



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
• Dissolving paper • Watering can/dish for water • Tree of choice	• What tree will you water?	Learn about the Jewish holiday of Tu B'Shevat, and the importance of trees.

ACTIVITY: Everyone on your feet! We're going to try a little tree imagination and movement. Spread out a little, make sure you have some space.

1. You can close your eyes for this exercise if you'd like.
2. Imagine you are a tree.
3. 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.
4. 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!
5. 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 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. Think of all the gifts you give by being a tree.
6. Open your eyes.

AFFIRMATION: Just like a tree, my roots grow deep and I stretch high. Repeat 4x

SAY: Raise your hand if you like birthdays. 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: Pass out a piece of the special paper to each child and place a basket of markers in the middle of the circle.

SAY: We are going to put some Tu B'Shevat tree blessings onto this paper. What kind words, thoughts or pictures would work for a tree? You might write a special word or sentence on it, write thank you, or draw a picture of sunshine or rain drops or leaves. Add as much love and gratitude as you can.

SHOW AND EXPLAIN: Use a clear bowl with water and add one piece of the paper. Watch what happens when you put this paper in water. (It dissolves!) **ACTIVITY:** Encourage everyone to add their paper until they are all dissolved. Go outside as a class and water one or more trees with your tree blessing water.

BONUS: Anyone who wants to can make a paper to take home, dissolve it in water there, and water trees around where they live.

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/> .