



POST-WORLD WAR II RESOURCES

Lesson Plans

Keeping Kosher

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Introduction

This lesson coordinates with the *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* component of the *Indiana Experience* at the Eugene and Marilyn Glick Indiana History Center.

In this experience, visitors are invited to step back in time to April 5, 1950, to visit the Kaplan family in their Union Street home a year after their re-settlement in Indianapolis from a post-World War II displaced-persons camp. The Kaplans, Jewish refugees from Poland, were making a new home and building a new life in Indianapolis after surviving the Nazi horrors in Europe. They resettled in Indianapolis with the help of Jewish Social Services, the Indianapolis Chapter of the National Council of Jewish Women, and the Indiana Refugee Service.

The curriculum is intended to provide historical context for life in Indiana in the postwar era and the Jewish community in Indianapolis. The lesson may be used to prepare students for a visit to *You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home* or it may be used as a follow-up to a visit. In addition, the historical context and themes will be relevant to classroom instruction even if a visit is not possible.

You Are There 1950: Making a Jewish Home opens on October 11, 2011, and will remain open through September 2012.

Overview/Description

In this lesson students will learn about Jewish dietary laws and the practice of keeping kosher, explore how this practice helps Jews connect their daily lives to their beliefs about God, and remember important events in Jewish history.

Learning/Instructional Objectives

Students will:

- be able to define the term kosher
- describe how keeping kosher honors Jewish dietary law
- cite the Kaplan family as an example of a Jewish American family who remained kosher
- analyze kosher menus and use graphic organizers to categorize information about the practice of keeping kosher

Grade Level

Intermediate/middle school (grades 6, 7, and 8) and high school

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Academic Standards for the Social Studies

- Indiana Standards
 - Grade 6
 - Social Studies 6.1.23—Form research questions and use a variety of information resources to obtain, evaluate, and present data on people, cultures, and developments in Europe and the Americas. (Individuals, Society and Culture)
 - Sociology
 - Sociology S.2.1—Define the key components of a culture, such as knowledge, language and communication, customs, values, norms, and physical objects. (Geography, History)
 - Sociology S.2.4—Give examples of subcultures and describe what makes them unique.
 - Sociology S.5.1—Identify basic social institutions and explain their impact on individuals, groups, and organizations within society and how they transmit the values of society.
 - Sociology S.5.7—Use various resources to interpret information about cultural life in the United States and other world cultures, both in the past and today. (History)
- National Standards (National Council for the Social Studies)
 - I Culture; IV Individual Development and Identity; V Individuals, Groups, and Institutions; and IX Global Connections

Social Studies/Historical Concepts

Judaism, American culture, Jewish religious customs, and kosher foods

Time Required

One class period

Materials Required

- Copies of the following image from the Indiana Historical Society collections. Refer to page seven of this lesson.
 - “Frania Kaplan in Her Kitchen in Indianapolis, 1950” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_C8449)
- Copies of the Cause and Effect Graphic Organizer. Refer to page eight of this lesson.
- Student journals
- Pens or pencils
- For the Suggested Modifications Activity
 - Copies of “Suggested Menus for the Sabbath and Holidays.” *Beth-El Cookbook*. (Indianapolis: Beth-El Sisterhood of the Beth-El Zedeck Congregation, 1949), 95. Refer to page nine of this lesson.

Background/Historical Context

The Torah (Jewish holy book) describes various mitzvahs, or commandments, that Jewish people are to follow. Sometimes there are no explanations describing why these rules or ways of living are necessary. However, following these laws helps Jewish people demonstrate their faith and show their trust and respect for God.

One mitzvot is that of kashrut. “Kashrut is the word commonly used to refer to the observance of the Jewish dietary laws. The word kosher literally means fit or proper, and describes those types of foods which Torah Law declares fit for us to eat as well as the way in which these permissible foods are to be prepared.”¹

While not all Jews choose to keep kosher, keeping kosher is a way of life for many observant and Orthodox Jews.

1. Esther S. Blau, ed., Lubavitch Women’s Organization, Junior Division. *The Spice and Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking* (Brooklyn, NY: Lubavitch Women’s Organization, 1977), 3.

- Strict rules for keeping kosher:²
 - Certain animals may not be eaten. This restriction includes the flesh, organs, eggs, and milk of the forbidden animals. Forbidden animals include pigs and all animals that do not have split hooves and chew their cud, shellfish, and birds of prey. The hindquarter of any animal is also not eaten.
 - Animals (birds and mammals) that may be eaten must be killed in accordance with Jewish law.
 - All blood must be drained from meat and poultry or boiled out of it before it is eaten to avoid its consumption.
 - Certain parts of permitted animals may not be consumed.
 - Fruits and vegetables are permitted, but must be checked for bugs (which may not be eaten).
 - Meat (the flesh of birds and mammals) cannot be eaten with dairy.
 - Fish, eggs, fruits, vegetables, and grains are considered pareve and can be eaten with either meat or dairy (according to some views, fish may not be eaten with meat).
 - Utensils (including pots, pans, and other cooking surfaces) that come into contact with meat may not be used with dairy, and vice versa. Utensils that come into contact with nonkosher food may not be used with kosher food. This applies only where the contact occurred while the food was hot.

2. Tracey R. Rich, “Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws,” Judaism 101, accessed September 10, 2011, <http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm>.

Teacher’s Instructional Plan

Introduction

- Begin the lesson by distributing copies of the image “Fanny Kaplan in her kitchen” to the students. Refer to page seven of this lesson.
- Without any explanation of the photo, allow students five to ten minutes to react to the photograph in a journal entry.
- After students are done writing, hold a think-aloud discussion in which students share their observations about and reactions to the photograph. Focus on the following guiding questions:
 - Describe the scene in the photograph. What do you see?
 - About what time period do you think the photo was taken? What specific evidence do you see in the photograph that makes you say that?
 - What is the woman in the photograph doing? Again, cite visual evidence for your answer.
 - What would you say is the significance of this scene? Why?
- Following the think-aloud discussion, share with the students that the woman in the photograph is Frania “Fanny” Kaplan.
 - The photo was taken in the spring of 1950 and was published in the *Jewish Chronicle* along with an article about the Kaplan family.
 - The Kaplans came to Indianapolis in 1949 as refugees from a displaced persons camp in Germany following World War II. Berek (Benny) Kaplan and Frania (Fanny) Kaplan were both Jews from Poland who survived the Holocaust.

- To learn more about the Kaplan family, have students read “The Kaplan Family Story.” Download the story at <http://www.indianahistory.org/teachers-students/teacher-resources/classroom-tools/post-world-war-two>.
- The Kaplans were Orthodox Jews who observed Jewish dietary laws. In other words, they kept kosher.
 - Ask students if anyone can define the terms mitzvah, kashrus, or kosher. If no student can volunteer the meanings of these terms, explain their meanings to the students.
 - A glossary is provided on page five of this lesson.
 - Write the basic rules for keeping kosher on the board or overhead projector.
- Explain that the concept of kashrus is a commandment for which there is no explanation given in the Torah.
 - Given this, and considering that to an outsider keeping a kosher kitchen seems like a complicated endeavor, ask students why some Jewish people might choose to keep kosher in a think-aloud discussion.

Procedure

- Ask students to react to the following quotations (you may wish to provide copies of these quotations so that students may read them carefully):
 - Throughout our 4000-year history, the observance of kosher has been a hallmark of Jewish identity. Perhaps more than any other “mitzvah,” the kosher laws emphasize that Judaism is much more than a “religion” in the conventional sense of the word. To the Jew, holiness is not confined to holy places and times outside the everyday; rather, life in its totality is a

sacred endeavor. Even the seemingly mundane activity of eating is a G_dly [*Godly*] act and a uniquely Jewish experience.³

- To understand how holiness or sanctification can be related to such physical activities as eating we must realize that the purpose of the Jew—given at Sinai—is to effect a transformation in this physical world itself, to purify it and make of it a place where G_dliness [*Godliness*] is revealed. . . . “Matter” and “spirit” are thus intertwined and interdependent, and everything we do affects and is affected by both. . . . The body, to fulfill its higher purpose and not merely satisfy those needs which it shares with all animals, must be an appropriate vessel. The Torah tells the Jew how to eat so that his body will be an instrument of the soul. . . . When a Jew eats kosher food exclusively he ensures that his body will be a more perfect vessel to receive the G_dly flow of life that is his inheritance as part of the totality of the Jewish people, and he ensures his own sensitivity to that G_dly flow.⁴
- Allow students to share their reactions to these quotations through another think aloud discussion. Focus on “keeping kosher” as a cause and the resulting attitudes/mindsets/ways in which it connects Jews to God as effects.
 - Have students record these effects in a cause and effect graphic organizer. Refer to page eight of this lesson for a template.

3. “What is Kosher?” Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center, accessed September 10, 2011, http://www.chabad.org/library/howto/wizard_cdo/aid/113425/jewish/What-is-Kosher.htm.

4. Lubavitch Women’s Organization, Junior Division, *The Spice and Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking*, (Brooklyn, NY: Lubavitch Women’s Organization, 1977), 4.

- Ask students to look once again at the photo of Fanny Kaplan in her kitchen. Armed with the information that the Kaplan kitchen was kosher, have students revisit the following question:
 - What would you say is the significance of this scene? Why?
- In addition, ask students to consider how a more significant meaning might be attached to keeping kosher in a household of Holocaust survivors.
 - As a Holocaust survivor, what particular meaning might it have for Fanny Kaplan to follow the mitzvot of kashrut?
- Finally, ask students to write a journal entry about a practice that they have or an action that they take which helps them to connect more closely with or demonstrate their beliefs. Perhaps a student who is an environmentalist participates in events to clean trash out of a local river. Or, perhaps a student who is concerned about discrimination makes a special effort to spend time with students from different races or ethnicities. In their journal entry, ask students to reflect on how this action both stems from and reinforces their beliefs and/or values.

Glossary

Mitzvot—A commandment issued to Jewish people in the Torah.

Kashrut—A word used to refer to the observance of Jewish dietary laws.

Kosher—A word that literally means “fit” or “proper.” It is used to describe foods allowed under Torah Law or the ways in which permissible foods are to be prepared.

Pareve—Foods that are not meat or dairy, or derivatives of them.

Assessment

The teacher may gauge prior knowledge on the subject of kashrut by noting student responses to defining this and other related terms. To gauge student learning the teacher may use subsequent discussion on the given quotations as well as discussion about the Kaplan’s practice of keeping kosher.

Suggested Modifications

To introduce the specific rules of keeping kosher, you might consider this additional activity.

- Prior to explaining the rules of kashrut to students (and in particular the rule that dairy and meat not be eaten together), give students copies of the suggested menus from the 1949 *Beth-El Cookbook*. Refer to page nine of this lesson.
- After defining the terms mitzvot, kashrut, kosher, and pareve for students, have students create a graphic organizer for each menu and classify each food as either dairy, meat, or pareve.
 - To do this, students may need to consult Jewish cookbooks from your local public library.
- Following this task, ask students to share their observations about these menus. Do any menus contain both meat foods and dairy foods?
- Contact a local synagogue to see if you might be able to speak to with someone in the congregation who keeps kosher.
 - Try to arrange for that person to visit the class, speak with students about the process of keeping kosher, and share their reasons for doing so.

Additional Resources

Publications

Ziegelman, Jane. *97 Orchard: An Edible History of Five Immigrant Families in One New York Tenement*. New York: Harper Paperbacks, 2011.

The author looks at five immigrant families and the foods they ate. The families are German, Italian, Irish, and Jewish (both Orthodox and Reform) from Russia and Germany, who are new Americans. Each family, sometime between 1863 and 1935, lived on Manhattan's Lower East Side. In particular, look at the chapters on the Gumpertz and Rogarshevsky families.

Blau, Esther S., ed. *The Spice and Spirit of Kosher-Jewish Cooking*. Brooklyn NY: Lubavitch Women's Organization—Junior Division, 1977.

Includes detailed explanations of the practices of kashrut as well as their meaning and purpose.

Web sites

“Kosher: A Guide to Eating Jewishly.” Chabad-Lubavitch Media Center. http://www.chabad.org/generic_cdo/aid/113424/jewish/Kosher.htm (accessed September 10, 2011).

A comprehensive Web resource on keeping kosher that includes videos, recipes, stories, and readings.

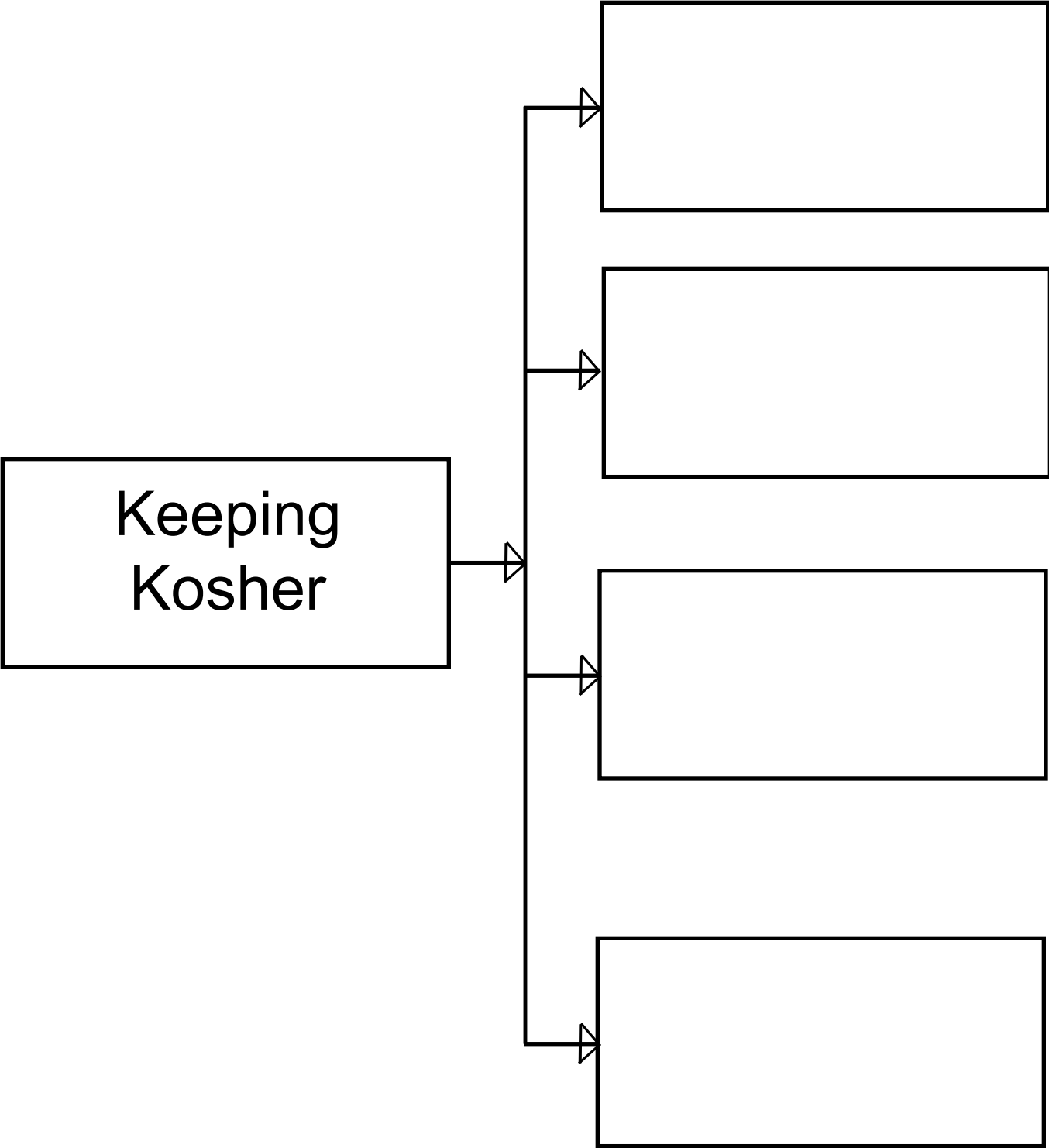
Rich, Tracey R. “Kashrut: Jewish Dietary Laws,” *Judaism* 101, <http://www.jewfaq.org/kashrut.htm> (accessed September 10, 2011).

A detailed explanation on the meaning of kashrut and links to sites with information about certified kosher products. The material provides answers to questions such as “Do all Jews keep kosher?”



“Frania Kaplan in Her Kitchen in Indianapolis, 1950” (Indiana Historical Society Digital Image Collections, Item ID M0463_C8449)

Cause and Effect Graphic Organizer



SUGGESTED MENUS FOR THE SABBATH AND HOLIDAYS

SABBATH:

Gefillte fish - horseradish	Vegetable
Chicken noodle soup	Salad
Roast or boiled chicken	Strudel or pie
Lokshen kugel	Tea

ROSH HASHANAH:

Gefillte fish	Vegetable
Chicken soup with farfel or mandlen	Salad
Roast duck or turkey	Mixed fruit compote
Tzimes	Honey Cake and Tea

YOM KIPPUR EVE:

Chicken soup with kreplach, very little seasoning	
Boiled chicken	Fruit compote
Tzimes	Sponge Cake and Tea

SUCCOTH:

Chopped liver or gefillte kraut	Tzimes
Chicken soup with noodles	Vegetable
Roast beef	Salad
Potato kugel	Apple torte and Tea

HANUKKAH:

Grapefruit sections	Vegetable
Roast duck or capon	Red cabbage salad
Potato lotkes, kugel or Varenikas	Heizenblozen and Tea

PURIM:

Fruit cup	Liver knishes	Salad
Veal Roast	Vegetable	Homantoshen and Tea

PASSOVER:

Gefillte fish - horseradish	Vegetable
Chicken soup with knadlech	Salad
Roast chicken	Nut sponge cake
Individual matzo meal potato kugel	Tea and Nuts

SHABUOT:

Fruit cup	Cheese kreplach or blintzes
Beet or spinach borsht with sour cream	
Gefillte fish - horseradish	Coffee

"Suggested Menus for the Sabbath and Holidays." *Beth-El Cookbook*. (Indianapolis: Beth-El Sisterhood of the Beth-El Zedeck Congregation, 1949), 95. Printed with permission.