



Editorial by Freddie

Tu BShvat

This month's newsletter is all about the festival of Tu B'shvat. We have written about the Tu B'Shvat Seder and eating fruit. We have compared being Jewish to being a tree, and our community to a woodland.

Tu B'Shvat is the birthday and New Year for trees. We have a birthday for trees because we have to know how old the tree is. When it is 5 or older we may eat its fruit. It says in the Talmud "For the 1st three years of a tree's life, you may not eat its fruit. During the 4th year, its fruit must be given to Hashem. (the law of Orla). Only when the tree is 5 years old may you eat its fruit." The Rabbis chose this date because they could see the signs of spring in Israel.

The name Tu b'shvat comes from its date, 15th of shvat. The Hebrew letters tet =9 and vav=6. Add them together =15 and they also make the sound Tu.



One of the most important trees is the Tree of Life, the Torah: When we return the Torah to the ark we say "For I give good instruction; do not forsake My Torah. It is a tree of life to those who grasp it, and those who uphold it are happy."

On the last page we have a competition. Give your answers to Clare or Freddie and one lucky winner will get a prize.

At Tu B'Shvat some people have a seder because it's a time for people to get together and to remember the seasons and trees.

Like at Pesach we have 4 glasses of wine but at Pesach the wine is all red. The four glasses for Tu B'Shvat are four colours to represent seasons:

White = winter (snow)

Pink = spring (blossom)

Dark pink = summer (flowers)

Red = autumn (leaves)

We eat special fruit at Tu B'Shvat because it says in the Torah that there are 5 fruits and two grains associated with Eretz Israel. It says in Deuteronomy 8:8 which foods to eat

They are wheat, barley, grapes, fig, pomegranate, olive and dates (honey).



Some people eat 15 fruits on Tu B'shvat to remember the 15th Shvat.

Some people like to eat four types of fruit to represent four types of people.

Soft outside hard inside e.g. cherry

Hard outside hard inside e.g. nut

Soft outside soft inside e.g. figs grape

Hard outside soft inside e.g. Satsuma, apple

We decided that Clare is like a grape, and is soft on the outside and inside. Freddie is a melon and is hard on the outside but soft on the inside. You can decide if you know people like the other fruits.



Is our community like a forest?

By Clare and Katie

Some people say communities and individuals in the community are like trees and forests. We asked ourselves if this is true:

1. What sort of woodland is our community? Is it full of different types of trees? Are some evergreen and some deciduous?

Our community has many different types of trees. Some people are much more religious than others these are the evergreens. Whereas others do not come that often. They are the deciduous trees. This shows we have wide range of trees.

2. Are all the trees the same size? Are there young saplings and mature oaks? How does this help our community survive?

It helps our community to have young saplings and mature oaks as the mature oaks help the young saplings to learn. By having young saplings it helps our community to grow.

3. When the trees are threatened by high winds they bend with the wind and do not fall down. Is our community like this?

Yes, our community is like this when threatened by different situations however bad they may be we stand tall together as a community.

4. Who is the centre of our community? What sort tree is he/she?

Though there are many evergreens in our forest, the rabbi is the centre. He is a very strong evergreen.

The individual in the community

5. The tree in the forest has roots to help it get nourishment and stability. What are the Jewish persons roots, and how are they nourished?

The roots of the Jewish people get their nourishment from believing in the Torah, spirituality and prayer study.

6. Different trees have different trunks. Some are strong and sturdy and some are thin but flexible. Some are thin and dry and crack in a drought. What part of a Jewish person is the trunk?

We think trunk symbolises the heart as it is the support of the tree/person. Different people are like different trunks for example we think the Rabbi has a strong and sturdy trunk.

7. What do the branches of the Jewish people symbolise? What happens when the branches are bare?

The branches symbolise the arms of the Jewish people reaching to meet other trees/Jews. When the branches are bare it means that the spirituality of that person/tree is lost but it will come back like a deciduous tree losing its leaves but knowing they will return.

8. What are the leaves for?

The leaves help the tree absorb the sunlight and help us absorb knowledge.

The leaves provide food for the tree. We provide lots of food on special Jewish holidays. The food helps us remember our past.

For more ideas like this check out
Dept for Jewish Zionist Education
www.jafi.org.il/education/festivls.



How are trees used in celebrations in other countries.

- ✍ In parts of India, banyan and papal trees are smeared with butter and painted with vermilion and turmeric as part of Hindu rituals worshipping the holy tree.
- ✍ In Mexico during December, piñatas are suspended from the trees as a treat for children, representing the bounty of nature.
- ✍ In Japan, according to ancient Shinto belief, some trees are believed to house spirits and are adorned with simple, ritually folded fortune-telling paper slips.
- ✍ On the North American prairies, the Lakota and Dakota Sioux still put rags in trees as a spiritual offering, with different colours representing the sun, sky and earth.
- ✍ In parts of Britain and Ireland there is a tradition of fastening rags to trees near holy wells as a symbol of long life and health. In Scotland these are known as clootie (cloth) trees.

Some famous trees

Womping Willow in Harry Potter, Tree Beard in Lord of the Rings, The Tree of Life in the Lion King, Major Oak in Sherwood Forest, The Shoe Tree in West Lothian and Jane in Dr Who.



It is also traditional to plant trees on Tu Bshvat in Israel and in other countries. You can be involved in looking after trees in Scotland by joining the **Woodland Trust Tree for All** which is a movement that gives children the chance to understand nature and the power to care for it.

<http://www.treeforall.org.uk>

Quiz!!!!

(Try to answer all questions)

1. How many fruits are meant to be eaten in a Tu B'Shevat seder?
2. What 2 vegetables do we consider as fruits? (not a tomato).
3. Why do some people eat 15 types of fruit?
4. What type of honey has to be used?
5. What Hebrew month is Tu B'Shvat in?
6. What does Tu B'Shvat symbolize?
7. What is the Tree of Life?
8. Where in the Torah are the fruits mentioned?
9. What is the Hebrew date of Tu B'shvat?
10. What is orla?

Did you know that there are 4 new years in the Jewish Calendar.

1st Nisan-1st month of the calendar

1st Tishrei-Rosh Hashanah is the spiritual New Year

1st Ellul-Tithing of animals

15th Shvat The New Year for trees