



Experiencing the Joy of Shabbat by Amy Kopkin

Subject Area: *Holiday*

Single teaching unit

Target Age Group(s): *5th grade to adult - can be modified for all groups*

Lesson Objective(s):

- 1) Students will be able to experience of the joy, rest and peace of Shabbat (the most important holiday of the Jewish calendar).*
- 2) Students will be able to utilize the wisdom of our ancestors to connect us to our tradition and past.*
- 3) Students will understand that we can learn from the wisdom of G-d's creation (nature).*

Materials

- Book: Fulghum, Robert "All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarden: Uncommon Thoughts on Common Things" p. 65*
- Set of Pre-Written Index Cards (See Below For Text)*
- Tape (if the lesson must be moved indoors)*
- Student leaders or adult facilitators to act as assistants*

Location

- Step 1: open grassy area, building or shelter located near hiking trails*
- Step 2: a non-strenuous hiking trail loop approximately ¼-1/2 mile long through a pristine or forested area*

The teacher/facilitator scouts an appropriate trail ahead of time. The lesson begins and ends in the same location that can be set up ahead of time for services.

Group Size: *5-100 people (subdivided into groups of approximately 2-5 students)*

Procedure: *This lesson is an excellent introduction to Shabbat services (evening or morning) for youth group or religious school retreats. It can also be done on a non-shabbat day to begin a discussion about Shabbat and what students can do in their lives to honor this day.*

- 1) The facilitator reads to the group from a passage from Robert Fulghum's book "All I Really Needed to Know I Learned in Kindergarden". The story is about weeds and beauty being in the eye of the beholder. The idea is that you can find*



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beauty in all of G-d's creation not just the ones that society has deemed "valuable" or "beautiful".

- 2) While the facilitator is reading the story, the assistants each choose an index card. On the front of the card lists a quote by a famous Jewish figure. On the reverse is a thought to ponder or a discussion topic. The facilitators place themselves along the length of the loop trail spacing themselves apart far enough so that they cannot see each other and are spread evenly along the trail. (For inclement weather, this program can be moved inside substituting the hiking portion with posting the quotes about 8 feet apart along a hallway or around a large room. No assistants would be needed.)*
- 3) When the story finishes, the facilitator begins to dismiss students in small groups of 2-5 people to begin walking the trail. If there is a large group, the facilitator can play games with the group as they wait for their turn.*
- 4) Along the trail, the small groups walk to the first assistant. The assistant reads the quote on the front of the card aloud to the participants. On the back of the card is food for thought that the participants think about or discuss quietly on the way to the next assistant.*
- 5) When the first group finishes the loop, the facilitator can begin singing a ningun or guide meditation to wait for the remainder of the group to arrive)*
- 6) Once the last group is dismissed along the trail, the assistants can join in with this last group after they read their card. When everyone gets back to the grassy area, the facilitator can begin services (or the discussion).*