

Tu B'shvat

Concepts: Birthday of the trees, planting seeds, ecology/taking care of the earth

Symbols/Custom: Planting trees

Props: fruit shakers, felt board with laminated tree and fruit, apple tree cards with five different kinds of fruit, blue-tooth speaker

Tips for Teaching This Unit:

1. Introduce the holiday with the song **We're Happy it's Tu B'shvat**, and sing the chorus with imaginary kazoos. Please note my new verse, which I think works better than the original.

We're Happy It's Tu B'shvat by Lisa Baydush ([audio](#))

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

Chorus:

Tu Tu Tu B'shvat, Tu Tu Tu B'shvat

Tu Tu Tu B'shvat, the birthday of the trees! (repeat)

*Imaginary kazoos on the Tu Tu 's;
Arms up in the air for 'trees';
Act out eating and planting.*

Tu B'shvat's the birthday, the birthday of the trees,

Eat some fruit and plant some seeds, and clap your hands with me!

(stomp your feet/jump up and down)

2. One of the ways we celebrate Tu B'shvat is by planting trees. Three wonderful songs are **Apple Seed** (simple and surprisingly effective with my youngest students), **Plant a Seed** (a HUGELY popular disappearing song), and **Let's Plant a Tree** (a fun movement song).

Apple Seed to the tune of Itsy Bitsy Spider

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

Once a little apple seed was planted in the ground;
Down came the raindrops, falling all around;
Out came the sun as bright as it could be,
And the little apple seed grew up to be an apple tree.

Plant a Seed by Les Julian ([audio](#))

Age appropriate for preschool & Kindergarten

Shovels... here we go!

Dig, dig, dig a hole,
and plant, plant, plant a seed,
and watch, watch, watch it grow some food
for you and you and you and you and you and me!

Words disappear line by line until the song is done silently, then we bring back all the words.

Let's Plant a Tree in Eretz Yisrael to the tune of Achsav ([audio](#))

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

Let's plant a tree in Eretz Yisrael! (2x)

Hey! Etz, etz, etz, b'Eretz Yisrael (2x)

The rain will fall in Eretz Yisrael...

The sun will shine in Eretz Yisrael...

Our tree will grow in Eretz Yisrael...

Do motions for plant, rain, sun and grow. Put arms in the air like branches reaching for the sky and jump up on the Hebrew word for tree, 'etz.'

3. Be a tree by acting out **Tree Growing Song**, **Tree Song** and **The Tree Song**.

Tree Growing Song to the tune of The Wheels on the Bus ([video](#))
Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

This is the way we grow our roots,
Grow our roots, grow our roots,
This is the way we grow our roots,
When it's Tu B'shvat!

Pop through the dirt...
Stretch and grow...
Bend in the breeze...
Grow our fruit...
Share our fruit...



In a squatting position, explain that you are a seed, and your wiggling fingers on the ground are roots growing.

Pop through the dirt by putting hands together and jumping up.

Stretch and grow; bend side to side; make fists for fruit; drop the fruit to spread the seeds.

Tree Song by Josh Miller ([audio](#))
Age appropriate for preschool & Kindergarten

We grow, we grow, we grow! (2x)

Tu-tu-tu-tu (5x) tu, Tu B'shvat! (repeat)

Tree! (5x) Tu B'shvat! (2x)

Well, I've got a friend (echo) who comforts me (echo)
I'm a kid (echo) and he's a tree! (echo)

On my birthday (echo) we eat a lot (echo);
On his birthday (echo) it's Tu B'shvat! (echo)

I like to play an mp3 so that I can do all of the movements with my students while still having musical accompaniment.

We grow verse: Start off in a squatting position, wiggling tush while slowly standing up.

Tu-Tu verse: Hands jut out for Tu-Tu's, like branches growing.

Tree verse: Pose as different trees.

Echo verses: Students echo leader.

The Tree Song by Lorraine Lee Hammond
Age appropriate for 3's & 4's

This is my trunk, I'm a tall, tall tree
In the springtime, the flowers bloom on me.
They open, they open!

...In the summer, the breezes blow through me.
I bend, I bend!

...In the autumn, the apples grow on me.
They drop, they drop!

...In the winter, the snowflakes fall on me.
It's cold, brrrrrrr! It's cold, brrrrrrr!

Bring in a picture of trees in each season.

Plant your legs in the ground; bend at the waist, reaching for your roots. Rise slowly, reaching up to the sky. Do motions for each verse:

Spring – they open: open hands like blossoms

Summer – I bend: bend side to side

Winter – it's cold: wrap arms around self

Autumn – they drop: open hands, like dropping fruit

Between verses, let the students tell you the next season. Sing through the song twice so they get the idea of the seasons being cyclical.

4. Discuss the kinds of fruit that grow on trees. My youngest students enjoy picking laminated fruit from my fruit tree while I sing **A Tree Gave Me**, and then singing a Tu B'shvat version of **Apples and Bananas**, while 3's and 4's students enjoy singing **Tu Tu Tu B'shvat** with tree prop cards.

A Tree Gave Me by Debbie Waldman
Age appropriate for 2's

Adapted lyrics:

A tree gave Lisa on Tu B'shvat
A special treat that she liked a lot!
She picked an apple from the tree
And ate it up so happily!

Original lyrics:

A tree gave me on Tu B'shvat
A special treat that I liked a lot!
Was it a fruit or was it a nut?
The tree gave me a(n) _____.



Apples and Bananas, adapted

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

I like to eat, eat, eat apples and bananas (3x)
on Tu-Tu-Tu B'shvat!

Pears and peaches; oranges and cherries, etc.

Tu Tu Tu B'shvat to the tune of BINGO

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

I have a tree with lots of fruit,
and now I'll pick an apple!
Tu Tu Tu B'shvat! (3x),
The birthday of the trees!



5. Sing **Shaky Fruit** and let students shake off some energy with fruit shakers.

Shaky Fruit to the tune of Oogiot by Marc Rossio, adapted by Nell Hirsch and Lisa Baydush

Age appropriate for 2's & 3's

Shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky fruit!
Shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky fruit!
It's delicious, and so nutritious!
Shaky, shaky, shaky, shaky fruit!



Apples, cherries, peaches, plums, any fruit will do!
My favorite part of Tu B'shvat
is shaking fruit shakers with you...
and you and you and you and you and you!

6. Tu B'shvat is an environmental holiday, so it's an appropriate time to sing nature songs. Three songs that my students really like are **Adamah V'shamayim, The Earth is Our Mother** and **One Seed**.

Adamah V'shamayim by Gabi Meyer

Age appropriate for 4's & older

Chorus:

Hey-ya (7x) Ho! Hey-ya (7x) Ho!
Hey-ya Hey-ya, Hey-ya Hey-ya
Hey-ya Hey-ya Hey-ya Ho!

Love the earth (echo), Love the sky (echo),
Heat of fire (echo), Drop of water (echo);
I can feel it in my body, in my spirit, in my soul!
(chorus)

Adamah (echo), v'shamayim (echo),
Chom ha'eish (echo), tz'lil hamayim (echo),
Ani margeesh zot b'gufi b'ruchi v'nishmati! (chorus)

Sing with body percussion on the chorus, hands doing a sliding clap on the Hey Ya's, pausing after Ho!

Do the same hand motions for the English and Hebrew verses to help reinforce the meaning of the Hebrew.

*Love the earth – pat the ground
Love the sky – wave hands in air
Heat of fire – finger bursts in front of body
Drop of water – wiggle fingers like rain falling
Body – wrap arms around self
Spirit/Soul – one hand as a cup, the other hand pulls an imaginary piece of thread out and up*

The Earth is Our Mother [\(video\)](#)

Age appropriate for 3's, 4's & Kindergarten

Chorus:

He-ey ya-na; Ho-o ya-na; He-ey ya-na ho (4x)

The sky is so beautiful,
We must take care of it! (2x) (chorus)

The rivers are so beautiful...
The trees are so beautiful...
The earth is so beautiful...

One Seed [by Laurie Berkner \(video\)](#)

Age appropriate for 4's & Kindergarten

My grandfather had a garden,
and showed my father how to make it grow;
Then my father, he had me,
Now it's my turn to plant a seed.

Chorus:

One seed (echo), Two hands (echo),
Dig a hole (echo), Start to plant (echo),
Watch it grow (echo), Pass it down (echo),
One earth (echo), Spins around (echo). (repeat)



Use rhythm sticks:

Chorus – sticks beat alternately on ground

Sky – hit sticks on ground, then rub together in air

Rivers – roll one stick back and forth on ground with other stick

Trees – hit sticks on ground, then tap three times in air

Earth – hit sticks on ground, then tap three times on ground

Tell the folktale of Honi and the Carob Tree.

Use hand motions for the chorus.

7. Other fun songs for Tu B'shvat...

Gonna Build Myself a Tree House [by Charity Kahn \(video\)](#)

Age appropriate for 2's, 3's & 4's

tap sticks together on 'chop, chop, chop':
I've got an ax, gonna chop chop chop (3x)
Gonna build myself a tree house!
tap sticks on floor and then over head for 'tree house'

Saw – cut, cut, cut
Hammer – tap, tap, tap
Ladder – climb, climb, climb, gonna climb into my tree house!

Use rhythm sticks for each tool.

Ax – chop the ground

Saw – rub sticks

Hammer – make one stick the nail and tap it

*Ladder – position stick horizontally in air
and put the other stick above it to make
rungs of a ladder*

Two Little Apples [to the tune of Six Little Ducks or as a chant](#)

Age appropriate for 2's

Two little apples hanging on a tree,
One for you and one for me;
I shook that tree as hard as I could,
Down came the apples and
Ummm! They were good!

*Let students hold laminated fruit
for the song. It's fun to drop the
fruit to the ground. Substitute
other fruit.*

Tu B'Shvat Knees and Toes

Age appropriate for 2's, 3's and 4's

Leaves, branches, trunk and roots, trunk and roots!
Leaves, branches, trunk and roots, trunk and roots!
Trees give us: nuts and shade and fruit!
Leaves, branches, trunk and roots, trunk and roots!

Use motions:

Leaves – wave hands

Branches – extend arms

Trunk – slap hands on sides of legs

Roots – squat to touch feet

Us – hands on chest

Tubie by Mike Stein
Age appropriate for 3's and 4's

Chorus:

Tubie, Tubie, Tubie (3x)
Tubie Tubie Tu B'shvat (repeat)

Tubie's made from cardboard,
Cardboard's made from trees
That's why Tubie likes Tu B'shvat,
It's the holiday of trees, oh yeah! (chorus)

Dig a hole, plant a seed, get dirt and cover it up
Watch it grow with the rain and snow,
Grow up and up and up! (chorus)



Israel Blooms All Around to the tune of The Green Grass Grows All Around
Age appropriate for Kindergarten, 1st & 2nd grade

There is a land (echo) called Yisrael (echo)
the greenest land (echo) that you ever did see (echo),
and Israel blooms all around, all around (2x)

And in that land, there was a tree, the tallest tree that you ever did see
A tree in the land of Yisrael, and Israel blooms all around, all around
and Israel blooms all around!

And on that tree... the longest branch...
And on that branch... the skinniest twig...
And on that twig... the littlest nest...
And in that nest... the whitest egg...
And in that egg... the bluest bird...
And on that bird... the softest feather...
And on that feather... the tiniest seed...
And then that seed, fell to the ground
and one day grew into a brand new tree...

Standing Like a Tree by Betsy Rose ([audio](#))
Age appropriate for Kindergarten & older

Standing like a tree
With my roots dug down,
My branches wide and open;
Come down the rain,
Come down the sun,
Come down the fruit
to a heart that is open to be... (repeat)

Try to maintain a yoga tree pose while singing this song! Do hand motions for rain, sun, fruit and open heart.

My Roots Go Down by Sarah Pirtle ([adorable video](#))
Age appropriate for 4's & Kindergarten

My roots go down, down to the earth (3x)
My roots go down. (repeat)

I am a maple tree growing at my school...
I am a flower growing in the field...
I am a mountain, strong and still...

Apple Tree by Justin Roberts ([audio](#))
Age appropriate for Kindergarten & older

I am a little apple seed
Sitting on the ground waiting to be
An apple tree, an apple tree

Everyone tells me that I'm oh so small
And I'm never gonna grow to be
Big and tall, big and tall

But I tell them wait and see—
'Cause I'm gonna be like an apple tree
And I'm gonna let all my branches run free
And I'm gonna reach way up to the sun
And open my arms for everyone
And like an apple is sweet, gonna be so sweet
And like an apple shines in the sun
Shine my light on everyone
'Cause I'm an a-p-p-l-e, apple tree, an a-p-p-l-e...

Tu B'Shvat by Dean Friedman
Age appropriate for Kindergarten & older

Tu B'Shvat / (2x) It's a holiday / I like a lot /
And the reason / it's the season /
We celebrate trees (2x) on Tu B'Shvat!

We celebrate ____ trees (6x)
We celebrate trees (2x) on Tu B'Shvat! (chorus)