

Values Curriculum:

Honoring Elders/Hiddur Pnei Zaken

OVERVIEW	This session teaches the Jewish value of Honoring Elders, <i>Hiddur Pnei Zaken</i> . Through an imagination game and story, students will consider what it's like to be older. Students will make cards and flowers to share with elders in their communities.
OBJECTIVE	To consider the value of the elders in our community and appreciate their many gifts. To inspire a visit to an elder in each of the children's lives in hopes of nurturing those connections.
VALUE(S)	<i>Hiddur Pnei Zaken</i> (Honoring Elders)
STORY	"Mrs. Katz and Tush" by Patricia Polacco
MATERIALS	Card-making supplies, costumes, paper flower materials
AT HOME CHALLENGE	Families will be invited to visit an elder in their community and bring them their child's card and flowers.

Materials List

Activity One

- Simple costume materials: scarves, hats, gloves, ties, wigs, costume jewelry, cane

Activity Two

- Tissue paper in many colors, cut into 10 inch squares
- Pipe cleaners
- Pairs of scissors

Gathering Activity

- Cardstock
- Crayons, colored pencils, pastels, or thin markers
- Decorative stickers and/or washi tape OR stamps and ink pads
- Shalom lettering to copy from as desired

Opening/Closing Circle

- Book: "Mrs. Katz and Tush" by Patricia Polacco
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge Sheet

Gathering Activity: Card-Making (15 Minutes)

Children will make cards to share with elders in their community.

1. Gather children around a table with materials laid out.
2. Tell the children we are making cards today for older people in our community. We will talk more about who that is in today's lesson.
3. Show children a sample card and the materials available for card-making.
4. Have each child take a piece of cardstock and make a card from it.



Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle, bringing their Shabbat mats with them, and begin with a melody, a *niggun* or a greeting song such as *Hineh Ma Tov*.

Tell about today's theme:

- The cards we will make are going to elders, older people in our community. Who is an elder? Who are we talking about when we use that word?

- Do any of you spend time with grandparents or other elders?
- What do you know about your elders? What do you like to do with them?
- How are they different from parents or people your parents' ages?
- Today we are learning about honoring our elders, *Hiddur Pnei Zaken*.
- What does it mean to honor something?

Introduce today's Hebrew words — *Hiddur Pnei Zaken*:

- Everyone put your hands in front of your body with your palms facing up. Say "Hee." Lift your hands up and say, "Dur." Put them together and say, "Hee-Dur."
- *Hiddur* means to make something beautiful or more special, or to see the beauty or specialness in something.
- Everyone bring a hand in front of your face. Make a circle with your hand in front of your face and say, "P-nay."
- *Pnei* means faces.
- Everyone put your hands in front of you and make a circle with your thumb and index fingers (one circle with each hand). Say, "Zah." Bring the circles over your eyes, like you are wearing glasses and say, "ken." Put them together and say "Zah-ken."
- *Zaken* means elder or older person.
- *Hiddur Pnei Zaken* all together means making beautiful the faces of our elders or seeing the beauty in our elders. We appreciate their wisdom and vision.

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — "Mrs. Katz and Tush"

- Elders have lived a lot longer than you have, and they often have amazing stories about their life. They have a lot to share about what they've already learned by living a long time. Children can have special friendships with elders because elders are good at stories and children are good at bringing people energy and life.
- The story we are going to read is about a child named Larnel. Larnel has a special friendship with his older neighbor Mrs. Katz. Let's find out how their friendship is made.

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**
 - ◇ How did Larnel and Mrs. Katz become friends?
 - ◇ What kinds of things did Larnel and Mrs. Katz do together?
 - ◇ What happened to Tush?

- **Get Curious**

- ◇ What are kids wondering about the story?
- ◇ Encourage kids to wonder about WHY something happened in the story, WHAT might happen next, or HOW someone did something.
- ◇ Record these questions on the big pad of paper.
- ◇ These questions don't have to have answers – though kids are welcome to try and answer each other's questions.
- ◇ Have kids respond to each other's questions with "good question!" and a thumbs up.

- **Give one more Question to Ponder**

- ◇ I'm wondering: Who are the older people in our community who we might spend more time with?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: When I Am Old... (20 Minutes)

Children will imagine themselves as older people. They will act out one thing they might do as an elder someday. Try to support the children in expanding beyond the stereotypes they might have.

Introduce the Activity:

Mrs. Katz did a lot of interesting things. She knitted and sewed. She told stories. She made tea and baked. She went to the market. She celebrated holidays. She remembered happy things and sad things. She took care of her cat.

Think for a minute about what you might be like when you are older. What are some of the activities you do now that you can still imagine doing then? What are new things you might do? What are things you see older people you know doing that you might also do when you are older? Let's think quietly for a minute.

Each one of us is going to pick one thing to act out quietly. And the rest of us have to guess what it is. We have a few costume items if you need them.

1. Do a demonstration by acting out an elder activity and having the children guess.
2. As they are ready, have each of the children act out one idea.

3. If you have a lot of kids, they could do this in pairs, then give them a few minutes to decide what they want to act out and make a plan.
4. If kids get stuck, you can brainstorm ideas together and then ask for volunteers to act that thing out.
5. Continue until everyone who wants has had a turn or you run out of time or ideas.

Activity Two: Paper Flowers (20 Minutes)

Children will make one or more paper flowers to give to an elder in their community.

Introduce the Activity:

Larnel thought Mrs. Katz could use more company and brought her a kitten. Not every older person needs or wants an animal to live with but almost everyone enjoys a visit and a thoughtful gift.

We are going to make paper flowers to give as gifts, together with the cards we already made, to an elder whom we know. Together with your family you can decide who you want to give it to. Hopefully, like Larnel's gift of the cat Tush, the gift will also be a good reason for a visit with that person



1. Have each child take a few pieces of tissue paper and a pipe cleaner in colors of their choosing.
2. Walk them through each step as you do it together.
3. Stack the tissue papers on top of one another and fold them accordion style.
4. Take the pipe cleaner and wrap it around the middle of the tissue paper, twisting it to secure it.
5. Using the scissors, cut the tissue paper ends on each side with rounded or pointed shapes to create the flower petals you want.
6. Unfold the paper and puff it up to open up the flower.
7. If time permits, allow the children to make additional flowers.

For directions on this project with helpful photos visit:

<http://www.rustandsunshine.com/2012/05/tissue-paper-flowers.html>

Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle with their flowers and cards.

Invite each child to think for a minute about an older person they might bring their gifts to. It could be a grandparent, a neighbor, someone in their Jewish community, a friend of their parent. Then have each child share their flowers and cards and say who they might give them to.

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies: Palms in front of you and facing up “Hee,” life them, “Dur.”
- A hand moving in a circle in front of your face “P-Nay.”
- Circles fingers like glasses to your face “Zah-Ken.”
- Have the children say what *Hiddur Pnei Zaken* means (honoring elders).
- We all hope to be elders someday. Today we appreciate their wisdom and vision.

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet

Sing a goodbye song like *Shalom Chaverim* or *Oseh Shalom*.

At Home Challenge: Honoring Elders/*Hiddur Pnei Zaken*

Today, we learned about the Jewish value of honoring our elders, *Hiddur Pnei Zaken*. We learned that older people have wonderful experiences, stories, and wisdom to share with us and that we have life-giving energy and kindness to share with them. We imagined what it will be like when we are older people and we made cards and paper flowers to share with elders in our communities.

Here are the next steps to take at home to practice honoring our elders:

1. As a family, think about who the elders are in your life or community. Do you have grandparents or great-grandparents, neighbors, friends, or other community members who are older? Maybe you spend a lot of time with them. Maybe you don't know them very well and this could be an opportunity to connect with them.
2. Reach out to one of those people and ask them if you can visit. Go by to see them and bring them your child's card and flower. You could visit for a while, stop in just to say "hi," or leave the card and flower if that's easier for everyone.
3. If you think of more than one person, make more flowers and cards at home and do a few visits.
4. If you visit one person and it goes well, consider making another visit sooner than later, next month, or next season. See if your visit can inspire you to a deeper connection.