

# Values Curriculum:

## *Peace at Home/Shalom Bayit*

<b>OVERVIEW</b>	This session explores the Jewish value of <i>Shalom Bayit</i> / Peace at Home. Through the ritual object of the <i>mezuzah</i> , students explore the role of listening and compromise in making and keeping a peaceful home.
<b>OBJECTIVE</b>	To make a <i>mezuzah</i> and learn to use the mezuzah as a reminder that each of us contributes to making a peaceful home, or not.
<b>VALUE(S)</b>	<i>Shalom Bayit</i> (Peace at Home)
<b>STORY</b>	"The Shema in the Mezuzah: Listening to Each Other" by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
<b>MATERIALS</b>	Mazes and masking tape, Mezuzah and <i>mezuzah</i> making materials, Shema and parchment
<b>AT HOME CHALLENGE</b>	Students will take their <i>mezuzahs</i> home and hang them in their houses. Families/children are encouraged to touch the <i>mezuzah</i> as they come and go and to use it as a reminder to practice listening when there's conflict at home.

# Materials List

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## Activity One

- Plastic tablecloth to cover tables
- Empty matchboxes (one per child)
- Popsicle Sticks (plain or colored, narrow or broad)
- Masking tape
- Tissue paper squares
- White glue, diluted with water
- Small cups for glue
- Small paint brushes

## Activity Two

- Parchment paper or Shema papers (cut to size so it will fit in matchboxes)
- Colored pencils or thin markers
- Scratch paper
- Pencils
- Sharpies or letter shin stamps and ink pads

## Gathering Activity

- Mazes (attached at the end of this lesson)
- Pencils
- Masking Tape
- Paper 12x18 (optional)

## Opening/Closing Circle

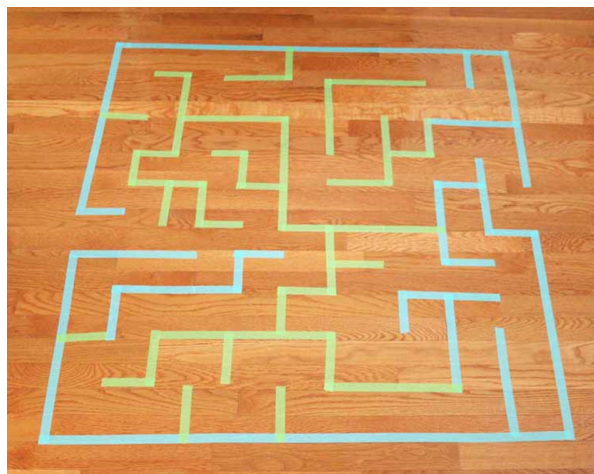
- Book: The Shema in the Mezuzah: Listening to Each Other by Rabbi Sandy Eisenberg Sasso
- Mezuzah and klaf (mezuzah scroll)
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge Sheet

# Gathering Activity: Mazes (15 Minutes)

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**Children will solve prepared mazes and then make their own from masking tape.**

1. Gather children around a table with mazes and pencils.
2. Invite the children to solve the mazes.
3. As children begin to finish the mazes, show them how you can make a maze with masking tape.
4. Depending on the group and its size, you can:
5. Give each child a large piece of paper and have individuals or pairs make mazes on their own paper.
6. Have children work in teams of 2 or 3 and make mazes on open table tops.
7. Have the children work in one or two larger groups and make one or two mazes on an open floor space.
8. Children could choose one of the simple mazes they have already worked and recreate it on the table or floor.
9. When children finish their mazes, they can have one or more classmates solve them with their finger (on paper or the table) or by walking through them (on the floor).



## Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

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**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:**

- In our mazes we found our way home. How do we know when we make it home? How do we know it's our home we have made it to?
- Show the children the mezuzah you brought.
  - ◊ Who knows what this is?
  - ◊ Who has one on their door at home?
  - ◊ Why do Jews put a mezuzah on their doors?
  - ◊ What letter do you see on the outside of your mezuzah?
  - ◊ Who knows what is it inside of the mezuzah?
- Show the children the klaf/mezuzah scroll.
- The mezuzah carries a very special Jewish prayer called the Shema.
- The Shema prayer says, "Listen! Everyone in our world is connected and we need to take care of each other." We put the prayer on our doors so that when we enter our homes we remember that we're connected and we need to take care of each other.
- Today we are learning about Shalom Bayit or making peace in our homes.
- What do we already know about making peace in our homes?

### **Introduce today's Hebrew words: *Shalom Bayit, Shema***

- Everyone make a shin letter with your hands by covering your pinky with your thumb so that three fingers are straight and say "sha--lom". Shalom means peace.
- Everyone raise your arms and join the tips of your hands as if you were making a slanted roof above you and say "ba--yeet." Bayit means home.
- Put them together "Sha-lom" "Ba-yeet" and we have Shalom Bayit which is making peace at home.
- Everyone take your shin and put it next to your ear. Say "She-ma." Shema means listen. Listening can help us make Shalom Bayit.

## Story (20 Minutes)

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### Introduce the Story — The Shema in the Mezuzah: Listening to Each Other

- Who has a home that is sometimes not peaceful? What makes your home not peaceful?
- The story we are going to read is about a child named Annie. Annie is helping her grandmother settle into her new home. When they find Grandma's mezuzah, Annie has some questions about how to hang it. Grandma tells Annie a story about how it was decided to hang the mezuzah at an angle. It is also a story about Shalom Bayit. Let's see if we can figure out what this story has to do with Shalom Bayit.

### Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**
  - ◇ What were the people in the village arguing about?
  - ◇ Who did the Rabbi say was right?
  - ◇ What does Grandma say about the mezuzah being a reminder to practice Shalom Bayit?
- **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: Can two different opinions, ideas, or ways of doing something both be right at the same time?

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## 10 Minute Break

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## Activity One: Making a Mezuzah (25 Minutes)

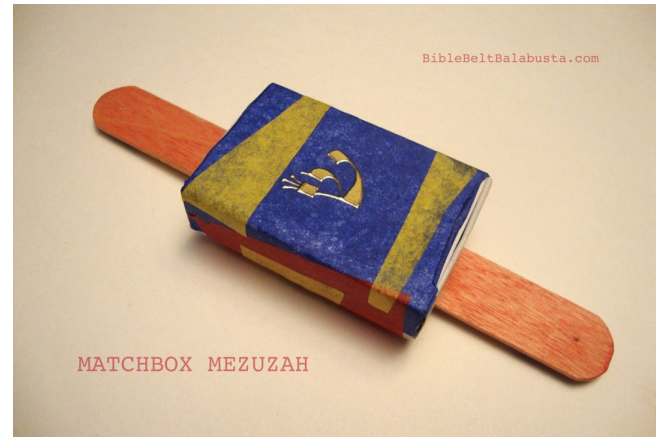
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**Children will each make their own mezuzah.**

### Introduce the Activity:

Today you will make your own mezuzah. At the end of our time together, you'll be able to take it home and hang it on your door — not standing up, and not lying down, but a little of both. We're going to start by making the outside.

1. Gather the children around a table with the materials laid out.
2. Show the children a sample of the mezuzah we are making today.
3. Give each child a match box and let them choose a popsicle stick.
4. Have each child tape their matchbox to their stick, keeping their matchbox more or less in the middle of the stick.
5. Have each child choose some tissue paper squares.
6. Show the children how to brush a little bit of glue on their matchboxes and add their tissue paper. Then have them brush over the tissue paper with the glue and add more paper until their matchbox is covered.
7. Set the matchboxes aside to dry.
8. Invite the children to look at each other's work.



## Activity Two: Shema Scroll (15 Minutes)

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**Children will make Shema scrolls to place inside their mezuzot.**

### Introduce the Activity:

- Pull out the klaf/mezuzah scroll again and invite the children to come close to look at it.
- What do you notice about the scroll?
- Does it look hard to make or easy?
- It takes an experienced and talented Hebrew writer to make these scrolls with this tiny writing. We are going to make our scrolls by just adding that first important word, Shema, Listen.

1. Gather the children around a table with the materials laid out.
2. Have the children choose either a Shema outline or a piece of parchment paper.
3. For children who want to write their own Shema, have them practice the letters on the scratch paper 2 or 3 times and then use pencil to write their final copy on their parchment paper. They can go over it afterwards with marker if they choose.
4. For children who want to use the Shema outline, have them use the colored pencils or markers to decorate their Shema.
5. When children complete their scrolls, they should go get their mezuzahs and see if they are dry yet. If theirs is dry, they can use the sharpies or the stamps to add a letter shin on their mezuzah. If theirs is still wet, let them know they can add it at home when it dries.



## Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

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**Gather everyone into a circle.**

### Introduce Closing Game: Sound Count Listening

It is interesting that the word Shalom (peace) and Shema (listen) start with the same sound, “Shhhhh....” How are peace and listening connected?

As we learned in our story, until people start listening to each other, it's hard to make peace when people disagree about things or are upset with each other. When we stop talking and we listen, we can hear others better. Listening takes practice. We are going to take a few minutes right now to practice listening.

1. Take a couple of deep breaths with the children to encourage calm and quiet.
2. Ask the children to close their eyes, and count as many sounds as possible. Only count sounds you haven't heard already. Kids can keep count on their fingers.
3. Time the quiet for 20-30 seconds.
4. Have the children share what they heard or even try to imitate the sounds they heard.
5. Challenge them to really listen to each other and not repeat a sound that someone has already said.
6. Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:
  - Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies: Your hand makes a shin shape and you say “Sha-lom”. Raise your arms overhead with your fingers together and say “Ba-yeet.” Have the children say what Shalom Bayit means (peace at home).
  - Take your shin and put it next to your ear. Say “She-ma.” Shema means listen. Listening helps us make peace at home.

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet. Sing a goodbye song like *Shalom Chaverim* or *Oseh Shalom*.





Can you find BOTH ways home from the park?

