LESSON PLAN

LESSON PLAN BY SETH GOLDSWEIG

The Names of Shavuot

LESSON AT A GLANCE

We can learn a lot from names. Through exploring the different names of Shavuot, students will learn about different aspects of the holiday. Building on the theme of names, students will then do research on their own names.

OBJECTIVES

- **Students will learn four different names of Shavuot.**
- **Through research, students will gain more insight into their own names.**

VOCABULARY

שֵׁם	**name**
שָׁבוּעַ	**week**
קָצִיר	**harvest**

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ACTIVITY: WHAT'S IN A NAME?

1. Begin class by discussing the following questions:

How many different names do you have?

Why do you have different names?

Do different people call you by different names? Why?

2. Tell students that the holiday of Shavuot has many names, but do not mention the names specifically.

What other holidays can you think of that have more than one name? [Pesach: *Ḥag Hamatzot* (The Festival of Matzah), *Zeman Ḥeruteinu* (The Time of Our Freedom); Sukkot: *Zeman Simḥateinu* (The Time of Our Rejoicing]

What can we learn about a holiday based on its different names? [The reason for its celebration, the time of year, the theme, etc.]

3. Divide the class into four groups. Give each group one of the texts and the worksheet (available at babaganewz.com/teachers). Have each group fill in the row of the chart for its text. For each text, students are asked to identify the name in Hebrew and English and to answer what we can learn about the holiday of Shavuot by thinking about that name.

דברים טז:ט-י

שִׁבְעָה שָׁבֻעֹת תִּסְפָּר-לָךְ מֵהָחֵל חֶרְמֵשׁ בַּקָּמָה תָּחֵל לִסְפֹּר שִׁבְעָה שָׁבֻעוֹת. וְעָשִׂיתָ חַג שָׁבֻעוֹת לַה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ מִסַּת נִדְבַת יָדְךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּתֵּן כַּאֲשֶׁר יְבָרֶכְךָ ה' אֱלֹקֶיךָ.

DEVARIM 16:9-10

Seven weeks shall you count; begin to number the seven weeks from such time as you begin to put the sickle to the grain. And you shall keep the Festival of Weeks to God your God with a tribute of a freewill offering of your hand, which you shall give according as God your God has blessed you.

שמות כג:טז

וְחַג הַקָּצִיר בִּכּוּרֵי מַעֲשֶׂיךָ אֲשֶׁר תִּזְרַע בַּשָּׂדֶה וְחַג הָאָסִף בְּצֵאת הַשָּׁנָה בְּאָסְפְּךָ אֶת-מַעֲשֶׂיךָ מִן-הַשָּׂדֶה.

SHEMOT 23:16

And the Festival of Harvest, the first fruits of your labors, which you have sown in the field; and the Festival of Ingathering, which is at the end of the year, when you have gathered in your labors from the field.

במדבר כח:כו

וּבְיוֹם הַבִּכּוּרִים בְּהַקְרִיבְכֶם מִנְחָה חֲדָשָׁה לַה' בְּשָׁבֻעֹתֵיכֶם מִקְרָא-קֹדֶשׁ יִהְיֶה לָכֶם כָּל-מְלֶאכֶת עֲבֹדָה לֹא תַעֲשׂוּ.

BEMIDBAR 28:26

Also in the day of the first fruits, when you bring a new meal offering to God, in your festival of weeks, you shall have a holy gathering; you shall do no labor.

קידוש, שבועות

וַתִּתֵּן לָנוּ ה' אֱלֹקֵינוּ בְּאַהֲבָה מוֹעֲדִים לְשִׂמְחָה, חַגִּים וּזְמַנִּים לְשָׂשׂוֹן, אֶת יוֹם חַג הַשָּׁבֻעוֹת הַזֶּה, זְמַן מַתַּן תּוֹרָתֵנוּ מִקְרָא קֹדֶשׁ, זֵכֶר לִיצִיאַת מִצְרָיִם.

***KIDDUSH*, SHAVUOT**

And You gave us lovingly, God our God, festivals and times of joy, this day of the festival of Shavuot, the time of the giving of our Torah, for a holy gathering and for remembering the exodus from Egypt.

4. The groups should then come up with ways to demonstrate the name (either in Hebrew or in English) through acting it out with no words, charades-style.

5. Have each group present their charade and the rest of the class can guess the name of the holiday or at least the topic related to the name. After each group presents its charade, the class should fill in the chart for that text.

6. Then, discuss as a class:

What have we learned about the holiday based on the different names?

7. Now that the class has learned about Shavuot through its names, students will try to learn something from researching their own names. Ask students to choose one of their names (Hebrew name, first name, last name, nickname, etc.) and look into the origin of the name. Some questions to consider (available on a worksheet at babaganewz.com/teachers):

How and why did you get this name?

What can you learn about the person you are named after?

What does your name mean?

What other famous people have this name?

Where does your name appear in literature?

Set a future date for students to share the information they learned about their names.

FOR FOLLOW-UP AND ENRICHMENT

Share one interpretation of one of the names of Shavuot with your students from page 166 of *The Book of Jewish Holidays*, Behrman House (and available to print at babaganewz.com/teachers).

"A famous rabbi was once asked, 'Why is Shavuot called the festival of the giving of our Torah, not the festival of the receiving of the Torah?'

The rabbi answered, "The giving of the Torah was on Shavuot. The receiving must happen every day of the year.'"

Discuss with your students what they think the rabbi meant.