

Values Curriculum:

Passover/Building Resilience

OVERVIEW	This session explores the holiday of Passover, the Jewish celebration of freedom. Students learn about the importance of engaging in challenges with patience and persistence in order to achieve their goals.
OBJECTIVE	To explore the role of patience and persistence in achieving goals and to link that idea to the holiday of Passover.
VALUE(S)	<i>Savlanut</i> * (Coming out Stronger after Struggle) *In modern Hebrew, the translation is "Patience." In this context, it would be responding to challenges with "patience and persistence" that cultivates resilience.
STORY	"Let My People Go" by Tilda Balsley
MATERIALS	Building materials for pyramids, bag of flour, <i>matzah</i> making supplies
AT HOME CHALLENGE	Families will be invited to challenge themselves with a family activity that will help them stretch, grow, and build resilience.

Materials List

Activity One

- Bag of flour, tucked inside of a plastic bag (so it doesn't break open)

Activity Two

- Timer
- Access to an oven, preheated to 475°
- 2 cups of all-purpose flour (whole wheat is great, or a mix of whole wheat and plain)
- 2/3 cup of water
- 1 large bowl for mixing
- Large spoon for mixing
- Measuring cups
- A table covered with a plastic tablecloth or with individual sheets of wax paper for children to roll their dough on
- Plastic cups for rolling the dough
- Forks for poking holes into dough
- 2 large baking trays
- Parchment paper
- Spatula

Gathering Activity

- Picture of a pyramid
- Timer
- Blocks, cans, empty plastic tupperware, or any other items to stack and balance into a pyramid

Opening/Closing Circle

- Book: "Let My People Go" by Tilda Balsley
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge Sheet

Gathering Activity: Pyramid Building (15 Minutes)

Children will build pyramids with blocks or other materials, recalling slavery in Egypt and working hard to meet a challenge.

1. Gather children around the materials you have chosen.
2. If you have small blocks or building materials, have children work in pairs. If you have large blocks or building materials, such as boxes, have children work as one or two groups.
3. Explain to the children that we are going to build pyramids today, like our ancestors did when they were slaves in Egypt. Show them the picture of a pyramid.
4. There are 3 rules:
 - ◇ It has to be in the shape of a pyramid.
 - ◇ It has to stand on its own.
 - ◇ It has to use all of the materials.



5. Set a timer for 10 minutes and have them go!
6. If a group is succeeding quickly, encourage them to build it taller.
7. At 5 minutes alert them that they are halfway done.
8. At 2 minutes remaining, let them know that they are nearly done and must add the rest of their building materials.
9. When they are done, take a step back and invite everyone to look at the pyramid(s). What do they notice about the pyramid(s)?
10. What was it like to do the challenge?

Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

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

Tell about today's theme:

- Today we are learning about Passover.
- What do we already know about Passover?
- Passover is: a spring festival, a time to celebrate our freedom, a time for gathering with family and friends for seder where we retell the story of the Exodus from Egypt, a time when we don't eat bread or other baked goods and instead we eat *matzah*.

Introduce today's Hebrew words — *Matzah*, *Chametz*, and *Savlanut*:

- Everyone put your arms in front of you like an open alligator mouth. Say "Ma" ... and close your arms together to say "Tzah." Put them together for "*Matzah*."
- *Matzah* is the flat bread we eat at Passover.
- Everyone stretch your closed alligator mouth arms in front of you. Say "Cha" ... and open your arms to say "Metz." Put them together for "*Chametz*."
- *Chametz* is regular bread and baked goods and all the puffy risen foods we eat when it is not Passover.
- Everyone put your arms on your heart. Say "Sav"...put your hands around your mouth like you are singing and say, "la" and then put your hands together in front of your heart and say "noot." Put them together for "*Savlanut*." *Savlanut* is staying strong and having patience when things are hard.

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — “Let My People Go”

- Ask the children if they have ever wanted to do something that they were not able to do.
- What kinds of things have they wanted to do but were not able to?
- Sometimes we are not able to do things because we are not old enough. Sometimes we are not able to do things because they are not kind or safe. Sometimes we are not able to do things because they are too hard and in order to do them we have to practice, or be patient, or keep trying.
- The story we’re going to read is about a person named Moses. Moses is given something to do that he doesn’t even want to do and then it ends up being really hard. Let’s see what Moses does when he gets told, “No.”

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**
 - ◇ What was Moses asked to do? Who asked him?
 - ◇ How did Moses and God work together to try and convince Pharaoh to let the people go?
 - ◇ Which plague finally convinced Pharaoh to let them go?
- **Get Curious**
 - ◇ What are kids wondering about the story?
 - ◇ Encourage kids to wonder 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 if Moses had decided to give up after the first or third or seventh time that Pharaoh said, “No”?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: Pharaoh's Freedom Flour (15 Minutes)

Children will work as a team to trick Pharaoh and capture the freedom flour. The game is a version of "Red light, Green light" that requires collaboration and stealth.

Introduce the Activity:

In our story, Moses and God had to work very hard to gain the Israelites' freedom. Pharaoh did not want to let them go, and whenever Pharaoh did decide to free them, he would change his mind again. It took patience, persistence, and teamwork to gain freedom for the Israelites.

In this game, we are going to practice those three things: patience, persistence, and teamwork, in order to gain freedom for the Israelites.

1. Identify a 20-foot stretch of space that children can run across.
2. Choose one child to be Pharaoh (if that's a problem, you or a teaching assistant should be Pharaoh). Place Pharaoh at one end of the open space and put the freedom flour at Pharaoh's feet.
3. The rest of the group are Israelite slaves who want to be free. They stand at the other end of the open space and line up shoulder to shoulder, ready to run toward Pharaoh and grab that freedom flour.
4. When Pharaoh is facing the Israelites, they cannot move. When Pharaoh turns away from them, they can run toward the bag of flour to capture it, but they must freeze when Pharaoh turns back around. Each time Pharaoh turns to face away from the Israelites, Pharaoh says, "No, no, no, I will not let them go!" and then turns back to see them. If Pharaoh sees anyone moving, that person must go back to the starting place and "go back to work."
5. When Pharaoh turns back around to spot the Israelites getting closer, he can ask, "What are you doing?" And the Israelites can answer, "I'm building a pyramid," "I'm carrying tools," or any other toilsome task as if they have been working (and not running) while Pharaoh was turned away.
6. Once someone captures the bag of flour, as a group they must get it back to the starting point to win their freedom. To get the bag back to the beginning they must pass the bag of flour to each other while Pharaoh is not looking (they cannot run with the bag). When Pharaoh turns to look, they must hide the flour behind their backs. Each time that Pharaoh turns to look at the Israelites, Pharaoh can suspect one person and ask them: "Do YOU have freedom?" If that person does have the bag of flour, the bag returns to the place near Pharaoh's feet and that individual starts from the beginning point. Encourage everyone to look like they have something behind their back so that Pharaoh gets confused.
7. Once the bag of flour is brought back to the Israelites' starting point, they have won their freedom.

Activity Two: Making Matzah (25 Minutes)

The children will make *matzah* together observing the traditional 18 minute time limit.

Introduce the activity:

Now that Pharaoh has said we can go, we have to leave quickly before Pharaoh changes his mind. There's not much time to pack but we'll need food for the journey. We're going to quickly make a little bread to take with us, but it won't have time to rise. Without time to rise, what kind of bread will we get?

1. Make sure you set up your ingredients and work spaces and preheat the oven to 475° ahead of time.
2. Gather the children around the table set with materials.
3. Show the children what the ingredients for *matzah* are and explain that in order for matzah to be kosher for Passover it must be done in 18 minutes. Only 18 minutes can pass between the time we add the water to the flour until we put the *matzah* in the oven.
4. Ask the children how we can work together to quickly get our *matzah* into the oven on time.
5. When you are ready to begin, start the timer. Pour the water into the flour.
6. Have kids take turns mixing and kneading.
7. Hand out a small fistful of dough to each child and have them continue to knead it and roll it out on the table or surface with a cup so that it's very thin.
8. Each child can poke the dough with the fork so that the dough stays flat while it cooks.
9. Lay each piece on the parchment paper and put it in the oven!
10. Check the timer. Did you make it?
11. Let the *matzah* bake for 5 minutes or until ready (keep an eye on it) and bring it with you to the closing circle. You may want to start the closing circle while someone keeps an eye on the *matzah*.



Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle.

Today we learned about being patient and persistent when we are trying to do something hard. What's one thing that was hard for you to do or learn that you were able to do by being patient and persistent? Have each child share a response if they have one.

Give each child a piece of matzah and say the blessing together.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech
haolam, Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם
הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

May our *matzah* be a reminder of what we can do when we work hard at something.

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies:
- *Ma* (arms in front of you like an open alligator mouth) *Tzah* (close your arms together).
- *Cha* (closed alligator mouth arms in front of you) *Metz* (open your arms).
- *Sav* (hands on your heart), *La* (hands around your mouth) *Noot*, your hands together in front of your heart).
- Have the children say what *Matzah*, *Chametz* and *Savlanut* mean (flat bread for Passover; risen bread and baked goods for the rest of the year; patience or staying strong and having patience when things are hard).

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet

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

At Home Challenge: Building Resilience

Today, in celebration of Passover, we noticed how patient and persistent Moses was in securing freedom for the Israelites. We practiced being patient and persistent, the Jewish value of *savlanut*, and also worked together as a team to achieve our goals, building pyramids, seeking freedom with the flour and Pharaoh, and making *matzah*.

Your challenge is to think about something you can work on together or learn to do as a family that is hard for you and will help you practice *savlanut*. When we practice *savlanut* we help build resilience, being strong when things are challenging.

Here are some ideas to try:

1. Make something together like a puzzle or a tile mosaic or recipe. Choose something that feels like a stretch and work on it together. Then enjoy it together when it's done.
2. Think of an activity that you've wanted to try but have been a little nervous about and do it. A hike? A bike ride? A boat adventure? A visit to a theme park?
3. Pick a book that is longer and harder to read than what the youngest readers are used to and read it as a family over a period of weeks.
4. Try something new for Passover. Keep kosher for more of the holiday. Remove the *chametz* (leavened things) in your house through the cool ritual of *bedikat chametz*: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/leaven-hametz/>. Learn the four questions together <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-four-questions/> or prepare something special for part of the seder you will host or attend. Make a new kind of charoset. Try something that will make you stretch.