

TEACHING GUIDE

MY FIRST LEARN AND DO JEWISH HOLIDAY BOOK

BEHRMAN HOUSE

MY FIRST LEARN AND DO JEWISH HOLIDAY BOOK is a complete holiday curriculum for children ages 5-7. Each text page presents basic holiday information and a holiday action. Each activity page is designed to reinforce and concretize the text material.

This guide gives specific suggestions for making the pages in the book meaningful and complete lessons.

We hope that the materials in **MY FIRST LEARN AND DO JEWISH HOLIDAY BOOK** will encourage you to use your own special talents, personality and skills in the classroom. We are very interested to hear about your experiences as a teacher with these materials. Please let us hear from you.

LESSON PLANNING

Good lesson planning is the key to success in teaching any subject. A good lesson consists of several parts, each part serving a specific function. The most effective kind of lesson has individual parts capable of standing on their own, but which are strengthened when used in combination. Remember that the attention span of young children is an important consideration in every lesson plan. About fifteen minutes for a given activity usually works well. Therefore, your lesson plan should ideally involve stringing together a series of short segments.

A typical lesson based on MY FIRST LEARN AND DO JEWISH HOLIDAY BOOK might consist of the following:

1. *Introduction*
Make children aware of the topic to be taught and learned.
2. *Text Page*
Read the text aloud with the children or have them read to you. Explain and discuss the key words. Ask questions to insure comprehension.
3. *Worksheet Page*
Children draw or color the picture. Implement the suggested activities.
4. *Project*
Make something relevant to the text. Specific references are made to INTEGRATING ARTS AND CRAFTS IN THE JEWISH SCHOOL, by Carol Tauben and Edith Abrahams, Behrman House, 1979.
5. *Music*
Teach a song relevant to the lesson. THE NEW JEWISH SONGBOOK, by Harry Coopersmith, Behrman House, 1965, is a useful reference.
6. *Guest*
Invite someone with a relevant skill to visit the classroom.
7. *Review*
Be sure children know and understand.

Page 4

The origin of the folk custom of eating honey to express our hope for a sweet year is unknown, but it is one of the most popular of all Rosh Hashanah practices. Ask the children if they like things that taste sweet. Ask them why. Tell them that everyone wants the new year to be sweet, just like an apple dipped in honey. Surprise them with real apples and honey to dip and eat.

Page 6

Show the class some Rosh Hashanah cards. Then have them create their own, using crayons, felt markers, scraps of colored paper and other materials available. They can plan their designs on page 7. Inside the card they can write a new year's greeting and sign their names. Encourage the children to bring in greeting cards received at home to decorate the bulletin board and the classroom.

Page 8

Invite someone to the classroom to blow the shofar. Have the children imitate the sounds. Let every child try to blow the real shofar. Teach the names of the shofar sounds: *Tekiah* - long blast; *Shevarim* - three short blasts; *teruah* - Nine very short blasts; *Tekiah-Gedolah* very long blast.

Page 10

These pages can serve as a motivation for decorating a *real* sukkah. Plan to visit the synagogue sukkah so that the children can experience the joy of helping to decorate it. Popcorn, macaroni, cranberries and many other foods can be strung to make wonderful decorations. Construction paper loop chains can be made too. You can create a sukkah in the classroom using a carton from a large appliance. Remove the top and cut one side out.

Page 12

Show the class a real lulav and etrog. Let each child hold and smell the etrog. Teach the children to shake the lulav to the left and then to the right, to the front and back, and then down and up. Have a *Hoshanah* parade around the classroom. Finish the session with refreshments.

Page 14

The children can make "real" flags. Two blue stripes and a blue Jewish star may be drawn or pasted on white paper which is then pasted to a thin wooden dowel, a popsicle stick or a plastic straw. Have a "march" around the school. Take the children to the synagogue sanctuary. Invite the rabbi or

cantor to be with you. Let the children see and touch the Torah. Send a note home to parents asking them to bring their children to Simhat Torah Services.

Page 16

Bring a Hanukkah menorah to class and light the candles. Teach the blessing, or part of it, by rote. Have children place the correct number of candles in the menorah for each night of Hanukkah (ie. how many candles do we need for the fourth night, the sixth, etc.) Have children choose their favorite night of Hanukkah and ask them to prepare the menorah for that night with the correct number of candles in their proper positions. Remember, as you face the menorah, the first candle is placed on your right. Subsequent candles are added to the left. The new candle is always kindled first.

Page 18

Show the children two boxes, one nicely gift wrapped and the other plain. Ask the children to discuss the difference between the two packages. Which one would they rather receive? Make gift wrapping paper. Potatoes can be used for block printing the designs. (See *Integrating Arts and Crafts in the Jewish School* page 99 - for additional suggestions.)

Page 20

Have a "Latke Party." Ask class parents to come and help. Let the children grate the potatoes. Sing Hanukkah songs while the latkes are frying. (See *The New Jewish Songbook* for suggestions.)

Page 22

Teach the four Hebrew letters: *nun*, *gimmel*, *hay* and *shin*. Teach the children that they mean "A great miracle happened there - *Nes gadol hayah sham*. Play a real dreidel game. Make sure that you have a supply of pennies, raisins or nuts to play with.

Page 24

Borrow the Congregation's megillah. Let the children examine it. Explain that it is a special scroll that tells the story of Queen Esther. Get a roll of white wrapping paper, move the furniture aside, have the children sit side by side on the floor and each draw on one section of the paper. It will be easier if you divide the paper in advance, putting a child's name on each section. You might assign parts of the story for each child to draw. They can plan their drawings on page 25. Display the finished megillah in the classroom or in the hallway. After Purim you can cut the megillah into its sections and send each child's work home.

Page 26

Have a variety of real graggers in the classroom for the children to twirl. Have children make their own graggers. A gragger can be made by putting a few beans into a container and sealing it. You can staple or tape shut a small milk carton or fold over and seal a paper plate or cover an empty can with paper. To make the handle, insert a wooden dowel or a small stick into the container and secure it. Then decorate. (See *Integrating Arts and Crafts in the Jewish School* pages 136-141 for additional suggestions.) Send a note home to parents inviting them to bring their children to the *Megillah Reading* in the synagogue.

Page 28

The children can make Purim masks from paper bags large enough to fit over their heads. Help them mark and cut out the openings for their eyes and noses. Then they can decorate their masks by cutting scraps of cloth and colored paper and pasting them on the bags.

Page 30

Bake hamantashen. Be sure to reserve the kitchen facilities and have all of the ingredients ready. A class parent or other adults may be needed to help. Let the children measure, mix and form the ingredients. Give each child a piece of flat dough to work with. Have them cut circles by pressing the rim of a cup into the dough. Show the children how to put a small amount of filling in the middle of each circle, flip three sections of the circle in toward the middle, and pinch the corners, to make a triangular pastry. It doesn't matter if the hamantashen are not perfect triangles. The children will love them anyway. Once the hamantashen are in the oven, bring the children back to the classroom. Sing Purim songs (see *The New Jewish Songbook* for suggestions). When the adults bring the finished cookies from the kitchen, have a "Hamantashen Party."

Page 32

Ask the children when they give gifts. (They will answer on birthdays, Hanukkah, Mother's Day, etc.) Tell them that there is another special time for giving gifts and that is on Purim. On Purim we give gifts of food to our friends and also to people who need them. Purim gifts are called *shalah-manot*. Have the children decorate paper plates and fill them with candy and cookies. Each child will then have *shalah-manot* to take home.

Page 34

Tell how matzah is made. Discuss the difference between matzah and bread. Role-play the going out from Egypt with the children pretending to

bake bread to eat along the way and having to hurry away before the dough has had a chance to rise. After walking for a little while, maybe to the playground or some other convenient spot, stop and bless and eat the matzah.

Page 36

Bring a real seder plate with horseradish, greens, roasted egg, lamb bone and *haroset* for the children to see, touch and taste. Teach the name and meaning of each symbol. Make *haroset* in the classroom. Children love to chop the apples and walnuts! Cut 2 apples into fourths, remove the seeds and pare. Use about 3/4 cup shelled walnuts. After chopping to desired consistency, add 2 tablespoons each of honey (some prefer 1/4 teaspoon cinnamon) and sweet wine (or grape juice). Mix well and refrigerate. Makes about 2 cups.

Page 38

Remind the children that the *haggadah* tells us the Passover story. Bring in a variety of *haggadot* for them to examine. Review the Passover story. Encourage the children to design page 39 using different elements of the Passover story. The possibilities are many.

Page 40

The Four Questions (*Mah Nishtanah*) are traditionally asked by the youngest child at the seder able to ask them. You can prepare your students for simplified participation. Read these sentences aloud. After several readings, encourage the children to finish each question and to carry out the physical motions. On all other nights we eat bread, why on this night do we eat _____? On all other nights we eat all kinds of herbs, why on this night do we eat _____ herbs? On all other nights we do not dip, why on this night do we _____? On all other nights we sit up straight, why on this night do we _____?

Page 42

Play *Find the Afkoman*. One student is "it" and leaves the room. The class hides the *afkoman*. "It" returns and searches for the hidden matzah, assisted by the students who sing a Passover song - loudly when "it" comes closer to the *afkoman* - softly when "it" moves away. When the *afkoman* is found, another child becomes "it." Make *afkoman bags*. (*Integrating Arts and Crafts in the Jewish School* tells how to make one from felt - see page 164.)

Page 44

Go to the synagogue sanctuary so that the children can take a close look at the Torah(s). Point out the mantle, breastplate and crown. Make sure that

the children get a chance to examine each of the ornaments. Discuss why we dress the Torah so beautifully. Make a Torah scroll. Roll a long piece of white paper up from both ends to the middle to form a scroll and secure with a rubber band. Take a piece of material large enough to wrap around the scroll (colored paper or cloth) and glue the ends together for the mantle. Decorate with foil for the breastplate and crown.

Page 46

Say the Commandments one at a time. Have the children repeat them after you. Bring a Torah to the classroom and have the rabbi, cantor, or another person who is able, read the Commandments in Hebrew to the class. Translate after each Commandment. Ask the children if they would add any commandments to the list.

Page 48

Have children make flowers from colored construction paper or tissue paper and arrange all of them in a giant bouquet. Ask the rabbi to conduct a special ceremony in the synagogue sanctuary during which the children can place their bouquet in front of the ark. Or this can take place during formal Shavuot Services.

Page 50

Explain that the candles are lit at home on Friday evening to tell us that Shabbat is beginning. Teach the blessing by rote. Have real candlesticks in the classroom and say the blessing as the candles are lighted.

Page 54

Teach the blessing by rote. Have a cup of grape juice for each child. Remind the children that the "wine" is sweet just like the Sabbath that God has given us. Make kiddush cups by covering plastic cups with aluminum foil or tissue paper (see *Integrating Arts and Crafts in the Jewish School* pages 58-63).

Page 58

Bring a *hallah* to class. Teach the blessing by rote and then eat the *hallah*. The children can make cloth *hallah* covers. Ordinary wax crayons colored on cloth handkerchiefs or napkins become permanent when ironed under heavy brown paper and a damp cloth, design-side down. Have the children take the *hallah* covers home as Shabbat gifts for their families.

Page 62

Bring a *Havdalah* set (cup, candle and spice box) to class for children to see and touch. Pass around the spice box, filled with sweet spices, for the

children to smell. Explain that *Havdalah* comes at the end of Shabbat to remind us of how sweet Shabbat has been.

Page 64

Teach the Shema by rote. The *Shema* is our most important Jewish prayer. We recite it in every prayer service. Its words are contained in every mezuzah. It is traditional to recite the *Shema* before going to sleep at night. You might like to teach the children this poem:

Before I sleep it's time to pray,
To thank you God for this good day.
I say the *Shema* when day is done:
"The Lord our God, the Lord is one."