

Multiple Ways to Be Joyful

Dr. Howard Gardner's Theory of Multiple Intelligences suggests that learners approach content through a variety of modalities. Gardner asserts that the realization of different approaches to learning should empower learners to explore the world through multiple avenues. Use the following activities to celebrate Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah in a variety of ways.



Logical / Mathematical

- Leaf Counter**—Count the leaves on the *hadas* among the *arba minim*. Then count the leaves on the *aravot*. Which one has more leaves on an individual branch? Which one has more leaves total on all the branches in the bunch? Bonus points for figuring out which one's leaves cover the most surface area.
- Measure for Measure**—The Mishnah describes the measurement of a *sukkah* in *amot* (cubits), which is the measure from one's middle fingertip to one's elbow. Measure your *sukkah* (or your community's *sukkah*) in *amot* with your own forearm. Have a friend or family member do the same and compare measurements. What other methods of measuring can you come up with? (Look up the smoot if you need inspiration.)
- Hop, Hop, Hop**—Many communities have a tradition to organize a *sukkah* hop in which community members go from one *sukkah* to another for treats of varying types. Get involved in a community *sukkah* hop and create a map of the *sukkot* in your community. *Sukkah* hoppers can use the map to navigate.

While focusing on the themes and actions of Sukkot and Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah, it might helpful to be familiar with the following words and phrases:

אַרְבַּעַת הַמִּינִים	<i>Arba'at Haminim (often referred to as the Arba Minim)</i>	The four species waved on Sukkot
לוּלָב	<i>Lulav</i>	Palm Frond (one of the <i>arba minim</i>)
אֶתְרוֹג	<i>Etrog</i>	Citron (one of the <i>arba minim</i>)
הַדָּס/הַדָּסִים	<i>Hadas/Hadasim</i>	Myrtle (one of the <i>arba minim</i>)
עֲרַבָּה/עֲרַבוֹת	<i>Aravah/Aravot</i>	Willow (one of the <i>arba minim</i>)
סְכָךְ	<i>S'chach</i>	The covering of a <i>sukkah</i>
סוּפֵר	<i>Sofer</i>	A scribe who writes <i>Sifrei Torah</i> and other sacred objects
סֵפֶר תּוֹרָה/סִפְרֵי תּוֹרָה	<i>Sefer Torah/Sifrei Torah</i>	Torah Scroll/Torah Scrolls
הַקָּפָּה/הַקָּפוֹת	<i>Hakafah/Hakafot</i>	The dancing circuits done with the Torah on Simchat Torah

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- **And Another and Another**—According to the Torah (Numbers 29:13 – 38), offerings of bulls, rams, and lambs were made on Sukkot in addition to the offerings that were made on a daily basis. How many additional bulls, rams, and lambs were offered in total? What do you notice about the number of bulls offered each day?
- **Rain, Rain, Come Today**—Analyze the monthly Jerusalem rainfall pattern. When is the rainy season? When is the dry season? Based on the rainfall pattern, why do you think the [Prayer for Rain](#) is said on Shemini Atzeret?



Verbal / Linguistic

- **You Are Welcome**—While there is a mystic tradition to welcome Biblical guests into the sukkah, there is also a custom to welcome actual living guests as well. Try welcoming guests in Hebrew—הַבָּאִים הַבְּרוּכִים—and [ASL](#). How many other ways can you say “Welcome”?
- **Story Time**—Tell a Sukkot story. Make up your own or find a fun classic. Need some help finding one, check out some examples [here](#).
- **Read Aloud**—To prepare to read from the Torah, many *ba’alei korei* (Torah readers) use a *tikkun*, which has the Hebrew with vowels on one side of the page and the Hebrew without vowels on the other side of the page. Find the first paragraph of the *Shema* in a *tikkun* (Deuteronomy 6:4 – 9). Compare how the words look in the different forms. After you look at the vowel side, try reading from the non-vowel side. If you can, try reading from an actual *Sefer Torah*.
- **Write On**—Try your hand at [being a sofer](#). Practice writing in Hebrew in the style of the Torah. If you can, use the tools of a *sofer*—a quill, black ink, and parchment.
- **Is It the Beginning or the End?**—On Simchat Torah, communities around the world complete a cycle of reading the Torah and then begin reading it again. Engage in a debate about whether it is better to finish reading the Torah or to begin reading the Torah.



Visual / Spatial

- **The Body in Four Species**—The *arba minim* are said to represent different parts of the body (spine, heart, lips, eyes). Find images of the *arba minim* and use them to create a portrait. Use the [art of Hanoch Piven](#) as inspiration for your own creation.
- **High Scroller**—Celebrate the Torah through art. Make a [Bottle Cap Torah](#) or an [Origami Torah](#). Add to the beauty of your (or your community’s) *sukkah* by decorating the *sukkah* with your creation.

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- **Picture Book**—*Sukkot* come in different shapes and sizes. Make a photo journal or a collage of different *sukkot*. You can find examples online or, with permission, you can take your own photos of *sukkot* in your community.
- **Stick It**—In preparation for the prayer for rain, which is traditionally said on Shemini Atzeret, make a rain stick. How many different rain sounds can you make with it?



Musical / Rhythmic

- **Tool Symphony**—Hammers, saws, and screwdrivers are just a few of the tools that might be used to build a *sukkah*. Each one has its own musical properties as well. Get together with family and/or friends and create music with tools. Younger participants can use plastic tools.
- **Collect Samples**—The sounds that echo through a *sukkah* can depend on whether the *sukkah* sits in an urban or a more rural locale. Record samples of the outdoor sounds you hear and use them to compose a Sukkot song.
- **Song Circles**—The joy of Simchat Torah is often expressed through song. Often seven themes are chosen, and songs are sung that correspond to each theme (e.g. songs about the Torah, songs for kids, songs about the land of Israel). Come up with seven Simchat Torah-related themes and create your own short playlist for each theme. Share playlists with friends and family and sing out loud as you celebrate.



Body / Kinesthetic

- **Build It Up**—Build a *sukkah*. If you do not have a *sukkah* at home, volunteer to help build your community's *sukkah*. If no *sukkah* is available to build, try creating a model that takes into account the different requirements for a *sukkah*. Make sure it has at least two and half walls and that its roof is made of something that grows from the ground.
- **Shake, Shake, Shake Your Lulav**—Wave the *arba minim*. Hold the lulav and etrog in separate hands. [Say the berachah \(blessing\)](#). Hold the lulav and etrog together. Then, wave them in each of six directions—east, south, west, north, up, down.
- **Feel the Breeze**—While the *sukkah* is meant to be a dwelling, it can feel as though one is outside while sitting in the *sukkah*. While eating a meal in the *sukkah*, notice how it feels to be in the elements. How does having a breeze blowing through your dwelling feel as you eat?
- **Dance the Night and Day Away**—It is a custom in many places to take all the *Sifrei Torah* out of the *aron* (ark) and do seven *hakafot* with them on Simchat Torah. While there is no obligation to dance while doing *hakafot*, enhance the joy of the day by dancing with the Torah. If you are in a place without Torah scrolls, just dance in celebration of the joy of Torah.

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Naturalistic

- **A Roof Over One's Head**—While a *sukkah's* walls can be made from just about anything, the roof must be made from *s'chach*. [Explore](#) what *s'chach* can and cannot come from and why it is important that it is the only roofing option for a *sukkah*.
- **Harvest Time**—Sukkot is also called *Hag ha'Asif*, which is understood to mean either the Festival of Ingathering or the Harvest Festival. Go harvesting. If you have your own garden, pick some vegetables and herbs to enjoy at your Sukkot table. If you do not have your own, find a local farm or orchard that lets you pick your own produce.
- **Does It Pass the Smell Test?**—Do a smell test of the *arba minim*. (Remember, do not do a taste test.) How are their odors similar and different? Which is strongest? Which is weakest? After completing your experiment, see what the [Sages had to say](#) about what the different characteristics of the *arba minim* represent.
- **Full Moon Fever**—Sukkot starts on the night of the 15th of Tishrei. Look at the night sky and observe what kind of moon is there. (Hint: It is pretty big.) Follow the phases of the moon over the course of the holiday through Shemini Atzeret/Simchat Torah. How does the amount of light from the moon at the end of the holiday compare to the amount of light at the beginning of Sukkot?
- **What Do You Make of That?**—A *Sefer Torah* (Torah scroll) must be made from particular materials. Go on a virtual scavenger hunt and discover what wood is used for the *atzei hayim* (the wooden handles) and what type of parchment is used for the scroll itself.



Interpersonal

- **A Festival of Guests**—There is a mystic tradition to invite *Ushpizin* (Biblical guests) into the *sukkah*. Invite your own flesh-and-bone guests into your *sukkah*. If you do not have a *sukkah*, go to a community *sukkah*. Discuss which Biblical figures you would most like to share a Sukkot meal with. Which other inspirational figures would you like to invite?
- **Shelter Me**—The *sukkah* is a temporary dwelling that forces those who dwell in it to move from the comforts of their regular homes. Many people need to move dwellings on a regular basis because they cannot afford a permanent residence. Seek out local organizations that support these people and explore how you can help to give your own support.
- **A Roof Over Their Heads**—Since *s'chach* must come from natural sources, the *s'chach* in one place can be very different from the *s'chach* in other places. Explore what people in other places use to cover their *sukkot*. Which people do you think are best protected by their *s'chach*? Which people have the most beautiful *s'chach*?

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- **Please Don't Rain Over Me**—There is a discussion among the Sages about the appropriate time to begin saying the prayer for rain. While it is generally agreed that it should be said at the beginning of Sukkot, there is also consensus that it should not be said until Shemini Atzeret (the end of Sukkot) lest the people who were traveling back from Jerusalem get caught in a major storm. Channel that concern for others and come up with three ideas of things that you can do for other people.



Intrapersonal

- **At One with Nature**—With Sukkot being a holiday centered around the harvest and nature, take the opportunity to consider your own place among the rest of the creations on earth. What can you do to further the dictate in the Torah to take care of the earth?
- **Getting Better All the Time**—While Yom Kippur is the Day of Atonement, many sources explain that *teshuvah* (repentance) can be done through *Hoshanah Rabbah* at the end of Sukkot. What do you have left to work on? Make a plan to improve and chart your progress over the course of the year.
- **Get to the Heart of the Matter**—Simchat Torah celebrates the ending and the beginning of reading the Torah. The last letter of the Torah is a “ל” (*lamed*) while the first letter of the Torah is a “ב” (*bet*). Together the two letters form the word “לב” (*lev*, heart). Record what is in your heart by writing in a journal, creating a piece of art, or another preferred method.



Existential

- **Clouded Judgement**—According to some commentaries, the *sukkot* mentioned in the Torah were really *ananei kavod* (clouds of glory) that protected *B'nei Yisrael* (the Israelites) as they traveled through the desert. Create a representation of your own interpretation of how it would look to be protected by a cloud.
- **Fantastic Journey**—Along with Passover and Shavuot, Sukkot is one of the *shalosh regalim* (three pilgrimage festivals) on which Jews would travel to celebrate in Jerusalem. Go on your own journey, whether it is to a faraway place or just around the block. As you travel, consider what it means to leave one's home for a communal experience.
- **Is Everybody Happy?**—According to the Torah, we will be *ach sameiach* on Sukkot. The 19th-century scholar Rabbi Samson Rafael Hirsch understands this phrase to mean “nothing but happy.” Discuss what it means to be nothing but happy. Should the end goal to be nothing but happy?