

Values Curriculum:

Community/Kehilla

OVERVIEW	This session explores the Jewish value of <i>Kehilla</i> /Community and how to welcome new people into a group. Through games and crafts students consider who is in their communities and practice how to build community.
OBJECTIVE	To practice community-building skills and commit to creating communities.
VALUE(S)	<i>Kehilla</i> (Community)
STORY	" <i>Dira L'Haskir</i> /Apartment for Rent" by Leah Goldberg
MATERIALS	Map making supplies, Welcome sign materials
AT HOME CHALLENGE	Students will take welcome signs home to remind them to do the work of welcoming people to their community. Families/ children are challenged to introduce themselves to someone new in their neighborhood or in their community.

Materials List

Gathering Activity

- White paper
- Pencils and erasers
- Markers, crayons, and/or colored pencils

Opening/Closing Circle

- Book: “*Dira L’Haskir/Apartment for Rent*” by Leah Goldberg
- Big pad of paper and markers
- Special objects – one for every child
- At Home Challenge Sheet

Activity One

- No materials required.

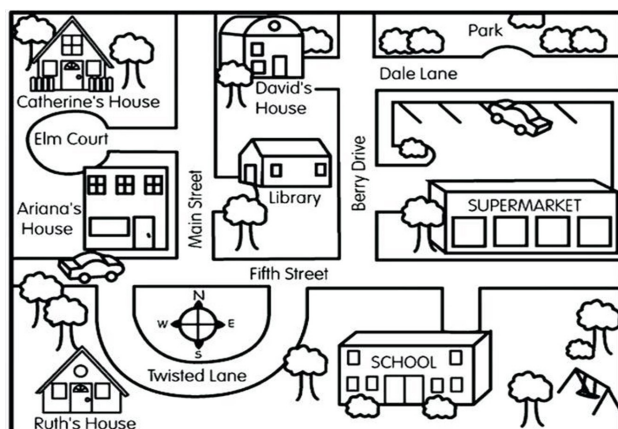
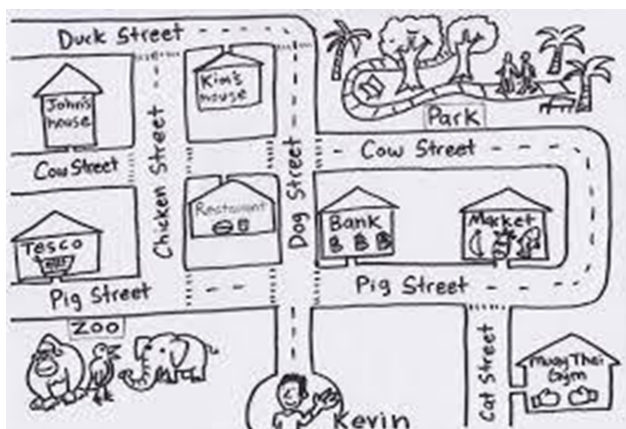
Activity Two

- Colored cardstock
- Bruchim Ha’Ba’im sheets
- Pairs of scissors
- Glue sticks
- Markers, crayons, or colored pencils

Gathering Activity: Neighborhood Maps (15 Minutes)

Children will make maps of their neighborhoods.

1. Gather children around a table with materials laid out.
2. Show children a sample neighborhood map (like the samples here).
3. Ask the children to tell you what they see on the map. Notice how these maps include places that are important to the map maker.
4. Ask each child to think about the things that are important to them in their neighborhood or community. What are the places they go to regularly or that matter to them?
5. Invite the children to draw a map of their places. The map does not have to be accurate. If their places are all spread out, they can still place them as if they were close to each other.
6. Children can use any of the drawing materials to make their map. For those who want it to be a certain way, they should start in pencil and add color afterward.



Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

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

Tell about today's theme:

- Have the children show their maps to each other. Have each child share one special place on their map.
- These maps represent our communities. Our communities include people that we know and places that we go. Some of the people in our communities we know well and others we hardly know at all.
- Today we are learning about how to build a community.
- What do we already know about communities?

Introduce today's Hebrew words — *Kehillah & Bruchim Hab'aim*:

- Everyone hold up your hands and wiggle your fingers. Say "ke-hee."
- Now interlace your fingers together and say "lah."
- Put these sounds together: "ke-hee-lah."
- *Kehilla* means community.
- A community brings people together.
- Everyone put your hand out in front of you. Pretend you are grabbing onto a door knob with each hand and say "Bru." Pretend to pull the doors open by bringing your hands toward your body and say "Cheem." Put these sounds together: "Bru-Cheem."
- Now take each hand and open it and then circle it toward yourself like you are trying to bring someone nearer. Say "Ha-Ba-Eem."
- Put all of the parts together: reach out "Bru," pull in "Cheem," welcome gesture "Ha-Ba-Im."
- Bruchim Ha'Ba'im means welcome or blessings on those who are arriving.

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — "*Dira L'Haskir/Apartment for Rent*" by Leah Goldberg

- Have you ever joined a *kehilla*/community like a neighborhood or a school or a classroom? How did it feel to be the new person?
- Have you ever been part of a *kehilla*/community where you welcomed a new person? What did you do to welcome them?
- The story we are going to read is about an apartment building in Israel where a community of animals live. They have an open apartment to rent. Let's find out who comes along to rent it.

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**

- ◇ What kinds of things did the visitors say they did not like about the animals living there?
- ◇ How did that make the animals living in the apartment building feel?
- ◇ What did the Dove see in the neighbors that the other visitors didn't see?
- ◇ What was more important to the Dove? The things she liked? Or the things she didn't like?

- **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: What do we pay the most attention to when we meet someone new? The things we like about them? Or the things we don't like?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: Community Building Games (25 Minutes)

In the first game, children will practice meeting each other and answering personal questions to learn more about each other. In the second activity, children will create a sense of belonging and connection by experimenting with secret handshakes.

MINGLE MINGLE

Introduce the Activity:

In our story, the visitors to the apartment decided that they didn't like some of the residents because of just one thing that they knew about them. They didn't take the time to get to know them better. Part of building a *kehilla*/community is taking the time to get to know the other people in the community. We are going to practice learning more about each other.

1. Gather into a circle with everyone standing.
2. Prompt children to point to different parts of their body: their elbow, their hands, their feet, their knees, their hips, and their back.
3. Explain the game. This game has 3 parts:
 - ◇ **Mingle:** While you sing “mingle mingle mingle” repeatedly in the melody of your choosing, the children walk around each other within the circle. The goal is for them to walk past everyone in the group and look into everyone’s eyes as they do.
 - ◇ **Find a partner:** Say “freeze” after 20 seconds or so of mingling and call out two body parts such as “elbow to elbow” or “elbow to knee” or “back to arm.” Children must find a partner and connect these two body parts.
 - ◇ **Get to know each other:** Once everyone is connected, ask a question that each partner will answer.
4. Begin the game.
5. After the children answer the first question, return to “mingle-mingle-mingle” until they choose another partner and receive another question.
6. Play three or four rounds.

Get-to-know-you questions:

- What’s your full name?
- Who lives in your house?
- What is one thing you like to do for fun?
- If you could turn into an animal, what animal would you be?

SECRET HANDSHAKES

Introduce the Activity:

In our story, the animals living in the tower had a *kehilla*/community where everyone was different from one another and everyone belonged. Sometimes a *kehilla*/community has specific ways of welcoming people to help them feel a sense of belonging like having a group song or wearing the same uniform. Today we are going to experiment with secret handshakes.

1. Model different handshake possibilities: pound fists gently, high five, wiggle fingers and touch your nose, clapping hands and then shimmying, making a shape together, shaking elbows, slipping your hand under your knee to shake hands, etc. The sky is the limit. Need inspiration? Check out this 3 minute video for ideas: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=D7lIB0eDWD4>
2. Put the children in pairs and ask each pair to make up a secret handshake. Give the group 3-5 minutes.

3. Have each pair demonstrate their handshakes to the rest of the group.
4. Does the group want to adopt one of these handshakes for our *kehilla*/community?

Activity Two: Welcome Signs (15 Minutes)

Children will make welcome signs to take home.

Introduce the activity:

When the animals had an empty apartment in their tower, they made a sign for the door to let the other animals know about the apartment. Sometimes in our homes we hang welcome signs to let visitors to our home know that they are welcome. In Hebrew we say, “*Bruchim Ha’Ba’im*” to welcome people. Today we are going to make *Bruchim Ha’Ba’im* signs to hang in our homes.



1. Gather the children around a table with the materials.
2. Show the children a sample welcome sign and explain the steps of the welcome sign.
3. Have each child choose a piece of colored cardstock and a *Bruchim Ha’Ba’im* sheet (copy the one below or find other copies you prefer).
4. Have each child cut out the words *Bruchim Ha’Ba’im* and glue them to their cardstock.
5. Invite the children to add decoration using markers, crayons, or colored pencils. Decoration could include images that feel welcoming to them or that say something about their home.

Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Welcome everyone into a circle.

Introduce Closing Game: Pass It Down

What a neighbor does can affect the entire neighborhood, like Squirrel's nut cracking which can be heard everywhere. Good things go around too, like Squirrel's cheerfulness. Let's pretend you all are neighbors to each other and let's see if you can work together and share special things you have with one another.

1. Explain to the children how the game works.
2. Hand each child an object to hold onto safely.
3. Once every child has an object, each child passes their object to the person on the left and receives an object from the person on their right.

4. The challenge is for all objects to make their way around the circle and arrive to their starting point in the same order.

Imagine that each of these things was something special about each of you, how kind or funny or thoughtful you are. How wonderful it would be for our *kehilla*/community to share all of the special things each of you has!

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies: Hold up your hands and wiggle your fingers “ke-hee,” interlace your fingers “lah.”
- Have the children say what *Kehilla* means (community).
- Put your hand out in front of you and open the door “Bru-chim.” Gesture a welcome “Ha-Ba-Eem.”
- Have the children say what *Bruchim Ha’Ba’im* means (welcome).

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet

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

At Home Challenge: Community/*Kehilla*

Today, we learned about *kehilla*/community. We talked about the people and places that are a part of our communities. We practiced how to build community through connecting with people, building a sense of belonging, welcoming newcomers, and sharing ourselves.

Here are the next steps to take at home to practice creating *kehilla*/community:

1. Hang your child's welcome sign near the front door as a reminder to do the work of welcoming people to your home and your communities.
2. Talk as a family about ways you could connect more deeply to your communities. Do you have a new neighbor you could welcome? Is there someone at synagogue you could invite home for a meal or a playdate? Could you participate in an event at school, at the synagogue, or in the neighborhood? If you do, could you meet one new person or family? Pick one of those ideas and try it in the next month.