

Lesson Plan for the First Grade – Holiday ID Card:

The plan deals with the Shavuot holiday—its various aspects, names and customs—through songs and pictures.

1. Holiday ID card: Holiday characteristics, precepts and customs
2. Names of the holiday and their meanings: Explanation of the different names of the holiday and reference to them in pictures.
3. Songs and stories

1. Shavuot ID card

Name of the holiday: Shavuot

Additional names: Harvest Festival, First Fruits (*bikkurim*) Festival, Holiday of the Giving of the Torah, Festival of Fifty (Jubilee).

Date: Sixth of Sivan.

Reason for the holiday, event: Beginning of the wheat harvest; commandment of pilgrimage and bringing first fruits of wheat to the Temple.

The giving of the law at Mt. Sinai: according to tradition, this was the day on which the Torah was given to the people of Israel.

Figures: Ruth the Moabitess – Naomi's daughter-in-law returns from Moab with her, although she is not obligated. She assists in redeeming the land of Naomi's family, King David's great grandmother; **Naomi** – widow of Elimelech of Bethlehem; mother-in-law of Ruth who is returning to Judea. With the help of Ruth and Boaz, she redeems her family's land, and produces an heir to the family. **Boaz** – takes Ruth as a wife, takes Naomi under his patronage and redeems the family's land; King David's great grandfather.





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Holiday precepts (*mitzvot*):

- Day of rest;

In the Temple period,

- Pilgrimage
- Sacrifice and two breads
- Beginning of bringing the *bikkurim*

Holiday customs

- Warnings (*Azharot*): Special hymns for the holiday, dealing mainly with the 613 commandments (*mitzvot*).
- Akdamut: A hymn in Aramaic recited before reading the Torah on Shavuot. (Ashkenazi)
- Bringing of the Bikkurim (First Fruits) In the cooperative-rural settlement in Israel, the custom of bringing the *bikkurim* (first fruits) of agriculture (and subsequently industry too) has been renewed in an impressive ceremony. In the schools of the Zionist settlement as well, it was customary for each child to bring a basket of fruits and vegetables, its value donated to the Keren Kayemet LeYisrael (Jewish National Fund).
- Special loaves of challah for Shavuot: 'Mt. Sinai Cakes' – special *challot* with seven folds or seven layers, corresponding to the seven heavens through which G-d came down to give the Torah to Israel. In certain ethnic groups, it was customary to bake *challot* in the shape of a ladder, the two tablets, etc.
- Greenery for Shavuot: It is customary to decorate the floor of synagogues and homes with greenery, branches and flowers. This custom has several possible reasons: Remembrance of the harvest festival. Remembrance of the giving of the Torah which was on the green mountain. Remembrance of the miracle performed for Moses in the reeds. Remembrance of the *midrash* in which the Torah was compared to a rose among the briars.
- Ketubah le-Shavuot (marriage certificate for Shavuot): It is customary to read a text of poetry or prose, as a symbolic betrothal of Israel and the Torah, or G-d and His people Israel, with the day of the giving of the Torah as the wedding day. (Sephardic)





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- **Dairy and cheese products**: On Shavuot it is customary to eat dairy and cheese products. This custom has several explanations:
 - In the Song of Songs the Torah is compared to honey and milk: “Your lips drop sweetness as the honeycomb, my bride; milk and honey are under your tongue.” (Song of Songs 4:11).
 - Remembrance of the milk Moses was fed from the breasts of a Hebrew woman.
 - As it is said: On the day of first fruits, when you present to the Lord an offering of new grain during the Festival of Weeks (Numbers 28), verse initials constitute Hebrew acronym “of milk”.
 - At the giving of the Torah, the people of Israel were commanded to eat kosher meat; however, they did not have kosher vessels so they ate dairy products.
 - In gematria (numerical value of Hebrew word) milk equals forty, as against the forty days and forty nights Moses spent on Mt. Sinai.
- **The Book of Ruth**: It is customary to read the Book of Ruth from parchment in the synagogue, before reading the Torah. Why is the Book read on Shavuot?
 - The story of the Book of Ruth takes place during the harvest.
 - According to tradition, King David, whose genealogy the Book deals with, was born and died on this day.
 - The Book of Ruth is also considered the ‘book of foreigners’, since Israel were converted on the day of the giving of the Torah.
- **Salvation water**: A custom of North African Jews brought to Israel, to pour water on every passerby.
- **The Ten Commandments**: It is customary to read the Ten Commandments in public as part of the prayer, in remembrance of the practice that existed in the Temple.
- **The Seven Species**: Seven types of fruit that the Land of Israel is blessed with: “From which the people were commanded to bring first fruits of to the Temple”, and one of the symbols of the holiday renewed since the beginning of Zionism.
- Doilies made from paper cutouts customarily pasted on windows of homes, especially in honor of Shavuot. They include decorative cutouts and symbols of the holiday.





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- Two dishes: It is customary to eat two dishes: One dairy and later on one meat, in remembrance of the Passover sacrifice and the celebration sacrifice. Each dish has its own bread, as against the two loaves of bread sacrificed on the *Bikkurim* festival.
- Tikkun Leil Shavuot (Service of the Night of Shavuot): Mishmara (Sephardic version): It is customary not to sleep but rather engage in study on the night of the holiday. The traditional *Tikkun* includes sections from the Torah as well as the oral law and texts from the Kabbalah. The custom appears in the Zohar as the custom of 'opening the heavens' to receive the Torah anew. It was renewed by the ARI and has since become widespread. In recent years, it is customary to observe *Tikkun Leil Shavuot (Service of the Night of Shavuot)* with free content, as a night devoted to study.



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2. Names of the Holiday

The names of the holidays are explained in the following; students may be asked to explain each name.

<u>Name</u>	<u>Explanation</u>
Shavuot Festival	The holiday is celebrated seven weeks from Passover and the beginning of the Omer, and concludes the period of counting the Omer.
Festival of the Harvest	Beginning of the wheat harvest and bringing the first fruits of wheat to the Temple.
Festival of the <i>Bikkurim</i> (First Fruits)	From this time on, the Seven Species begin ripening and the bringing of the <i>Bikkurim</i> (First Fruits) begins. In the Zionist era, the ceremony of bringing the <i>bikkurim</i> is the main theme of the holiday.
Giving of the Torah	According to tradition, this is the time of the giving of the law at Mt. Sinai, and giving of the Ten Commandments.
Assembly (<i>Atzeret</i>)	Gathering of the pilgrimage for bringing the <i>bikkurim</i> ; the holiday also stops (<i>otzer</i> , derived from <i>Atzeret</i>) the counting of the Omer.
Fiftieth Year Holiday / Jubilee	Fifty days are counted from Passover. The counting of seven weeks corresponds to seven years of <i>shmita</i> (sabbatical year), with the Jubilee year at the end.
Time, occasion (<i>regel</i>)	Each of the three pilgrimage festivals (<i>Sukkot</i> , <i>Passover</i> , or <i>Shavuot</i>)





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Matching pictures to names of the holiday

Which name (there can be more than one) of the holiday matches each picture?





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3. Songs

- In the following songs, find words associated with the holiday.
- To which names of the holiday does the song correspond to?

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks (Shavuot)

Lyrics: traditional

Music: Yedidya Admon

And thou shalt observe the feast of weeks (Shavuot)
of the first fruits of wheat harvest.

Those who plant in tears
will harvest with songs of joy.

Then shall the earth yield her increase
A land flowing with milk and honey.

Our Baskets

Our baskets on our shoulders
our heads adorned with blooms
from every corner we come
bringing the first fruits.

From Judea, from Judea and Samaria,
from the valley and the Galilee,
Move aside and make way,
we're bringing first fruits;
bang, bang the drum; play the flute.





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Our barns are full of grain

Lyrics: P. Elad / Music: D. Zehavi

Our barns are full of grain
Our homes are humming with babies
Our livestock is fertile
What more would you ask of us, our homeland,
that is still lacking.

Shibolim (Sheaves)

Lyrics: M. Kashtan

Music: C. Aldema

Sharp, sharper than a sword (2)
My scythe will not stop
Until evening falls (2)
Golden sheaves we shall reap.

Shibolim shibolim shibolim
Bundles of grain we'll bring to the threshing floor
And amass grain in the barn
Shibolim shibolim shibolim

Who by car? Who on foot?

Who by car? Who on foot?
Who will march in formation?
Who will lead with the flag?
Who will beat the drum?





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Beat the drum, clash the cymbals!
Play the triangle, and the chimes,
We shall ascend to Jerusalem
where we will dance all night.

Bikkurim

Lyrics: Shmuel Bass

Here I have brought the fruit of my garden,
A full basket in all its splendor.
First fruits I have brought
And worn a wreath on my head
La-la-la

From the village to the city
A shepherd's son leads a lamb and a kid,
Singing his songs aloud

Diddle, diddle, diddle-dee
La-la-la

A farmer's son from the fruits of his garden
brings figs and pomegranates.
And in a basket on his shoulder
a pair of doves call
Coo-coo-coo



Torah and Merchandise

This is the story of a sage who traveled by ship, on which there were merchants with their merchandise. Over the course of the journey, the merchants would discuss their matters and show each other their merchandise. The sage would sit on the side in silence. The merchants asked him: Where is your merchandise?

And He said: It is with me.

The merchants searched the entire ship but could not find his merchandise. They began mocking the sage, whose merchandise could not be seen and did not take up space. And the sage just sat in silence.

While approaching the shore, pirates raided the ship and robbed everything on it. The merchants went ashore destitute and impoverished, like poor men begging. The sage went to the Beit Midrash (place of Torah study) and began speaking words of Torah. The people in the Beit Midrash saw how much knowledge he had, and honored him greatly. Before long, they appointed him as their rabbi. The merchants then realized what merchandise the sage had, that it was not visible nor did it take up space; hence, it could be taken from him.

The merchants approached the sage and told him: Please forgive us for ridiculing you. Now we realize: Your merchandise is better than ours was. Ours was lost and yours still exists. Ours was taken from us and we have nothing left, whereas you give yours away freely; yet you do not lack any of it.