LESSON PLAN BY JOAN L. FLORSHEIM AND DEBBIE FEIGENBAUM

"Desert Oasis"

PAGES 17–19

The article about the formation of a kibbutz in the Negev highlights the communal nature of kibbutz life and explores how such a community was instrumental in resettling the land of Israel. In this lesson, students will discuss the ideals behind kibbutz life, and compare maps of various communities, including a kibbutz, to discover how the physical layout of a community can be an expression of its values.

OBJECTIVES

- **Students will explore the nature of life on a kibbutz.**
- **Students will consider how the organization of physical space in a community reflects values.**

VOCABULARY

קִבּוּץ	**kibbutz, literally "collective"**
חָלוּץ	**pioneer**
שִׁוְיוֹן	**equality**
חַקְלַאוּת	**agriculture**
תַּעֲשִׂיָּה	**industry**

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

"They wanted to create a community where everyone was an equal, whether man or woman, educated, uneducated, Ashkenazi or Sephardi."

In what ways can everyone in a community be equal?

Does being equal mean that everyone does exactly the same work? How can different people contribute differently and still be equal?

Why do you think that equality was such an important value for these pioneers?

"Each *erev* Shabbat, the pioneers would rest from their backbreaking work. 'We would light the Shabbat candles in the dining room, and then go outside to enjoy the campfire, where we would gush with joy at our successes and sing songs of Zionist ideals.' "

What Zionist ideals motivated these pioneers?

Why did they choose Friday night to sit back and rejoice in their accomplishments?

ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY MAPPING

1. Divide the class into pairs; distribute the two maps available at www.babaganewz.com/teachers. Instruct each pair to study the maps and answer the following questions:

How are the maps similar? How are they different?

What do you notice about the shapes of both communities? Why do you think that the shape of the community might be important?

Find the center of each map. What is there? Why might that be significant?

How can the physical layout of a community express its values?

If, as a class, we were to map our community, what would the layout of our community reveal about its values?

How do these maps, or a map of our community, reflect intentional planning and how do they reflect the history of the community?

2. Read the article "Desert Oasis" and discuss the Quotes & Questions. Ask:

Has anyone ever visited a kibbutz?

What do you know about kibbutz life?
[For a brief discussion of kibbutz life, see www.babaganewz.com/teachers.]

In general, students should learn the following three facts about a kibbutz:

a. Founded on the ideal of social justice, a kibbutz is a cooperative settlement where people work together for the community. All earnings are divided according to the needs of the individuals.

b. Many kibbutzim are agricultural and produce about half of Israel's food even though less than 2% of Israel's population lives on *kibbutzim*.

c. Many *kibbutzim* are situated on Israel's borders and are important to Israel's security and defense.

What values did the early pioneers at Revivim hold dear? How did the establishment of their *mitzpeh*/kibbutz reflect those values?

Why do you think that that kibbutz was such a successful way to resettle the land of Israel?

What sacrifices do people make to live on a kibbutz? Why do you think someone would make those sacrifices? What is the benefit of kibbutz life?

What do those who choose to leave a kibbutz lose?

Most *kibbutzim* are non-religious, while only a few are religiously observant. What, if anything, do you think is particularly Jewish about living on a kibbutz?

3. Study the Jewish texts cited below.

4. To conclude the lesson, read the sidebar in the article and explain that there has been a decline in the kibbutz movement in recent years. Ask students to consider:

What might be a cause for such a decline?

What positive communal aspects of kibbutz life do you think could be translated into living in a different type of setting?

JEWISH TEXTS

ISRAELI FOLK SONG

We have come to the land to build it and be rebuilt by it.

This text was a popular song and slogan of the early pioneers in Israel. How did the pioneers hope to build the land? What do you think they meant when they sang about their being rebuilt by the land?

How could working the land and establishing settlements there help renew and rebuild the pioneers? The Jewish people in general?

DEVARIM 16:20

Justice, justice you shall pursue.

How does this text relate to the ideals of a kibbutz? How can this text direct the workings of any community?

PSALMS 133:1

How good and pleasant it is for siblings to dwell together.

To whom do you think the text is referring with the word "siblings"?

Why did the psalmist choose those words?

How could those words reflect the positives and negatives of kibbutz life?

What makes a community good and pleasant?