

PROGRAM:

ALL ABOARD THE EARTH ARK



Objectives:

- Experience the pressure placed on animals when they lose habitat.
- Learn the story of how Noah saved the creatures of the earth in the Torah.
- Interact with fellow participants and “overcome” threats by working together as a team.

 **THE JEWISH
NATURE KIT**
Empowering Discovery Through
Fun Nature Programming



JEWISH VALUES:

חֶסֶד, רַחֲמִים *CHESED, RACHAMIM*

Compassion.

צֶעַר בְּעַלֵּי חַיִּים *TZA'AR BA'ALEI CHAYYIM*

The prohibition against cruelty to animals.

אָדָם יָחִיד *ADAM YACHID*

Everyone is created equal.

Time for activity: 30 minutes

Complementary programs:

- Critter Crawl
- Camouflage
- Natural Discussions

When to play: Day. Nighttime in a well-lit area.

Where to play: Anywhere. Grassy field, playground, urban setting, rural setting, indoors.

Age level: 8 years and up.

Players needed: 6-15

SAMPLE—NOT FOR REPRODUCTION

Materials needed

Large tarp, 12'x12' for 15 participants. Get a larger size for more people. If you don't have a tarp you can mark an area on the ground using rope, blankets, etc.

Use these questions to generate interest in the activity

1. Where do you live?
2. Who, or what, lived there before you? Who lived there before there was even a house? Where else do you live – city, country, continent, hemisphere and finally the earth?
3. Where do you think you will live in 10 years? 20 years? 30 years? Who will have lived there before you?
4. Have you heard of the term “habitat loss?” (See vocabulary.)
5. Have you heard of Noah's Ark?
6. What are some of the threats that are facing animals on Earth today?

VOCABULARY:

- ◇ Habitat: **בֵּית גִּדּוּל** (Beyt Gee-dool) The natural home or environment for an animal, plant or other organism. A habitat provides the necessary resources for an organism to live, such as food, shelter, water, etc.
- ◇ Habitat loss: When the land and resources that animals depend upon for survival (life) is lost due to destruction, fragmentation or degradation. Habitat loss is one of the major environmental threats on the earth. It affects people, plants, and animals. It does not discriminate based on religion, color or ethnicity. **Without habitat, there is no wildlife. It is that simple.**
- ◇ Ark: **תֵּבַת** (Te-vat) A boat. The boat Noah built in response to G-d's command (Genesis 6:14). As a baby, Moses went down the Nile River in a *Tevat* (Exodus 2:3).

G-d said to Noah, "From all life, all flesh, bring two of each kind of animal into the ark to live with you."

-Genesis 6:19

"Man did not weave the web of life, he is merely a strand in it. Whatever he does to the web, he does to himself."

-Chief Seattle

ACTIVITY

- ❖ Gather all participants in a large, flat area.
- ❖ Have the participants help you to spread the tarp open. Have them stand around the outside of the tarp and tell them that the tarp represents the Noah's Ark.
- ❖ Read them the short story of Noah's Ark. (*Included in THE JEWISH NATURE KIT.)
- ❖ After hearing the story, ask these questions (you don't have to ask them all). The questions will help participants remember the story more fully:
 - ◇ Why was it important for Noah to save the animals?
 - ◇ How would the earth be different if one of the animals did not make it aboard the Ark?
 - How would it feel if you were the animal that was left off of Noah's Ark?



ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

- ◊ How do you think the Earth is like Noah's Ark? What are the similarities between the two? (Encourage your participants to think about this and come up with their own answers. Here are few suggestions.)
 - The ark had enough food and resources for all the animals.
 - The ark had enough clean water for the animals.
 - Each animal had its own space in the ark (habitat).
 - The earth is like a huge ark travelling through space. Noah's Ark travelled across the water and was the animal's home for 40 days and 40 nights.
 - The earth is our Ark.
- ❖ Tell participants they are now going to play a game called "All Aboard the Earth Ark."
- ❖ Have the participants select any kind of animal they wish to be. They can do this silently or they can tell the group what animal they have become.
- ❖ Have them choose a sound and a motion that represents their animal, and act it out.
- ❖ Tell the participants, "All creatures, both large and small, need space on the Earth Ark to live. This tarp represents the Earth Ark, with enough space for all species to live comfortably."
- ❖ Have the participants step onto the tarp and roam about the "Earth Ark" making their animal sounds and movements.



ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

- ❖ Ask the “animals” to step off the tarp (Earth Ark). Inform them that houses need to be built to house the growing human population and they will, unfortunately, lose some of their habitat. Fold the tarp in half.
 - ◇ You may only need to fold the tarp $\frac{1}{4}$ closed if you have a larger group.
- ❖ Ask the students/animals to step back onto the tarp and do the same animal things they were doing before. Ask these questions:
 - ◇ Do they have enough room?
 - ◇ What happened?
 - ◇ How does human growth impact their lives/behaviors?
- ❖ Again, have all “animals” step off the Earth Ark/tarp. Inform them that a huge shopping center has bought land so the people in their homes can go shopping. Fold the tarp in half again (or by $\frac{1}{4}$).
- ❖ Now ask the animals to step back onto the tarp and do their actions/noises.
- ❖ Ask them, “How does this feel compared to before the shopping center was built?” Listen carefully to their answers.
 - ◇ You may have to ask this question in a few different ways.
 - What did the shopping center do to your land/space?”
 - Do you like the shopping center being on your land? Why? Why not?



ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

- ❖ Ask them to step off the tarp yet again. This time let the animals know that a waste dump has been created to dispose of the trash from all the new homes and the shopping center that was built on their land. Fold the tarp in half again (or by $\frac{1}{4}$).
- ❖ Now ask the participants to step back onto the tarp and do their animal actions/noises. Ask them, “How does this feel compared to before the dump was built?”
- ❖ By this point the “animals” should be tightly packed onto the remaining “land.” If not, fold the tarp in half again (or by $\frac{1}{4}$) so the animals feel the pressure of habitat loss.
 - ◇ At this point the activity takes on a cooperative group challenge.
 - ◇ The animals need to work together to devise ways of staying on the tarp. For example, participants can: hold hands, balance on one foot, hold a person who is across the tarp from them, etc. Allow them to get creative!
 - ◇ With all the animals on the tarp, have them sing a song together. It could be “It’s a small world after all...” or *Hinei Ma Tov Umanaim...* or any other song you think appropriate. This makes the challenge longer; participants have to remain on the Earth Ark for a certain period of time. If they “fall” off the earth before the song is over, they must retry. You could also simply say, “You must remain on the earth for at least 15 seconds.



ACTIVITY (CONTINUED)

- ❖ Have them step off the tarp one last time. Tell them about the destruction of land and animals on earth:
 - ◇ A football size field of land is lost every minute of every day due to logging and habitat destruction. All the animals either need to find a new place to live, or they unfortunately will die.
- ❖ Fold the tarp in half again. Ask them if they can fit onto their land anymore.
 - ◇ They do not need to try to fit on the tarp. They can see this would be impossible (but if they want to try, let them!).
- ❖ Now, tell them that using new methods of construction, using less packaging, recycling materials and water, reducing waste through composting and reductions in toxic products has opened up new land for them to use and live on.
- ❖ Unfold the tarp. Ask the participants to step back onto the tarp and do their animal action and make their noise. This should seem super roomy!
 - ◇ Ask them, “How does this feel?”
- ❖ Have the participants sit in a comfortable area around the tarp and use the questions provided to start a discussion.



HINTS FOR SUCCESS

- ✓ In the last part of the challenge, when participants are all trying to stay on the tarp, RUN around the tarp and check that no one is stepping off the tarp. Show enthusiasm and excitement. If someone steps off, SCREAM, “OH NO! You didn’t just fall off the earth!” Remember; Get into it; your energy will be contagious!
- ✓ For an added challenge, ask your participants to work together to have them stand on the other side of the tarp without anyone stepping off the tarp. The story might be, “The animals’ land has been destroyed and they need to get to the other side of the earth in order to find suitable land for survival.” You can invent another story for the scenario, i.e. “you need to populate a new world that is on the bottom of this tarp.” You can give them a time limit too, perhaps 10 minutes. Have fun and be creative!
- ✓ Adapt the challenge for the appropriate age by making the tarp bigger or smaller, changing the storyline and by asking participants to develop their own storyline.
- ✓ Additional quotes that may enhance the program are:

“The love for all living creatures is the most noble attribute of humans.”

-Charles Darwin

“Earth provides enough to satisfy every person’s need, but not anyone’s greed.”

-Mahatma Gandhi



DISCUSSION: CONTINUING THE CONVERSATION

Ask your participants the following questions to engage them in conversations. You don't need to ask all the questions (you shouldn't), but pick ones on which to focus.

- ❖ Was this a game? Was it more than a game? Why, Why not?
- ❖ Do you think this is happening on earth right now? How? Why? Where?
 - ◇ This activity was designed to simulate the loss of land to wildlife through development and pollution. Like the game we just played, we humans **can** make a difference and help stop destruction of land and habitat for animals (including people!).
 - ◇ How can you make a difference?
 - ◇ Our challenge is to act as a team and prevent real animals from falling off the earth, ourselves included!
 - ◇ The more we help protect the animals and the earth, the more we help protect ourselves.
 - Ask participants if they can give examples of this.
 - ◇ Why/how are we destroying oceans and forests? Can we find the purpose to:
 - A forest? What is it?
 - The oceans? What is it?



DISCUSSION (CONTINUED)

- ❖ How is the Earth like Noah's Ark?
 - ◇ How did Noah live the value *Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayyim*?
 - ◇ How do you live the value of *Tza'ar Ba'alei Hayyim*?
- ❖ Did Noah have compassion/*Rachamim* for the animals?
- ❖ Is the earth important to you? Why? How?
- ❖ How does the earth help you?
- ❖ How do you think Noah would overcome some of today's obstacles facing the animals of the earth?
- ❖ How do you think the quotes on page 3 pertain to what we did? Reread the quotes.

- *CHESED, RACHAMIM: Compassion.*



- *TZA'AR BA'ALEI CHAYYIM: The prohibition against cruelty to animals.*

- *ADAM YACHID: Everyone is created equal.*



LAKE EDUCATION

Contact

www.outdoorjewish.com

Email: josh@lakeeducation.com