

Celebrating Life Together

OBJECTIVE:

To learn what a "community" means, who makes up a community and how cultural customs bring community members together.

ACTIVITY OVERVIEW:

Students will read the story *Tikvah Means Hope*. Through the story, they will learn about the Jewish harvest festival, Sukkot. They will also learn about the different people and animals that make up a community.

MATERIALS:

🐾 Book: *Tikvah Means Hope*, by Patricia Polacco

🐾 Book: *In the Jewish Tradition, A Year of Festivities and Foods*, by Judith B. Fellner

ACTIVITY:

Preliminary Discussion

- 🐾 Define "community." Who are the people and animals that make up your community?
- 🐾 Why are animals an important part of a community?
- 🐾 Discuss the variety of people and animals in your community. Focus on the different races, religions and ages of the people and the different types of pets and wild animals.
- 🐾 How do you feel when you meet someone who's different than you? What new and interesting things can you learn from the people in your community who are different than you? What do you have to contribute to your community? What if we were all the same?
- 🐾 Why are some people unkind to those who are different than them? Discuss the importance of respecting others even though they may be different than you.

Procedure

Read the book *Tikvah Means Hope*. Discuss the Jewish festival, Sukkot, which commemorates the ancient time when the Israelites built temporary shelters as they wandered in the wilderness. It also celebrates harvest time, when the crops were gathered.

Invite a Jewish person to your classroom to talk about the holiday. There may be a Jewish child in your class whose family can assist with this. The book, *In the Jewish Tradition*, is a good resource for studying about Sukkot.

Discuss a variety of other holidays and customs that people celebrate. Have the students each write about a special holiday, custom or tradition that their family shares and tell the class about it.

Post-Discussion

- 🐾 What were some new things you learned about other people's holidays, traditions and customs?
- 🐾 Why is it important to understand and respect what other people believe, even if it's not something that you believe in?
- 🐾 How can people in a community learn to care about each other and respect each other's different ideas and customs?

EXTENSION ACTIVITY:

Choose several holidays to explore and learn about throughout the year.