Tu BiShevat Tree Hugger Rap: LESSON PLAN
By Rachael Gelfman Schultz

LESSON AT A GLANCE
In celebration of Tu BiShevat, students explore what we can learn from trees through a creative thinking exercise, studying a biblical verse, and watching a video.

OBJECTIVES
- Students will interpret the biblical verse, “A person is like a tree of the field,” by identifying ways in which people are similar to trees.
- Students will explore what lessons they can learn from trees that can be applied to their own lives.

ACTIVITIES
1. If possible, go to an outdoor space with trees. Each student brings a pen and paper, and finds a place to sit near a tree. Direct the students to write without stopping and without thinking too much—never letting the pen leave the paper—from the perspective of the tree, in first person. What do you see? Feel? Hear? Need? Want? Give the students about five minutes to write. If you cannot go outside, do the exercise indoors, ideally where you can see a tree from the window.
2. If you were outside, you may return to the classroom now. Ask students who wish to share a line of what they wrote. Discuss: How did it feel to do this assignment—was it easy or difficult and why? How did you feel while you were seeing the world from the tree’s perspective? (peaceful, calm, steady...)
3. Explain that on Tu BiShevat, we celebrate the birthday of trees. We think about why trees are so important and what we can do to protect them. Read the following quote together and answer the question below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Deuteronomy 20:19</th>
<th>דברים כ:יט</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A person is like the tree of a field.</td>
<td>כִּי הָאָדָם עֵץ הַשָדֶה</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

How are people like trees? Make a list on the board. (We grow; we need water, sun, and fresh air; we share what we have with others...)

4. Watch the video. Discuss: According to the rapper, why is it good to be like a tree? What can we learn from trees?
5. Give each student a piece of paper cut in the shape of a tree. Ask the students to write down their answers to the following questions on their trees:
• In what way would you want to be like a tree? (*I would like to have strong roots in my family and tradition, I would like to give shelter to those who need it, I would like to produce tasty fruit to share with people, I would like to stand strong even when the wind is trying to knock me down…*)

• What can you do to become more like a tree in this way?

Students may share what they wrote with the class or in pairs. They may also display their trees in the classroom, making a forest of trees.

6. Optional Assignment: Students write their own rap song that addresses the Deuteronomy 20:19 text that was already discussed.