

Lesson 1: Eating Local

October 26, 2011

Big Jewish Idea:

- Food connects us to the land / Deuteronomy 8:8 – 7 species text
- We have a tradition of fighting long fights – we pursue justice even if it takes months, years, millennia

Environmental Ideas

- Eat local
- Get to know the foods that grow in the area
- Biodiversity is lost in the supermarket

Materials

5-6 different apples from NY State (unusual varieties)

Pens, paper

3-4 cookbooks

Large post-it paper

Knives & plates for cutting apples

Chumash or photocopies of Deuteronomy 7 text

Small box of Apple Jack cereal

Advance Prep

Coordinate with CSA Coordinators if they can talk to the group

Lesson Outline

6:15 – Opening Circle (15 min)

When you think of “the environment” – how do you feel? What are your biggest concerns?

6:30 – Framing of the course / setting guidelines (30 min)

“It’s not up to you to complete the work, but neither may you desist from it”: yes, there are lots of challenges, and it can be disheartening, but there’s also lots of good and lots of work to do.

Over the next 9 months, we’re going to learn together, delve into Jewish tradition, do some really cool projects, and go on retreat together to a very cool Jewish farm, where we’ll get to learn about and see some of the things we’re talking about here in action.

You’ll also have the chance to reflect on your own values and choices, and learn some leadership skills to help you inspire others to take these issues seriously.

- Introduce journaling exercises
- Personal challenges?

Community Guidelines

To learn together – we need to make some guidelines for our time together. *Have everyone suggest community guidelines; write these on a big piece of paper that will be posted in the room every month.*

Food we eat together

- tonight we have pizza. This is the budget. What do you guys want for future months? (model the guidelines you just agree upon as you have this conversation – ie, listening to others, don’t yuck my yum, etc.)

6:50 – Apple vs. Apple Jack (20 min)

Hold up a mini-box of Apple Jack cereal and an apple. Ask the students to tell you what the differences between the two are. If you need prompts:

- processed / natural

- many ingredients / 1 ingredient
- packaging / no packaging
- sugar, GMOs / natural sugars
- traveled a distance / from NY state
- money went to a store / money went to a farmer at the farmer's market
- apple jacks are always the same, no matter where you are / apples tasted different

Conclusion: the picture we're starting to see is that food is complicated. We're going to learn more about food issues all year, but tonight we're going to dig in a little more to this idea of local food and knowing where your food comes from.

7:10 – Snack: Biodiversity! (15 min)

Cut into different apples, have teens see if they can taste the difference, pick a favorite.

Highlight: these all come from NY State. In the store you might only see 3 kinds of apples – Granny Smith, Gala, Red Delicious. But there are actually thousands!

Why do you think big stores only carry a few kinds of apples when there are actually so many?

7:25 – 7 Species / Deuteronomy 8:8 (20 min)

⁷For the Lord your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; ⁸a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and [date] honey; ⁹a land where you may eat bread without scarceness, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine bronze. ¹⁰When you have eaten and you are satisfied, give thanks to the Lord your God for the good land which God has given you.

– Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Read text out loud. Ask: why do you think it's important that the Israelites were told about the food that grows in the land of Israel before they got there? How do you think that made them feel? What's the connection between knowing about a piece of land and caring for it? What food grows where we live?

7:45 – CSA visit (15 min)

Introduce the concept of CSA: people in the neighborhood buy a share of food from a farmer about 2hrs from here. Whatever the farmer has ripe that week is brought to Temple Israel Center. That way, people get very fresh produce that's in season locally. We're going to go take a look at what's in this weeks' share, and then see if we can come up with a menu based just on foods that are in season right now. As if we were the Israelites being told "this is your land, this is the food you're going to eat from this land."

Break into teams of 2-3; everyone brings a notebook so they can write down the vegetable list. Maybe interview with CSA members to ask why they like eating local produce?

8:00 – Make Local Menus (20 min)

In groups, have teens develop a menu based on the food they saw at the CSA. Tell them, you're going to present it to us like God presented the land of Israel – make it really attractive and delicious sounding. But you can only use the foods that we saw on the list.

8:20 – Menu Presentations (10 min)

8:30 – Closing Announcements:

Next month we'll talk about your project – come with ideas!

8:30 – Closing Circle / Personal Challenge #1

What's one new vegetable or local food that you learned about tonight that you're going to eat this month?