

UNIT 1 - LESSON 1

To Grow - לגדל
Seeds - זרעים

OVERVIEW

In Jewish tradition, growing food begins in the Garden of Eden. This lesson allows students to reflect on where their food comes from. The students make connections between the references to seeds in Genesis 1:29 and sprouting their own seeds. This text provides an entry point into a discussion about the importance and roles of seeds, human beings, G-d in producing food. Students then follow step by step instructions in order to sprout seeds.

OBJECTIVES

At the end of this lesson, students will have:

- Reflected on where food comes from based on Jewish text and personal experience
- Considered plant-based, vegetarian diets in a Jewish context
- Learned how seeds start the plant life cycle
- Gained hands-on experience sprouting seeds

MATERIALS

For the teacher

- **Photosynthesis: Teacher's Note**
- **Seeds for Sprouting: Teacher's Note**

For each group of 2-3 students

- 1/3 cup red sprouting lentils (or other sprout)
- 1 wide-mouth glass pint jar
- 1 piece of cheesecloth cut large enough to cover each jar
- 1 rubber band large enough to cover the mouth of each jar

For each student

- **Entrance Card** (p. 1-W)
- **Text Study: Seeds** (p. 2-W)
- **Sprout Farmers: Planting Instructions** (p. 3-W)
- **Seed Care Plan** (p. 5-W)

Lesson 1

LESSON

1 Introduction (7 minutes)

(Workbook p. 1-W)

Explain to students that they are about to begin a program that focuses on the study of Jewish life, Jewish tradition and food. During these lessons students will be asked to think and write, and sometimes they will just have a few minutes to do this. Make it clear that all ideas and thoughts are welcome – the questions they write about do not necessarily have one right answer but are ideas that they will explore through writing.

NOTE: The initial writing functions as a pre-assessment. This writing should be kept in a safe place in order for students to return to it at the end of the curriculum.

Ask students to take five minutes to write on the worksheet their personal answer to the following question:

1. *What are the connections you think about when you hear the words “food” and “Jews”?*

Answers will vary from my mother’s matzah ball soup and challah to *kashrut* and *brachot*. Since all answers are “correct,” students should be encouraged to keep writing for the entire 5 minutes to practice expanding on their ideas during writing time.

After completing the writing, inform the students that they are now going to explore this question by examining how we grow, harvest, prepare, and eat food, and how we sustain the land that grows food. During the curriculum the students will learn about care for the land, animals, and their bodies by blending Jewish tradition and contemporary knowledge. They will also explore Jewish tradition and laws around food and agriculture.

2 Where Does Food Come From? (15 minutes)

(Workbook p. 2-W)

Describe a common dining scenario to the class. For example, for dinner, you are sitting at home and eating a plate of macaroni and cheese.

Open up the following question to the students for discussion:

Q: *Where does our food come from?*

Ask one student to be the recorder and write all the ideas on the board. Elicit responses by asking questions in order to make sure the following terms are generated: kitchen, supermarket, farm, land, seed.

Provide students a copy of **Seeds Lesson** worksheet. In *chevruta*, ask the students to read the passage and discuss the questions.

FRAMING THE TEXT

In the first chapter of Genesis in the *Torah*, G-d creates the world during the course of six days, beginning with creating the heavens and the earth, and ending with the creation of humankind. At the very end of this chapter, G-d blesses humankind to “be fruitful and multiply,” and then speaks verse 29, saying what is to be considered food for human beings. For many Jews who advocate a vegetarian diet, this verse is foundational, for this shows that, originally, G-d wanted every living thing to be vegetarian.

בראשית פרק א : כט

הָעֵץ כֹּל וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ כֹּל פָּנִי עַל אֲשֶׁר זָרַע זֶרַע עֹשֶׂב כָּל אֶת לֶכֶם נָתַתִּי הִנֵּה אֱלֹהִים וַיֹּאמֶר
לְאָכְלָה יִהְיֶה לָּכֶם זָרַע זֶרַע עֵץ פְּרִי בּוֹ אֲשֶׁר

G-d said, “See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food.”

Genesis 1:29

In *chevruta* (groups of two) discussion questions:

1. What is G-d's initial plan for what people are to eat?
2. How is the word “seed” used in this text?
3. What is the connection between seeds and food?
4. Based on the class brainstorm and this pasuk (biblical verse), where does our food come from? (G-d created seeds that become plants, plants are grown on farms, animals eat plants, human eat both animals and plants)

As a class, several students should share their ideas about these questions.

3 Sprouting Seeds (15 minutes)

(Workbook p. 3-W - 4-W)

The class will plant sprouts in order to be a part of where their food comes from and to engage in tending to plants.

Divide students into “farming teams” of three people. Distribute ***Sprout Farmers: Planting Instructions*** and read through the instructions.

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4 Sprouting Seeds Care Plan (5 minutes)

(Workbook p. 5-W – 6-W)

Sprouts are simple to grow compared to most vegetables, especially since we are growing them in jars and inside, away from animal and insect predators, and protected from droughts, wind, and cold snaps. Even so, over the next few days, be conscientious farmers and tend the sprouts carefully to give them the best chance to grow.

Set up the **Seed Care Plan** and determine who will care for the seeds for the next 2-4 days. Encourage each team to share the responsibility.

NOTE: Sprouts are ready to eat when there is at least a ¼ inch sprout from the bean. Do not wait for the sprouts to grow longer than this length or they will spoil. Some sprouts will only need 2-3 days to get to this length.

5 Homework (5 minutes)

Hand out the Min Ha’Aretz Pre-Curriculum Survey. This survey is designed to learn about what the students know, think and decide about the food they eat. There might be some questions they are not able to answer right now and words and ideas they have not learned about yet, but ask them to provide their best guess. This is a chance to get a glimpse into just some of the things we will be learning about during this curriculum.

Please remember to send Hazon copies of your completed student survey.

TEACHER’S NOTES

Teacher’s Note: Photosynthesis

Each tiny seed contains its own nutritious food supply for the young plant to draw on until it is large enough for its own leaves to begin making food through photosynthesis.

Through the process of photosynthesis, the plant takes in energy from the sun and stores that energy in the tissue of the plant. The seedling’s roots push down into the soil to anchor the new plant and to absorb water and minerals from the soil; and its stem with new leaves pushes up to get energy from the light. The germination stage ends when a shoot emerges from the soil. But the plant is not done growing. It’s just started. Plants need water, warmth, and nutrients from light to continue to grow.

Lesson 1

Teacher's Note: Seeds for Sprouting

Local garden shops and health food stores typically carry lines of seeds for sprouting. Check that seeds are intended for food and not for planting; some planting seeds might have been treated with fungicides or insecticides to protect young seedlings. One reliable online source for "sprout" seeds and beans is www.sproutpeople.com.

Remember that seeds soak up 2-3 times their dry volume in water and sprouts need at least six times the volume occupied by the seeds. So be sure that your container is large enough and start with a minimal amount of seeds in your jar.

- **Alfalfa** - soak for 6-12 hours to start. Sprouts can be eaten after 3-5 days when the root is 1-2 inches long and tiny green leaves start to develop. 1-part seed gives 10-parts sprouts.
- **Lentils** - soak for 12-hours to start. Sprouts are ready in 3-6 days when the root is 1-inch long. 1-part lentils gives 6-parts sprouts.
- **Barley, Oats, and Rye** - soak for 12-hours to start. They can either be grown as "grass" to harvest, or sprouts ready to eat after 3-5 days. Ideal length for eating is about 1/2-inch. 1-part seed gives 2-parts sprouts.
- **Soybeans** - Soak for 12-hours to start. Sprouts are ready after 3-6 days when the root is 2-inches long. 1-part beans gives 4-parts sprouts.
- **Mung Beans** - Soak for 12-hours to start. Ready to eat after 3-6 days when the bright, white root grows from 1-2 inches long. 1-part beans gives 4-parts sprouts.

Lesson 1- Extension

Activity #1 Draw: Where does food come from?

Draw a picture to answer the question "Where does food comes from?"

For some students this might be the cycle that was discussed during class, for others it might be a seed, or a picture of the person who cooks their dinner.

Activity #2 Write: What makes food Jewish?

Write a paragraph answering the following question "What is Jewish about my dinner?"

If your students are not accustomed to this type of reflective writing, they may find it challenging. You may wish to brainstorm a list of ideas to serve as prompts such as *brachot*, types of food, style of eating, discussion during dinner, etc.

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Min Ha'Aretz Student Survey (Pre-Curriculum)

Date: _____

Grade Number: _____

Please circle one: Female Male

Section 1

1. Circle the whole foods.

Popcorn	Potato	Bread	Apple
Applesauce	Wheat berry	Apple pie	Peanut butter

2. What is the meaning of the phrase "**shomrei adamah**"?

- a) Guardians of the Earth
- b) Land owners
- c) Earth movers
- d) All the above

3. Which is not an example of making a sustainable choice?

- a) Composting food scraps
- b) Reusing plastic water bottles
- c) Bringing your lunch in a reusable bag
- d) All the above are examples of sustainability

4. What is the meaning of the phrase "**shmirat ha'guf**"?

- a) Caring for the land
- b) Caring for your body
- c) Caring for animals
- d) Caring for your family

5. What is the meaning of the phrase "**tsar ba'alei chayim**"?

- a) Caring for the land
- b) Caring for your body
- c) Caring for animals
- d) Caring for your family

6. Leaving the corners of your field for those in need is an example of which agricultural practice?

- a) Peah
- b) Orlah
- c) Shmita
- d) Yovel

Section 2

7. How often do you sit down and eat a meal (breakfast, lunch, dinner, snacks) together as a family (at least 1 parent and 1 child) at home?

- ___ Less than once a week
- ___ 1-2 times a week
- ___ 3-4 times a week
- ___ 5-6 times a week

Lesson 1

8. When you discuss food in your home, what are the top 3 topics you talk about?

Check the 3 topics you talk about MOST.

- What's for dinner tonight
- Where does food come from
- Is the food kosher
- When is it snack time
- Is the food healthy
- Importance of trying new foods
- Other: _____

9. Below are some ways that the choices you make in your home about food and eating may be connected to Jewish tradition.

Check all that apply to your family.

- We eat healthy food as part of our Jewish tradition.
- We say blessing(s) at meals.
- We keep kosher.
- Other ways our food at home is part of Jewish tradition: _____
- No, our food at home is not connected to Jewish tradition.

10. Does your family have any meal-time traditions?

- Yes
- No

If yes, please briefly describe:

Section 3

11. Rate how **important** the following are to you. Check the best answer.

		Not Important	Somewhat Important	Important	Very Important
a.	Help prepare/cook food for your meal				
b.	Know where your food comes from				
c.	Say a blessing before you eat				
d.	Understand Jewish tradition about the environment and food				
e.	Read the ingredient labels on food packages				
f.	Eat whole foods				