

Trees Make Perfect Pets

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{ How can we show love for our world? }



HANDS ON!

Paint a Tree in Bloom

This easy and fun art project may inspire a real “hands-on” attitude toward trees.

Supplies:

Paint
Paintbrush
Paper
Paper plate

Paint a landscape for your tree to live in, like a simple blue sky and green grass. When dry, paint the trunk and branches of the tree. Put some paint on a paper plate. Dip your fingertips in the paint and make dots on the branches to serve as blooming flowers. When dry, you can share your artwork in the window to help celebrate Tu B'Shevat.

A Botanical Birthday

In the Hebrew calendar, wintertime features a green surprise . . . a birthday party for the trees! This nature-lover's holiday is called Tu B'Shevat, which literally refers to the 15th day of the Hebrew month Shevat. In ancient Israel, this day was most important for farmers. According to Jewish law, fruit should be picked only from trees that are at least four years old; Tu B'Shevat helped farmers keep track of when their trees were ready. But whenever there's a chance to make a celebration, why not take it? Tu B'Shevat has become a day to celebrate trees and their special role in the world — and to plant new ones to keep our planet green. Have you thanked a tree today? To learn more, visit pjlibrary.org/treesmakeperfectpets.

A Seder for the Trees

A seder (ritual meal) isn't just for Passover. Tu B'Shevat has one, too. This special celebration features a variety of fruits and nuts — like carobs, raisins, and almonds — as well as Shivat HaMinim (the “Seven Species”) of the Land of Israel: wheat, barley, grapes, figs, pomegranates, olives, and dates. The seder directs participants to eat the fruits in a special order, taking them from “lower” or more physical fruits to “higher” or more spiritual ones. (You may never look at your dates and almonds the same way again.) Red and white wine or grape juice is also mixed together in different proportions to symbolize this process.

Perfect Pet Caretakers

Abigail may be onto something — in a way, trees were the first pets. In the earliest chapters of the Torah (the first five books of the Bible), the first humans were put in charge of caring for the Garden of Eden, which included “every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food.” Maybe Adam and Eve hung out with the trees, sang to them, and tucked them in at night, the way Abigail does in this story. Trees may not wag tails or do tricks, but they still deserve our love and attention. What would the world be like if we all started to feel as responsible for the trees and plants around us as we would for the cutest little puppy?

TALK IT OVER WITH YOUR KIDS

LOOK closely at the illustrations in this book. How does Abigail help Fido? How does Fido help Abigail?

WHAT can you do to help take care of trees and plants?

IF you had a tree as a pet, what would you do together?