

Example of an Investigation: Diversity in Israel



A deep dive of *Ahavat Yisrael*/love of Israel

This suggested series of activities integrates math, social studies, science, cooking, and more as a way to explore the diversity of the people and the land of Israel.

Display photos and videos that depict the varied topography and the multiplicity of cultures in Israel.

Let this lead you into a conversation about how variety and diversity can be represented in your classroom. Using the following example, you can explore this subject for an hour, a day, or weeks on end.

- After your intro of pictures and videos, talk with your class about what they see. Ask lots of “I wonder” questions to solicit feedback from the children about what is familiar or foreign in the images.
- Incorporate what they notice along with statistics about the places and people of Israel (see below) into graphs. Use classroom objects, such as blocks, Unifix cubes, Magnatiles, etc. to represent different types of landscapes or cultural groups of Israel.
- Once the class has completed their graph, move on to using food to represent the diversity that they have depicted. If you choose, you can introduce this piece of text:

"Adonai your God has brought you to a good land. A land of brooks of water, of fountains and depths, springs in the valley and hills; a land of wheat, and barley, and vines of grapes, and fig trees, and pomegranates; a land of olive oil and honey; a land wherein thou shalt eat bread without scarceness, thou shalt not lack any thing in it" (Deuteronomy 8:7-9).

- Ask the students which foods they hear mentioned. How many?
- With clean trays, wax paper, or paper plates, create pie charts. Fill them in with the *sheva minim* (seven species) that are mentioned in the Torah text above. (Don't worry – food won't be wasted.) Brainstorm what each item represents, i.e. grapes are the mountains, barley represents the desert, etc. Provide bowls of each food with scoopers/spoons so that the children can fill in their pie charts.
- Once they have gathered all the materials, ask more questions! Notice the different colors, textures and smells. Run a finger or spoon through everything to start mixing them together. Take lots of pictures and videos while the exploration is happening.
- Once you're finished, cook the grains up like oatmeal and have it for snack. For every cup of grains and fruit (use quick cook barley and cream of wheat), use 2 cups of water, bring to a boil and reduce to a simmer until the liquid is absorbed. Enjoy the delicious combination with toppings of your choice.

