

Connections Israel - Bringing the Jewish People Together

Educational Department

Yom Yerushalayim – A Hands on Program

Goals:

To establish a connection to Jerusalem through the symbol of the kotel; to encourage children to give of themselves to others

Target audience:

Preschool through elementary aged school children

Visual Aid:

A picture of the kotel

Length of activity:

60-90 minutes (for younger or older children)

The teacher will start the discussion by telling the following story:

When it came time to build the exterior walls of the Holy Temple, all of the Jewish people rushed to donate money to the project so that they could share in the mitzvah of building the beit hamikdash. Just like today, not everyone could afford to contribute and that made the poor people very, very sad, because they also wanted to participate in this important event. They asked if they could come in person and help to physically build the wall and in that way have a portion in this mitzvah. And so, groups of poor Jews came to work on the building every day until the wall was complete. This particular wall was very special because it wasn't built by hired workers but by the sweat and tears of the Jewish people who came up with a solution to their dilemma of how to participate in this mitzvah. When the beit hamikdash was destroyed, only one wall remained standing, the wall that our poor Jews built themselves – the Kotel.

Follow up questions:

- 1) What is special about the kotel?
- 2) How can you contribute to a project? How do you help at home, in school etc? How can you help someone without giving them money?

Art Project:

Create-a-Kotel (for young children – preschool age)

Materials needed: construction paper, scissors, glue

Instructions:

Cut out squares and rectangles of different sizes. Glue onto a large sheet of paper to make a kotel. Draw a sun shining on the kotel.

Create-a-Kotel (for older children – elementary school)

Materials needed: construction paper, scissors, glue, oaktag like backing

Instructions:

Ask children for mitzvot/values that are important to them and list them on the board. (Examples: visiting the sick, being honest, prayer...)

Have children cut out various sized squares and rectangles. Ask them to put one value/mitzvah on each “stone” and build their own kotel. After gluing the pieces onto the oaktag, there will be spaces between the ‘stones’ because they were different shapes. Using the point of a scissor, make a few holes in between the “stones.” Let students write their own wishes/prayers and insert into their kotel.

A song about the Kotel:

Song: Oh My Yerushalayim – Country Yossi – clip can be heard here:

<http://www.mostlymusic.com/greatest-hits-3134.html> or second song on May 18,2009 <http://www.charliebernhaut.com/archive2.html>

When the sun shines on the Kotel
And the day is born anew
And my soul feels just like flying
Yerushalayim we love you

Chorus:

Oh my Yerushalayim,
Never once out of my heart
Oh my Yerushalayim
Nothing can keep us apart
And no one can take Yerushalayim away

Chorus

I can hear the children singing
Voices soaring to the sky
As they echo through the valleys
Singing Am Yisrael Chai

Chorus