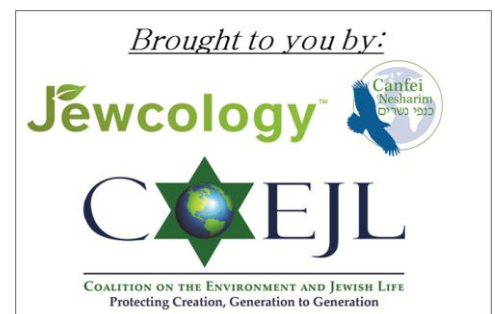


Year of Engagement: How to Turn Tu Bishvat into a Policy Engagement Opportunity

Tu Bishvat is a natural time for Jewish communities to come together to learn about the importance of protecting the environment. During this time, we can explore how much we appreciate our earth, and consider personal and communal actions that we can take to make a difference. But Tu Bishvat is also an ideal time to take the next step by connecting Jewish environmental values with advocacy in support of sustainable energy policies.

Here's how you can do it.

1. **Plan a Tu Bishvat program:** Tu Bishvat 2014 is on January 15-16. Are you planning an activity to celebrate? It can be a Seder with friends or a simple Torah teaching at synagogue. For activities to organize and lessons to share, explore [Canfei Nesharim](#), [Jewcology](#) or [COEJL](#)'s Tu Bishvat materials.
2. **Tu B'shvat and climate change:** Use the opportunity to spread awareness about one of the most critical challenges of our time, climate change. If speaking about climate change is difficult in your community, consider framing the conversation around sustainable energy as a national security or public health issue. You can also teach about Jewish laws to protect energy. [Here are some talking points which may help you.](#)
3. **Incorporate engagement:** At the event, explain the importance of taking our action to the next level by sharing our commitments and values with our elected representatives. Tell participants you will be sending a picture of the group with a short note.
4. **Take a picture:** Take a picture of the group which can be transferred to a computer.
5. **Look up your representatives:** You can find your elected representatives by entering your zip code at <http://engage.jewishpublicaffairs.org/getLocal.jsp>. Make a note of their addresses and contact information for now and the future.
6. **Prepare your letter:** Download the [Tu Bishvat Letter Template](#), add your photograph, and customize for your community and your event. A [completed example](#) is also available. Be creative! Create versions for both of your senators, your congressional representative, and your state and local representatives.
7. **Mail your letter:** Address your letter to the LOCAL offices of your representatives. (Letters sent to the Washington, D.C. office may take a long time to arrive, and of course, you want your letter to arrive soon after Tu Bishvat!) Use your own address as a return address so that you will receive the official response.
8. **Post on social media:** Once your letter is ready, post a picture of it on Twitter! Use the hashtag #2014engage. This will help get the word out about our campaign.
9. **Share your success!** When your representative responds to your letter, consider sharing a copy with your community via email or by posting it on a community bulletin board.
10. **You're done... for now!** Stay tuned for more opportunities in the Year of Engagement!



**If you are not part of a community, or your community is not hosting an event, you can still mail a personal letter to your representatives from yourself or your family! Just customize the template for your needs.*