



OUR SUKKALEH

Submitted by: REBECCA SWARTZ

Subject Area: Jewish Living and Identity, Values, Holidays
Single Session Lesson with Multiple Play Opportunities
Target Age Group(s): Early Childhood

Summary of Objectives: Young children learn best when they are able to have real experiences scaled to their own size! In this lesson, the children will engage in building a child sized Sukkah using a cardboard appliance carton as a frame in addition to branches and other art materials for decoration. (Another option is to build a Sukkah structure using small wood beams such as 1"x2"s, which can be lifted and manipulated by the children, though this may require more adult supervision.) Through building a child sized Sukkah, the children will have hands on experience that helps them to understand the characteristics of a Sukkah, participate in the mitzvah of building a Sukkah, as well as have an opportunity to experience the mitzvah of Hachnasat Orchim (welcoming guest) into their own Sukkah through continued dramatic play opportunities outdoors.

During Sukkot of 5767 in the BJDS Early Childhood Program, each class built a Sukkah and the teachers and children brought out materials for dramatic play so the children were able to invite each other to play in their classes Sukkah, making our playground into a mini neighborhood filled with Sukkot. The children also were able to fulfill the mitzvah of dwelling in the Sukkah in a child oriented way, by reading, resting, and playing in the three Sukkot on our playground. The main goal of this the "Sukkaleh" lesson is to create play opportunities which allowed the children time to experience the rhythms of Jewish life associated with the Festival of Sukkot. This lesson is replicable for either a single classroom, or ideally, an early childhood program, so that the children have the opportunity to experience being both hosts and guests.

Materials Needed:

1. Appliance sized box for each group of children. The top of the box should be open so that you can see the sky through the roof which will be covered with branches.
2. Paint or markers for decorating the walls
3. Construction paper, scissors, glue and craft materials for making decorations
4. Branches and sticks the width of the box

Directions:

1. At circle time, introduce what a Sukkah is by showing the children pictures or reading a book such as, *It's Sukkah Time* by Latifa Berry-Kroft and Tod Cohen



OUR SUKKALEH

Submitted by: REBECCA SWARTZ

2. Have the Sukkah box set outside for children to begin to decorate. Tempera paint is a nice way to personalize the Sukkah, but remember to have the children wear smocks! Painting a large box can get messy.
3. After the box dries, have the children place branches across the top of the Sukkah.
4. At your next circle time or gathering time, have the children dictate their ideas for what they could do in the Sukkah. It is a mitzvah to dwell in the Sukkah, so eating, reading, and playing are all great things they can do in the Sukkah. If your Sukkah is on the playground, you might bring out a tub of books during your recess or materials for drawing during your outside play time. The children can also visit other Sukkot made by their friends in other classes. Your playground can be a neighborhood of Sukkot to visit during the holiday!
5. Make sure to protect your Sukkah from rain until your children are finished playing with it, as cardboard boxes don't last forever in the rain! After they have enough play time, the children will understand that a Sukkah doesn't last forever and they will understand if it gets wet in the rain.
6. Be sure to take photos so that you can make a documentation book or poster so the children can remember their Sukkah.