



Since a Man is the Tree of the Field – Men and Trees

Activity Plan for Grade 2

The plan deals with Tu Bishvat as the New Year for trees, with an emphasis on getting acquainted with trees and their importance to our lives and the utilitarian and symbolic connection between man and tree. The activities are designed to learn about the trees in their physical sense – the parts of a tree, the conditions in which they grow, types of trees, and also metaphoric connotations, and the connection between people and trees.

Lesson 1 – Getting Acquainted with Trees

1. The structure of the tree – explanation on the parts of the tree and their roles

The roots – are the part of the tree that is in the ground. Its role is to absorb the water and the nutrients from the soil to nourish the tree. In addition, the root attaches the tree to the ground and stabilizes it so it doesn't get uprooted

The trunk - the central part holding the body of the tree. The trunk is strong and stable so that it could carry the branches, the leaves and the fruit. The trunk also connects the roots to the branches and the leaves, and through it water and nutrients are transferred from the ground to the leaves.

Branches – The continuation of the trunk that spreads out to different directions. The branches carry the leaves, the flowers and the tree's fruits.

Leaves – Usually green, and their role is to produce from air (carbon dioxide) and water, using sunlight, materials are used to nurture the tree. The tree breathes through the leaves and evaporates some of the water it has absorbed. There are trees whose leaves fall in the autumn and in spring they bloom, grow again. These trees, like fig, almond, are called "deciduous" trees. Trees whose leaves remain intact all year round like the carob or olive are called "Evergreen".

Buds and flowers - The buds are the small glands that grow on the branches and from which the flowers develop. The flowers are usually colored, and have petals, stamens, and leaves. The role of the flowers to fertilize the tree and create seeds that will develop into new trees, that is, to reproduce the tree.

Fruits and seeds - Fruits develops from the flowers and they contain the seeds. The fruit is the seed used to nourish the seed from which a new tree develops. The seeds are scattered around the tree or carried to other places. They are absorbed in the soil and with water they germinate and become a new plant.





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Lesson 2 – Legends on Parts of Trees

A story about roots- the love of the arbutus and the pigeon:

Once there was a pigeon who lived in Mount. Carmel. The pigeon was the friend of the arbutus tree that grew in the valley. Every day the pigeon would fly down the Carmel and tell the arbutus about the great landscapes she sees as she flies over the Carmel and on her journeys. Once she took a long flight and did not return for days and weeks. The arbutus missed the pigeon and was also jealous of her and also wished to see the scenery on his own. He decided to ascend to the peak of the mountain. With a great effort he uprooted himself and started climbing the mountainside. Soon enough he turned red from strain, his muscles got entangled and its roots got stuck. As the pigeon flew to visit her friend in the valley, she did not find him. She flew and looked for him and suddenly saw him on the mountainside in the middle of the way up, all red.

"What are you doing?" asked the pigeon. "I missed you", answered the arbutus, "and I wished to see by myself everything you told me about". "You have nothing to worry about", answered the pigeon, "I shall not leave you again".

Ever since the trunk of arbutus is red and it grows on a mountain but only till a certain altitude.

A Story about a Trunk – The Mourning Olive Tree (A Folk Tale)

When King Solomon passed away, all of the animals and plants mourned him. The animals cried and refused to eat. The Trees shed their leaves and did not produce fruits. They spoke to each other about the good heart of King Solomon.

Only the olive tree was quiet and did not shed its leaves.

One day a loud noise was heard. All the trees turned to the direction of the noise, and lo and behold, the trunk of the olive tree was split. So they told each other, the olive tree lamented over King Solomon more than we did. In the depth of its heart it lamented and it suffered until its heart split. Ever since until this day, the trunk of each ancient olive tree is hollow and split – due to the heart ache of the olive tree over the death of King Solomon.





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A Story of Blossoming – The Diligent Almond Tree

Two weeks before Tu Bishvat, the angel of the plants, Tzimhiel, descended to wake up the sleeping trees. Heavy rainfalls pour down, cold winds blow, and all of the trees stand barren. The pomegranate sleeps, the apricot sleeps and so does the peach tree. And the almond is asleep while it stands, in the fall it hasn't got even a single leaf left, and it is deep in a slumber. Comes the angel Tzimhiel to the pomegranate, touches it and says: Pomegranate, pomegranate, isn't it about time you get up and open your red flowers in honor of the holiday? The pomegranate answers sleepily: I'm cold, there's a storm outside and heavy rain is falling, I'll continue to sleep until the month of Iyar.

Comes the angel to the apricot, it touched and patted it and asked: apricot, apricot, perhaps it's about time you get up and open your white flowers in honor of the holiday? The apricot replied sleepily: My leaves have fallen and I am barren, it's raining and I'm extremely cold. I'll leave my flower for the month of Adar.

So, the angel Tzimhiel also approaches the peach, who in turn, answers out of sleep: I've slept only a bit, and it's hailing outside, I'll sleep just a bit longer, only till spring. Then I'll open my flowers.

The angel goes approaches almond tree, pats it and says: Almond, my almond, all my trees are lazy, they do not wish to get up and do not wish to adorn themselves in honor of the holiday of Tu Bishvat, perhaps you can get up and announce my arrival to the children? So the almond immediately opens its eyes, laughs at the angel and says: "I have slept enough, I shall be first to rise in honor of the holiday, I shall adorn myself with flowers and I'll bring joy to the children happy.

A Fruit Story – The Fig Planter

A story is told of King Hadrian, who went out for war with his conscripts to conquer a country that had rebelled against him, he encountered an old man planting fig trees. "Hadrian said to him," You are old, working hard and toiling for others" .

The man replied: My Lord, king. I am planting. If I have the merit, I will eat my own fruit, and if not, my sons will eat them.

The king spent three years in the war and then returned. He found the old man in the same place. What was the old man doing? He took a basket and filled it with beautiful figs and approached Hadrian.

The man said to him: Dear king, accept these from your servant. I am the old man you had encountered on your way to the war and you had said to me: You are old, why are to standing and working for others. Well, G-d had already given me the merit to eat the fruit of my labor. And these, that are in the basket, I grant you as a gift. So Hadrian immediately told his servants: Take it from him and fill it with gold coins, and they did just that.

Therefore, a person should not refrain from planting. Yet just as he finds produce, he should continue planting even if he is old.





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2. Similarity Between Men and Trees

1. Introductory Questions:

- In which ways does a man resemble a tree?
- What do both people and trees need in order to live? (water, nutrition, light, ground to stand on)
- What substances could harm both people and trees? (heat and cold, fire, injury – cutting off)
- Recollect the parts of a tree:

The Tree

I am the tree – look at me,
Let us count all of my parts,
This is the trunk, brown and thick with branches above.
Yes, branches whose leaves are green and charming,
And also fruits and flowers,
And beneath me, the roots are hidden.

Parts of the Tree as Symbols:

- Roots – How do we use the term roots in regard to people? What does it mean when someone says, 'my family has roots in Iraq, or in Russia'? or a 'roots journey' or 'roots job'? Roots attach the tree to the ground from where it draws water and nourishment – what attaches people to the land, to where they had grown, to their home? (family, the past, what had occurred to me and my family is – history)
- The trunk – What is the trunk in the connection with animals, for example? What is meant when we say that a dog is a purebred (in Hebrew the word is - *Gizi* - גזעי, which stems from the same root *Geza* - גזע – meaning trunk) which indicates that it had not intermingled with other species, and that it is of the primary specie of its breed. The trunk is what holds all of the branches, the leaves and the fruit – what holds a man's body? The skeleton, the spine.
- Branches – How is the term branches used in a context that is not connected with trees? What has branches? For example, the economy has various branches, what is meant by the branches of the economy? (various sections of the same organization). The branches of the tree are actually parts of the trunk that spread out, and they transfer water and nutrients to



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all parts of the tree. Similarly, branches are used to spread out various parts of any given entity.

- The Treetop – is comprised of the uppermost branches of the tree. What symbolizes the highest part of the tree? Who could reach the highest part? The treetop is a symbol of success - being the best in a given field.
- Flowers – What is meant by someone who is "blooming"? (happy, satisfied, successful). The flower is the attractive and colorful part, and it shows up when the tree is revived – ordinarily, after a period in which it had not grown (winter). Therefore, blossoming is a symbol for development, success and happiness.
- Fruit and Seeds - What are the uses of fruit that are not connected to trees? What is meant by 'fruitful work'? (Successful work, that has positive results = fruits). A fruit is what holds the seeds, the continuation of the tree, and facilitates its reproduction. Fruits are the edible part of the tree and therefore are a symbol of positive results, to which the entire process is directed.
- The Seed or the Core is the smallest and the internal part of the fruit, that will grow and become a full tree, the pit contains all the characteristics of the tree. Therefore, the core serves as an expression of something small but important. A hard core is an expression of small group, or small part that is most reliable.

Symbolic Expressions Connected to Trees (Hebrew words in the expressions show up in parentheses)

1. To set a foothold (to hit a root) – to settle down, to get accustomed to a place, to get connected.
2. Race to the top (to the tree top) – a competition to achieve the best score.
3. To cut off the branch you are sitting on – To destroy and harm something you are dependent on.
4. The apple did not fall far from the tree – the child resembles its parents.
5. A youth like a cedar tree – a good boy, serious, of high caliber.
6. The strong core – The central part, small but faithful.
7. Hung on a high tree – relies on the words of an honorable and knowledgeable person.
8. To uproot – to destroy from the foundation.
9. There are so many trees – you cannot see the forest – Due to so many details, you cannot discern the main point.
10. No bears and no forest – what was transmitted is incorrect.
11. A foreign plant – something or someone who is an outcast in its/his surroundings, unfitting.



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12. Each person under his vine and under his fig tree – a situation of peace and tranquility.

Fill in the Appropriate Expression in the Sentences

1. Oren, Alon and Tamar are very dedicated to the activity. They are the _____ of the team.
2. I found out that everything that was told to me did not occur, actually _____.
3. It was a good era in Israel, _____ and everyone helped each other.
4. The father of Gefen, who is good at drawing is an artist, probably _____.
5. Dan exhibited courage and responsibility during the trip, he is really _____.
6. I set out on a trip with Moran's friends because she invited me, but I felt like _____ there, I didn't know anyone.
7. Only a few years ago we moved to the new town, but by now we feel already at home, which means we succeeded in _____ in the place.
8. Sigal is not free to spend time with friends. She is very busy with _____ at her workplace, there's serious competition there.
9. If you mock your friends you _____ since they will refuse to be your friends.
10. He quoted statements of experts in order to convince me, he _____.
11. There is a need to _____ violence, to simply, eradicate it.
12. Dekel spoke so much, I couldn't understand a thing. I wanted to tell him that _____.

Lesson 3 – Since Man is Like a Tree of the Field – Similarities Between Men and Trees

- How do you understand the sentence: "Since Man is like a tree of the field"? In which ways are men similar to trees and in which ways do they differ?
- Read the statement from the book of Deuteronomy and explain it. Trees in general and their fruits in particular, are valuable and should not be harmed even during a time of war, where there is an intention to harm them in order to cause damage to the enemy. A tree is not a man, and is not to be blamed, and should not be put under siege.





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"When you lay siege to a city for a long time, fighting against it to capture it, do not destroy its trees by putting an ax to them, because you can eat their fruit. Do not cut them down. Are the trees people, that you should besiege them".

Deuteronomy 20, 19

Songs

Lyrics: Fania Bergstein Music: David Zehavi

You planted in me melodies mother and father
Melodies and forgotten songs
Kernels, seeds were carried by my heart
Now they rise and blossom
Now they extend their veins in my blood
Their roots in my arteries are bound
Your melodies father and your songs, mother
in pulses awaken and come back

Here I will listen to my far-off lullaby
My mouth has uttered, mother to daughter
Here will shine with tears and laughter
Eicha and chants of Shabbat
Every utterance shall cease and every tone shall be silenced
In me your far voices will stir
I shall shut my eyes and I am with you
From above the darkness below.

Questions:

Difficult words: *Shuchim* – forgotten, old. *Nasa* – Held, took with him. *P'orot* – branches. *Orek* – artery. *Shluvim* – connected, integrated. *Dofki* - my heartbeat. *Neorim* – awaken.

- Mark in red, words connected to man and to his body, mark in green words that connected to trees.
- Were there words difficult to sort? Which ones?
- What do the various parts of the tree in the song symbolize and what are their roots? Their branches? The planting?
- Are men and trees similar according to the song? If so, in what ways are the similarities expressed?
- Why, in your opinion did Fania Bergstein choose the symbol of a tree? What does a tree symbolize for her?
- Choose an excerpt from the song and illustrate it with a drawing.

The Tree of the Field



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Lyrics: Natan Zach / Music: Shalom Chanoch

Because a man is a tree of the field
Like a man also the tree grows
Like the tree the man is destroyed
And I do not know
Where I was and where I shall be
Like a tree of the field

Because a Man is a tree of the field
Like a tree he aspires to reach above
Like a man he burns in fire
And I do not know
Where I was and where I will be
Like a tree of the field

I loved and I also hated
I tasted the flavor of both
I was buried in a plot of earth
And I'm bitter, my mouth is bitter
Like a tree of the field
Because a man is the tree of the field
Like a tree he thirsts for water
Like a man he remains thirsty
And I do not know
Where I was and where I will be
Like a tree of the field

I loved and I also hated
I tasted the flavor of both
I was buried in a plot of earth
And I'm bitter, my mouth is bitter
Like a tree of the field



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Possible Exercises for the Song

Sort the marked words, for man and for the tree

1. Which words were easy to sort? Which were difficult to sort?
2. Which of them are suitable for both man and tree?
3. What, in your opinion, does the song attempt to express about the connection between man and tree?

My Tree

- Suggest characteristics of trees, (tall-short, fruit tree-ornamental tree, blossoming season – ripening, areas of cultivation, uses of trees and fruits, the size and shape of leaves)
- Every child comes up with a tree that has traits suitable to him and draws it.
- Create an exhibition.
- You may divide the class into groups in which each student presents the tree of his choice and why he had chosen this tree.

A Closing Legend – Ilan and the Almond Tree

They were two pals, an almond tree that grew in the small yard and the boy, Ilan, who lived in the small house. They were almost the same age, being that the almond tree was older than Ilan by seven months. The birthday of the tree was on Tu Bishvat and the birthday of the boy, Ilan, was on the 15th of Elul, yet, nonetheless they were good friends. Whenever he had a chance, Ilan would go and visit his almond tree, and believe me, the almond tree would also go and see Ilan if he only could...Tu Bishvat was getting close, and Ilan stopped to think: What present should I bring my almond tree in honor of his birthday. He thought, and thought until he finally knew what to bring, but he kept it secret until the day had arrived. On the morning of Tu Bishvat, Ilan went to visit his almond tree, and stopped short full of wonder, his friend the tree was decorated in a white and wonderful garment of blossoms in honor of its birthday. All of its branches were covered with small white-pinkish flowers giving off a pleasant fragrance.

Hello almond tree, my friend and congratulations on your birthday! Said Ilan. Here, I brought you a valuable gift! The gift was a huge and colorful picture of a tree blooming in spring, created beautifully by Ilan. I'm positive the almond tree was happy with the gift, and if he could have spoken he would say, Thanks Ilan, thanks very much!

Weeks went by, five months had passed, six and seven and the 15th of Elul, Ilan's birthday had arrived. It was a clear and warm day. A summer sun climbed high in the sky and Ilan got up early, to



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visit his pal, the almond tree. He left the house to the yard, in a white dressy outfit, and he was all curious about what the almond tree would give him in honor of his birthday.

Hello, my dear friend the almond tree, said Ilan as he approached it, I've just turned eight years old. Have you...He was about to ask him a question, but the question was not asked. It was unnecessary to ask. The branches of the tree, filled on Tu Bishvat with white-pinkish flowers, were now laden with loads of fruit. Brown fruit, ripe almonds. Ilan stretched out his hand and took an almond, peeled it and ate its content. It is... extremely delicious! Said Ilan merrily.

And then Ilan picked some more almonds off the tree, sat in its shade, leaned his back on the bark and said: Thanks, almond tree, for preparing me such a tasty and wonderful gift for my birthday!

It was a pleasant birthday; don't you think so?

