

To Work it and Take Care of It – Environmental Responsibility

Lesson Plan for Grade 6

1. An attitude of responsibility to nature.
2. A practical dilemma – Development of open spaces – Simulation of a public committee.
3. If you go out to a war – What is the extent of responsibility to nature.

1. Scriptural Sources for Attitude to Nature

When a fruit bearing tree is cut down,
its voice is carried from one end of the world to the other and its voice is unheard
(Chapters of Rabbi Eliezar 34)

- What is the interpretation of the expression ' its voice is carried from one end of the world to the other end and it is not heard'?
- Why is there a difference between ornamental trees and fruit trees? What is the importance of fruit trees?
- What attitude to nature is reflected from the passage?

At that time, G-d took Adam through all the trees of the Garden of Eden and told him:
Look at my creations, how charming and fine they are! And everything I had created – I created for you. Make sure not
to ruin them and destroy my world. Since if you ruin it there is no one who can repair your damages.
Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7

- What is the role of man according to the passage?
- The Medrash connects "for you I have created" to "do not ruin it", why was this connection made? What is the attitude to what is ours? What is the connection between belonging and responsibility?
- What attitude to trees and to nature is reflected from the passage?

2. Development and Open Spaces

Introduction. The activity deals with an issue that influences our daily life in various ways, the topic of development and open spaces. An open space is a space that has no construction on it, such as: a fallow field, a sea shore, a nature reserve, a park and also an agricultural field. And in Israel? In our tiny country expanses of land are valuable assets, and open fields are no less than treasures! Nature reserves, national parks, forests of the Jewish National Fund, agricultural areas and other uncultivated areas – all these are considered open spaces, also called 'green lungs'. There are also open spaces within constructed areas, 'green arteries'. These are the parks and gardens, the squares and the buffer zones, which are designated as attractions for recreation and amusement.

With the establishment of the state, the founders dreamt of 'building the land and to be built in it,' 'to bring growth to the wilderness', ' to dress it with concrete and cement,' and other aspirations that were true to the early days of the building of the land. The first waves of immigration triggered the necessity to build cities and infrastructures at a rapid pace and to expand agricultural areas, sometimes even without long-term planning. **In many cases, development challenges the preservation of open spaces.** This is a dilemma that entails various aspects. In this activity we will examine this question from different angles.

- A Public Committee – Role Plays



Divide the class in groups of 6 students each. Each group serves as a public committee faced with the dilemma which it must resolve. Every group receives an instruction sheet to carry out the procedure. Every student receives a card detailing the role he must simulate as a representative of a faction or an interested party in the discussed issue. Every student must read his role and consider his opinion in this subject and to come up with arguments to use in convincing the rest of the members of his committee. It is possible to have those with identical roles convene for shared considerations and to consolidate their arguments. You can change the name of the given town to the name of your city or to a nearby location, in order to bring the issue closer to the students' reality.

Group Discussions

In the simulation groups the participants express their personal opinions about the question on hand, and they cast votes for the suggestion.

General Discussion

Every group must report about its discussion and its results in the simulation framework and then?

1. What were the arguments for building an industrial park and what were the arguments against it?
2. What new arguments came up in the discussion that you hadn't thought about previously?
3. What, in your opinion would happen in reality in a similar situation?
4. What is a Zionist position? Which arguments are Zionist arguments and which aren't?
5. What is the best solution in your opinion?
6. Are there additional solutions that could resolve the tension between the need for development to the need to preserve open spaces?

Instructions for a Public Committee in Question of Building an Industrial Park

A suggestion to build an industrial park near the town of Ma'ale Tzion, a peripheral town in the north, was presented to the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor. The intent of the park is to encourage employment and to contribute to the development of the area and to prevent negative migration (abandonment of the city). Many residents and also many "green" organizations initiated a public opposition to the plan.

You serve as the public committee set up by the government to decide whether to accept the plan or not.

Personal Assignment

Study your role, using the imaging card and the background material:

- Who are you?
- What is your position in regard to the creation of the industrial park?
- On what grounds can you persuade the fellow members of your committee?
- Which compromises are you willing to arrive at?

Convene for a Discussion

- Introduce yourself, who are you? What is your occupation/role?
- Present your positions, try to persuade the fellow members of your committee.
- Cast votes, which decision was accepted?
- Are there other possibilities for a solution?

Members of the Public Committee – Role Cards



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Or Caspi – Representative of the Ministry of Industry, Trade and Labor

It is your responsibility to encourage employment in the north. You must show an increase in the number of positions offered. Ma'ale Tzion, and settlements in the region suffer from a high unemployment rate and that the establishment of the park will lead to an increase in job offers. Your office supports the establishment of the park and the allocation of funds for the creation of as many production plants as possible, as well as grants provided according to the number of employees in each plant.

Gal Ra'anani – Representative of the Ministry of Environmental Protection

It is your responsibility to plan landscape construction and open spaces in the north and the valleys. You must take care of the 'green lungs' in the area in general and especially of those near cities. It is known that some of the plants planned to be built in the park are liable to create pollution of air and water and become a source of noise and damage to the landscape and to the quality of life of residents of the area. The factories may also harm the tourism that is beginning to grow in the region. Your ministry is opposed to the park, but if it is established, the ministry will condition this with forwarding some of the government grants to plants – to prevent environmental hazards.

Daniel Sadeh – Farmer in a Moshav in the region. Some of his fields are located in the area designated for the building of the park

In your opinion, agriculture is a value, not just a livelihood. The connection to the land and the right to it depends on your work on the land. You oppose the establishment of the park because it would harm agriculture and nature in the area, and also because of the damage to your income and to those of your fellow farmers. However, the proceeds from agriculture are not high and the compensation you could receive for the land, if it is high enough, may help your immediate financial situation, especially since some of your children will attend and others are already in the midst of their academic studies and you want to help them with their education costs and in acquiring lucrative professions.

Sharon Tzioni – Mayor of Ma'ale Tzion

Many of your city's residents have financial and employment problems. Unemployment is high, and there is not much development and trade in the city and the region. Construction of the park is an opportunity for additional employment, and for keeping the residents of the city and its surroundings in the area and would attract additional population to the region. The park initiative would bring in funds to be invested in the region and in the surrounding area. Therefore, you support the establishment of the park even though the residents living near the designated site are opposed to its establishment and may make it difficult for you in the upcoming election campaign.





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Moran Chai – Representative of Nature Reserves

Your office objects to the establishment of the park because of the expected damage to nature as a result of its construction and the operations of the plants. Your office claims that the park is too close to the nearby antiquities site and the Ma'ayan Tzion Reserve and may damage archeology and the flora and fauna in these areas and their surroundings. According to the Nature Reserves Office it was promised the capacity to expand the area of gardens in this region in order to encourage tourism.

Tal Matzliach – A Businessman Interested in Building a Plant in the new Industrial Park

The establishment of the park will allow you to receive grants and good conditions for the technological plant you intend to put up. The plant will employ about 50 workers in its first stage and then it may develop and employ additional workers. You grew up in Ma'ale Tzion and you have an attachment and responsibility to the place and its success. Nonetheless, you were given the option to build your plant in the Haifa Bay, and if it is not built locally you will build your plant there.

3. When you Lay Siege to a City – The Attitude to Trees at a Time of War

Deuteronomy 20, 19 "When you lay siege to a city for a long time, battling 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?"

Rashi: Is a man – a tree that would go into the siege in fear of you and would suffer hunger and thirst just as the dwellers of the city? Why would you destroy it?

- What is the described situation?
- What is the explanation why it is prohibited to cut the tree?
- "Since man is a tree of the field" – is it a statement or a question? What type of question is it?





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The Tree of the Field

Lyrics: Nathan Zach / Melody: Shalom Chanoch

Since 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

Since 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
Since 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

- Compare the source passage to the poem
- In what is man likened to a tree and in what does he differ in each stanza?
- What is the lesson learned from each of the two passages? Is he similar or different?

