

UNIT I: JEWISH CONNECTION TO THE LAND

LESSON 1:

ISRAEL IN THE TORAH

Learning Objectives: Students will be able to identify the covenant made to Abram (Abraham) in the *Torah* for the Land of Israel and identify the connection between the Land of Israel and the People of Israel.

Older students will also examine the difference between the covenants made between God and Abram (Abraham) and God and Moses at Sinai.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

Jewish attachment to the Land of Israel, much like Judaism itself, has evolved throughout history and changed with respect to environment and the situations of time and place. The origins of this attachment are found in the origins of the Jewish people as presented in the *Torah*, where there are nine covenants made between God and the people. These covenants refer to the relationship between the people, God and the Land of Israel.

As the Jewish people evolved from a clan of forefathers and foremothers into a nation with laws, so too does the relationship with both God and the Land of Israel. The nine covenants can thus be divided into two distinct sections; pre- and post-exile from Egypt and the reception of the laws at Sinai.

In this lesson, students will look at one covenant from each of these time periods to compare how the relationships evolved.

Students Will:

- Read, analyze, discuss, compare and interpret through art one or two *Torah* Texts
- Experience the difference between looking at and engaging with a piece of land

Essential Questions:

- According to the text, what promises did God make to Abram?
- What is the difference between a promise and a gift?
- Why did God tell Abram to “walk the land?”
- How did God’s promise change after the Jews received the law at Sinai?

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

Activities one and two are recommended for grades 2-7. Activity three is recommended for grades 5-7.

Activity One (recommended for grades 2-7):

Recommended time for this activity: 30 minutes

Bereshit 13: 14-17

(translation adapted and simplified for younger grades)

“And *Adonai* said to Abram, after Lot had left him, Look up from where you are standing and look out to the north and south, to the east and west. I give all the land that you see to you and your children and your children’s children forever. I will make your children as many as the dust of the earth. If someone could count all the dust of the earth, then they could count your children too. Get up, walk throughout the land, through its length and its width, for I give it to you.”

1. Divide students into small groups of 3-5. Each group should read the passage aloud to each other.
2. After reading the passage, have each group draw a picture that answers this question: **What two promises is God making to Abram in this text?** (Answer: land and lots of descendants)
3. Each group should share and explain their pictures with the rest of the class: What were the promises?

Discuss: What is the difference between a promise and a gift? Are the promises made by God to Abram promises or gifts? Does Abram have to do anything to get these promises or gifts? (In the case of this covenant, neither Abram or the Jewish people need to fulfill any obligation in order to get the land.)

Activity Two (recommended for grades 2-7):

Recommended time for this activity: 30 minutes

After drawing and sharing the pictures, take students outside to a predetermined location and while standing in one spot have them look in every direction (this can also be done from a window in the school).

Discuss: How far can they see? What do they see?

1. On a notecard have each group write down what they **know** about the place they have seen?
2. Ask the groups to share what they wrote down.

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ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE):

Activity Two (Continued from Previous Page):

After they have looked around, written down and shared what they know from their observations, have the groups walk throughout the same area that they were looking at in the first part of the activity.

1. On the back side of the same notecard, have each group write what they know about the place from walking through the area.
(Suggestion: Add some objects to the area for them to find/see that they would have been unable to see merely from observation at a distance.)
2. Ask a few of the groups to share what know about the area.
3. Discuss: What is the difference in what they saw looking from a distance versus what they saw as they walked around?

Activity Three (recommended for grades 5-7):

Recommended time for this activity: 45-60 minutes

Shemot 19:3-5

(translation from Jewish Publication Society, *Hebrew-English Tanakh*, 1999)

“And Moses went up unto God, and *Adonai* called unto him out of the mountain, saying: 'Thus shalt thou say to the house of Jacob, and tell the children of Israel: You have seen what I did unto the Egyptians, and how I bore you on eagles' wings, and brought you unto Myself. Now therefore, if you will hearken unto My voice indeed, and keep My covenant, then you shall be Mine own treasure from among all peoples; for all the earth is Mine.”

1. Divide students into small groups of 3-5. Each group should read the passage aloud to each other.
2. In groups discuss: How is this text different from the text in *Bereshit* (the text that was presented in activity one)? What is God promising to Moses and the Jewish people here? How is the promise similar or different to the text from *Bereshit*?
3. Have students create a graphic display highlighting the similarities and differences of the two texts. (The biggest difference is that in *Shemot*, the promise is not unconditional. Now the Israelites need to do something, keep the covenants etc., in order to get the reward God is promising.)
4. Higher level thinking question/activity for older grades: Questions with God – have students work in pairs to create an interview with God.

Key questions that must be featured in the interview are:

- a. Why did God change the nature of the covenant first made in *Bereshit* to something different in *Shemot*?
- b. Why do you think God added conditions to the agreement?

Possible answers include:

- a. God had just taken the Jews from slavery, so they couldn't have everything just handed to them.
- b. God had just given the Law (*Torah*) to the Jewish people, therefore God needed there to be incentives and consequences for obeying or not obeying a system of rules.
- c. God saw that the unconditional promise of the land didn't work – Jacob (and Rebecca) tricked Isaac, Joseph was sold into slavery, Jacob and Esau fought.

UNIT 5: CULTURE

LESSON 3: FOOD

Learning Objectives: Israeli food is an important representation of the diversity of life in Israel and tells us much about the people who live in the country.

LESSON OVERVIEW:

For many, Israeli food is synonymous with *Felafel* and *Hummus* and little more. While *Felafel* and *Hummus* are indeed important Israeli staples, they are by no means the only examples of the diversity of food that can be considered “Israeli.”

Like the history of the country itself, food in Israel is representative of the country's diversity. Immigrants from many lands have brought many types of cuisines into the country. Often times, it has been food that has helped newcomers become more a part of the fabric of overall Israeli culture.

In this lesson students will learn more about the foods of Israel, including *Felafel* and *Hummus*, and explore why certain foods have been adopted as part of the culture of the country.

Students Will:

- Learn about the chickpea and why it became a staple food in the Middle East and Israel
- Create their own version of *Hummus*
- Learn more about the diversity of foods brought to Israel by immigrants by researching current Israeli restaurants and making a menu for a new restaurant
- Examine a primary source relating to *Kashrut* in Israel and examine the connection between Israel, Jewish values and food

Essential Questions:

- Why are *Hummus* and *Felafel* such popular dishes in Israel and the Middle East?
- How have waves of immigrants to the Land of Israel changed the types of food that are associated with the country?
- How is food part of a country's culture?
- How does *Kashrut* impact life in Israel?

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES:

Activity one is recommended for grades 2-7

Activity two is recommended for grades 2-7.

Activity three is recommended for grades 4-7.

Activity One (recommended for grades 2-7):

Recommended time for this activity: 30-45 minutes

1. Begin by asking students to brainstorm “Israeli” foods and listing them on the board. For each food, ask if they have ever tried it. Do they like it or not like it?

There will be many answers here - including some that are considered traditional “Jewish” foods like *Matzoh Balls*. While much of what students may think of as Israeli food is actually Jewish. That's ok because as you will see in Activity 2, one of the keys to understanding “Israeli” food is that it is made up of the food of many different cultures. For older students, you may want to ask for an example of a food that was originally from one culture but became associated with another. An example of this could be pizza (Italy) or hot dogs (Germany), which have become American staples due to immigration.
2. After students have brain-stormed distribute, project or post this picture:



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UNIT 5: CULTURE

ACTIVITIES AND PROCEDURES (CONTINUED FROM PREVIOUS PAGE):



Activity One (Continued from Previous Page):

3. Ask the students to guess what is in the picture by asking 'yes' or 'no' questions to the teacher. The picture is of a chickpea plant, so it might be a good idea for the teacher to brush up on the chickpea. Wikipedia has a good entry on the plant as does the Food Network: <http://www.foodterms.com/encyclopedia/chickpea/index.html>
4. After it has been revealed that the photo is of a chickpea plant, ask the students if they can identify which two "Israeli" foods that they listed that are made from chickpeas. The answer is *hummus* and *felafel*.
5. Distribute the text in the blue box to the right to the students or read it aloud to them.
6. Ask students to create an infomercial(see: <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Infomercial>) based on the information they have learned. This can be done as a skit or video. The infomercial should be creative and address this question:
 - Why do you think that *Hummus* became such a popular food item among Arabs and later was adopted by Israelis? (Some potential answers: easy to grow ingredients, inexpensive, able to improve the flavors of other foods as a dip or spread, able to be eaten in the field while working or without utensils.)
7. After each group has created and shared their infomercial, provide the students with some *hummus* to taste.
8. To show the students how easy *hummus* is to make, provide them with some basic ingredients (canned chickpeas, lemon juice, tahini paste, olive oil, garlic powder, cumin, salt, pepper, and maybe some chopped nuts and or spices) and some basic tools/utensils, like forks, and maybe a potato masher, spoons and pita. The ingredients can either be mashed in a bowl for a chunkier variety or blended in a food processor for a smoother texture. This could also be turned into a competition with students divided into groups and each group creating its own hummus with different ingredients.

For a basic *hummus* recipe: <http://www.epicurious.com/recipes/food/views/Hummus-237832>

Activity Two (recommended for grades 2-7):

Recommended time for this activity: 45-60 minutes

1. This activity requires an internet connection and preferably multiple internet connected devices. If you do not have access to the internet, the teacher should print out the relevant information from the restaurant websites.

Note: The restaurant websites provided were accurate as of June 2015. If you find that one or more of them is no longer active please inform CIE at info@israeled.org.

2. In this activity, students will get a flavor of how immigrant groups have impacted the food culture of Israel by looking at different restaurant menus and learning more about the variety of food items that Jews and others brought to Israel.

Hummus is a food dip or spread that is traditionally made by mashing chickpeas and blending them with *tahini* (sesame paste), olive oil, lemon juice and salt.

The word *Hummus* is actually the Arabic word for chickpeas. Chickpeas were so common throughout the region of what today is Israel, Lebanon, Syria, Jordan (called the *Levant*) and some regions of Turkey and Iraq that their farming and use became incredibly widespread among the populations living there. As far as back as 11,000 years ago, chickpeas were grown widely because of their nutritional value as well as the fact that once picked they could be dried and stored for long periods of time. Dried chickpeas could also be ground into a flour. This flour was used to make breads and cakes or mixed with other ingredients, shaped into a ball and fried in oil to make *felafel*.

As a result of its widespread growth, chickpeas are used in a wide variety of Middle Eastern cooking and food, including the incredibly popular *hummus* and *felafel*.

In fact, when the *felafel* dish made its way into this region from Egypt, where it was originally made from fava beans, chickpeas replaced the fava beans to give us the *falafel* balls we most commonly see today.

The earliest record of *hummus* comes from a 13th century Arab cookbook where *hummus kasa* is described. This recipe was different than *hummus* with *tahini* because it substituted vinegar for lemon juice and included extra herbs and nuts. The earliest verifiable record for *hummus* with *tahini* comes from 18th century Damascus in Syria.

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