



POST-WORLD WAR II RESOURCES

Lesson Plans

Food in the Jewish Tradition

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Introduction

This lesson coordinates with the *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* component of the *Indiana Experience* at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center.

In this experience, visitors are invited to step back in time to April 5, 1950, to visit the Kaplan family in their Union Street home a year after their resettlement in Indianapolis from a post-World War II displaced-persons camp. The Kaplans, Jewish refugees from Poland, were making a new home and building a new life in Indianapolis after surviving the Nazi horrors in Europe. They resettled in Indianapolis with the help of Jewish Social Services, the Indianapolis Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Indiana Refugee Service.

The curriculum is intended to provide historical context for life in Indiana in the postwar era and the Jewish community in Indianapolis. The lesson may be used to prepare students for a visit to *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* or it may be used as a follow-up to a visit. In addition, the historical context and themes will be relevant to classroom instruction even if a visit is not possible.

You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home opens on October 11, 2011, and will remain open through September 2012.

Overview/Description

In this lesson students will learn how traditional Jewish food symbolizes different characteristics or beliefs about God and is a reminder of important events in Jewish history.

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- examine and analyze two historical photos that show different types of bread in the Jewish tradition
- be able to explain that many foods in the Jewish tradition serve as symbols to help Jewish people understand their history and faith
- cite leavened and unleavened bread as examples of symbolic foods in the Jewish tradition
- be able to define vocabulary related to bread and its role Jewish tradition.

Grade Level

Elementary (grades 1 and 4)

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Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards
 - Grade 1
 - Social Studies 1.3.8—Compare cultural similarities and differences, such as family traditions and customs, and the traditional clothing and food of various ethnic and cultural groups found in Indiana. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
 - Grade 4
 - Social Studies 4.1.12—Describe the transformation of Indiana through immigration and through developments in agriculture, industry, and transportation. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
 - Social Studies 4.3.10—Identify immigration patterns and describe the impact diverse ethnic and cultural groups have had on Indiana. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
- National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies)
 - I Culture; IV Individual Development and Identity; V Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; and IX Global Connections.

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Ethnic diversity, Jewish religion, ethnic traditions, and American life and culture

Time Required

One class period

Materials Required

- Copies of the following images from the Indiana Historical Society collections. Refer to pages eight and nine of this lesson.

- “Mrs. Frania Kaplan Shops at Shapiro’s Deli” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER10_001).
- “Berek (Benny) Kaplan Working at Old Kraft Bakery” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER10_002).
- One loaf of leavened bread (sandwich bread)
- Matzo’s (unleavened bread)
- Ingredients for making bread dough¹
 - Three cups of water
 - Fifty grams (approximately four teaspoons) of dry yeast
 - One cup of sugar or honey (or a mixture of both)
 - Three eggs
 - One cup of oil
 - Three tablespoons of salt
 - One-and-a-half-pound bag (approximately twelve cups) of flour (whole wheat, white, or a mixture of both)
- Instructions for the “Science of Bread” activity from the Exploratorium’s Web site.
 - Download instructions at <http://www.exploratorium.edu/cooking/bread/activity-yeast.html> (accessed September 8, 2011).
- Materials for the “Science of Bread” activity
 - One packet of active dry yeast
 - One cup of very warm water (105° to 115° F)
 - Two tablespoons of sugar

1. Rebbetzin Tzipporah Heller, “Challah: The Divine Dough,” Aish.com, accessed September 7, 2011, <http://www.aish.com/sh/trai/48970616.html>.

- One large rubber balloon
- One small (one pint to one liter) empty water bottle

Background/Historical Context

Bread has a very important place in Jewish tradition and faith. In the Torah (Jewish book of faith) there are many references to bread. One specific reference comes from Deuteronomy 8:3: “Man does not live by bread alone, but rather by what comes forth from God’s mouth does man live.”² This means eating bread keeps our bodies alive, while the word of God provides food for our souls. For people of the Jewish faith, bread serves as a symbol of the way God feeds our souls. When Jewish people eat challah, a special bread made of dough braided into loaves and served on the Sabbath (Shabbos) and at many holiday meals, they think about how they are connected to God.

Matzoh, a crisp, flat, unleavened bread, plays a significant role in Jewish tradition. The Torah tells how the Jews (Israelites) were enslaved in Egypt during Biblical times. Their Egyptian captors served them matzoh because it was a simple, but filling, food.

Matzoh is a symbol of bondage for the Jews. It is called “lechem onee,” meaning the bread of affliction. Matzoh also plays a central role in the story of Jewish emancipation from slavery and their escape from Egypt. The book of Exodus describes how God sent a series of plagues (disasters) upon the Egyptian people in order to convince Egypt’s Pharaoh to free the Israelites.

During the time of the plagues, God had Moses instruct the Israelites to sacrifice (kill) a lamb on the tenth day of the month of Nissan (the first month of the Jewish calendar year; the equivalent of March-April in the English calendar). They were to eat the flesh of the lamb according to special instructions and mark their doorways with the blood of the lamb so that God would skip over their house when sending the next plague. These actions were called a Passover sacrifice to the Lord. Each spring,

2. Ibid.

Jews celebrate Passover to remember how God spared them. During the seven days of Passover, Jews do not eat leavened bread (bread that has been allowed to rise) in memory of this act.

When the Pharaoh finally freed the Israelites, they had to flee Egypt very quickly. The Passover guidebook (the Haggada) notes that matzoh is eaten at the Seder meal during Passover. As the Israelites fled Egypt, the bread dough that they had made and took with them did not have time to rise and baked in the desert’s midday sun. (Exodus 12:39). Today matzoh bread serves as a dual symbol for Jewish people—for their suffering and their freedom.

A mitzvah, meaning commandment, for women called “separating challah” also relates to bread. When women bake bread that contains a certain amount of flour, they must remove a small piece of dough, called challah, prior to baking. In Biblical times, this piece of dough was given to the Kohanim (rabbi) in the Temple as an offering. Today, the dough is either burnt or kept for a period of time and then discarded. The word challah is also used to refer to the special Shabbos loaves (bread eaten on the Sabbath or holidays), which is reminiscent of the “showbread” placed in the Temple on a special golden table during Biblical times.³

Teacher’s Instructional Plan

Introduction

Introduce the lesson by telling students that they will be learning about foods that have special meaning for people of the Jewish faith. In particular, they will see how bread serves as a symbol for Jewish people to represent the ways that God has provided for them as His “chosen people.”

- Give each student copies of the images of Benny Kaplan baking bread at the Kraft Bakery and Fanny Kaplan shopping at Shapiro’s Deli.

3. Esther S. Blau, ed., Lubavitch Women’s Organization, Junior Division. *The Spice and Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking* (Brooklyn, NY: Lubavitch Women’s Organization, 1977), 76.

- Copies of the images are found on pages eight and nine of this lesson.
- Ask students to examine the loaves of bread that Mr. Kaplan is baking.
 - Does this look like bread that they are used to eating?
 - What about it is similar? What, if anything, is different?
- Tell the students that this bread is leavened bread, which means that the dough rises either because it contains yeast, baking powder, or baking soda, or it has been allowed to sit long enough for the fermentation process to begin.
 - Fermentation occurs as sugars in the dough are converted into alcohol and carbon dioxide gas is released, causing the dough to rise.
- There are two types of bread—leavened and unleavened.
 - Leavened bread dough has been allowed to rise.
 - Sandwich bread is an example of leavened bread.
 - Unleavened bread does not contain yeast, baking soda, or baking powder, or the dough has not been allowed to rise.
 - Breads such as chapatti (Indian flatbread), bammy (Jamaican flatbread), flatkaka (an Icelandic flatbread), and matzoh (a traditional Jewish flatbread) are all examples of unleavened bread.
- Ask students to examine the photograph of Mrs. Kaplan and her children shopping at Shapiro’s Deli.
 - Explain that Shapiro’s Deli was a Jewish-owned business in Indianapolis that stocked many specialty foods eaten by Jews.
- Ask students to examine this photo to see if they can find the two different types of bread (leavened and unleavened) for sale in Shapiro’s Deli.
- Ask students if they have noticed matzoh for sale in the grocery store that they use.
 - What does it say about the diversity of our community, where specialty grocery stores such as Shapiro’s Deli sell foods to specific ethnic or religious groups?
 - What does it say about the diversity of our community, where specialty foods are sold in large, chain grocery stores such as Kroger, Marsh, or Meijer?
- Tell students that matzoh is a special type of unleavened bread that Jews eat each spring during the Passover holiday, when they remember how God saved the Israelites (Jewish people) from slavery in Egypt.
 - Before the Egyptian ruler (pharaoh) decided to listen to God’s advice and free the Israelites, God told them to be ready to leave Egypt at a moment’s notice. So the Israelites would be ready to leave quickly on the long, difficult journey across the desert, God told them to eat only unleavened bread for seven days.
- Share with students that it takes eighteen minutes for bread dough to begin rising and the fermentation process to begin.
 - Any bread dough that sits for more than eighteen minutes without being baked will produce leavened bread.
- Ask students to consider the connection between unleavened bread and the ability to quickly depart.
- Tell students that matzoh is a special food for Jewish people.
 - They eat it to remember how God saved them from slavery. They think about their freedom and their relationship to God.

- Tell students that bread that has risen (leavened bread) is also symbolic for Jewish people.
 - A special type of leavened bread that Jews eat is called challah. Because the dough has risen or “puffed up,” leavened bread reminds Jewish people that they should not let themselves be “puffed up” with pride, but should be humble before God.
- Ask students if they eat any special foods that are connected to their ethnic or religious heritage.
 - Are these foods eaten at holidays or special days?
 - Do these foods have special meaning?
 - Examples include Holy Communion, in the Christian tradition, or eating abalone (sea snails) during the Chinese New Year to symbolize good fortune for the coming year.
- After establishing which bread is leavened and which is unleavened, remind students that it is the process of fermentation that makes leavened bread.
 - The dough of the leavened bread has been allowed to rise. In this case, the dough contains yeast (an agent or ingredient) that triggers the fermentation process.
- Tell students that you are about to conduct an experiment showing them how yeast does its job.
- Follow the activity instructions for the Exploratorium’s “Science of Bread: Yeast-Air Balloons.”
- Ask students to write down their observations in a notebook.
- Following the experiment, tell students that during the fermentation process the yeast produced carbon dioxide in the bottle, which, in turn, caused the balloon to inflate.
 - A similar process happens in bread dough. Carbon dioxide, created when yeast reacts with the sugar and flour in the bread dough, makes thousands of bubbles that cause the dough to inflate (rise).

Procedure

- Tell students that they are now going to have a chance to see and taste the difference between leavened and unleavened bread.
- Give each student a piece of matzah and a slice of leavened bread (sandwich bread).
- Ask the class:
 - Which bread is leavened? What do you observe that makes you say that?
 - Which bread is unleavened? What do you see (or not see) that makes you say that?
- Allow students to taste each type of bread.
 - NOTE: Before doing this activity, make sure to check for food allergies that may prevent students from tasting either type of bread.

Glossary

Leavened bread—a substance such as yeast or baking powder in bread dough that causes it to rise when carbon dioxide gas is produced through the process of fermentation.

Unleavened bread—dough that does not contain leaven, such as yeast or baking powder, that causes it to rise. Or, dough baked within eighteen minutes, before the fermentation process begins.

Fermentation—The digestion of matter by bacteria, yeast, or some other small organism. In bread, yeast digests the sugars in the dough and produces carbon dioxide.

Agent—A chemically, biologically, or physically active substance that produces a reaction. Yeast is an agent that causes fermentation in bread.

Challah—An egg-rich, yeast-leavened bread that is usually braided or twisted before baking and is traditionally eaten by Jews on the Sabbath or holidays.

Matzoh—A brittle, flat, unleavened bread eaten by Jews during the Passover holiday.

Assessment

The teacher may use a pretest to gauge prior knowledge on leavened and unleavened bread, the fermentation process, and the symbolism of Jewish food. After the activity is completed a second test may be used to assess student learning.

Suggested Modifications

- If facilities for baking exist at school, consider making leavened and unleavened bread with students.
 - A recipe for matzah is available at the My Jewish Learning Web site, http://www.myjewishlearning.com/holidays/Jewish_Holidays/Passover/At_Home/Food_and_the_Kitchen/Matzah_Baking.shtml (accessed September 8, 2011).
 - A simple challah recipe is available at the Temple David Web site, <http://www.templedavid.org/recipe/recipes20.html> (accessed September 8, 2011).
- Complete the “Family Food Favorites” lesson available from the Indiana Historical Society Web site at <http://www.indianahistory.org/teachers-students/teacher-resources/classroom-tools/immigration-and-ethnic-heritage/familyfood.pdf> (accessed September 8, 2011).
 - This lesson discusses food in the context of family heritage and helps students to consider how food has meaning in their own lives.

- Invite a representative from a local synagogue (or the parent of a Jewish child in your class) to visit the classroom and discuss the symbolism of Jewish foods.

Additional Resources

Publications

Kimmelman, Leslie. *The Little Red Hen and the Passover Matzoh*. New York: Holiday House, 2010.

Just as it happened in the original story, no one will help Little Red Hen. She makes the Passover matzoh herself, but everyone wants to eat it. What’s a chicken to do? A recipe for matzoh and a Yiddish glossary are included.

Kroph, Latifa Berry. *It’s Challah Time!* Minneapolis: Kar-Ben Publishers, 2002.

Photographs showcase children in a Jewish preschool as they prepare for Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath, by making challah, a traditional, braided egg bread.

Krulik, Nancy. *No Matzoh for Me!* New York: Grosset and Dunlap, 2003.

This book is a kid-friendly Passover story. Imaging Sammy’s disappointment at not being chosen to portray one of the ten plagues in his school Passover play. Who wants to play the part of a matzoh?

Ziefert, Harriet. *Passover: Celebrating Now, Remembering Then*. Maplewood, NJ: Blue Apple Books, 2010.

Web sites

Mindel, Nissan. “Bread – Nature’s Wonderland.” Chabad.org Tzivos Hashem Kids! http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/114797/jewish/Bread.htm (accessed September 9, 2011).

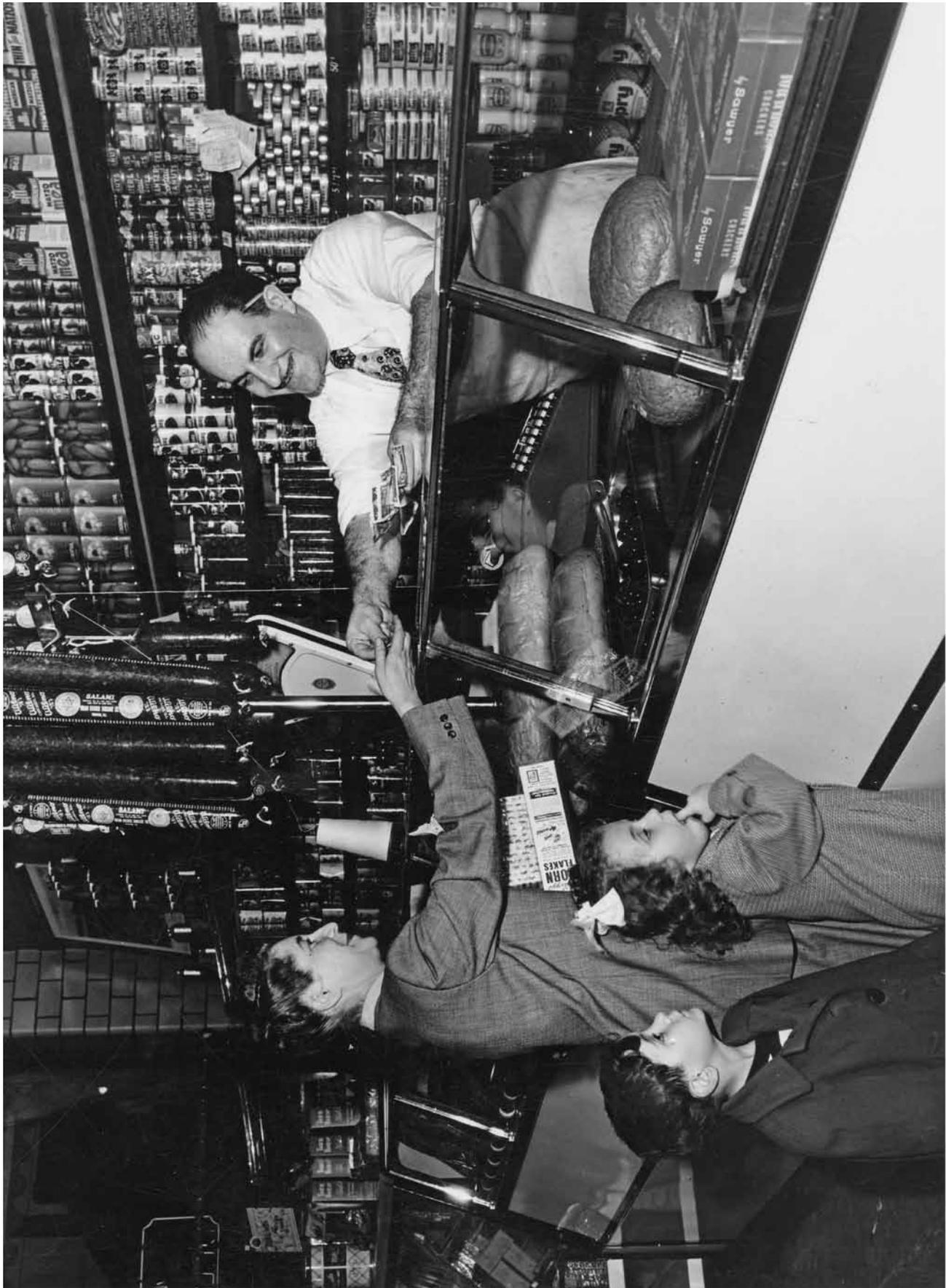
This article describes the importance and symbolism of bread in the Jewish tradition.

“Matzah: What’s Up With It?” Chabad.org
Tzivos Hashem Kids! http://www.chabad.org/kids/article_cdo/aid/1361542/jewish/Matzah-Documentary.htm
(accessed September 10, 2011).

This humorous documentary for young children explains how to make matzoh.

Public Broadcasting Service. The Meaning of Food. <http://www.pbs.org/opb/meaningoffood/>
(accessed September 9, 2011).

This site explores the cultural meaning of a variety of foods.



“Mrs. Frania Kaplan Shops at Shapiro’s Deli” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER10_001).



“Berek (Benny) Kaplan Working at Old Kraft Bakery” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_BOX1_FOLDER10_002).