



A Family Education E-Resource

Sukkot 5766

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Dear Parents,

Sukkot begins on the full moon of the Hebrew month of Tishrei, which this year occurs on the evening of October 17, 2005. The holiday of Sukkot offers you many opportunities to connect to our heritage and to the community. The most identifiable mitzvah connected with the holiday is building or decorating a *sukkah*/booth and sitting in the *sukkah*. Home *sukkah* building has become more popular in the Jewish community as many prefab kits are available and are affordable. Also, you can participate in this mitzvah by coming to help build and decorate the synagogue *sukkah*.

To build your own *sukkah*, plans are available for a home *sukkah* made out of PVC pipes at: <http://www.holidays.net/sukkot/pdf/sukkahplan.pdf>

Holiday Joy

Another name for Sukkot is *Z'man Simhatenu*/Season of Our Joy.

Many people add to the joy of the holiday by eating something new (not previously consumed in the last month) each day of Sukkot. This is an additional opportunity to recite the *Shehecheyanu* blessing* for our having reached this season.

*The *Shehecheyanu* blessing is available in every *siddur*/prayer book or at <http://www.jewfaq.org/prayer/sukkot.htm#Shehecheyanu>

Hospitality

Sukkot is an opportunity to be hospitable and welcoming to others in many ways. There is a long-standing tradition of inviting *ushpizin* /spiritual guests to share in the holiday. The traditional *ushpizin* include the forefathers Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, and King David. Some people include the *ushpizot* /prophetesses Sarah, Miriam, Deborah, Hannah, Abigail, Huldah, and Esther. Sukkot gives each family time to extend *haknusat orhim*/hospitality to friends, family, and other guests.

- ◆ Invite both historical guests and neighbors for a snack or a meal during Sukkot.
- ◆ Distant relatives and friends can become part of a “virtual *sukkah*” celebration through an Internet/video link!

- ◆ Designate a day during Sukkot for each family member to be the host and extend an invitation to someone special.

The holiday of Sukkot has several themes that are especially relevant to families. Two examples are:

Sukkat Shalom/A Sukkah of peace and wholeness

The *sukkah* is a reminder that the holiday is a remembrance of the Exodus when God sheltered *B'nai Yisrael*/the Israelites in the wilderness.

- ◆ Walk around your home and point out the differences between a permanent home, temporary housing and a *sukkah*.
- ◆ As many people are suffering from the devastation of hurricanes in the last months, families can talk about the need for shelter and how it is provided to those in need. Talk about who lives in temporary shelters. Think about what it would be like to live for a long time in a hotel, summer camp, tent, or *sukkah*.
- ◆ Plan how your family can make life easier for those who need permanent housing by sharing and/or volunteering, or contributing food, clothing, or household items.
- ◆ As we have seen over the last month, even permanent homes can be vulnerable to a natural disaster that may cause damage from wind, fire, or water. If you needed to think about what is most important to you – what would you take with you?
- ◆ Each family should plan for both a safe place to stay within their home, and evacuation plans if that becomes necessary. Practice with your family and prepare a Family Disaster Plan by using the list on:
http://www.familyeducation.com/article/print/0,1303,1-33368,00.html?obj_gra
- ◆ The ideal of a *sukkat shalom/a sukkah of peace* reminds us to pursue peace. We can seek peace within each family, within the community, and throughout the world. Is it necessary to have a partner in the pursuit of peace? Ask what each individual can do to pursue peace.

The Israel Connection

Use the *shivat haMinim*/seven varieties of produce [wheat, barley, dates, figs, pomegranate, olives, and grapes] linked to the Land of Israel from Biblical times, in foods prepared for meals and snacks during Sukkot (Deuteronomy 8:8). Many of these foods are more available than ever before. Look also for fresh fruits, vegetables, and herbs from Israel in local markets and specialty stores.

Try some of these Sukkot recipes that are easily served in a *sukkah*!

http://judaism.about.com/library/3_holidays/higholidays/bl_sukkot_recipes.htm

http://sukkot.123holiday.net/sukkot_recipes.html

http://www.funmunch.com/events/sukkot/sukkot_recipes.shtml

We wish you a חג שמח - a joyous holiday!

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