

Tu B'Shevat Ice Cream Seder

Purpose:

Introduce students to the holiday of Tu B'Shevat with a reflection that we live in two civilizations by offering both a Tu B'Shevat Seder and Ice Cream for Breakfast (national holiday) as a way to interest the students.

Materials:

- copies of seder
- small spoons
- small plates (dessert or smaller)
- medicine cups for ice cream
- 4 flavors of ice cream (vanilla, mint chocolate chip, strawberry, chocolate)
- 4 alternative ice creams (vanilla, mint chocolate chip, strawberry, chocolate)
- orange
- mango
- dried mango
- grapes
- assorted nuts
- sound system
- table set-up
- placemats
- crayons/colored pencils/markers

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Welcome: Introduce Tu B'Shevat and Ice Cream for Breakfast

As we do this next part, we will be collecting tzedakah money from everyone that brought it; later in the Seder, we will share more about this.

The Ice Cream For Breakfast Day Story: Once upon a time there was a little girl named Ruth and a little boy named Joe. Ruth and Joe grew up in the back of beyond in New York State where it was very very cold. Every winter between New Year's Eve and Passover, life in up-state New York got extremely boring, so their parents invented a holiday to brighten up the dreary days of winter. It was called Ice Cream For Breakfast Day. This was a wonderful holiday for children and parents alike because to celebrate you had to eat ice cream for breakfast on the first Saturday in February.

Well, Ruth and Joe grew up and went away to a university. They made many friends and taught them all about Ice Cream for Breakfast Day. After college Ruth had a roommate named Barry to whom she also told

about this tradition. Many years later, Barry met Itzah C. Kret in Washington, D.C. and converted him into an Ice Cream for Breakfast Day observer.

Nobody has kept precise track but through word of mouth ICFBD has been celebrated in many homes, states and countries all over the world. Some people give parties with musical instruments, others simply celebrate with family members. There is no right or wrong so long as you follow the 3 plus 1 simple Ice Cream for Breakfast Day Rules:

- (1) Eat ice cream
- (2) for breakfast
- (3) on the first Saturday in February
- (4) spread the word

God speaks:

“Adam, this is God. I have been leading you around the Garden of Eden for some time now. Why do you think that is? Take a long hard look at everything you see – my works of creation. Do you see how AMAZING they are? Take note of the excellence of my work! I created everything you see here for You. Adam – see to it that you do not spoil or destroy my world – for if you do there will be NOBODY to repair it after you. . . .” (Adapted from Ecclesiastes Rabbah 7:13)

Leader: Welcome to our Tu B'Shevat Seder. According to the Mishnah there are actually 4 Jewish New Year Days. There are three days that everyone has heard of: Pesach, Rosh HaShanah, and Tu B'Shevat; some of you might have heard about the first of Elul in which the tithing of animals took place in ancient times.

Today, however, we will celebrate Tu B'Shevat. All of the things we will eat tonight (including Ice Cream) have special meaning for us. Aside from just ice cream, we will be eating several different kinds of fruits. Some of those fruits are hard on the outside and soft on the inside and some of them are the other way around—soft on the outside and hard on the inside. As you know people are exactly the same way. It is only after we get through the hard outside, that we can really come together as a community.

If we all knew each other better – What would we need to do to create healthier relationships with friends/family? our community? the larger world?

Four Questions:

1. Other holidays honor events and people. Why does this event honor trees?
2. Ordinarily we eat whatever fruit is in season. Why on this night do we eat fruits that are grown in Israel?

3. We sometimes take the environment for granted. Why, today do we focus on conservation?
4. It's winter. Why are we thinking about planting trees when spring is several months away?

Turn Turn Turn:

Words-adapted from the bible, book of Ecclesiastes,
Music-Pete Seeger

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for every purpose, under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die
A time to plant, a time to reap
A time to kill, a time to heal
A time to laugh, a time to weep

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for every purpose, under heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down
A time to dance, a time to mourn
A time to cast away stones, a time to gather stones
together

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for every purpose, under heaven

A time of love, a time of hate
A time of war, a time of peace
A time you may embrace, a time to refrain from
embracing

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for every purpose, under heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose
A time to rend, a time to sew
A time to love, a time to hate
A time for peace, I swear its not too late

To everything (turn, turn, turn)
There is a season (turn, turn, turn)
And a time for every purpose, under heaven

Winter

Distribute oranges and vanilla ice cream

Leader: Oranges have a soft inside and a hard outside. Like the winter that is now cold and harsh, we will soon pass through it to find the beauty of spring and all of the things that spring has to offer. The blessing is said for the fruit of the tree. Keep in mind that you are saying the *bracha* for all necessary parts of the Seder. We will be eating other foods that grow on trees.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Ice cream is now coming out; do not eat until we say the *bracha*.

The white ice cream symbolizes the snow and cold of winter. Before we say the *bracha* below, keep in mind that you are saying the *bracha* for all necessary parts of the Seder. We will be eating more treats that use this same *bracha*.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָ בְּדָבָרוֹ.

Spring

Distribute mango and mint chocolate chip ice cream

Leader: The mango is soft on the outside and hard on the inside. This is symbolic of the fact that while a mango or a person may be soft or fragile to begin with, the inner seed (or pit) if cared for can grow into a wonderfully fruitful tree or person.

After everyone receives their mango, let's repeat the *bracha* together and then we can eat.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

The green mint chocolate chip ice cream symbolizes life, such as the budding of the trees in the spring.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָ בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

Summer

Distribute grapes and Strawberry Ice Cream

Leader: Grapes are soft both on the inside and outside. Like a grape, our environment is very fragile and we must take excellent care of it. If we handle it the wrong way, we will likely hurt or crush it.

After everyone receives their grapes, let's repeat the *bracha* together and then we can eat.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

The next ice cream is strawberry because the best strawberries grow in the summer. In the summer we are able to enjoy less homework, good times with friends, campfires, and barbeques.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָ בְּדַבְּרוֹ.

Fall

Distribute tree nuts and Chocolate Ice Cream

The Story of Honi – This story comes from the Talmud and is retold by Michele Mindek

(Note: Show the carob pod, if possible.)

There once was a man named Honi. He was walking along one day and saw a man planting a carob tree. Honi asked the man, "How long will it take for that tree to grow?"

The man replied, "Seventy years."

Honi looked shocked as he asked, "How do you know that you will live another seventy years?"

"I don't, but just as my grandparents and parents planted for me, I am planting this tree for the generations to come," replied the man.

"Well fine," said Honi, as he left. After walking for about an hour, Honi realized he was exhausted. He lay down on the dusty ground right next to a large rock. When he awoke, he was so shocked he had to pinch himself to make sure he was not dreaming. The dusty ground had become a large grassy field, and the rock was gone. In its place was a huge carob tree, towering over a glittering pool of blue water.

Honi walked back the way he had come, but he did not realize this was the way he had come. All of a sudden, he recognized his surroundings as the very place he had come from 70 years before. In the place where he had watched a man planting a carob sapling stood a towering carob tree. Honi realized then that he had been asleep for 70 years.

When Honi returned to town, nobody recognized him. He told everyone who he was and they didn't believe him, but they were kind to the wise, old stranger.

Honi lived a full life, in which he chose to travel the Land of Israel planting carob trees for future generations.

Leader: Nuts come directly from trees. They are hard both inside and out symbolizing the consistent role that God plays in our lives. The environment is God's creation and we only have the right to make use of it. We do not have the right to destroy it or abuse it. If you plant a tree or save a precious life (human or plant), it is as if you have saved the world.

After everyone receives their nuts, let's repeat the *bracha* together and then we can eat.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

Chocolate ice cream symbolizes that even though leaves turn brown and seem to die in the fall, all good things are actually taking place. The leaves are changing colors and eventually turning brown, falling to the ground and fertilizing the trees soil. Chocolate can remind us that something so dark can be so sustaining, so nourishing.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָ בְּדַבָּרוֹ.

The last cup of ice cream is eaten.

Together let us all recite Rabbi Shefa Gold's Brich Rachamana so that we can thank God for the food we have all enjoyed.

בְּרִיךְ רַחֲמָנָה מְלִיקָה דְּעֵלְמַע מְרִי דְּהֵי פְּתָא.

*Brich rachamana, malka d'alma, marei d'hai pita.**

You are the source of life for all that is and your blessings flow through me.