



TODAY'S TOPIC:

Tu B'Shevat

Pronounced: too beeshVHAT

You are welcome to use this lesson to inspire spiritual conversation in your family or youth classroom. It is written for elementary age but could be adjusted as needed.

THINKING JOB: Ask a "thinking job question" to get everyone thinking about something pertinent to the lesson. This could be asked moments or hours before your conversation.

What makes trees so important?

Lesson

Tu B'Shevat

Materials	Things to Prepare	Today's Goal
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Watering can/dish for water Tree of choice 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 	Learn about Tu B'Shevat

SAY: Everyone likes birthdays. They are so much fun! We get to gather with our friends and family and celebrate someone for just being them! **ASK:** Have you ever celebrated a birthday that wasn't for a person? Maybe for a pet? How about for a plant?

SHARE: Today is a holiday called Tu B'Shevat, which is kind of like a birthday for the trees. Tu B'Shevat is a Jewish holiday that celebrates trees and honors them for all the gifts they provide for people and for the earth. Each year, families and friends gather to recognize the trees for another year of living and giving.

ASK: What do trees do that makes them so important? Ideas: provide shade, fruits and foods, oxygen and shelter.

SHARE: During Tu B'Shevat, we honor the trees by enjoying a feast made with foods trees provide and showering trees with gratitude, prayers and well wishes for their new year.

ACTIVITY: Get up on your feet! We're going to try a movement meditation. Make sure you have some space and shake your wiggles out, quick. Great, now we are ready to get into it. You can close your eyes for this exercise if you'd like. Let's

imagine that we are trees. Start by planting your feet firmly on the ground. Imagine that roots are growing out the bottom of your feet, into the earth, going deeper and deeper with each breath you take, grounding you. Now, with your roots sunk deep into the earth, you can imagine your trunk growing tall. Your strong legs and core are sturdy. Breathe into that strength as you stretch your branches up and out, reaching, reaching, reaching! Imagine leaves sprouting from your fingertips and your head. A gentle breeze blows and your branches begin to sway and your leaves rustle. Now, a mama bird lands on one of your branches she feels so safe with you, that she decides to build a nest and lay her eggs there. A child comes along on their bike and stops to rest in your shade and snack on the fruit you've grown. You are such a gift for them! Alright you can open your eyes now. **ASK:** How did that feel? Does it feel good to be a tree?

ASK: When you celebrate your birthday, is there something you always get?

Presents, of course! **SAY:** Since it's their birthday we are going to give the trees a gift!

ACTIVITY: Tree Blessing Water

Place your chosen water dish in front of you. **SAY:** All trees need water, but they also need love! We are going to supercharge this water with lots of love so that it will be an extra special gift for the trees to soak up! I am going to read a blessing for the trees out loud over this water, while you listen, try to infuse as much love and gratitude and heart energy as you can into the water. You may dip your fingers in the water and swirl it around, or rub your hands together and place them gently on the container. You might even hum a little song!

READ: from the book "Dear Tree" by Doba Rivka Weber

Dear Tree,

May you have a year filled with sunlight

A year full of delicious rain

May G-d give you a year of chirping birds and buzzing bees

A year of beautiful blossoms, shiny green leaves, and sweet fruit with many seeds inside.

This year, I hope your bark will protect your delicate branches.

I hope your branches will stretch out and give more shade.

Stay strong, dear tree. For a storm may rage, and the sky may grow dark...
...but G-d has given you thick roots that reach deep into the earth to hold you steady against the wind.

May you stand firm and straight for years to come and may your seeds grow into little trees all around you.

So, dear tree, I will care for you and guard you.

For I know that you, and all other trees around the world, do so much good for the earth and for people just like me.

Happy New Year!

ACTIVITY: Go outside and water a tree with your blessed water! Say your affirmation while pretending to be a tree again.

AFFIRMATION – My roots go deep and I stretch high! repeat 4X

Note: Printable affirmations and coloring sheets for this lesson are available at <https://www.milehichurch.org/youth-family/> .