

Lesson Plan III: *Berachot* & Chocolate Making

About this Lesson:

- This material may be used to supplement units about *berachot*, *kashrut*, community service, Jewish food, Pesach, Chanukah or other.
- For Grades 5 and above. This lesson may be used with Lesson II. Please feel free to adapt and modify to suit your needs.
- This lesson accompanies sections of *On the Chocolate Trail* including Chapter 10 and “A Consumer’s Guide to Buying Ethically Produced Chocolate,” page 177.

Objectives for the Students:

By the end of the lesson my students will be able to:

- Recite the blessing for chocolate¹
- Explain some of the issues related to chocolate blessings -- *haeitz* or *shehakol*
- Refresh thinking about the best chocolate choices from Lesson II

Lesson:

Set Induction: (approximately 5-10 minutes)

My opening will be:

1. Review the class decision to use this particular type of chocolate. Discuss briefly the values that are expressed through the chocolate. “A Consumer’s Guide to Buying Ethically Produced Chocolate,” page 177 and Chapter 10.
2. Why do we say blessings/*berachot*? Why does Judaism teach blessings for chocolate? What is the correct blessing for chocolate?
3. Read/listen to an app or a clip of the two possible *berachot*.

Planned Activities to Make the Lesson Work:

1. How cacao grows and chocolate is made (approximately 5-10 minutes)
Use a video clip/s, if possible. Discuss the amazing wonders of chocolate; the species name for chocolate is *theobroma*, meaning, food of the gods. Review or learn about the basics of how chocolate is grown and processed. Consider the several steps of chocolate making which definitely deserve gratitude and appreciation.
2. Blessings help us pause to appreciate our food and to recognize the sanctity of God’s creation.

3. Debate the pros and cons of each blessing. Which one really applies? Read and recite them. (approximately 10-15 minutes)

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַכֹּל נִהְיָה בְּדִבְרֶיךָ.

...*Shehakol Nihyah bidvaro.*

...everything was created through God's words.

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם בּוֹרֵא פְּרֵי הָעֵץ.

...*Borei p'ri ha'etz.*

...who creates the fruit of the trees.

4. Decide: Which *beracha* makes most sense to you? Review the arguments for each and then vote. (approximately 5 minutes)
5. Use melted chocolate to make Chanukah or Passover shapes or general Jewish shapes for gifts to give to nursing home or food pantry and, of course, enough for the class to taste (approximately 15 minutes)

Create Closure:

1. Say the *beracha shehakol* over the chocolate and taste.
2. Read this quote and ask students to consider its meaning: Rabbenu Bachya ben Asher: "See how one's eating is considered a perfect act of worship like one of the forms of the divine sacrifices."

Materials and Supplies

- "A Consumer's Guide to Buying Ethically Produced Chocolate" and Chapter 10 in *On the Chocolate Trail*.
- Enough of the best chocolate (of the type selected in previous week) and Jewish molds for forming chocolate for gifts to deliver to nursing home or food pantry, as well as samples for the class.
- Texts of the two *berachot* in handout or slide.
- Apps/video clips of (a) the *berachot* and (b) how chocolate is grown/processed.

