

# Bal Taschit/Compost

Bal Taschit/Compost

Time to complete activities

5<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> Grade

~1 hr 45 min

\*Designed for a farm that has vegetables and chickens but pieces may be adapted\*

---

## Program Overview & Guiding Questions

This program is an introduction to the farm and the closed-systems way of thinking using compost as a lens to think about resource use. Participants will explore the thought behind these systems with the help of the Jewish concept Bal Taschit.

*Guiding Questions:*

1. What is waste?
  2. How do the different areas of the farm relate?
- 

## Goals:

1. Understand the idea of cycling nutrients by being able to explain the cycle of plant-food-compost-plant.
  2. Weed and then feed weeds to the chickens
- 

**Materials needed:** *Beet buddy walk cards, buckets*

---

## Session Plan:

(10 Min) Intro to Farm

Welcome students, have them place bags/lunches.

Establish attention getter

Say a bit about what we do and what they're going to do

-Jewish Community and Educational Farm (ask students how they think we do each)

-Jewish: Judaism informs our practices (give a few examples)

-Community: community involvement, community space and serving the community

-Educational: what we're doing today-also other examples

-Farm: What we produce, how and where does it go

Introduce theme of Bal Tashchit, a Jewish principle commanding us not to be wasteful. Ask for a few hands on how the farm might keep this practice.

Give quick rundown of the day

(10 Min) Game

Your favorite-something high energy and easy/quick to explain

**(10 min)** Weeding an area of the farm. Save weeds in a bucket to use for later!

(20-25 Min) Beet Buddy Walk(s)

**\*\*Set up buddy walk cards beforehand\*\***

Divide into groups of 9-12

Explain Buddy Walk (only 2 people at each station, stay on paths, take turns reading, walk don't run etc)

Those waiting to go have (a) paint chip(s) and need to find a perfect match

At the end, continue the story (either speaking or writing)

Sharings/Debrief, connecting back to Bal Taschit

(10-15 Min) Plant, Food, Compost (variation on Wah)

Use the example of one food (ex. apple) in a simplified nutrient cycle. Explain how plants grow food with nutrients they get in the soil. When leftover parts of the food become compost, the nutrients are again available to plants. (Optional: explain the broken nutrient cycle when leftovers are thrown in the trash and synthetic fertilizers are used).

Gather participants in a circle and explain and then play game

One person starts with the nutrients and throws it to another person (B) in the circle by yelling "Plant!" and pointing to (B) with their hands together.

(B), takes those nutrients to grow food by yelling "Food!" and pointing up with their hands together.

The people to the left and right of (B) compost the food and break it down by yelling "Compost!" and "chop" (B) at their stomach (clarify that there is no physical contact)

(B) now sends those nutrients to a new person by yelling "Plant" and pointing to a new person.

Continue at a steady rhythm.

Once students understand the rules, people can get out for physical contact, breaking the rhythm, failing to do the hand motions when pointed to or when next to someone yelling "Food, or saying the wrong thing, doing the wrong hand motion

(20+ Min) Systems/connections in the farm/Farm Tour

Can be done as a led-tour. If your site has good signage (or you put out good signage) this can be done as a scavenger hunt.

(10 Min) Feed the chickens

Students will now know that the chickens are fed weeds from the farm. Return to the area you weeded and bring the weeds to the chickens. As a student to explain the system.

(5-10 min) Closing/Reflection

Share special moments, favorite things

- What did you learn about composting?
- How can you waste less and reuse more at home? in school?

'Thank you's to chaperones, farm staff, teacher(s), students

Parting note: how to bring this home, how to come back to the farm

---

### **Anticipated Outcomes:**

Students will have a clearer sense of the nutrient cycle

Students will have engages in nutrient reuse by weeding and feeding the chickens

Students will understand the notion of Bal Tashchit as it applies on the farm and in our lives

---

**Materials:** Create your own Beet Buddy Walk cards! These are cards that tell the story of a beet (or any other plant) from seed to harvest to refrigerator to rot to compost to soil to plant.

\*Plant, Food, Compost also appears in the Amir Sourcebooks. This game was created by Jaclyn Kellner with the help of Stefanie Bugasch and Tamir Zausmer.

**Prepared by: Jaclyn Kellner, Community Educator, Coastal Roots Farm, Winter 2017**