



Jewish Holiday Recipes and Their Stories (a book)

Submitted by Julia Bry Schwab

Subject Area

Intergenerational communication around Jewish holidays and the festivals in sharing food. Specifically, gathering recipes and their particular stories (how they were acquired or where they came from) to be compiled by individual students for a class "recipe book."

Target Ages:

2nd - 6th grades

Lesson Objectives

1. Interview family members across generations and geography
2. Gather anecdotal tales connecting a holiday recipe to the line of Jewish ancestors
3. Retell and illustrate (photo, painting, or combined) the vignette
4. Individual contributions for a collective goal
5. Generate revenue for Tzedaka

Discussion

Bridging generations and retrieving stories underlie the transmission of Jewish values. Here the cyclicity of the holidays renew and reinforce this legacy of



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wisdom through ritual. Expressed in the food we prepare and share, there is obviously much more involved than the sheer recipes. Connecting outwardly beyond usual spheres and then retelling and illustrating the recipe's story deepens the experience. In the end, the final product is a rich and tangible collection of individual representations of Jewish tradition passed on. This book will undeniably be a treasure for each family and the collective effort of the group.

Production Process

This is a twelve week project, in other words, a big commitment with big rewards. The project is broken down into separate, concrete activities, which students can comprehend as stages of logical progression. There is some necessary coordination from the parents when it comes to postage and mailing, as well as later manipulation of parts into a cohesive whole for the printing. The following “lesson plan” is chronologically arranged for teachers. There are accompanying materials listed for each week’s activity. Plus, at the end I’ve included examples of letters to accompany the project. The bottom line for the whole experience is CONTAINED [structure provided by teacher] CREATIVITY[kids have freedom & fun] all in the service of a longitudinal expression of our Jewish legacies.



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Lesson Plans

Week 1

- Teacher presents a **thumb nail model** of the book to the children. This visualization of the project can be extremely(!) valuable in stimulating and motivating students.. Though a mock presentation may be daunting to you, any semi-artist can sketch the possible layout for the two pages of recipe, story, and art. Using lots of color creates a magical lure. This art person may be a valuable consultant through the ongoing weeks as paints and collages and photos enhance the book and especially the kids' experience.
- Teacher leads discussion of traditions in the year's holidays, which correlates to traditions of food. Why make a book of recipes???!!!!!!!!
- Teacher has letter ready for parents introducing and describing the scope of project. (See appendix for model letter.) Specifically, three names of family members are needed for next week's letter-writing class.

Week 2

- Teacher has VERY LARGE poster-size letter in front of the class exemplifying the day's task. (Model letter in appendix) Then together, on another big piece



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of paper, the students create together a letter which says in their own way, what they are seeking in this recipe search

- ❑ Students write a rough draft.
- ❑ On special stationary, several sheets each, students simply create a design or letterhead for final draft.
- ❑ [Markers or paints]
- ❑ On a manila folder(for storage of materials gathered and made) , student makes same "logo" with their name.

Week 3

- ❑ From folders, each child takes out "special" stationary to compose final letters to family.
- ❑ Finished letters are placed in envelopes with addressee's name on front. Parents complete mailing procedure.
- ❑ Note home to parents: PLEASE ADDRESS & MAIL!!!!



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Week 4

- Paint front of blank postcards. Set aside to dry.
- Class together creates a “reminder message.” Something like, *Dear Aunt Margot, By now you’ve received.....thanks....call if you have questions.....our **deadline** is XYZ.....sooo excited, etc.*
- Students transpose message onto their specially designed cards.
- Note home to parents: PLEASE ADDRESS & MAIL!!!!

Week 5

- Have a “symbolic” holiday meal with students. You will need cups of grape juice, yalmalkes, cookies, musical instruments, table cloth, candle, and lighter.
- Break into small groups for 3 minute contributions: servers, dancers, singers, poets, musicians, candles, and lighters. Be sure then to DEBRIEF the elements of experience. What is “meaning”?

***NOTE TO PARENTS: SELECTED RECIPE DUE WITH “STORY” NEXT**

WEEK



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Week 6

- Recipe written. Ingredients, instructions, serving recommendations, and of course, the name of the recipe (which can be exaggerated or dramatized) for which holiday. A whole page will be devoted to this portion. Hand-writing or later typed language is a choice.

Week 7

- Write the story about the derivation of the recipe you now use. Students may have been encouraged to write back to the person whose recipe is now being “published.” Topics such as: where the family of this person came from”? when does that person recall its first making? are there funny or magical ways that the holiday dinner was remembered? is this person a particularly unique or special person to you? [Stories will be only **one half page in format**. They may be printed or later typed.]

THE FOLLOWING THREE WEEKS WILL BE ART-MAKING. SEE INDEX FOR DISCUSSION OF CREATING SUCCESSFUL ART EXPERIENCES.



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Week 8

Paint upon the photo of the recipe donor or a member of the family from decades before. If a child receives no photo, they can use a contemporary one from their nuclear family. Be sure to embellish painting with bright colors amidst the other more refined details of the image. Again, the half page is the format. The materials include tubes of acrylic paint, small paper plates for palettes, small brushes, water containers, aprons, newspaper (to cover tables) & paper towels.

IMPORTANT: BE SURE TO PREVENT BRUSHES DRYING WHILE COATED WITH PAINT.....acrylic hardens permanently

Week 9

Collage an image of the food or the story recorded. Again a half page format, taping off an area on paper to frame space (8 x 5 1/2 inches) **after** the product is complete. Materials needed will include magazines that are free for ripping out image. scissors, paper, rubber cement, & newspapers to cover tables.



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Week 10

Paint an image of the finished recipe or its ingredients. Or, be imaginative; pretend it's a sewn tapestry; or wild modern art, or a memory of the feast at King Solomon's table, or a picnic dinner in the mountains/river/forest/meadows nearby. Materials needed include tubes of acrylic paint, brushes, paper, water containers, aprons, & newspapers to cover tables. As other art pieces, half page format.

Week 11

“Museum” of all art and telling of stories. From here on out, the individual students' efforts will be collective in preparing the final book.. So, this is a celebration and “show & tell” of what has so far been created. This is also an excellent time to photograph the art as well as the group of children. These images have value in documentation for future funding and for media releases when selling the recipe books.

After week 11, there is a day's worth of important adult tasks.

See Appendix for *ADULT TASKS AFTER WEEK 11*



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Week 12

Volunteers will be needed to assist in the diversity of group tasks. Children break into small groups, each with an adult helper. Tasks include placing **STICK ON LETTERS** to the book's **cover**, creating a **Title Page** with the name of the project, name of temple/agency, date, and the purpose of the book as articulated by the students), writing up a **Table of Contents** by food, a page of **participant names** with accompanying 2 sentence self-description.

Adults now make book “camera -ready “ by gluing backs of recipe pages together with dabs of rubber cement and arranging pages’ order. Be sure to number pages in correlation with Table of Contents. Choice of bindings to be negotiated.

Though the final putting together may appear daunting, printers do this kind of thing all the time.

Week 13

The book is ready!!!!!!!!!! Sales projects may begin with families or summer festivals. The cost should cover expenses of printing with all profits going to Tzedaka.

[Note: This sales portion could of course be a project for another whole year.]



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APPENDIX

Letter to Parents

Dear Parents,

We're heading into a great project! With collected recipes of the Jewish holidays from members of your extended family, students will be learning about some underlying values of our heritage. We see the origins from which they come, the recipes that is, to be mirrors of Jewish culture which we now reflect. These reflections will come to life through writing and story-telling and painting, all to coalesce in a finished product. It will be a book, *Jewish Holidays and Their Recipes*.

Through the coming months, we'll be writing letters and re-writing recipes and telling the tales of these recipes and visually translating images with paint, photography, and collage. Then, when our collection is whole, we'll sell the *Jewish Holidays and Their Stories to raise money for Tzedaka*. It is quite exciting!

If you'd like to assist us along the way, marvelous. We'll be needing volunteers from time to time. So, if you have any questions at this time, feel free to call me at 444-4444. I really look forward to this year.

B'Shalom,

Julia Dayan



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Kids' Letter to Relative(s)

Dear Aunt Margot,

We're creating a great book. As part of my "Living Jewish Life class," we will collect recipes from family members like YOU. These recipes will come from Jewish holidays, and hopefully you will tell me the stories you remember of those yummy foods. If you could send a photograph of our ancestors, that would be special too. I wonder where this recipe came from?

In the book you see, we will have a recipe along with the story of its origin. Along with these parts, we will make a painting or use the photograph. It would be meaningful to have your help. I hope you can remember something we had at a holiday dinner long ago.

I haven't seen you in a long time, so I hope you remember ME!

Love,

Julia



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Hints on Making ART Successful

Art is fun! By using fluid materials like paint or cutout magazine pieces with glue, some of our perfectionistic tendencies recede. Furthermore, bold colors de-emphasize the technical skills which frustrate many children and adults. Relax and trust the marvelous originality that will surface. Remember, your attitude as teacher makes a huge difference. By the same token, if you can create a space and time frame that is not pressured, children will not fear mistakes. Aprons or old shirts, newspapers on tables, water containers to keep brushes moist, and nearby towels for accidents are helpful in this way. If you want to have fun, and if you want to create a visual model for the children (this REALLY helps those with less skills for abstraction!), try out the project first at home, where you have less self-consciousness and room to be experimental. The payoff is enormous. The bottom line is this: **the experience** is the key to production. Parents love to join in making art with their kids - get back up. Don't worry. Be happy. Art won't hurt you.





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Adult Tasks After Week 11

The work is simple. It breaks down as a full afternoon's work for 3 or 4 volunteers.

Among the 3 art pieces made by each child, decide which will go for the individual recipe, which for the square reproduced onto the quilt-like front & back, & which for the poster to advertise the book. So, in the end of this selection process, there will be 3 categories of different art.

- ❑ **Individual Recipe Part:** Art on top half of left page. Paste. Story on bottom half of left page. Paste. Then full-page recipe on right side.
- ❑ **Cover Art:** "Reduce" half pages of chosen art on color copier to fill patchwork of diverse images on front and back covers. Like a stone wall of different art "blocks." Cut and paste onto 8 x 11 paper.
- ❑ **Poster Art:** Save until later. Preserve in sturdy folder