

Bring Home The Hostages Tu B'Shvat Seder

Facilitator Guide

A Tu B'Shvat Experience Dedicated to the Hostages

ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

What is the special connection between the land of Israel, freedom, and the values of life, renewal and the celebration of trees on Tu Bishvat?

How might we dedicate our Tu B'Shvat celebrations—in our homes, youth groups, schools and communities—to raising awareness about the hostages and move participants to advocate on their behalf?

FRAMING THE ISSUE

The Tu B'Shvat seder, modeled after the Passover seder, traditionally includes eating a variety of fruits and nuts and drinking four cups of wine of various colors and is an opportunity to celebrate the species that are unique to the land of Israel.

The seder has kabbalistic roots and was first mentioned in the book Pri Etz Hadar, written in the 18th century. There is room for much creativity when planning a Tu B'shvat seder, including the choice of foods, readings, and discussions.

This year, the people of Israel cannot properly celebrate the bounty of the Land of Israel, as they are both grieving for those that have fallen on and since October 7th, as well as pained by the fact that so many are being held hostage still in Gaza.

This Tu B'shvat Seder has been specially adapted and dedicated to raising awareness about the Israeli hostages being held in Gaza and to move participants to advocate on their behalf.

As we engage in this Seder, let us pledge to do what we can to spread its messages and do what we can to free our hostages.

Info For Facilitator



Target Audience:

Middle school, High School, College Students in formal and informal educational settings, Adults, Families



Length Of Program:

90 minute program



Materials & Prep:

-Invite your participants to a Tu B'shvat seder dedicated to the hostages.

Set up the room so all participants can sit by a table. The table should be set festively, with cups and plates, and the following:

- Red grape juice or wine
- White grape juice or wine
- Wheat crackers
- Barley crackers or cereal
- Figs
- Dates
- Pomegranate seeds
- Grapes
- Olives

You may add decorative elements that celebrate nature and the land of Israel.

Leave an empty chair at the table (or multiple empty chairs), with a photo and name of one (or more) of the hostages, noting their absence.

Each participant should have a printed copy of the Haggadah booklet

LET'S EXPLORE

This activity takes place in a Seder format, much like the Passover seder. Participants sit around a table laden with wine and foods. Each participant should have a copy of the Haggadah, which includes the readings and blessings and instructions.

The facilitator should decide how to divide the readings and the leadership of the Seder amongst the participants.

TAKE ACTION!

■ In addition to the Seder activity, you can invite your group to participate in the [Tree of Wishes Campaign from UnitED](#):

Students are encouraged to write wishes or draw pictures expressing support for our hostages and their safe return, encouragement of their families, and strength to our IDF soldiers. These wishes from thousands of students across the world will be affixed to a tree that will be 'planted' at Hostage Square in Tel Aviv by a delegation of leading global educators from across the world before Tu B'Shvat. Submissions are due by January 21, 2024.

[For details click here.](#)

CLOSING INTENTION

Now that you've participated in the Seder and learned some sources that relate to hostage-taking and captivity, discuss with your group:

How can you turn your knowledge and awareness into deeds?

What can you do today and every day on behalf of the hostages, until they come home?

