

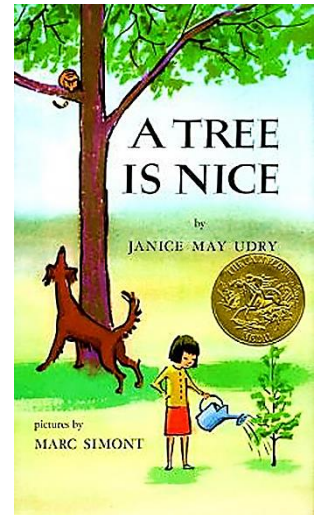
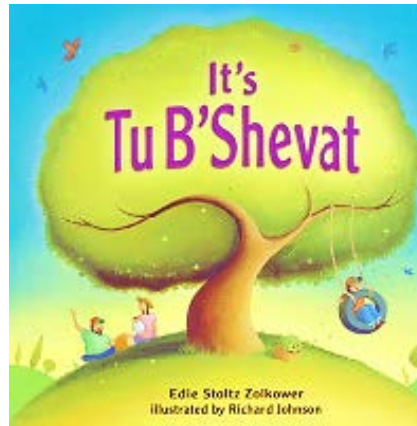
It's Tu B'Shevat

By Edie Stoltz Zolkower

&

A Tree Is Nice

By Janice May Udry



Program Focus

Age group: Ages 2-5
Time frame: 60-90 minutes
Central value: Seeing the beauty in our world, appreciating the environment

Synopsis

With rhyme and colorful illustrations, *It's Tu B'Shevat* tells the story of a boy and his family who plant a tree in honor of Tu B'Shevat, the Jewish holiday celebrating the birthday of the trees.

Why is it nice to have a tree? *A Tree Is Nice* describes a variety of ways in which people make use of trees and explains some of the many reasons that they are so important to us all.

Goals

- Highlight and connect the major themes of this book to daily life
- Involve families in a project to continue *mitzvot* at home
- Care for a piece of nature
- Stop and notice the natural beauty and gifts in our world

Submitted by

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Plan in advance

Choose Location

Ideally, pick a nature center or location where you can easily go outdoors and visit trees, that also has an indoor area to use for reading, snacks, and crafts. Be sure to advise all to dress for the weather – including mud!



Indoor Nature Hunt

Materials

- Small pads & pens (or clipboards with paper for each family)
- Sheet of construction paper and crayons for each child

Planting Activity

Materials needed

- Peat pellets (compressed peat pots which “magically open” when water is added), peat pots, or indoor potting mix
- Small containers to hold the plants (recyclable paper cups, small pots) - if you are using peat pellets, be sure not to use pots with a hole in the bottom!
- Parsley seeds
- Sporks or little forks to rake the dirt
- Water in pourable containers
- Fresh parsley to show the group



Advance Prep

1. Have water available for pouring.
2. If using soil, have it in easily accessible bowls with scoops.
3. Have seeds in shallow bowls so that children or parents can easily take a “pinch”

Prepare a Snack

Materials

- Apple juice
- Fruit slices
- Fruit flavored snacks
- Fruit flavored cookies

Prepare a Tree

If not outside, cut out a large tree shape from brown construction or butcher paper, or draw one on tag board or easel paper. Hang it on the wall behind where you will be telling the story.

Introduce with an activity



Indoor Nature Hunt

Directions

1. Provide each family with a pad or clipboard and pencil.
As you wait for everyone to arrive, they have time to go on a nature hunt! As they do, encourage them to introduce themselves to other PJ families.
2. Depending upon your location, ask families to do one of the following:
 - Explore the nature center a bit and hunt for trees. Find ways the trees are being nice by helping animals or other things. Write down what they find.
 - If not at a nature center, ask them to look out the windows, looking for what trees are doing and the ways trees are nice to animals and other things. Write down what they find.

Outdoor Nature Hunt

Intro Words

I've been hearing you talk about so many interesting things that you are seeing. It sounds like you are finding out a lot about trees and other things even while we are indoors. I wonder what we will see and learn when we go outside! Before we go outside, I have some questions for you.

1. Do you grow?
2. Do you get bigger every year?
3. How do you celebrate getting bigger every year?
4. Do trees grow?
5. Do they get bigger every year?

Did you know that trees have a birthday too, just like all of us? We call that day Tu B'Shevat, and it comes every winter in the Hebrew month of Shevat. I have a song about trees that I'd like to teach you (teach the group one of the songs attached, such as "Tree, Tree, Tree"). I think that when we go out to see the trees we should sing "Happy Birthday," don't you think so?

Directions

1. Send families outdoors with appropriate outer clothing and pads/clipboards in hand.
2. Remind families of any rules, such as staying on a trail, not picking up anything they see, walking quietly so they can hear the leader, etc.
3. Encourage parents to take pictures, not just of their children, but also of the things you see so that they can remind their children of all they saw and learned.
4. Sing "Happy Birthday" to the trees!
5. While outdoors, look for nice things the trees are doing. At some point, you can have everyone be really, really quiet and then ask them what they hear.
6. See if they can find the following:
 - Trees offering homes for birds, squirrels, and other animals
 - Fallen trees and branches offering shelter to ground animals
 - Trees decaying and making new dirt
 - Tiny animals helping the trees to decay
 - Fungi living on trees

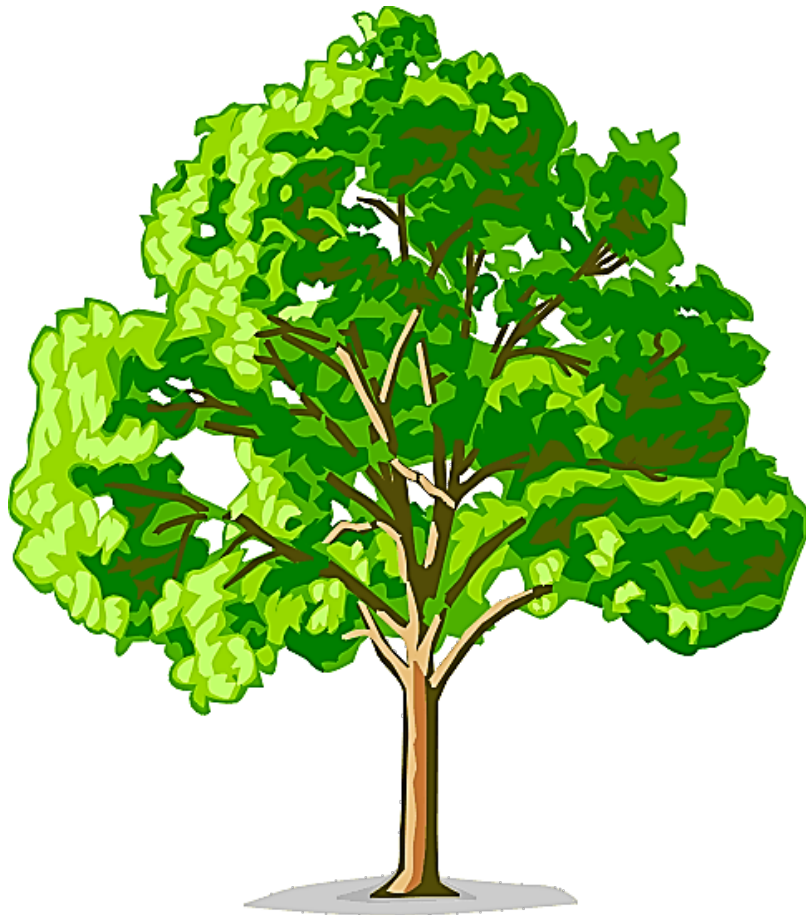
Read the story

Encourage Participation

As you read, encourage active movement as the book describes if you see that the children are restless. If they seem cuddled into parents (they may be tired), just read soothingly.

Discussion

1. Did you learn something new about trees?
2. What do you like best about trees?
3. Let's sing "Happy Birthday" to the trees one more time!



Follow Up activities and resources

Sing Planting Songs

The Tree Song

By Mr. Fred Rogers

Melody can be found at:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=H68OMQyar3Y>



Tree, tree, tree; tree, tree, tree

Tree, tree, tree; tree, tree, tree

We love you; yes, we do.

Yes we do; we love you.

Tree, tree, tree; tree, tree, tree

Tree, tree, tree; tree, tree, tree

Let's Plant a Tree in Eretz Yisrael

By Judy Caplan Ginsburgh

Melody can be found here:

http://www.oysongs.com/products/songs.cfm?mp3_id=1105&artist_id=94



Let's plant a tree in eretz Yisrael (2x)

Hey! etz, etz, etz, b'eretz Yisrael (2x)

Then comes the sun in eretz Yisrael (2x)

Hey! Shemesh, shemesh, shemesh b'eretz Yisrael (2x)

Then comes the rain in eretz Yisrael (2x)

Hey! Yored geshem, geshem b'eretz Yisrael (2x)

Our tree will grow in eretz Yisrael (2x)

Hey! etz, etz, etz b'eretz Yisrael (2x)



Plant a Tree for Tu B'Shevat

By Debbie Friedman

Melody can be found here:

<http://www.totshabbat.com/Purim-Tu-B-Shvat.html>

Chorus

Trees are blowin' in the wind, they're blowin,
Trees are blowin' in the wind - WHOSH! (2x)



Let's dig a hole, let's dig a hole and plant a tree
let's water it, oh let's water it
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat

Look at the sprouts, look at the sprouts, they're coming up,
let's water it, oh let's water it
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat

Look at the leaves; look at the leaves they're growing now,
let's water it, oh let's water it
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat



Look at the trunk, the trunk is so much bigger now,
let's water it, oh let's water it
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat

Look at the tree, the tree is so much taller now,
let's water it, oh let's water it
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat

Just look at me, just look at me, I'm taller now,
Don't water me, please don't water me
'cause it is Tu B'Shevat



Planting Activity

Intro Words

Although we cannot plant real trees today, everyone can plant something that grows- parsley (show them a bunch of fresh parsley). People use parsley for cooking and for celebrating Passover in the spring. The parsley they plant today will be ready to use on a Seder plate at Passover!



Directions

1. Put names on each cup/pot so each one is easily identifiable.
2. Put soil (or pellet) into container. If you are using pellets, have parents slowly add water.
3. Once soil is ready, have each child or parent take a pinch of seeds and sprinkle it over the soil.
4. Use the sporks or forks to rake a bit of soil over the top.
5. Gently add enough water for all of the soil to be moist.



Have a Snack

Enjoy a nice snack of juice, fruit, fruit snacks, and fruit cookies. It is so nice that the trees share their fruit with us so we can have these snacks!



Resources for parents, teachers, families

Nurturing the Family

Have everyone gather back with you, leaving their pot at the table. Thank them for coming, give any reminder announcements, and tell them that you hope they will send pictures to you as they take care of their growing parsley. Encourage parents to mark this experience by creating a book of pictures.

Invite families to also send any “tree food” recipes they want to share with others to you (along with a photo cooking it) so you can put some in your e-blast. You can sing any of the songs above &/or your “end of program ritual,” such as “*Shalom Chaverim*” (see below for words; sheet music can be found in basic Jewish music songbooks; videos of song being sung on www.youtube.com if you search for it.)

Web sites to learn from and share:

PJ Library Tu B'Shevat Page

<http://pjlibrary.org/parents-and-families/reading-tips-and-resources/jewish-holidays/tu-bshevat.aspx>

Ways to Celebrate Tu B'Shevat – a PJ blog post

<http://pjlibrary.org/pj-blog/index.php/archives/2293/celebrate-tu-bshevat/>

A Seder for Tu B'Shevat – a PJ blog post

<http://pjlibrary.org/pj-blog/index.php/archives/4262/seder-for-tu-b-shevat/>

Green Thumb Training – a PJ blog post

<http://pjlibrary.org/pj-blog/index.php/archives/4267/green-thumb-training-for-tu-bshevat/>