



AMERICAN COMMUNITIES HELPING ISRAEL

ACHI LESSON PLANS

GRADES: N, PRE-K, K (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

LESSON #1

CONCEPTS: Hebrew names, Hebrew months, calendar, Rosh Chodesh

ACTIVITY: create a classroom chart with each child's Hebrew name and Hebrew birthday.

ACTIVITY: each child makes a Hebrew calendar to take home. Have one big calendar in meeting area in classroom, including children's names and Hebrew birthdays.

ACTIVITY: teach about Rosh Chodesh, have Rosh Chodesh parties; serve Israeli treats.

ACTIVITY: invite the mothers to come in, a few at a time, to discuss how their child got his/her Hebrew name (person named after, what name means, etc). Have camera ready and take pictures. Create a binder of the children's Hebrew names, stories about their names that the mothers told, and photographs of the mothers' visits to class. Place binder in the classroom library.

EXTENSION: for all grades, place a chart in the classroom with the children's Hebrew names, Hebrew birthdays, and for older classes, also the Hebrew year and the Parasha.

LESSON #2 (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

CONCEPT: shapes, colors, map of Israel

ACTIVITY: discuss what a map is, what kind of information a map gives us, draw a map of the classroom together and label it draw a map of the school and label it together.

ACTIVITY: review shapes and colors with them (rectangle, square, circle, semi-circle, triangle). Tell the class that one can put shapes together to create things. For example, a green circle and a brown rectangle can become a tree. Show them how to make buildings, the sun, etc. Discuss what a map of Israel should have.

ACTIVITY: give them shapes in different colors and hand out a blank map of Israel. Discuss where Jerusalem, Tel-Aviv, the desert, and the Galilee would be. They can then create and paste the shapes to become a sun in the desert, trees in the Galilee, a rectangle can turn into the kotel in Jerusalem with bricks drawn on it, and squares and rectangles held the long way can be buildings in Tel-Aviv.

EXTENSION: hang up the maps around the room, invite the parents for an Israel Day, sing songs, recite poems, and serve Israeli snacks.

LESSON #3 (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

CONCEPT: noticing and locating objects, then categorizing them.

ACTIVITY: what does it mean to have something made in Israel? Why is it important for us to buy things that were made in Israel? Why is Israel so important to us? Have a clear, short discussion about this.

ACTIVITY: I Spy Israeli objects game (based on the original I Spy activities for young children). Create a large chart with all kinds of pictures of many things. In addition, place products made in Israel within the chart. The children take turns noticing and locating the Israeli objects. When they say “I Spy with my little eye a they have to be as descriptive as possible. For example,” I spy with my little eye a picture of a small yellow bottle of (olive) oil from Israel” so colors and shapes and any other information can be gleaned.

ACTIVITY: place a large blank paper on the board. Label and draw a picture of the different Jewish holidays. Have the children now categorize the Israeli products into different holidays that the products belong in.

LESSON #4 (EARLY CHILDHOOD)

CONCEPT: the five senses, Hebrew language usage

ACTIVITY: read *My Five Senses* by Aliko (stage 1) to the class. Discuss the different senses and why they are important.

ACTIVITY: teach the Hebrew for I see, I hear, I taste, I smell, I touch, following the book’s English example. Add nouns to make the sentences complete.

ACTIVITY: classification- place different objects on the children’s desks and ask them to put the objects on a large table by classifying them according to which senses would be used (obviously, some objects can use more than one sense). Ask them to then say the sense and follow with a Hebrew phrase. For example, I hear, anee shomeyah shofar (I hear a shofar).

EXTENSION: create a wall mural where the children can cut and paste different objects, foods, etc. on the wall according to designated senses that would be used. Practice saying them in Hebrew for the parents on a day when they are invited in, and serve Israeli snacks in celebration of all the Hebrew language they have learned

GRADES: 1-3 (LOWER GRADES)

LESSON #1

CONCEPTS: as per the NYS standards for first grade to study communities and second grade to study New York City, this lesson will incorporate both topics.

ACTIVITY: discuss urban, suburban, rural communities; create a large chart with a section for urban, suburban, and rural, and jot down what the children say about the different sights and sounds of the different communities. For example, the urban sounds could be taxis honking, while the sounds in the suburbs could be the children's voices as they play, the dog barking, or the sound of a newspaper being tossed on the lawn.

ACTIVITY: what is a city? Read to the class books about NYC. Discuss important cities in Israel and compare them to NYC. Put desks together to make four or five different tables in class, and label/call those tables by names of Israeli cities.

ACTIVITY: in cooperative groups, have them research (put easy-to-read books of their designated Israeli city on their desks and also allow them to search the internet) and request that they prepare a chart advertising that city. Invite another class to see their advertisements and serve Israeli treats.

EXTENSION: have the groups also work on a map of their designated city, then create a bulletin board of the advertisements and maps.

LESSON #2 (LOWER GRADES)

CONCEPT: world communities, Israel as a world community, as per the NYS standards to study six world communities in third grade.

ACTIVITY: what is a world community, how is it different from referring to it as a country? Which six world communities should we study? Definitely Israel should be one of the ones you study.

ACTIVITY: define four or five topics about Israel that the class would like to study. Break up into four or five tables, call the tables by the topic (such as holidays, geography, people, etc.) and hand out research materials (allow also to use the internet in class or in the school library). Have the groups research their topics and write important information on index cards.

ACTIVITY: instead of writing research papers, discuss creating a game for each topic on Israel. Discuss how important it is for everyone to be a team player and work well within his/her group. Give the groups time to discuss what kind of game they would like to construct. There are catalogues where you could order blank game boards to make it much easier for yourself as a teacher.

ACTIVITY: when the games are completed, invite the parents in for an Israel Game Exposition, serve Israeli snacks, have the parents actually play the games. They will be amazed at how much information their children acquired by doing this project.

LESSON #3 (LOWER GRADES)

CONCEPT: Israeli store shopping

ACTIVITY: tell the class that you are going to set up a make-believe store with Israeli products. They will be given each a dollar or two in all kinds of coins, and each item in the “store” will have a designated price. They will receive a tally sheet to figure out how much they have left after each item is purchased. They will constantly have to add and subtract.

ACTIVITY: to prepare the students for this event, first conduct a read-aloud (part of Balanced Literacy): *Alexander, Who Used to be Rich Last Sunday* by Judith Viorst. Read the book to them as you sit by a whiteboard so that you can constantly show them how they have to add and subtract Alexander’s coins.

ACTIVITY: shopping for Israeli products. Set up the room as a store, including pretend cash register, have someone assist you during this activity. Give every student money in different coins (doesn’t have to amount to a lot of money) and mark each item by designated cost. Give each child a worksheet to tally as he/she purchases items. Also distribute brown paper bags to put purchases in. They must hand in their tally sheets at the end of the activity, so remind them to write their names.

ACTIVITY: since you are using only Israeli products, decorate the room that day as an Israeli supermarket, wear an apron, have a Hebrew sign for yourself, make it as real-life as possible. Explain why it’s important to support Israel by purchasing these Israeli products in the US. Have a younger class come in to observe as you play shopping that day.

LESSON #4 (LOWER GRADES)

CONCEPT: quilts as story tellers

ACTIVITY: read books to the class about the making of quilts, the stories that quilts portray, etc. Some good examples of such books are:

The Quilting Bee by Gail Gibbons
The Keeping Quilt by Patricia Polacco
Cassie’s Word Quilt by Faith Ringgold

ACTIVITY: discuss how quilts can tell stories from their pictures and embroidery. Tell the class that they will be making a quilt of Israeli and Jewish symbols. Try to get the art teacher or parents who have made quilts before, to help out. Also ask parents if they can donate fabric and materials for the quilt.

ACTIVITY: before embarking upon making the quilt, give each child a blank paper square. Have a discussion of Jewish and Israeli symbols. What are symbols? What, for example, does a dove symbolize? Each child should sketch a different symbol, and then color it. Ask parents to help you convert the sketch to the quilt. Each child should write his/her name on the square. When completed, hang the quilt in class, invite the parents to see it, have the children explain what the symbols are and why they chose them, and serve Israeli treats.

GRADES: 4-6 (MIDDLE GRADES)

LESSON #1

CONCEPT: fiction v. nonfiction

ACTIVITY: using mentor texts, share with the class the differences between fictional and non-fiction (informational) writing.

ACTIVITY: read the Discoveries book of *Insects and Spiders* as an informational book, and *Charlotte's Web* by E.B. White as an example of a work of fiction. Lead a discussion about the clear-cut differences.

ACTIVITY: from a list of suggested topics, have each child self-select (or you as the teacher assign topics if everyone wants the same topics!) The children should research the topic, then write an informational piece about the topic, and also write a fictional piece of creative writing using the topic as background to the story. For the nonfiction piece, the students must include a list of references.

ACTIVITY: once the fiction and non-fiction writings are completed and checked by the teacher, hand out blank bound books (you can get them in school supplies catalogues). The children should print/type/word-process their writing pieces, one side of the book for the fiction and the other side of the book for the non-fiction. Each side gets a cover with the title of the writing endeavor, illustrated, and illustrations can also be done throughout the "books" as well. Put all desks in a horseshoe shape with all the two-faced books the children created on the desks. Have a sheet for parents to sign and comment on, invite them in, and serve Israeli snacks.

LESSON #2 (MIDDLE GRADES)

CONCEPT: Israel: what it is like to have grown up there.

ACTIVITY: read *Grandfather's Journey* by Allen Say as a mentor text to the class. Discuss the style of the book with its narrative and illustrations, the story of coming to America, etc. Use this as an opportunity to compare and contrast Israel and the US.

ACTIVITY: teach how to interview. What kinds of questions do you ask? How do you present them? How do you take notes about the interview? Then focus specifically on the task at hand: since you will be inviting visitors to your class to talk about Israel, what do you want to know? What information is really important to find out? Try to glean from the mentor text (above) what you are looking for.

ACTIVITY: invite some individuals to your class who came to the States from Israel (one at a time). The students should have their interview questions ready. Focus on why the speakers came to the States; how it was different from Israel, did they go back to visit, their impressions, etc.

ACTIVITY: create picture books (get bound blank small books or make your own) with narratives and illustrations. They should have three parts, including the impressions of the individual coming from Israel to the States with similarities/differences of the two countries, what they missed about Israel, and what it was like going back to visit (or live there).

ACTIVITY: have a celebration, invite the interviewed guests as well as parents, serve Israeli snacks, have the children read their books.

LESSON #3 (MIDDLE GRADES)

CONCEPT: Persuasive Essays

CONCEPT: as part of the English Language Arts standards, students need to know how to write persuasive essays.

ACTIVITY: read to the class from *The Adventures of Tom Sawyer* by Mark Twain the section where Tom convinces other kids to whitewash the fence for him. Discuss with the class what Tom does, what he says, what he doesn't say, to persuade other kids to do what he wants. Is the ability to persuade others a good thing or a bad thing? When is it a positive talent?

ACTIVITY: discuss why Israel is important to every Jew in the US. Why is it important to support Israel? How does purchasing Israeli products support Israel financially? Psychologically?

ACTIVITY: each child should write a persuasive essay on the topic of supporting Israel by purchasing Israeli products. Invite another class in to listen to each student read his/her persuasive essay, and serve Israeli treats.

EXTENSION: create a bulletin board in the hallway so others can see the importance of this mission.

LESSON #4 (MIDDLE GRADES)

CONCEPT: Israel Craft Day

ACTIVITY: research together which crafts are prominent in Israel. Choose several crafts to highlight. Purchase the materials and find parents (or the art teacher) to help you on the Israel Craft Day.

ACTIVITY: divide the classroom into several sections. Ask kids to bring old shirts or smocks that day. Have old newspapers ready to cover tables. Have a camera ready to take pictures of the students working on their crafts.

Some suggested crafts: decorating kippot with Israeli symbols and Hebrew writing, embroidering challah covers, making clay vases, making felt wall hangings, knitting bookmarks. Keep it simple.

ACTIVITY: review the format of writing a “how-to” essay (how to make something, including all steps). Tell them that after their craft is finished, they will be writing “how-to” essays on how they did the craft.

ACTIVITY: have tables set up with completed crafts that the children made. Invite parents, and serve treats from Israel. Each child should also read his “how-to” essay (how they made the craft from beginning to completion).

ACTIVITY: put the “how-to” essays and a matching photo in each child’s writing portfolio.

GRADES: 7TH, 8TH (UPPER GRADES)

LESSON #1

CONCEPT: Israel’s economy

ACTIVITY: using the internet as well as research books, discuss economics in general. What impacts upon a country’s economic state? Discuss the different variables. Then focus on Israel. How do geography, climate, wars, terrorism, tourism, agricultural innovations, etc. impact on Israel’s economy?

ACTIVITY: working in small groups, the children should research and take notes on selected variables (each small group has a different topic).

ACTIVITY: have the school technology teacher or a parent with know-how teach the class how to do Powerpoint presentations. Have them work on their presentations. When the presentations are completed and successful, send an invitation to the parents to come in to see and hear them. Part of every presentation should highlight how purchasing products from Israel can help Israel’s economy.

EXTENSION: have the class present these Powerpoints to other classes.

LESSON #2 (Upper Grades)

CONCEPT: famous people of Israel 1948-present.

ACTIVITY: discuss with class as a whole which individuals contributed to Israel’s creation and growth from 1948-present times. Ask if they can think of any names (Golda

Meir? Moshe Dayan? Ben Gurion? Rabin?) and what these individuals were famous for. Create a suggested list of “famous” people of Israel.

ACTIVITY: in small groups, the students should research the individuals. As part of the research, have on hand some primary or secondary resources for them to explore and deepen their understanding.

ACTIVITY: each small group should write a speech based on the individual they self-selected to research. Practice and then invite another class to view the presentations. The groups can come in dressed as their researched individual or bring any materials that would add to make their researched individual more real to the audience. Have someone video the presentations to show other classes later. Serve Israeli treats.

LESSON #3 (UPPER GRADES)

CONCEPT: diversity in Israel, an integrated lesson

ACTIVITY: discuss what diversity means, and what kinds of cultural groups are represented in Israel. Have the students do lots of research in this area.

MATH ACTIVITY: have the students create all kinds of graphs, highlighting the different cultural groups in Israel today, their numbers, educational levels, jobs they have, where in Israel they live, etc.

LANGUAGE ARTS ACTIVITY: create a class cookbook with recipes from the different cultural groups in Israel. This will take time and effort, but once done can be utilized as a fundraiser for Israel (ACHI). Send a note to families that your class is embarking upon this project, and what you are focusing on. Give assigned tasks to the students (writers, typists, recorders, field people to actually find family members with recipes, illustrators, photographers, etc).

SOCIAL SCIENCE ACTIVITY: focus on the customs and ceremonies of the difference cultural groups. Why is diversity important? Why is it significant in Israel? What are some of the challenges?

EXTENSION: initiate a school-wide pen-pal program (or sister-school program) so that students can write to Israeli children, especially focusing on Israeli students from diverse cultural groups.

LESSON #4 (UPPER GRADES)

CONCEPT: creating a newspaper about Israel

ACTIVITY: bring in different kinds of newspapers (Hebrew and English) for the students to see. Decide as a class which sections of the newspaper should be included in the class newspaper project. Ask students to start bringing in newspaper articles about Israel.

ACTIVITY: is there anyone from your parent body who works or has worked on a newspaper before? Invite that person in to discuss what it is like to put together a real newspaper (the deadlines, the details, the headlines, etc).

ACTIVITY: assign roles (or have the students self-select roles) of the different tasks (photographer, editor, reporter, etc). You could have an editorial page, a front page, an international page, etc. In addition, some students should be in charge of advertising, and you can use this as an opportunity to advertise made-in-Israel products (you can have illustrations by the students of products or take a picture of the products or copy (in color) the products) and create an advertising section.

ACTIVITY: writing a newspaper takes time and organization, but it reinforces team work and builds writing and interviewing skills so it is a worthwhile task. Both the Hebrew and the English departments can be involved in this (make it a Hebrew/English newspaper if you want). Once completed, create a newspaper bulletin board outside your classroom for all to see and read.

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