



# True Joy Through Water: Appreciate Water This Sukkos and Shemini Atzeres

## Children's Activity #1: L'Mayim!

### Intended audience:

Children up to 12 years old.

### What to Provide:

Water to drink- preferably in reusable cups.

### Have participants sit in a circle and share the following with them:

"All the streams flow to the sea yet the sea is never full. From the place in which water comes, there it returns."  
(Koheles 1:7)

*Explain that the above is an interesting quote from Koheles (Ecclesiastes), one of the books in the Tanach which is read on Sukkos. Ask participants: What do you think this passage means?*

*If the participants are very young or if they are having trouble understanding the quote, have them close their eyes and picture many streams of water flowing in to a sea which never fills up.*

*Ask them: How this is possible?*

*Ask them: If there is so much water in this world and the lakes and rivers and seas keep filling up, then why do we have to worry about saving water? The answer may be found by asking them the following: What have you poured down the sink lately? (eg. Paints from paintbrushes, cleaning detergents if they have washed the dishes.)*

*Where does water go when it goes down the drain? What do you think happens to the things – paints and detergents— that are in the water? (Some of them get broken down and returned to the land, but a lot of them can damage the next species [animals, plants] that the water goes to.)*

*Answer: we need to save water because when we use water, we often pollute it and cleaning it up again is a very hard job for human beings. It's easier for humans to clean up the water that we pollute if we don't waste it and keep it as clean as we can.*

*Explain that all the water that we drink or bathe in or swim in is the very same water that Hashem put on the earth during the seven days of creation when he separated the waters of the heaven from the waters of the earth. Just imagine! The water we drink is the same water that flowed through the Nile River that Moshe was rescued from! It's the same water that was split when the Jews crossed the Yam Suf.*

*Give each participant a cup of water but tell them not to drink it yet. Go around the circle and have each participant raise their glass in a toast and say 'l'mayim!' to one time in the Jewish people relied on water. If participants can't name an incident from Tanach, help them think of one or have them make a toast to mayim for a time that it affected them personally. When everyone has had a chance to share, make a bracha on the water and let the students enjoy their drinks.*

*Make sure they remember their toast so that they can repeat it later on in a presentation to the parents as part of the Simchas Beis Hashoeva party. Have one participant introduce why they are making a l'mayim, and then lead the parents in a big l'mayim too!*





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### Children's Activity # 2 - Torah, Math, and the Environment

#### Intended audience:

Children 7 and up.

#### What to Provide:

1 large bucket filled with water

1 large empty bucket

One large glass or clear plastic cup or jar (at least 1/3 quart capacity).

One common plastic washing cup (32 oz.) or, preferably, a metal cup of about the same size.

#### Share the following with the participants:

In the Simchas Beis Hashoeva during the time of the Beis Hamikdash, many Jews, led by a Cohen, would walk together to the banks of the Shiloach, a spring that runs outside of the Old City. They would collect what the Torah calls 3 “log” of water from the spring and then they would all walk back together to the Beis Hamikdash where the water was poured over the altar. It was a very fun time because the Leviim would sing and play instruments and everyone else would dance and have a great time.

The cup that the Cohen used to collect the water was made of gold and it probably had handles on it—just like a washing cup! In fact, it probably was about as big as the washing cups we use today.

You may want to act out this process with the students. Appoint one as the Cohen and a few as Levi'im. Have the Cohen lead the rest of the participants to the water bucket while holding the washing cup (take a long route around the room) while the Levi'im sing and clap to 'shavtem mayim besason' or 'mitzvah gedolah lihiyot beshimcha.' Of course, everyone is welcome to join in.

Let's say that 3 logs equals a quart of water. (Actually, it is 18 eggs.)

*1 quart = approx. 2 logs*

*1 log = approx. 1/2 quart*

*Show the participants how much water is one log by filling a washing cup to 1/2 capacity from one of the buckets and pouring it in to a smaller (preferably transparent) container. Show the participants how much water is one quart by filling up a washing cup and showing them that it is full. When you have poured both the full and half washing cup, you will have poured approximately 3 logim.*

Pouring the water over the altar used to remind the Jews to pray for rain in the winter that is coming. (Just like we say Tefilas Hageshem nowadays during Succos.) Rain in Israel is very precious because there are not a lot of big lakes like in the United States or Canada to provide water for drinking and watering the farms. So Jews in the time of the Beis Hamikdash knew how important it was to save water. Do you pay attention to how much water you waste?



Let's see if you can guess how many washing cups full of water it takes us to do the following day-to-day things.

(With older students you may want to ask them how many LOGS of water it takes to do these things—then let them do the math to figure out how many washing cups worth of water it would take.)

Activity	Quarts	Logs
Flushing a toilet	20	40
Washing dishes	52	104
Taking a shower – 5 mins	100	200
Taking a bath	148	296
Washing the car	Between 80 and 120	Btwn 160 and 240
Doing Laundry	Between 76 and 180	Btwn 152 and 360

Isn't it amazing how much water we use for our day-to-day activities? In fact, the average American uses nearly 243 gallons (972 quarts or 1944 logim) of water every day! But our water resources are limited and we have to share them with the rest of the world.

Water is a precious gift from Hashem, and we can show our appreciation by safeguarding its use and preventing waste. The mitzvah of Bal Taschis (do not destroy) calls us to use our resources wisely.

*Anyone who smashes household goods, tears clothing, demolishes a building, stops up a spring, or wastes articles of food in a destructive manner, is in violation of the command "you shall not destroy"... (Maimonides, Mishneh Torah, Laws of Kings, Ch. 6 Laws 8-10)*

And Rabbi Shimshon Raphael Hirsch writes in Horeb, 279-80: "Do not destroy anything" is the first and most general call of God, which comes to you, man...God's call proclaims "only if you use the things around you for wise human purposes...do you have the right over them which I have given you. As soon as you use them unwisely, be it the greatest or smallest, you commit treachery against My world, you commit murder and robbery against My property, you sin against Me."

### What can I do?

- Turn off the faucet! Don't let it run between washing for netilas yadayim, while brushing your teeth, or while lathering dishes.
- Ask your parents to buy sustainable seafood.<sup>1</sup>
- Tell your parents to use non-toxic cleaning alternatives and to take unwanted household chemicals to hazardous waste collection centers; do not pour them down the drain.
- Eat less beef.<sup>2</sup>
- Don't buy a lot of bottled water to drink in your house (every once in a while, when you are out, is OK). If your parents feel that your drinking water is not safe, ask them to filter your water.
- Take the Canfei Nesharim stickers and hang them up in your house to remind you to save water.

<sup>1</sup> Learn more at [www.oceansalive.com](http://www.oceansalive.com)

<sup>2</sup> Red meat is responsible for 3 times the water use and more than 12 times the land use than poultry. Together, waste from meat and poultry is responsible for 20% of all the common water pollution in our society. (*Guide to Consumer Choices*, UCS)



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## Children's Activity #3 - Water Conservation Signs

### Intended audience:

Children 12 and under (young children)

### What to Provide:

- Old magazines and newspapers
- Crayons and/or markers
- Glue
- Scissors
- Tape
- Construction paper or reused (scrap) cardboard
- Hole punch
- String or yarn
- Any other 'crafts' materials such as glitter, tissue paper, etc.
- *Optional:*
  - Sponges
  - Bowls with water
  - Water sign templates (included), photocopied.
  - Laminator

### Introduce the activity as follows:

Every single day, every single one of us uses more water than we absolutely need to.

Ask participants- what do you use water for?

*(For younger participants, it might help them to ask them where water is used room by room in their house or shul. Don't forget about things like watering plants or housecleaning.)*

Ask participants to volunteer some ways to reduce the water that they use.

*[Some ideas include: Turning off water when brushing teeth, taking shorter showers, using water from cooking pasta or potatoes to water plants (once it cools down), scrubbing dishes with the water off watering lawns in the evening instead of the middle of the day, going to a carwash instead of washing the car at home, keeping water in the fridge instead of letting the water run to let it cool off.]*

Explain that they will be making signs to hang in the house and yard to remind their family and visitors to conserve water. They may use the templates provided.

By making these signs, they will be participating in the mitzvah of **bal tashchis**, which is the law against wasting in TWO WAYS:

1. They will encourage people not to waste water.
2. They will be reusing old materials that would otherwise get recycled or go in the trash. Recycling is a great thing to do but it ALSO uses water, so reusing is better.



By saving water, we are also making this world a healthier place to live. This may count towards the mitzvah of **shmiras haguf** – the mitzvah of keeping oneself healthy.

Also, it is especially important for Jews to save water on Sukkos because it is the holiday on which we pray to Hashem for rain. Wouldn't it be a chutzpah to pray for rain and then just throw it down the drain?

When signs are finished, punch two holes near the top and tie yarn through the holes to make the signs ready to hang.

**Optional:** Laminate the finished artwork.

\* If there is no laminator available, another option is to 'podge' or 'decoupage' the finished pieces. Put about 2 parts water to 1 part glue in a bowl and mix well. Dip a sponge in the mixture and brush it over the finished art. **Beware:** colors from markers or tissue paper art may run when coated with decoupage mixture. In these cases, use less water and more glue.

*Sample Water Conservation Signs*

Dishwashing tips:

1. First soak (in soapy water)
2. Then scrub (*don't turn on the tap yet!*)
3. Then rinse (under a slow running tap)



*Water is precious....*

**DON'T LET IT RUN AWAY**

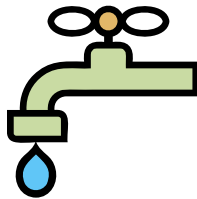
*....turn off the tap when you are not  
using it.*

**You earned this water from Hashem.**



**Don't throw it down the drain!**

Have YOU conserved water today?



*This one.*

*And this one.*

*And yes, this one too.*

*Also this one.*

**Every drop counts. Don't waste even one.**

*In the shower I sing!  
It's a beautiful thing!  
But I don't sing for long...  
One shower per song!*