

Bringing Bikkurim (First Fruits)

Framing this unit

In this unit we will learn texts describing how Shavuot was celebrated during Temple times. With the help of these texts, we will be able to analyze an illustration depicting the bringing of bikkurim (first fruits) to Jerusalem. We will then compare this tradition with its modern Zionist interpretation as expressed in a poster published by the Keren Kayemet L'Yisrael (KKL-JNF). Finally, we will write a letter inviting a friend to a bikkurim ceremony.

Group Activity

Activity 1: Hevruta study

We can start off by asking what other names there are for Shavuot.

What first fruits are (bikkurim) and what was done with them in the time of the Temple?

In hevruta pairs, we will study the texts describing how *bikkurim* were brought to the Temple and discuss the questions from the

[Sefaria source sheet](#).

Activity 2: Analyzing and comparing primary sources

Now we will take a close look at two primary sources and compare them: Bringing Bikkurim to Jerusalem, 1730 and KKL-JNF poster

Project the illustration/poster on the board or provide printed copies.

We will continue working with our hevruta partner to fill out the [comparison worksheet](#).

Discussion Questions

Based on the texts from the source sheet:

- Describe the trip to Jerusalem. If you had been there, what would you have seen and heard?
- What questions do you have about the bikkurim ceremony?

Looking at the illustration from 1730, consider the following questions:

- How do you think the artist knew how to depict the scene?
- Do you think that you can rely on the illustration to accurately depict how bikkurim were brought to the Temple? Which details in the picture seem reliable to you and which don't? Why?
- What, in your opinion, does the picture reflect?

Add the JNF poster to the discussion:

- Describe both images (figures, background, depicted events, colors, details, texts, etc.)
- When was each image created? How do you think that affected the artists' choices?

- Use the chart to help answer the question: What differences are there between how bikkurim were brought at the time of the Temple and during the early years of Zionist settlement of the Land of Israel?
- How can you explain these differences?

Creative Activity

Write a letter to a friend!

- Look at additional photographs of *bikkurim* ceremonies from the NLI collections. You can project them on the board or provide printed copies or links to the items.
- Imagine that you live on a kibbutz or moshav. Write a letter to a friend who lives in the city, encouraging them to attend a *bikkurim* ceremony that your community is holding. Describe what the event will be like and why it will be fun.

Write a journal entry!

- Imagine that you made the journey to Jerusalem with your bikkurim in the time of the Temple. How did you feel? What was on your mind? Share your experience!

Primary sources in this lesson



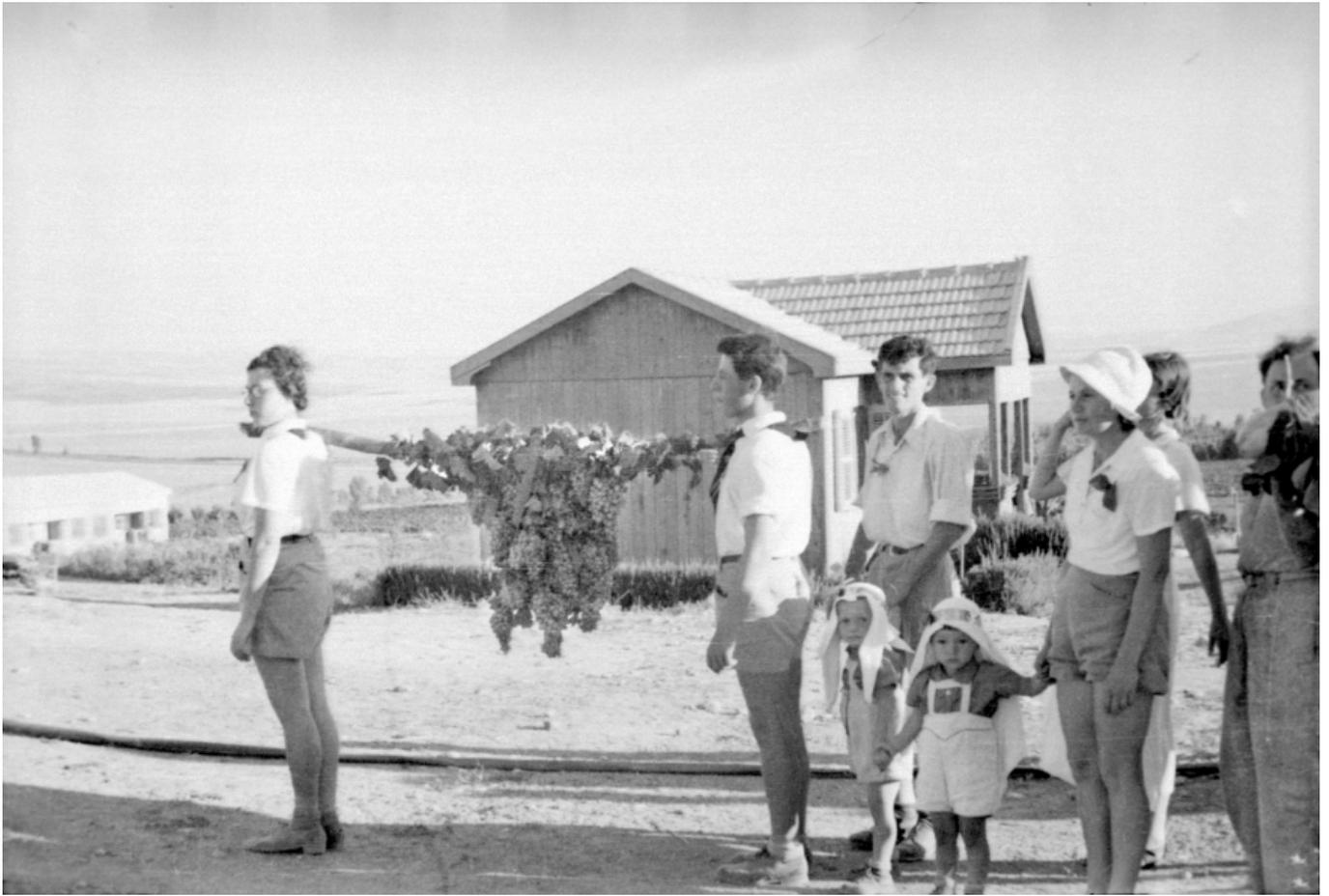
Bikkurim, JNF Poster
Ephemera Collection, The National Library of Israel



Bringing Bikkurim to Jerusalem, 1730
The Eran Laor Cartographic Collection



Bikkurim Celebration, Twentieth Century



Bikkurim Ceremony, 1940



Shavuot in Cyprus, 1940s
Visual Memory Photograph Collection



Girls Dancing in Shavuot Ceremony, Tel Aviv, 1970



Children Participating in a Play at a Shavuot Celebration, Tel Aviv, 1970