain that today we will talk about consumption and consumerism, and we will learn about the connection between consumption, the environment, and ecology.

3. Group Work (10 minutes)

Divide the class into five groups. Each group receives a worksheet (see Appendix B) with directions for creating a two minute long advertisement for a particular product.

(Don't tell the students, but they are being asked to create advertisements for a product that has many problems with it. Our goal is to challenge the students to deal with this issue, and we will ask them to reflect on it later).

4. Presentations (15 minutes)

Each group presents its advertisement.

5. Class Discussion (20 minutes)

Ask students to describe how they felt as they were creating their advertisements. Focus on the challenge of creating a positive advertisement for a product that has many flaws. Ask the students how they dealt with this challenge. Ask: Do you think real advertising agencies deal with this problem? Explain that advertising agencies generally present only the positive side of the product. Sometimes, it is difficult to find good qualities of the product, so many agencies create advertisements that have nothing to do with the product they are selling, that are mostly "air."

Show this video about consumer culture:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PMAbtq6g5Ng>

The video is mostly images without words, but it was made in Israel so there are a few words in Hebrew that you should translate for your class. The opening scene says: A Global Look at Consumer Culture. On her iPad, the girl keeps pressing "Buy." At the very end, she sees a message on her iPad that says she has a work shift beginning at 12:45.

The end of the video tells the students:

Consumer culture is a way of life where people buy many more products and services than they need in order to live a comfortable life. Consumer culture is very damaging to the earth. Limit how much you consume. Buy less. Recycle more.

Discuss with the students the desire and need to buy more and more products. Ask: How do you feel each time you buy something new? How do you feel two or three months after you bought the new product that you wanted? Why do you think we want to buy new things?



Remind them about the ecological footprint that we talked about in the first lesson. The ecological footprint is the area of the earth that people and/or nations use in their daily lives. Explain that, similar to the ecological footprint, there are many experts who suggest that we calculate the real price of a product in terms of the damage that it causes to the environment to produce it. Do you think this environmental price would be higher or lower than the actual price? Remind the students that products almost always come in packages, and these packages become garbage that every country has to figure out how to deal with.

Ask: Do you know anything about the conditions of workers in East Asian countries? Explain that, for the most part, their working conditions are very bad. They work without insurance or benefits. Many companies use workers in East Asia and elsewhere because they can pay them less, so the companies can lower the price of the product and increase their profits. In many cases, companies will even employ children, who suffer doubly – they are not able to get an education, and they also earn low wages for difficult work that is sometimes harmful to their health.

6. Individual Work (15 minutes)

Ask each student to make a list of all the things s/he has in his or her room at home. Ask them to write in as much detail as possible: table, closet, how many pants, how many shirts, pictures on the wall, books, games, etc. After they finish writing, ask them to look at their lists and think about how many of these things are really necessary. Ask students to share: Do you think you have a little or a lot of stuff? Is there a gap between what we need to have and what we want to have? If so, what does this gap show us? From the list that you made, what do you think you could do without? How would that impact your life?

7. Havruta Study (20 minutes)

Split the class into pairs or small groups. Each group reads two texts related to consuming (Appendix C). Ask them to answer the questions on the hand-out, and then share with the class.

In the discussion, emphasize that the sages of the Mishnah (Pirkei Avot is part of the Mishnah) believed that the rich person is not the person who has the most stuff, but the person who is happy with what he has. This means that wealth is defined by happiness and a feeling of being complete. Ask: Do you agree with this definition of wealth? Can there be a person who doesn't have so much but is still considered rich?

Ask: What did they understand from Daniel Shalit's quote? Explain that he is emphasizing the disconnect between the mall and nature. Explain that sometimes we get to the mall on a hot day and the temperature inside the building is so cool that it is difficult to remember which season we are in. The strong lighting inside makes us forget what time it is outside, and this creates a disconnect from nature. This disconnect makes us forget the impact of our actions on nature.



8. Writing Sentences to Send and Conclusion (10 minutes)

Ask students to share the sentence they wrote in response to the quote from Pirkei Avot, "Who is rich?" Ask each student to add another sentence about what he would be willing to give up in his room. If they can, translate their sentences into Hebrew. Collect all the sentences in one document and send to the partner class.

Summarize the lesson: We learned that our culture encourages us to buy more and more. It is important to remember that every time we buy something, it affects other people and also the environment. We hope that after this lesson, students will think more closely about what they buy.

** In relation to Shmita, this would be a good place to stop and examine our lives. What is Shmita? Do we live in an agricultural society? How does Shmita affect us? This would be the place – a year where we examine what we need vs. what we want. It would be a great exercise for the environment and for society as a whole to try and omit everything we don't need. I would suggest that the greatest value in this exercise will come from having to stop and dedicate time and thought into deciphering whether we need something or merely want it.





Group #1

You are a new, young, and energetic advertising agency. Every new client is very important to you, because you want to grow and become a leading advertising agency. A client comes to you who wants to advertise a new neighborhood that they just built. Read carefully the following details about the neighborhood, and prepare a two minute long advertisement for the neighborhood.

Bird Song Neighborhood

- A thousand housing units will be built in an area of 250 acres.
- The neighborhood is very close to a factory that works 24 hours a day.
- The factory produces chemicals and its chimneys release bad smells.
- The closest supermarket is 15 miles away.
- There are no schools, preschools, or playgrounds planned in the neighborhood.
- Garbage trucks will enter the neighborhood three times a day.



Group #2

You are a new, young, and energetic advertising agency. Every new client is very important to you, because you want to grow and become a leading advertising agency. A client comes to you who wants to advertise a tourist site that just opened. Read carefully the following details about the site, and prepare a two minute long advertisement for the site.

River Fun

- 1.5 mile-long river whose water comes from drainage from a chemical factory.
- The main attraction is motor-boats that go at a very fast speed back and forth.
- There is one restaurant at the site, which mainly serves “fish and chips” (fried fish and French fries).
- The closest parking is five miles away.
- You get to the river by walking down 35 steps.
- Next to the site, there is a music school for beginning musicians, most of whom are learning to play the drums.



Group #3

You are a new, young, and energetic advertising agency. Every new client is very important to you, because you want to grow and become a leading advertising agency. A client comes to you who wants to advertise a new car. Read carefully the following details about the car, and prepare a two minute long advertisement for the car.

Mizuranu

- A long car, in the style of old American cars (17 feet long as opposed to 15 feet average).
- Space for the driver and only two passengers.
- Gas mileage of 15 miles per gallon (as opposed to an average of 25 miles per gallon).
- Made in black and pink with yellow polka dots.
- High exhaust emissions (i.e. releases a lot of carbon dioxide into the environment).



Group #4

You are a new, young, and energetic advertising agency. Every new client is very important to you, because you want to grow and become a leading advertising agency. A client comes to you who wants to advertise a new child care center. Read carefully the following details about the child care center, and prepare a two minute long advertisement for the center.

Kiddos Child Care

- The child care center is on the sixth floor without an elevator.
- One of the caregivers is hard of hearing and the other is vision impaired.
- Maximum capacity of 35 children.
- Children range from one to five years old.
- On the fifth floor of the building, there is a printing company.



Group #5

You are a new, young, and energetic advertising agency. Every new client is very important to you, because you want to grow and become a leading advertising agency. A client comes to you who wants to advertise a new snack food. Read carefully the following details about the snack, and prepare a two minute long advertisement for the snack.

Trehealthy

- Eating this snack leads to replacement of skin cells on the face. After eating, facial skin begins to peel off.
- For some people who eat the snack, the skin on the palms of their hands also peels off.
- Contains palm oil.
- A surprise in each package – every time you open a snack, you discover a new flavor.



“Who is rich? The person who is happy with his lot. As it is written, ‘You shall eat the fruit of the work of your hands; you shall be happy, and it shall go well with you.’ ‘You shall be’ refers to this world; and ‘it shall be well with you’ refers to the world to come.” (Pirkei Avot 4:1)

“Thousands of models of cars, televisions, videos, programs, games, and phones; household, kitchen, office, and outdoor items; dozens of mini-yogurts, cheeses, and breads; conventional, alternative, holistic, and mystic clinics; tour packages, experiences, and emotions; radio, television, and cable channels; programs and materials; updates and upgrades; information, supplies, opportunities, and temptations... Everything is big, strong, powerful, colorful, loud, lively, surprising, striking, wonderful, and amazing... The mall is closed off from nature underneath it – the land, rivers, seas, plants, and animals, which the person encounters only as resources to exploit... The mall is also closed off from everything above and beyond it, and all the more so everything that is spiritual, creative, and divine – of which the mall knows nothing... The mall is a symbol and a parable for the world of people today” (Daniel Shalit, The Great Mall, p.17-21).

- Read these two quotes, and explain each in your own words.
- What is the connection between the two quotes?
- Write your own sentence beginning, “Who is rich? The person who ...”



YAROK

Shabbat and Shemitah

*“God rested on the seventh day
from all the work that God did” (Genesis 2:2)*

The mitzvah of the Shemitah year, as it appears in Torah and rabbinic literature, is a very daring and radical idea in practice. The mitzvah includes two parts, each of which deal with one of the basic elements of life: land and money. The mitzvah tells us that once every seven years, we should not do agricultural work for an entire year. In an agricultural society, this means that most people go on a kind of sabbatical year. An entire society chooses to live at a significantly lower material standard of living for a year in order to devote itself to more spiritual pursuits than the daily grind. As a result, not only does the land rest, preserving its fertility, but also we, together with the land, have an opportunity for renewal.

The second aspect of the mitzvah is cancelling all debts. Everyone who loaned money forgives the debts that are owed to him. It is important to note that in those days, loans were given to help people get by, unlike today, when many loans are for starting or building up businesses, and they can be described more accurately as investments than as loans in the traditional sense. Cancelling debts was a way of leveling the playing field financially and socially, of ensuring that people do not sink further and further into debt and poverty without any way out. (Jeremy Benstein)

In this lesson, we will learn about Shemitah, and think together about which ideas we can apply in modern life and how to do so.

| UNIT GOALS |

1. To understand the concept of Shemitah and study relevant texts.
2. To explore how to apply some of the ideas of Shemitah to the students' lives.
3. To prepare for the video conference.

| ACTIVITIES |

1. Opening (15 minutes)

Ask students to describe their Shabbat. Ask: Are there certain things you do on Shabbat? Who do you spend time with on Shabbat? Are there smells, tastes, or sounds that are part of your Shabbat? Does Shabbat feel any different than other days of the week? Try to have as many students participate as possible. Note that in North America in some ways we have two days of rest, Saturday and Sunday, even though only one of them is Shabbat in the Jewish tradition. Ask students to imagine a situation where there were no weekends, where the daily routine of school, after-school activities, work, and so forth just kept going without stopping. How would you feel? What would happen in your family? How would it make our society different?

Summarize the discussion. Note that rest is essential for everyone, so that we can renew our energy to continue with the work that makes us and our society move forward. It is important for each one of us to stop once in a while and let go of our hold on our day-to-day life (the root of the word Shemitah comes from letting go) and rest.

2. What is Shemitah? (10 minutes)

As a class, watch this video about the ideas underlying the Shemitah year:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ah3Z_ZoFLcw#t=13

Explain that the Shemitah year is once every seven years. Just as Shabbat is the seventh day on which we rest from our day-to-day work, Shemitah is the seventh year when the land and all of society rests from our daily pursuits and takes a break from routine, in order to give us opportunities for renewal, growth, and the creation of a more just society. The mitzvah of Shemitah is found in the Bible: "Six years you shall plant your land and gather its produce, but in the seventh year you shall leave it alone and let it rest. Let the needy among your people come and eat, and whatever is left, the wild beasts will eat. You shall do the same with your vineyards and olive groves" (Exodus 23:10-11).



Over the years, the sages of the Mishnah, the Talmud, medieval, and modern times, developed guidelines for putting the principles of Shemitah into practice. The central mitzvah of the Shemitah year is a prohibition of any work that is intended to improve the land. It is forbidden to plant new seeds in the land, to prune, to harvest (wheat), and to pick (grapes). All the fruit that grows during this year can be eaten but not sold. The fruit is considered holy so we cannot waste it.

The mitzvah of Shemitah only applies in the land of Israel. Today, when Jews are once again farming the land of Israel, several solutions have been developed to enable Jews to keep Shemitah while still being able to access fresh produce (for the majority of Israeli Jews who do not have a variety of fruit trees and vegetables growing in their backyard). Many Jews “sell” their fields to non-Jews for the year, a legal fiction that is similar to selling chametz to non-Jews on Passover. Another solution is called Otzar Beit Din, which aims to distribute the fruits of the Shemitah year equally among people. The beit din (rabbinical court) usually receives some kind of fee for gathering and distributing the fruit, so the person who gets the fruit is paying for the labor, not the fruit itself, but the beit din does not make a profit.

3. Group Work (20 minutes)

Explain that there are five main reasons for the mitzvah of Shemitah. Divide the students into five groups. Each group receives a list of the five reasons (see Appendix A). Their task is to understand each reason, and to come up with ideas for how to apply these goals today in our modern life.

The five reasons are:

- a) To understand that the land does not belong to any person.
- b) To allow the land to rest, because the land, like people, needs rest.
- c) To increase equality and decrease poverty.
- d) To set aside a time for study and giving back to the community.
- e) To rehabilitate the ecological system.

Students share their ideas with the class. Then show the quote from Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Ramon on the Smart Board (see Appendix B).

Ask: After we read R. Rimon’s ideas, and thought of our own ideas, which idea will we choose to do during the Shemitah year?

In conclusion, explain that the biblical book of Leviticus presents a solution for those who worry that there will be famine during the Shemitah year:



If you ask: What are we to eat during the seventh year, if we are not to plant or gather crops? I will give My blessing for you in the sixth year, so that it shall yield produce that is enough for three years. When you plant in the eighth year, you will still be eating old produce [from the sixth year]. You will be eating that produce until the ninth year, when the produce comes in. (Leviticus 25:20-22)

From this verse, we see that even in biblical times, people were worried about having enough to eat during the Shemita year. Therefore, God promises that He will take care of our livelihood, for the two years after the Shemita year as well as the Shemita year itself, so that as many people as possible can fulfill the mitzvah.

4. Introduction to the Video Conference (10 minutes)

Explain to the students that our next meeting will be a video conference with our partner class in Israel. The students in Israel will see everything that is happening in our classroom, live, and we will see them. In order to make the conference interesting and meaningful, we will stage a trial together in which future generations bring a claim against today's society for not leaving them a clean and healthy earth.

Before we assign roles, we will discuss several technical issues regarding the video conference:

It is important to realize that movement, comments, and whispers will be captured by the camera, and will be heard and seen clearly on the other side of the ocean. Therefore, it is important to keep quiet and stay still, because if we do not, it will be hard to understand what is being said. Students who are speaking will be asked to go up to the camera (you will see at the video conference where the camera is) and to speak into the microphone. You should hold the microphone a little away from your mouth.

Always act respectfully toward the students who are reading out loud, whether from our school or our partner school (even if their accent is different and the names sound funny to us).

Remember the time difference between us and Israel. Make sure to come on time (set a time for the students to come that is 15 minutes before the video conference starts) and make sure to go to the bathroom, get a drink, etc. before the start of the video conference.

After this explanation, leave time for students to ask questions.

5. Summary of the Program and Preparation for Video Conference

(45 minutes)

Explain that we will stage a trial with a judge and jury. Assign roles to the students:

- 2 judges
- 2 defense lawyers
- 2 prosecution lawyers
- 3 witnesses for the defense
- 3 witnesses for the prosecution
- 6 jury members





FIVE MAIN REASONS TO KEEP THE SHEMITAH YEAR:

To understand that the land does not belong to any person.

Based on: “SIX YEARS YOU SHALL PLANT YOUR LAND AND GATHER ITS PRODUCE, BUT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR YOU SHALL LEAVE IT ALONE AND LET IT REST. LET THE NEEDY AMONG YOUR PEOPLE COME AND EAT, AND WHATEVER IS LEFT, THE WILD BEASTS WILL EAT. YOU SHALL DO THE SAME WITH YOUR VINEYARDS AND OLIVE GROVES” (EXODUS 23:10-11).

To allow the land to rest, because the land, like people, needs rest.

Based on: “SPEAK TO THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL, AND SAY TO THEM, ‘WHEN YOU COME TO THE LAND WHICH I WILL GIVE YOU, THEN SHALL THE LAND KEEP A SABBATH TO THE LORD. SIX YEARS YOU SHALL PLANT YOUR FIELD, AND SIX YEARS YOU SHALL PRUNE YOUR VINEYARD, AND GATHER IN ITS FRUIT. BUT IN THE SEVENTH YEAR SHALL BE A SABBATH OF SOLEMN REST FOR THE LAND, A SABBATH FOR THE LORD. YOU SHALL NEITHER PLANT YOUR FIELD, NOR PRUNE YOUR VINEYARD’” (LEVITICUS 25:2-4).

To increase equality and decrease poverty.

Based on: “EVERY SEVENTH YEAR, YOU SHALL DO SHEMITAH. HERE IS HOW THE SHEMITAH IS TO BE DONE: EVERYONE WHO HAS LENT MONEY TO HIS NEIGHBOR SHALL CANCEL THE DEBT THAT IS OWED TO HIM; HE SHALL NOT DEMAND THAT HIS NEIGHBOR OR BROTHER REPAY THIS DEBT, BECAUSE A SHEMITAH [CANCELLATION OF DEBTS] TO THE LORD HAS BEEN ANNOUNCED” (DEUTERONOMY 15:1-2).

To set aside a time for study and giving back to the community.

Based on: “MOSES INSTRUCTED THEM AS FOLLOWS: ‘EVERY SEVENTH YEAR, THE SHEMITAH YEAR, ON SUKKOT, WHEN ALL OF ISRAEL COMES TO APPEAR BEFORE THE LORD YOUR GOD IN THE PLACE THAT YOU WILL CHOOSE, YOU SHALL READ THIS TORAH [TEACHING] OUT LOUD IN PRESENCE OF ALL OF ISRAEL’” (DEUTERONOMY 31:10-11).

To rehabilitate the ecological system.

Based on the commandment in Exodus cited above to leave produce for the animals. In addition, some commentators explain that the land “resting” for a year increases its fertility and eliminates the pests that usually eat agricultural produce.

Questions

- Read the five reasons above.
- Explain each verse in your own words.
- Think of ways in which we can apply these goals today to our modern life.





Today we do not live in an agricultural society and the shemita year has lost much of its unique national flavor. Commerce continues as usual; people retain possession of their property. Serious consideration must be given to the question of how we can best develop the important ideas that characterize the shemita year.

This question connects back to the various reasons for shemita suggested above. In order to truly feel the idea that the land belongs to God, and to extend assistance to the poor, we must consider alternative ways of performing acts of kindness and charity that will be unique to the shemita year.

In addition to performing the usual acts of kindness, it is possible to do things that will remind us of renouncing ownership of the land during the shemita year. For example, professionals can provide their services to the needy free of charge or for a nominal fee (lawyers, doctors, teachers, plumbers, and the like). Of course, a person can give expression to the social aspect of shemita by waiving a portion of the debts owed to him (and, perhaps, banks and other financial institutions can offer their customers better terms for repaying their loans and balancing their finances).

It is also possible to “declare as ownerless” a portion of our time. Both adults and children can dedicate time to special acts of giving and kindness during the shemita year.

The special Torah study of the shemita year can find expression in additional periods of study. For example, a person can dedicate time on Fridays for regular study, and perhaps additional frameworks should be established to encourage such study...

The rationale for shemita that stems from the sanctity of the land and from the idea that God is its true owner is expressed in our increased efforts to purchase the produce of Eretz Israel [the land of Israel]... even if it costs a little more, and thus also merit becoming active partners in the mitzvah of shemita, and not allow it to fall solely on the shoulders of the 1.6% of Israel's population that works in agriculture...

We must not fear the shemita year. On the contrary, we must rejoice in anticipation of its arrival. We must rejoice in the fact that we have merited to eat shemita produce, that we have merited to preserve shemita sanctity, and that we have merited to see this sanctity reaching ever wider sectors of the Jewish people and parts of Eretz Yisrael [the land of Israel]. By understanding the unique sanctity and privilege that we attain once every seven years, we will hopefully merit to draw closer to God and return to the fresh and natural dimensions of our inner selves. (Rabbi Yosef Tzvi Ramon, Shemita: From the Sources to Practical Halacha, 27, 82. Translated by David Strauss)



FOR THE PROSECUTION

Future generations asked that you represent them in bringing their claim against human society today. They argue that human society today has violated their right to live good and healthy lives. Their arguments centers around three claims:

- a. The pollution of water sources has left them with few sources of clean water.
- b. Cutting down trees has left them with severe air pollution.
- c. Huge piles of garbage have created hazardous fumes and limit the area of land they have to sustain them.

Your job is to gather information on these three topics, and to prepare three witnesses to explain how human society today has harmed future generations' well-being in each of these ways. Work together with the witnesses. Think about what questions they will be asked during the course of the trial, and how they can respond to them. In addition, prepare a short closing argument summarizing your points. (If possible, translate this speech into Hebrew).



FOR THE DEFENSE

Human society asked you to represent them in their defense against the claims of future generations. Future generations argue that human society today has violated their right to live good and healthy lives. Their argument centers around three claims:

- a. The pollution of water sources has left them with few sources of clean water.
- b. Cutting down trees has left them with severe air pollution.
- c. Huge piles of garbage have created hazardous fumes and limit the area of land they have to sustain them.

Your job is to gather information on these three topics, and to prepare three witnesses to explain how human society today has not harmed future generations' well-being in each of these ways. Gather information demonstrating what human society has done today in these three areas in order to protect the environment. Work together with the witnesses. Think about what questions they will be asked during the course of the trial, and how they can respond to them. In addition, prepare a short closing argument summarizing your points. (If possible, translate this speech into Hebrew).



FOR THE JUDGES AND JURY

Future generations are bringing a claim against human society today for the damage it has caused them. According to their claim, human society today has violated their right to live good and healthy lives. Their argument centers around three claims:

- a. The pollution of water sources has left them with few sources of clean water.
- b. Cutting down trees has left them with severe air pollution.
- c. Huge piles of garbage have created hazardous fumes and limit the area of land they have to sustain them.

Your job is to gather information on these three topics to better understand what the situation is today – both what humanity is doing to harm the environment, and what humanity is doing to protect the environment in these three areas.

Resources to Prepare for the Trial:

<http://eschooltoday.com/pollution/water-pollution/what-is-water-pollution.html>

<http://www.kidsecologycorps.org/our-environment>

http://www.myjewishlearning.com/beliefs/Issues/Nature_and_the_Environment/Traditional_Teachings/Sabbatical_and_Jubilee_Years/Sabbatical_Year_Principle.shtml

http://jafi.org/NR/rdonlyres/ED78B34B-09FC-4347-B1BA-2945EA9EF25C/54588/SHAB-BAT_TEACHERS.pdf

<http://hazon.org/>

<http://www.coejl.org/resources/>

| VIDEO CONFERENCE |

Opening

Each student introduces him or herself and says the most surprising thing that he learned during the Yarok program. If there are too many students in the class, students can introduce themselves in groups of five. Students in the group introduce themselves individually, and the group says one thing that their group found surprising.

Introduction to the Trial

The facilitator for each class introduces the students who are playing the different roles, and these students sit close to the camera.

The facilitator reads the claim:

“Representatives from future generations brought a claim against human society today, in the year [fill in the current year]. According to their claim, their right to a healthy and good life has been violated by the way humanity lives today. Their argument centers around three claims:

- a. Water pollution has left them with very little clean water for drinking and bathing.
- b. Cutting down huge numbers of trees has left them with polluted air and few natural places to enjoy.
- c. Huge piles of garbage have created hazardous fumes and limited the area of land they have to sustain them.”

First, the lawyers from the prosecution will present their arguments.

Prosecution

The Israeli judges invite their lawyers from the prosecution to stand up and come close to the camera. The lawyers call up their three witnesses, and ask them questions regarding these claims.

The American judges invite their lawyers from the prosecution to stand up and come close to the camera. The lawyers call up their three witnesses, and ask them questions regarding these claims.



Defense

The American judges invite their lawyers from the defense to stand up and come close to the camera. The lawyers call up their three witnesses, and ask them questions regarding these claims.

The Israeli judges invite their lawyers from the defense to stand up and come close to the camera. The lawyers call up their three witnesses, and ask them questions regarding these claims.

Closing Arguments

One of the Israeli lawyers from the prosecution stands up and gives their closing argument.

One of the American lawyers from the prosecution stands up and gives their closing argument.

One of the American lawyers from the defense stands up and gives their closing argument.

One of the Israeli lawyers from the defense stands up and gives their closing argument.

Jury Deliberation

The judges in each classroom ask their juries to discuss among themselves and reach a verdict about whether or not to accept the prosecution's argument. The juries write their verdict on a piece of paper and give it to the judges. The judges in each classroom read the juries' verdict and explain their decision.

Conclusion

Thank the students for their hard work on the trial and throughout the course. Conclude that it is important to act responsibly today in order to protect the well-being of future generations. Read the following text in Hebrew and in English:

When God created the first person, God brought him before all the trees of the Garden of Eden and said to him: Look at my works, how wonderful they are! And everything I created, I created for you. Be careful, not to destroy My world. Because if you destroy it, there is no one who will fix it after you. (Kohelet Rabah, 7:1)

Thank the class for the connection that they developed this past year. We hope that that they will continue this connection in the future!

