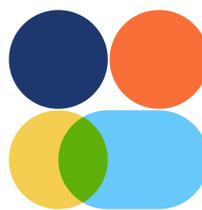


LESSON PLAN



Theme Shavuot

Grade Level(s)

Middle-High

Time of lesson 45 Minutes

Key Ideas

- **The Giving of the Torah:** Understanding the significance of the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai
- **Tradition & Observance:** Exploring the customs of Shavuot and common ways people observe
- **Personal and Communal Growth:** How receiving the Torah continues to shape Jewish identity

Learning Outcomes

By the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- Explain the historical and spiritual significance of Shavuot and its connection to the Torah.
- Analyze different interpretations of why dairy foods are eaten on Shavuot.
- Reflect on the relevance of Torah Study and Jewish values in modern life.

Materials & Resources

- Excerpts from the Torah/Text (text sheet)
- Rabbinic commentary on Shavuot
- Discussion prompts
- Whiteboard & markers
- Paper & pens
- Dairy Snacks

Warm-up and Overview

Begin by asking:

- “What is a moment in your life when you received something that changed you?”
- “What does it feel like to take on responsibility?”

Encourage them to use real life examples that are relevant in their lives (getting drivers license, being left home alone etc.) Relate this to the moment the Jewish people received the Torah, emphasizing the idea of a transformative experience that shaped identity and responsibility.

Introduction

Framing the Lesson:

- Introduce Shavuot as the holiday celebrating the giving of the Torah at Mount Sinai. Explain that while it is one of the three pilgrimage festivals (along with Pesach and Sukkot), its focus is on revelation and learning.
- Discuss the tradition of all-night Torah study (Tikkun Leil Shavuot) and its purpose.
- Bring up the custom of eating dairy foods and ask students if they have any ideas why this might be part of the tradition.

Specific Accommodations

- **Visual Learners:** Use a slideshow with key texts and images of Mount Sinai, traditional Shavuot foods, and Torah study.
- **Auditory Learners:** Read texts aloud and encourage students to listen for key words and phrases.
- **Kinesthetic Learners:** Have students move around the room for small group discussions or write responses on the board.
- **Processing Needs:** Offer alternative ways to engage (writing instead of verbal discussion, summarizing texts instead of deep analysis).

Activity 1

Text Study – The Giving of the Torah (Exodus 19-20)

Reading & Discussion:

- Read aloud or assign students to read excerpts from Exodus 19-20 (The Revelation at Sinai/the Ten Commandments).

Discuss the following:

- What emotions do the Israelites experience at Mount Sinai?
- Why do you think the Torah was given in a dramatic way (thunder, lightning, smoke)?
- How would you react if you were part of this event?
- What does it mean to “receive” the Torah—not just historically, but personally?

Connection to Modern Life:

- Ask students: How does this moment compare to major life-changing experiences today (e.g., graduation, taking on a leadership role, getting your license)?
- Discuss modern responsibilities and ethical codes—compare the Torah to legal systems, school rules, or personal moral codes.

Activity 2

Why Do We Eat Dairy on Shavuot?

Small Group Exploration:

Divide students into small groups, each examining a different explanation for eating dairy:

- The Israelites had no kosher meat prepared after receiving the Torah, so they ate dairy instead.
- The Torah is compared to milk (“Like honey and milk it lies under your tongue” – Song of Songs 4:11), symbolizing spiritual nourishment.
- The numerical value of the word ‘milk’ (חלב - chalav) in Hebrew is 40, corresponding to the 40 days Moses spent on Mount Sinai.

Group Discussion:

Each group shares their explanation with the class. Ask:

- Which explanation resonates with you the most?
- How do food traditions help people connect to their heritage and values?

Options for Extensions

- **Personal Reflection Essay:** Have students write about a time they learned something that changed their perspective or deepened their understanding.
- **Debate:** Should receiving the Torah be seen as an obligation or a gift?
- **Ethics and Torah:** Explore one of the Ten Commandments in depth—how does it apply in today’s world?

Options for Remediation

- Provide a simplified version of the Torah text and key ideas for students who need extra support.
- Offer a guided worksheet with key takeaways for those who struggle with open-ended discussion.
- Use small group discussions to allow quieter students to engage in a lower-pressure setting.

Review and Closing

- What is Shavuot?
- What does receiving the Torah mean on a personal and communal level?
- Why do we eat dairy on Shavuot?

Final Reflection:

- Ask students: “What is one thing from today’s lesson that you can apply to your life?”
- Have them write or share one takeaway, whether it’s about responsibility, tradition, or personal growth.

Specific Accommodations

- Observe student engagement—who is participating, who might need extra guidance?
- Offer multiple ways for students to express their understanding (writing, discussion, creative projects).
- Provide one-on-one support for students who need clarification on the texts or discussion points.

Checking for Understanding

Exit Ticket Questions (Written or Verbal):

- What is one key idea you learned about Shavuot today?
- How do you think receiving the Torah at Mount Sinai impacted the Jewish people?
- Which explanation for eating dairy on Shavuot makes the most sense to you and why?

Small Group Discussions:

- Assign students different aspects of the lesson (e.g., the giving of the Torah, the dairy tradition, the significance of Shavuot) and have them explain it to their group.
- Listen in to assess understanding and address misconceptions.