

Simchat Torah

Concepts: Celebration of the Torah; we finish reading the Torah and then roll it back to start again; we read first story in the Torah – Creation.

Symbols/Customs: Hakafa (dancing with the Torah)

Props: flags and laminated Torahs; stuffed Torahs; small Consecration Torah; creation felt-board prop

Tips for Teaching This Unit:

1. With 4's – 1st graders, wish everyone 'Chag Sameach.' Review **Chag Sameach** and sign language from Rosh Hashanah. Teach **Chag Sameach** (Baydush), which reinforces the meaning of the Hebrew and reviews the holidays thus far.

Chag Sameach

by Lisa Baydush ([prop](#)) ([audio](#))

Chorus:

Chag Sameach, Chag Sameach, Happy Holiday! (repeat)

Can you name the holidays? I'll give you some clues!
Let's start with apples dipped in honey... Rosh Hashanah, good for you!

Here's another holiday, and here's another clue:
We say, 'I'm sorry' to our friends on... Yom Kippur, I'm proud of you! (chorus)

Can you name the holiday when we build a sukkah?... (Sukkot!)
And when we roll the Torah back?... That's right, that's called Simchat Torah!

How about the holiday with the Maccabees?...
Chanukah, you guys are smart! And how about when we plant trees?... (Tu B'shvat!) (chorus)

The next one's kinda silly and we shake the groggers 'round... (Purim!)
Then we have a seder... Pesach is my favorite one!

Israel's Independence Day is... Yom Ha'atzmaut,
And every week we light the candles... (Shabbat!)... of course, that one I knew you knew!
(chorus)

2. Simchat Torah is the last day of Sukkot. Review Sukkot songs, then introduce the Torah. Show my home-made Torah with pictures inside, and see if students recognize any of the stories, such as Noah and Moses at the Burning Bush. Explain that the Torah contains stories of the Jewish people, and that we love the Torah – offer the stuffed Torahs so everyone can give the Torah a hug.
3. Explain that our custom on this holiday is to march around the sanctuary seven times with the Torah. Give out flags and Torahs to 2's and 3's students and ask them to demonstrate marching legs. Sing **On Simchat Torah** and then **March Along With Me**. Age appropriate for 2's and 3's, though they are too young to do the echo on the verse.

On Simchat Torah

by Sarah Dekelbaum

On Simchat To-rah, I'll be so proud
to **march in the synagogue** and sing out loud
Simchat Torah, Simchat Torah, chag sameach to every one!

... wave my flag
...dance with the Torah

March Along With Me (on Simchat Torah)

by Lisa Baydush

Come march, march, march, march with the Torah,
March, march, march along with me!
Come march, march, march, march with the Torah,
Wave your flags and sing with me! (repeat)

1-2 (echo), 3-4 (echo), Let's march (echo) some more (echo);
4-3 (echo), 2-1 (echo), Simchat Torah is fun! (chorus)

4. Another great, but longer, song is **Hakafa**. Zip in children's movement suggestions. Age appropriate for 3's and older.

Hakafa

by Ellen Allard

Chorus:

Ha-ka-fa--- we go around and around
and around and around and
Ha-ka-fa--- we go around and around
and around. (repeat)

We're marching with the Torah we love, love, love, love, love;
We're marching with the Torah given by God above;
Yes, God is up and down and in and out and all around... (chorus)

5. Then sit down and invite them to roll their arms for **Round and Round on Simchat Torah**, freezing when the music stops, or **Roll it Back**. Age appropriate for 2's and 3's.

Round and Round on Simchat Torah

by Ellen Allard

Round and round and round on Simchat Torah! (freeze!)
We go round and round and round
and round and round,
with the Torah we go round. (repeat)

We celebrate our love for Torah (ahhh!)
We sing and dance and make a joyful noise (lalala!)
We march around for seven hakafot, (get ready!)
All the grownups, all the girls and boys, and...

Roll it Back

by Marc Rossio

Chorus:

Roll it back, roll it back, roll the Torah back, we made it to the end;
Roll it back, roll it back, roll the Torah back, let's start it all again! (repeat)

This holiday's Simchat Torah, for our most important scroll,
So grab the Torah by the handles as we start to roll, roll, roll... (chorus)

6. Explain to 4's and older, that the Torah is described as our tree of life, and teach Tree of Life with hand motions and clapping.

Tree of Life

by Richard Silverman

Shalom, shalom (clap 4x) (4x)

It is a tree of life to them that hold fast to it,
and all its supporters are (clap) happy (repeat)

7. On Simchat Torah, we roll the Torah back to the very beginning and begin to read it all over again! The first story in the Torah is when God created the world. How many days do you think it took? Can you count to six with me? Count to three on each hand, then demonstrate the sign for 'world.' Then do it again, this time singing the chorus to Six Days to Make the World. (With 2's and 3's, that may be too hard, so just count normally and roll closed fists.) Sing **Six Days to Make the World** ([audio](#)); age appropriate for ages 2-5. Use felt board prop to 'build' the world with pictures. Simplify the song by repeating each line with younger children and use hand motions.

Six Days to Make the World

by Lisa Baydush

Chorus:

1-2-3, 4-5-6

It took six days to make the world (repeat)

count to six with fingers

rolling hands

In the beginning, **light and dark (echo)**

In the beginning, **day and night (echo)** oh...

finger bursts; cover eyes

finger bursts; cover eyes

Then came the **land, the sky and sea (echo)**

Then came the **flowers and the trees (echo)** oh...

hands to the ground, up in air, makes waves

wiggle fingers for flowers; sign for tree

Next came the **sun, the moon and stars (echo)**

Next came the **animals, birds and fish (echo)** oh...

finger burst for sun, other hand for moon, both for stars

flap wings, swimming hands

Last came the people, **Adam and Eve (echo)**

Last came the people, **you and me (echo)** oh...

point to children, then to self

On the seventh day, **God took a rest (echo)**

That's why **Shabbat is our day of rest (echo)** oh...

head on hands

8. **Seven Days** is a wonderful alternative for Kindergarten through third grade. Use [pdf prop](#) to teach movements, then sing with [video](#). Point out the dynamics of how the word 'good' is sung. Make sign for 'God' with a loud whisper between verses.

Seven Days

by Ellen Allard

First day, day and night
And it was good!
God, God, God, God...
... Zip in each additional verse

ASL signs for day/night
Thumbs up
Sweep open palm through the air above head

First day, day and night
Second day, heaven and earth
Third day, plants and trees
Fourth day, sun and moon and stars
Fifth day, fins and wings
Sixth day, beasts and humankind
Seventh day, Sabbath rest

Arms reach up; arms reach down
Wiggling fingers grow like plants, then sign for tree
Finger bursts
Hands swim, arms flap
Thump chest like ape, then stomp each foot
Head on hands

9. Segue from creation to being partners with God in the continual act of creation. Ask students if they want to help me paint a beautiful world?! Use paintbrushes for **Painting a Beautiful World** ([audio](#)) ([prop](#)). Age appropriate for preschool. I recently adapted the song to match my rainbow colored paintbrushes, so I eliminated white and added purple. I also added a line about a rainbow: "Keshet, keshet, gonna paint a rainbow in the sky."

Painting a Beautiful World

by Lisa Baydush

I'm gonna paint a beautiful world,
Do you wanna paint with me?
I'm gonna paint a beautiful world,
C'mon and paint it with me!

Blue paint, blue paint,
Gonna paint a blue, blue sky (repeat)

White paint... lots of fluffy clouds...
Yellow paint... a shining sun...
Green paint... the green, green grass...
Orange paint... lots of pretty flowers...
Red paint... apples on a tree...

We just painted a beautiful world for everybody to see;
We just painted a beautiful world, thanks for painting with me!

Songs:

1. Chag Sameach (traditional)
2. Chag Sameach (Baydush)
3. Hakafa (Allard)
4. March Along with Me (Baydush)
5. On Simchat Torah (Dekelbaum)
6. Painting a Beautiful World (Baydush)
7. Roll it Back (Rossio)
8. Round and Round on Simchat Torah (Allard)
9. Seven Days (Allard)
10. Six Days to Make the World (Baydush)
11. Torah Torah (traditional)
12. Tree of Life (Silverman)
13. We March with the Torah (Walters)