

Using Your Jewish Map and Compass
Rabbi Jamie Korngold

Subject Area: Eco-Judaism

Single/Multi-unit lesson plan single

Target Age: 3rd grade and up

Objectives:

1. Introduce students to ways in which Judaism can help them make good choices
2. Make Jewish learning accessible, meaningful and fun
3. Connect the realms of Judaism and taking care of the earth

Time: 15 min if done as a stand alone program
45 -60 min if interspersed with physical map and compass tasks

Materials:

- **Jewish Map and Compass:** Make a fancy looking book or scroll that can invoke the feel of a Torah or Bible. Glue the teachings (below) in, so that the students can look them up, or you can dramatically open the big book and turn to the teaching.
- 1 big and 10 little bags of chips (or carrots or other food) or a drawing on a poster board of 1 big and 10 little bags
- 2 stuffed dogs or puppet dogs
- Optional but fun: a pretend stuffed chicken (or other bird. You can get little toys birds at McGuckin and Whole Foods) and some hard boiled eggs to make a chicken sitting on a nest filled with eggs)

Location and Timing: One way to do this is to intertwine these lessons with map and compass tasks. So for example, the children use their map and compass to get physically to station one. When they arrive, they are faced with a problem. To solve, they consult the “Jewish map and compass” the big book.

Station One: Ba'al Taschit

Tommy and his friends are hungry. Their map and compass can help them get to the store to buy some chips, but when they get

there, they are faced with a choice. Should they buy one big bag of chips or 10 little bags?

Tommy and his friends look inside the Torah, the Jewish compass to find out.

Deuteronomy 20:19-20 “When in your war against a city you have to besiege it a long time in order to capture it you must not destroy its trees, wielding ax against them. You may eat of them, but you must not cut them down.”

From this we learn that we should avoid destroying things. We should not be wasteful. Buying many small bags of chips is wasteful because of all the extra wrappers. The Jewish compass tells us to buy the big bag of chips. (And to finish them all!)

Station Two: Kindness to Animals

Tommy and his friends have been out hiking all day. Their dogs Buddy and Hippy are with them. They want to go home and get a cold drink. They use their map and compass to find the way home. When they arrive they are faced with a choice. Who should they get water for first, themselves or the dogs?

Tommy and his friends look inside the Torah, the Jewish compass to find out.

Deuteronomy 11:15

"And I will give grass in your fields for your cattle, and you will eat and be satisfied."

Because the food for the cows is mentioned first, Judaism teaches that a person may not eat or drink until they have feed and watered the animals.

Station Three: Sustainability

Tommy and his friends have been camping for a week, eating energy bars. One of Tommy's friends knows where a chicken is nesting. Yumm! Fresh food! They use a map and compass to find the nest. But when they get there they have a choice. Should they take the eggs and make omelets or take the chicken and make fried chicken?

Tommy and his friends look inside the Torah, the Jewish compass to find out.

Deuteronomy 22:6-7

“If, along the road, you chance upon a bird’s nest, in a tree or on the ground, with ... eggs, and the mother sitting upon the eggs, do not take the mother with the [eggs] Let the mother go, and take ... [the eggs] in order that you may fare well and have along life.”

From this we learn that if we take the chicken there will be no more eggs. Taking the eggs is what we call more sustainable- it can keep going. The chicken will lay more eggs, so we take the eggs and leave the chicken.

Station Four: Preventing Air Pollution

Tommy and his friends want to go to the park. They can use their map and compass to get there but how should they go? Should they drive Tommy’s van or ride their bikes? The van is faster and lets everyone be together, but creates air pollution. The bikes take longer, but don’t pollute.

Tommy and his friends look inside the Talmud, the Jewish compass to find out.

(Explain that a tannery is a factory that produces leather and it puts really stinky fumes into the air. A cubit =1.5 feet, 50 cubits =75 feet, Mishana Baba Batra is part of another important Jewish book called the Talmud)

Mishana Baba Batra 2:9 says,

“Tanneries must be kept 50 cubits from a town. A tannery must only be placed on the east side [down wind] of a town.”

From this we learn that we are not allowed to pollute the air and make it stinky for our neighbors. They ride their bikes.

Closing:

Ask the participants what four things they have learned from their Jewish Map and Compass. Review:

1. Don't be wasteful
2. Take care of animals first, then yourself
3. Live in a way that is sustainable. (may require simpler word)
4. Don't pollute