

Transform Your Classroom in the days leading up to and on Tu BiSh'vat

Sand & Water Table

Fill the table with soil and each day bury different “treasures” related to Tu BiSh'vat for excavation. Here are some ideas to build upon: a. different plastic trees (craft shop or bakery cake decorations) b. various fruits & nuts in the shell (depending on your nut allergy practices) ex. Walnuts, pecans, almonds, carob. c. various twigs, leaves, small branches, small plants with plentiful roots d. pretend bugs, insects, worms, etc.

Blocks/Cars & Trucks

Provide two laminated maps, one of Israel and one of USA to be used as a floor mat for building upon or running cars and trucks on a route to and from USA and Israel; Add small plastic trees to incorporate into the block structure creations. Use a small board or large block to be a ferry boat to take cars and trucks “across the ocean” if you want to show that the two countries are separated by water.

Book Nook

Add storybooks, picture books, and poetry books related to trees, planting, fruits grown on trees, etc. Your local public library may offer beautiful photo books of various agricultural and gardening examples. To have the children's books on trees and agricultural you probably have to get there early!

If you are adventuresome, hang green and brown crepe paper from the ceiling over top the sitting and reading area for the “feel” of sitting under a tree.

Suggestions for books:

- *A Tree is Nice* by Janice May Udry
- *Growing Vegetables* by Lois Ehlert
- *The Tiny Seed* by Jean Marzolla
- *The Carrot Seed* by Ruth Krauss
- *The Little Leaf* by Chana Sharfstein
- *Look Inside a Tree* by Gina Cugoglia
- *Shimmee and the Taste Me Tree* by Shendel Weinbac

Math Center

Provide a counting categorization chart or matching board and several laminated squares of various tree pictures. For each tree picture, provide a prescribed number of pictures so the student can use logic to systematize them: one oak, two pine, three palms, four pear, five maple, etc (go to Google images and you'll find about 1 million pictures)!

You can also sort and count different kinds of seeds that you can purchase at the grocery store (lima beans and split peas) and/or leaves that the children collect on a nature walk. Children can draw or make a cardboard tree and give them red and/or yellow dots to stick on and count the dots

Writing Center

Provide different types of Hebrew and English letters for the sounds and words of Tu Bishvat for tracing and stenciling.

Help children write their own tree stories or poems and put them together in a book for the whole class to enjoy. Make up experience stories like *If I were a seed* and *How does a seed grow?*

Science Center (Discovery Center)

Provide various stages of growth of small plants so children may see the various root systems by transplanting small house plants into glass or clear plastic bowls.

You may “plant” various large pits as well in cups of water using toothpicks to hold the pit halfway in the water and halfway out of the water. Children may watch, observe, compare and chart their observations over days or weeks. (use avocado pit, potato, papaya pit, etc)

Plant a dish garden using materials from the dollar store and inexpensive plants.

Make a “Kitchen Forest” using the seeds and end cuts from food you normally find in your kitchen—carrot, turnip, beet tops, apple, pear and orange seeds, dried lima beans, etc.

Present various things of nature that meet these criteria:

Earth = Physical = hard on the outside and soft on the inside

Water = Emotional = Soft on the outside and hard on the inside

Air = Cerebral = Soft Throughout

Fire = Spiritual = Light and wispy, almost without mass (Dandelions, fine sand)

Art Center

Provide various leaves, branches, nuts in their shells, pits (clean & dry) from fruits (peaches & nectarines) and earth tone colored paint in shallow dishes. See how the children create their own interpretation of what they’ve learned about Tu Bishvat using the various elements in a different way (printing, tracing, and painting)

For Snack Time

Make edible Torahs from 2 pretzel sticks and a fruit roll up

Provide fruit shaped cookie cutters for the children to “shape” their fruit roll-up or jello.

School Office and Hallways

Create a climbing vine that runs throughout the school and connects each classroom entrance to the vine.

Create a collage of various seeds and seed packets for display

Take the children on a nature walk and look for small branches that can be used as trees. Then decorate a plastic or Styrofoam cup and put play dough or modeling clay inside for anchoring. Stick the branch in and then decorate it with colored tissue paper and cotton balls.

Make “trees” using the children handprints (for the trunk and branches) with brown tempera or brown marker outline of the hand and then decorate with leaves, flowers and fruit. You can also use this idea to show a tree in all 4 seasons.

Make a family tree. This can be a big project involving family input. You can do outlines of each child lying with their hands up for the trunk and branches and use a leaf or fruit pattern to glue one for each family member. Put a picture of each student in the middle of their tree and make a grove on the wall in the hallway. Or you can send a tree cut out or outline home for each family to complete and decorate at home with the names of their family members.

Have a Wood Hunt: Take a walk around the school and make a list of all the things you can find that come from trees (books, tables, chairs, pencils doors, etc)