

Jewish LearningWorks DIY Jewish Cooking Projects & Min Ha'Aretz: Hazon's Family Education Initiative

Project Description

Using food and Jewish tradition as focal points to create innovative programming for students and their families, Min Ha'Aretz weaves together Jewish tradition and contemporary food issues for students and complementary family education curriculum. Jewish LearningWorks' developed family-friendly recipes suitable for kids in grades k-3 to build and deepen the Min Ha'Aretz curriculum. This cooking curriculum was funded by a grant from Hazon in 2013. This curriculum will be used in Jewish LearningWorks pilot Shalom Explorers scouting program in Marin.

Goals

- Promote awareness of contemporary food issues that is infused with Jewish values and traditions, integrating both secular and Jewish curricula;
- Increase parents' involvement in their children's education and promote joint parent-child and family educational opportunities.
- Create opportunities for the entire community--students, parents, teachers, administrators, rabbis, program directors, and others--to manifest their own Jewish, health, and environmental values and priorities by taking action around the ideas they learn.

Benefits

For students, Min Ha'Aretz demonstrates how vitally relevant Jewish tradition is today and builds understanding of where our food comes from. Min Ha'Aretz strengthens students' Jewish identity by linking something they do every day—eating!—with Jewish tradition and values.

For families, this approach sparks conversations about food, Jewish tradition, and the world around us. Min Ha'Aretz strengthens Jewish life by bringing Jewish texts and values into the food choices families and students make everyday.

For schools, synagogues, and other Jewish organizations, Min Ha'Aretz offers an innovative way to engage students and families. Min Ha'Aretz taps into community interest in food and the environment and stimulates community "greening" efforts.

Student & Family Curriculum Summary

The Min Ha'Aretz student curriculum allows students to explore the question, What is the relationship between Jewish texts, traditions, and practices and the food we eat? More specifically, how does Judaism relate to all the processes and choices involved in how we grow, harvest, prepare, and eat our food, as well as manage our waste? How does Judaism relate to my and my family's food choices? At the beginning of Min Ha'Aretz, students encounter the driving question of this curriculum: what is the relationship between Judaism and food?

Lesson: Earth & Land

For the LORD your God is bringing you into a good land, a land with streams and springs and fountains issuing from plain and hill; a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey; a land where you may eat food without limitation, where you will lack nothing; a land whose rocks are iron and from whose hills you can mine copper. When you have eaten your fill, give thanks to the LORD your God for the good land which He has given you.

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

Fun Fact: Jewish tradition teaches that the pomegranate is a symbol for righteousness, because it is said to have 613 seeds which corresponds with the 613 *mitzvot* or commandments of the Torah.

Activity #1: Discussion

After reading the verse about *Eretz Israel* (tr. the land of Israel), students think about what makes “a good land.”

1. *Make a list of all the **parts** that make “a good land.”*
 - In this list there are physical **things** that make “a good land” such as brooks, fountains, wheat, barley, vines, fig trees, pomegranates, olive oil, honey. There are also **qualities** that make “a good land” such as no scarcity, enough food, no hunger, tools to use, holiness, and blessings.
2. *Which characteristics found in the Torah’s good land do you think are the most important?*
3. *Think of a land you feel connected to (your hometown, Israel, your favorite vacation spot, etc). What characteristics make this a good land?*
4. *How is the description of your personal good land similar and different from the “Good land” text?*

Activity #2: Nosh Niche Cooking Project—"Good Land" Cake

"...a land of wheat and barley, of vines, figs, and pomegranates, a land of olive trees and honey;"

Deuteronomy 8:7-10

"Good Land" Cake

Original recipe by Josie A.G. Shapiro

- 1/2 cup sugar
- 1/4 cup pomegranate molasses
- 2 eggs
- 1/3 cup olive oil
- 1/2 teaspoon orange extract
- 1 cup flour
- 1 teaspoon baking powder
- 1/4 teaspoon salt
- 6 fresh figs
- Confectioners' sugar for dusting
- 1/4 cup pomegranate seeds (optional)

Preheat the oven to 350 degrees F. Lightly grease an 8-inch round cake pan. Trace the bottom of the pan on to a piece of parchment. Cut out the parchment, and place in the bottom of the pan. Grease again.

Mix together the sugar, pomegranate molasses and eggs in a medium bowl until blended and frothy. Drizzle in the olive oil and orange extract and mix until smooth. Sift together the flour, baking powder, baking soda and salt in another medium bowl. Add the flour mixture to the wet ingredients and mix gently just to incorporate.

Pour into the prepared cake pan. Arrange halved figs, cut side up on top of cake. They will sink at some point. That's okay. Bake 42 to 47 minutes or until a toothpick inserted in center comes out clean. Let the cake cool 15 minutes. Invert on plate. Remove parchment. dust with confectioners' sugar and serve sprinkled with pomegranate seeds if those are in season. Serves 6-8.



Lesson: Sustainability & Growing

Activity #1: Read *The Lorax*

The Lorax is a children's book, written by Dr. Seuss. It chronicles the plight of the environment and the Lorax (a "mossy, bossy" man-like creature), who speaks for the trees against the greedy Once-ler. While the book is appropriate for young children, middle school students enjoy the opportunity to revisit this favorite and understand the story on a significantly deeper level.

Read *The Lorax* aloud or have the students read a copy on their own. Provide guiding questions that allow the students to apply the concept of sustainability to the story of the Lorax.

1. *What is the world like that the Once-ler describes long ago?*

Green grass, wet ponds, clean clouds, Swomee-Swans, Humming-Fish, Bar-ba-loots, Truffula Trees

2. *Why did the Once-ler start his small shop?*

Truffula Trees had soft tufts and sweet smell that were perfect for knitting a Thneed

3. *Why does the Lorax appear?*

To speak for the trees and ask why the Once-ler is using his Truffula tuft

4. *What happens to the environment as the business grows?*

There is not enough Truffula Fruit to go round and the Bar-ba-loots are hungry. Smoulding smoke made the Swomee-Swans fly away. Machines make Gluppity-Glupp and Schloppity-Schlopp which goes into the pond forcing the Humming-Fish to swim away.

5. *Is the Once-ler's business sustainable? Why or why not?*

The business is chopping down trees as fast as he can and not thinking about the impact on the present or the needs of the future. The animals are being driven out of their homes. The air, water, and land are destroyed with smog, waste, and the removal of trees.

6. *What could the Once-ler have done differently so that his business was more sustainable?*

The Once-ler could plant new trees for the ones that were cut down. Not grow the business so big or quickly. Find ways to re-use the waste created or cut down on waste created. Etc.

Activity #2 Plant Your Own (15 minutes)

Students plant their own seeds and appreciate the value of planting their own food. When possible, planting of an herb, such as parsley, that would be consumed during a Passover seder is recommended.

Materials

For the class:

- Masking tape
- Watering can
- Markers
- Quinoa ingredients

For each student:

- Planter (bottom of a ½ gallon cardboard carton, like an orange juice container)
- Seeds
- Soil

Remind students to follow the instructions on the seed packet.

Be sure to have each student write his or her name on a planter. If a variety of seeds are planted, label each planter with the type of seed. This information can be written on masking tape and stuck on the side of the planter. Place all the window boxes in a sunny place in the classroom.

Determine a care plan for the plants. Either one person a day can water and turn the plants or a group of students can each be assigned a day a week to care for the plants together.

Alternative Option: Plant a Class Herb Garden. Buy a ready-made kit at a local nursery, or purchase your own seeds, dirt, growing containers, etc.

Activity #3 Nosh Niche Cooking Project—Quinoa Salad

Cooking with herbs (good Passover activity, as quinoa is Kosher for Passover)

Fresh Herb Quinoa with Honey-Lime Dressing

Original recipe by Josie A.G. Shapiro

- 2 cups quinoa, pre-washed or rinsed well
- 1 teaspoon kosher salt
- ½ tsp ground cumin
- ¼ cup fresh lime juice
- 1 tsp fresh garlic, minced
- 2 tsp honey
- 1/3 cup extra-virgin olive oil
- Freshly ground black pepper
- 1/4 cup currants
- 1/2 cup chopped flat-leaf parsley
- ¼ cup chopped fresh mint
- 4 scallions, thinly sliced
- ¼ cup green pumpkin seeds, toasted

Cook quinoa with salt according to package directions. Fluff with a fork.

Combine cumin, lime, garlic, honey, olive oil and plenty of fresh black pepper in a jar. Shake. Add currents and soak at least 10 minutes.

Strain currents from dressing with a slotted spoon or a fork, and add to warm quinoa. Cool. Add dressing and herbs to quinoa. Mix. Garnish with toasted pumpkin seeds. Serves 4.



Lesson: Agriculture & Harvest

Jewish tradition is intricately tied to agriculture and the harvest year. Students consider the production process of turning grain into bread and participate in one step of the process when they grind wheat berries into whole wheat flour. Students explore the connection between the agricultural cycle and Jewish holidays and gain a deeper understanding of this connection.

Activity #1: Becoming Flour

Either write or draw pictures of all the steps required to have wheat flour for bread. Here is an overview of the basic steps:

- Prepare the Fields
 - Plow the land to make sure the soil is soft and loose
 - Make sure soil is moist and healthy with nutrients
 - Add compost/nutrients

- Cultivate the Crop
 - Plant seeds
 - Provide adequate water (but not too much)
 - Pull weeds to eliminate competition and allow for the plants to have room to grow
 - Provide protection from pests and predators (bugs)

- Harvest the Wheat
 - Cut down the stalks
 - Separate the wheat grain (wheat berry) from the stalk
 - Store the wheat berries as you harvest
 - Grind the wheat berries, either at a processing center or small-scale, by hand

Ask students for the first step and as a class put together the list of steps required. Acknowledge that there are many steps and it is hard to identify all of them.

Activity #2: Explore Turning Wheat Berries to Flour

To get to flour, the grain, known as a wheat berry, needs to be ground. There are many foods that we eat everyday that are made from grain; bread and pasta are two examples.

Hand out a wheat berry to each student.

Q: *What is a wheat berry?*

A wheat berry is a whole grain, which means it contains the bran, germ, and endosperm.

Q: *What are the three parts of a whole grain?*

1. **Bran** is the hard outer layer that protects the seed. Bran is a good source of fiber, B vitamins, and minerals.
2. **Endosperm** provides the energy in the form of carbohydrate and protein. The part of the wheat grain that is found in white flour is primarily the endosperm.
3. **Germ** is the inner nourishment for the seed and is a good source of antioxidants, vitamin E and B vitamins.

Q: *What is the difference between whole wheat flour and white flour?*

Whole wheat flour is usually brown because it contains all three parts of the wheat berry, bran, endosperm and germ. White wheat flour is missing the bran and germ (and thus many nutrients) and loses the brown color.

Grind Wheat Berries (5 minutes)

Grinding wheat berries allows the students to witness one step in the transformation of wheat into bread.

Pour approximately $\frac{1}{2}$ cup of wheat berries into the grinder. Depending on the size of the machine, this amount will need to be adjusted.

Allow the students to take turns using the hand grinder or pressing the button on the coffee grinder. Ask the students to listen to how the grinding sounds. Periodically check inside the grinder. Determine a connection between how loud the grinding sounds and how coarse or smooth the flour texture feels. As the grinding gets quieter, the wheat berries will be closer to becoming flour.

Remind the students that this is whole wheat flour. The whole wheat berry was used. This flour could now be used for baking bread or challah.

All grains start as whole grains. If we wanted refined white flour, the bran and endosperm would have been removed before grinding. Then the flour would be white.

Activity #3: Text Study: Making and Eating Bread

The LORD spoke to Moses, saying: Speak to the Israelite people and say to them: When you enter the land to which I am taking you and you eat of the bread of the land, you shall set some aside as a gift to the LORD: as the first yield of your baking, you shall set aside a loaf as a gift; you shall set it aside as a gift like the gift from the threshing floor. You shall make a gift to the LORD from the first yield of your baking, throughout the ages.

Numbers 15:17-21

1. *What connections do you have to making and/or eating bread?*
2. *How does this passage make you think differently about bread?*

Activity #4: Nosh Niche Cooking Project—Pita Bread

Quick Pita Bread

Original recipe by Josie A.G. Shapiro

- 1 ½ cups whole wheat flour
- 2 cups all purpose flour + more for kneading if necessary
- 2 teaspoons quick-rising yeast (1 packet)
- 1 teaspoon granulated sugar
- 1/2 teaspoon salt
- 1 1/4 cups warm water-- about 110-degrees (warm to the touch but not hot enough to burn)

Stir together whole wheat flour, dry yeast, sugar, salt and water. Mix in all purpose flour using just enough to make a soft, sticky dough. Turn dough out on to floured board knead, using more flour as needed, for 5 minutes.

Divide dough into 8 balls. Roll each ball to about 1/4 inch thick and 6 inches in diameter. Place on very lightly greased cookie sheet and let rise in warm place for 25-35 minutes .

Bake at 450 for 3 min, and then turn over for 3 more minutes or until lightly browned. Serves 8.



Lesson: Feeding the Hungry

Today, millions of people in our city and billions of people in the world go hungry every day. Meanwhile, Jewish texts provide different perspectives on sharing foods – we have a strong tradition of hospitality toward guests, and we are also required to provide food for those in need. This lesson includes facts on hunger in one of our major cities and the students consider what this means for people's choices during daily life. A text study of Pirke Avot 1:5 allows students to explore their own view on sharing food with poor.

VOCABULARY

Soup Kitchen: A place where hot and cold meals are prepared and distributed on site.

Food Bank: A place where groceries are contributed and made available to those in need.

Explore Facts About Hunger

1. 1.2 million New Yorkers will turn to soup kitchens or food pantries in 2007 for some or all of their meals, including 348,000 children and 144,000 elderly.
2. Of these 1.2 million New Yorkers:
 - **34%** must choose between paying for food and paying for utilities or heating fuel.
 - **34%** must choose between paying for food and paying their rent or mortgage bill.
 - **22%** must choose between paying for food and paying for medicine or medical care.
 - **30%** are in poor health.
3. From 2003 to 2005, an average of 1,256,000 of the city's residents - one in six - lived in households that could not afford to purchase enough food, according to United States Department of Agriculture data.
4. According to an annual survey of local hunger, the number of people served by the city's charitable food pantries and soup kitchens rose by an estimated 11% in 2006, on top of an estimated 6% increase from 2004-2005.
5. The fastest growing population using pantries and kitchens is families whose parents are working at or near minimum wage salaries.

(Source: <http://www.unitedwaynyc.org/?id=17&pg=fcap&xt=5facts>)

1. *If your classroom was a mini NYC, how many of you would be unable to purchase food according to fact #3?*
2. *What might you not be able to pay for if you had very little money?*
3. *How would your life be different if you had very little money?*

Activity #2: Take Action...

There are a number of ways to work towards raising awareness about and reducing hunger.

Fundraising Activities

Auction student artwork.

Sell student 'fridge magnets (from Session 6).

Organize a bake sale.

Set up an in-school lemonade stand.

Donate monies to an organization of students' choosing.

Students identify and research organizations; discuss the relative merits and needs of organizations and how their work relates to Jewish values; vote on how to distribute monies. Encourage students to consider organizations that work to eliminate the *underlying* causes of hunger by empowering people to raise their own animals, grow their own food, or get educations.

"Bike/Walk/Somersault/Jump for Hunger"

Get friends and family to pledge donations for every mile biked or somersault completed.

Volunteer

The class tours and volunteers at a local food bank, soup kitchen, or "Meals on Wheels" program serving the elderly.

Class (or School-wide) "Give Away"

The next time students go grocery shopping with their parents, buy one extra thing to give away: a bottle of juice, a jar of spaghetti sauce, a box of cereal, a bottle of moisturizer or shampoo, etc. Collect items and donate to a local shelter. Although parents may typically cover the entire cost, encourage students to pay for at least part of what is purchased, even if they only contribute a quarter.

Hunger Banquet: An On-Line Game

Play this well-researched and interactive game developed by Oxfam. Students assume the roles of individuals around the world who struggle to make ends meet and have enough to eat. <www.hungerbanquet.org>.

Activity #3: Nosh Niche Cooking Project-- Stone Soup

There are many versions of the book Stone Soup in print. Pick one and read it before preparing this meal.

"Plenty For All" Stone Soup

Original recipe by Josie A.G. Shapiro

- 2 tablespoons olive oil
- 1 small red onion, diced (1 cup)
- 1 large clove garlic, minced (2 tsp)
- 2 small carrots, peeled and diced (1 cup)
- ½ teaspoon ground cumin
- ½ teaspoon ground chili powder
- 1/2 teaspoon dried oregano
- 1 15-ounce can garbanzo beans, drained and rinsed
- 2 small zucchini, diced (1 ½ cup)
- 1 cup frozen corn
- ½ cup tortilla chips, crushed
- 1 14-ounce can diced tomatoes
- 1 very clean stone
- 4 cups vegetable broth
- Kosher salt and freshly ground pepper
- 1/2 cup cilantro or parsley leaves

Heat the olive oil in a large pot over medium-high heat. Add the onion and cook over medium heat until translucent, about 3 minutes. Add the garlic and carrots and cook, stirring frequently so garlic doesn't burn just until carrots start to brown in places—about 4 minutes. Stir in the cumin, chili powder and dried oregano—cook until fragrant, 30 seconds. Add drained garbanzo beans. When coated in spices, add the zucchini and frozen corn. Stir.

Add crushed tortilla chips. Stir. Add tomatoes with juice. Add your stone! Then add broth and bring to a boil. Reduce the heat to medium low and simmer 15 minutes or until vegetables are tender. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Add cilantro or parsley. Serves 4-6.

