

6th Grade Holidays, Customs, and Ceremonies

This curriculum is a review of holidays, customs, and ceremonies learned in the previous years with some new additions. There is no specific text for the students; Torah Aura Instant Lessons, The Handbook for Jewish Living, The 2nd How-To Handbook for Jewish Living and a variety of texts in the Hebrew School Office, including the Siddur used at Beth El are all available in the religious school office. Teachers are encouraged to assign the Ipad lab to students for researching any number of interesting sections in the units. This curriculum lends itself to the exploration of food, music, dance and art projects.

The units follow the seasonal holidays, with informational units inserted during non-holiday times.

All page numbers are referenced to The 2nd How To Handbook for Jewish Living

Goals and Objectives

- To review customs and ceremonies
- To review Hebrew prayers associated with customs and ceremonies
- To review customs at home
- To review customs at synagogue

Unit 1: Basic Brachot, 1 session, 1 hour, The How-To Book, pages1-10

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will understand that there is a blessing (as Tevye said in Fiddler on the Roof) for everything
- Students will pick one blessing that they would like to inculcate in their daily life

Key Concepts:

- There are 3 types of Brachot

Key Terms:

- Brachot
- Bichat Ha Mitzvot
- Bichat Ha Nehenin
- Bichat Ha Shachar
- Bichat Hoda'ah

Activity and Assessment:

- Quiz on the terms and what they mean

Unit 2: Rosh Hashanah, 1 session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will explore Rosh Hashanah as a new beginning of a cycle of Jewish life
- Students will explore the moral dimensions of Rosh Hashanah

Key Concepts:

- Beginning a New Year

- Examination of the past in relation to the present and future
- Celebrations in the home
- Shofar as a symbol of the holiday
- The story of the binding of Isaac

Key Terms:

- Tashlich: How-To Handbook, page 64-65
- Shofar: How-To Handbook, pages 61-62
- Mitzvah

Activity:

- Compare New Year's Eve to Rosh Hashanah

Assessment:

- Class discussions
- Oral quiz

Unit 3: Yom Kippur, 1 session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will discuss the meaning of teshuvah
- Students will understand that Yom Kippur is a time for moral self-evaluation
- Students will understand the strong component of mercy in God's judgment

Key Concepts:

- Yom Kippur is the final day of the Days of Awe
- The meaning of right and wrong in our actions and relationships
- Fasting and uninterrupted prayer
- Themes of repentance and forgiveness in the Story of Jonah

Key Terms:

- Teshuvah
- Repentance
- Personal accountability

Assessments:

- Students instruct each other on key concepts of Yom Kippur

Unit 4: Sukkot, 1 session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will examine Sukkot as a holiday of harvest
- Students will be reminded of our ancestors' 40 years of desert wandering
- Students will understand Sukkot's symbols and ceremonies

Key Concepts:

- The reasons for building a Sukkah today

- Shemini Atzeret
- Prayers for lulav and etrog
- A kosher Sukkah, The How-To Book, page 67

Key Terms:

- The 4 species, The How-To Book, page 67
- Lulav and Etrog, The How-To Book, page 70

Activity:

- Make decorations for Sukkah

Assessments:

- Students will be asked to explain the symbols of Sukkot

Unit 5: Simchat Torah, 1 Session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will examine customs and rituals of Simchat Torah
- Students will understand the centrality of the Torah to Jewish Life

Key Concepts:

- Simchat Torah is the happiest holiday of the year
- The Torah is important to the Jewish people
- The reading of the last chapter and the first chapter of the Torah
- The celebration of Erev Simchat Torah

Key Terms:

- Hakafot

Assessments:

- Oral quiz
- Class discussion

Unit 6: Shabbat, 2 sessions, 1 hour each

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will understand the role Shabbat has in unifying and preserving the Jewish people
- Students will discuss rituals and customs of Shabbat: From candle lighting to the Havdalah Service

Key Concepts:

- The meaning of Shabbat rest
- Shabbat prayers: wine, challah, candles, The How-To Book, pages 49-52
- Havdalah, The How-To Book, page 57
- The concept of Shabbat study

Key Terms:

- Brachot
- Havdalah candle
- Spices
- Oneg Shabbat

Special Activities:

- Bring in candle sticks and wine cup
- Practice Blessings
- Discuss family practice
- Make challah
- Make Havdalah candle

Assessments:

- Class discussion on the purpose(s) of Shabbat in the modern age

Unit 7: How to Give Tzedakah, pages 52-53, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the source for Tzedakah
- Students will understand the underlying philosophy of giving

Key Concepts:

- You have an obligation to give tzedakah
- Maimonides created the 10 levels of tzedakah

Key Terms:

- Gemilut Chasadim
- Pushke
- Tzedakah

Activities:

- Class Tzedakah Project
- Make Tzedakah Box

Assessments:

- Questions and answers

Unit 8: How to Say Amen and Mean It, pages 16-17, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the Torah source
- Students will learn that “Amen” is an acronym for El Melech Ne’eman, God, Faithful Ruler

Key Concepts:

- The word “amen” is a public agreement

- Jewish law instructs us to say amen after we hear another say a prayer
- There are rules for when to say amen

Key Terms:

- Amen
- Baruch Shemo
- Kein Yehi Ratzon

Activity:

- Write a statement of belief

Unit 9: How to Construct Your Own Theology, page 73-74, 1 session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will understand the source
- Students will review the relationship that Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob each had with God
- Students will consider their own concepts of God

Key Concepts:

- A belief in God is central to Jewish Theology
- A statement of belief begins with “I believe...”

Assessments:

- Class activity on when it is appropriate to say Amen

Unit 10: Chanukah, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will review the Chanukah story
- Students will review customs and ceremonies
- Students will explore Chanukah as a festive counterpoint to assimilation: then to Hellenism, today to Christmas

Key Concepts:

- Story of Chanukah
- Candle lighting ceremony, The How-To Book, page 73
- Songs and Games, The How-To Book, page 77

Key Terms and People:

- King Antiochus
- Mattathias
- Maccabees
- Hellenism
- Shammai
- Hillel
- Ma'oz Tzur

Activity:

- Act out a candle lighting ceremony where the students are the candles

Assessments:

- Discussion the importance of Chanukah in our lives

Unit 11: Tu B'Shevat**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the importance of trees in the Land of Israel
- Students will learn about the early Zionist pioneers

Key Concepts:

- The Birthday of the Trees
- Tu B'Shevat Seder, pages 206-209

Key Terms and People:

- The Jewish National Fund
- Etz Chaim He
- Zionism
- David Ben Gurion
- Theodor Herzl

Activity:

- Tu B'Shevat Seder - only 6th grade

Assessments:

- List five important facts about Tu B'Shevat

Unit 12: Making a Shiva Call, pages 80-81, 1 session, 45 minutes**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the source
- Students will understand appropriate customs

Key Concepts:

- If you join the bereaved right after internment, don't expect to be served
- There may be a pitcher of water next to the front door
- The word Shiva is taken from the word seven, referring to the 7 days of intense mourning

Key Terms:

- Shiva
- Sheloshim

Activities:

- Invite the Rabbi to discuss the importance of Shiva to the class

Assessments:

- Class discussion regarding the purposes of making a Shiva visit

Unit 13: Sitting Shiva, pages 82-84**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the source
- Students will learn the customs

Key Concepts:

- The traditional period of mourning is 7 days
- There is ritual hand washing
- There is a 7 day mourning candle
- There are customs involving shoes
- There are customs involving the activities you may participate in
- There are rules if Shiva coincides with certain holidays or Shabbat

Assessments:

- Class discussion on the purposes of Shiva rituals

Unit 14: How to Write a Condolence Letter, pages 85-86, 1 session, 1 hour**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the source
- Students will understand the customs

Key Concepts:

- Comforting the mourner is an act of kindness
- Writing a letter is acceptable when visiting is not possible

Activities and Assessments:

- Class writes a group condolence letter

Unit 15: Purim, 1 session, 1 hour**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will review the story of Purim
- Students will review the rituals and customs

Key Concepts:

- Story of Purim
- Reading of the Megillah
- Parties, plays, carnivals costumes
- Gifts to the poor

Key Terms and People:

- Mordechai
- Esther
- Haman
- Lots and the element of luck
- Megillah
- Shalach Manot

Activity:

- Make Shalach Manot for each other

Assessments:

- Class discussion
- Oral quiz

Unit 16: The 613 Commandments, pages 160-181, 3 sessions, 45 minutes each**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will read the 613 commandments in 3 different sessions
- Students will divide the mitzvot into lists of doable and not doable today

Key Concepts:

- There are 248 positive commandments
- There are 365 negative commandments
- There are commandments that relate to the Temple and to sacrifices

Activities:

- Class debate on “Is It Important to Observe all 613 Mitzvot or Just Certain ones”

Assessment:

- List 5 facts regarding Commandments and Mitzvot

Unit 18: Passover, 2 sessions, 1 hour each, 2 session, 30 minutes each**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will understand the symbols and rituals of Passover
- Students will review the Passover Story
- Students will review the order and parts of the Seder

Key Concepts:

- The Story of Exodus
- The search for the Hametz, The How-To Book, pages 79-81
- The Haggadah
- Seder symbols and their meanings, The How-To book, pages 84-85
- The Prophet Elijah
- Seder rituals, both traditional and those the students may observe in their own homes

- The counting of the Omer, The How-To Book, pages 89-91

Key Terms and People:

- Prophet Elijah
- Freedom
- Seder
- Haggadah
- Mitzvah
- Maror
- Haroset
- Karpas
- Plagues

Activities:

- Compose a 5th Question for the Passover Seder

Assessments:

- Oral quiz
- Class discussion

Unit 19: The 12 Tribes of Israel, pages 127-128

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will understand the Biblical source
- Students will review the names of Jacob's 12 sons

Key Concepts:

- The nation was divided into 12 Tribes
- Each tribe received a portion of the land of Israel
- The tribes had different mothers
- The tribes each had a symbolic flag
- The tribes each had a designated "campsite" when in the desert

Key Terms:

- Degel, banner or flag

Activities:

- Create banners for each of the 12 Tribes

Assessments:

- Oral quiz

Unit 20: Lag B'Omer, 1 session, 1 hour

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will examine the roots of Lag B'Omer

- Students will learn about the heroism of those who defied oppression to study Torah

Key Concepts:

- History and Meaning
- Heroism of Rabbi Simeon Ben Yochai and Rabbi Akiva
- Celebration

Key People:

- Rabbi Simeon Ben Yochai
- Rabbi Akiva

Activity:

- Make a shield with tribes on it

Assessments:

- Class discussion on what we have today in place of tribes

Unit 21: Yom Ha-Shoah, 2 sessions, 1 hour each

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will examine the historical developments that led up to the Holocaust
- Students will gain an understanding of the events of the Holocaust
- Students will research partisans, uprisings, and righteous Christians
- Students will review the manner in which we remember the Holocaust today

Key Concepts:

- The meaning of the Holocaust
- The rise of Hitler
- The Warsaw Ghetto Uprising
- Customs and Prayers

Key Terms and People:

- Concentration Camp
- Holocaust
- Hitler
- The Bielski Brothers
- Oskar Shindler
- Irena Sendler

Unit 23: Yom Ha HaAtzmaut and Yom Hazikaron, 2 sessions, 1 hour each

Goals and Objectives:

- Students will review the historical developments that led to the creation of the State of Israel
- Students will discuss the special qualities of the Jewish Homeland
- Students will discuss the importance and meaning of Yom Hazikaron

Key Concepts:

- Two thousand years of Jewish dispersion
- The return of young Jewish pioneers
- The birth of modern Zionism
- The War of Independence

Key Terms:

- Zionism
- Nationalism
- Declaration of the Establishment of the State of Israel

Activity:

- Read and interpret actual declaration

Assessments:

- Discussion on the importance of the State of Israel to modern Jews

Unit 23: Yom Yarushalayim and Yom Hazikkaron, 2 sessions, 45 minutes each**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will learn of the division of Jerusalem during the 6 Day War
- Students will discuss the meaning and accompanying ceremonies of Yom Hazikkaron

Key Concepts:

- War of Independence
- Jerusalem
- 6 Day War

Activities:

- Have a Young Israeli Emissary speak to the class about the importance of these two holidays to Israelis.

Assessment:

- Students write a letter to a non-Jewish friend explaining the meaning and importance of these two holidays.

Unit 24: Shavuot: 1 session, 1 hour**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will review the 10 Commandments
- Students will examine the meaning and values inherent in the Book of Ruth

Key Concepts:

- Shavuot is the conclusion of the Counting of the Omer
- Shavuot is the anniversary of the receiving of the 10 Commandments
- Dairy foods are eaten on Shavuot

Key Terms:

- The 13 Principles of Faith, The How-To Book, pages 149-151
- The Story of Ruth
- 10 Commandments, The How-To Book, pages 147-148
- Covenant
- Gleaning

Activities:

- Have the class work in small groups to come up with a 13th Commandment for modern day mankind.

Assessments:

- Class discussion
- Oral quizzes

Unit 26: Tisha B'Av, 1 session, 1 hour**Goals and Objectives:**

- Students will recall the Destruction of the Temple

Key Concepts:

- Day of Mourning
- Destruction of the First Temple, 586 BCE
- Destruction of the 2nd Temple, 70 CE
- Exile of the Jewish People, Diaspora

Key Terms:

- Western Wall
- Diaspora

Activities:

- Have students work in small research groups to identify various occasions when Jews were expelled from places.

Assessments:

- Discussion of the role that Tisha B'Av should play in our lives