



BNEI AKIVA
OF THE US AND CANADA

CHOVERET CHINUCH

Chodesh Iyar

Noseh: עצמאות Independence



Table of Contents

Introduction to the Noseh	Page 2
Peula #1: “Our Song”: Hatikva	Page 3-9
Peula #2: Fighting for Atzmaut, Together	Page 8-11
Peula #3: Mascots: Rabbi Akiva	Page 12-18

Chodesh Tov!

We're happy to introduce you to the Choveret Chinuch for Chodesh Iyar. This month we chose to focus on the theme of **Atzmaut, Jewish Independence**. The month of Iyar marks the anniversary of many events in Jewish history related to the theme of Atzmaut. These events include **Yom HaZikaron, Yom Haatzmaut, and Lag Baomer**. In this choveret, we will learn the about our national anthem, which reflects our independence in our land as well as learn about Hakamat HaMedina and the fight for Atzmaut. During Sefira we reflect of the failure of the Bar Kochva revolt against the Romans but we also celebrate Lag Baomer. Although the revolt did not ultimately succeed, we reflect on the bravery of the people who fought for a Jewish independence so many years ago. Lag Baomer is a day of celebration, most famously for the end of the deaths of Rabbi Akiva's students and the commemoration of Rabbi Shimon Bar Yochai's Yartzeit, who were both involved in the fight for Jewish independence. Lag Baomer also is close to home because it is also the anniversary of the founding of Bnei Akiva! In one of the peulot we will explore Rabbi Akiva's personality and his connection to Lag Baomer as well as why our movement is named after him.

It is important that you and your madrichim own these peulot as your own.

What we gave you is just the skeleton, if you do exactly what this page says- you will not run a successful Snif! Read the peulot, make edits, and add your own stories or favorite games! Mix and match- these peulot have many parts, you can take parts of a peula and move them to another or create new ones. At the end of this choveret you can find extra stories and ideas to add as you like. Feel free to run ideas by any of us!

Bivrakat Chevrei Torah v'Avodah,

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Choveret Chinuch Iyar 5778
Peula #1: “Our Song”: Hatikva
Written by Jen van Amerongen, Merakezet Chinuch BANA

Goal: This peula will introduce the idea that a song can represent different events or themes of our life and personality or a theme song for a TV show. A national anthem is supposed to do the same thing. This peula can also be used as an opportunity to teach the words and meaning of Yad Achim.

Materials: Before Shabbat, print cards with random words for the Song Challenge. Print page with songs. Print the lyrics for Hatikva and Yad Achim.

Trigger #1: Theme Song of Your Life

Play an “ice-breaker” game- Ask everyone, to get to know each other better, say your name and what song would be the theme song of your life and why.

- Would they use a song that has already been written?
Would anyone have to write a new song?
- What points of their lives do they think are the most important to highlight?

Trigger #2: TV Theme Songs

Hand each chanich/a the page with the TV theme songs and ask them to read them and consider the following questions:

- Which song do you like the best?
- Which song most accurately reflects the TV show?
- Does it accurately introduce the show or is it just a song?
- Which shows don’t have a theme song that fits?
- Why is a theme song important?

Game #1- Write a Song Challenge

- Split the chanichim into different groups and have each group choose 5 slips of paper with random words. Print enough slips of paper for each group.
- Each group has to write a song incorporating all of the words in their song
- Have the chanichim perform for everyone! It’ll be silly and cute!

Now turn the conversation to the national anthem:

- If you were to write an anthem for the State of Israel- what type of themes would you want to focus on? What “words”/ideas would you need to make sure to include?
- Read Hatikva and explain the words, make sure the chanichim understand.
- What does Hatikva mean to you?

<p><u>Spongebob</u> Are you ready kids "Aye Aye Captain" I Can't hear you "AYE AYE CAPTAIN" Ohh... Who lives in a pineapple under the sea "Spongebob squarepants" Absorbant and yellow and porous is he "Spongebob Squarepants" If nautical nonsense be something you wish "Spongebob Squarepants" Then drop on the deck and flop like a fish "Spongebob Squarepants" READY Spongebob squarepants Spongebob squarepants Spongebob squarepants</p>	<p><u>Arthur</u> Every day when you're Walking down the street, Everybody that you meet Has an original point of view. And I say - Hey! (Hey!) What a wonderful kind of day If we could learn to work and play And get along with each other.</p> <p>You gotta listen to your heart, Listen to the beat, Listen to the rhythm, The rhythm of the street. Open up your eyes. Open up your ears. Get together And make things better By working together.</p> <p>It's a simple message, And it comes from the heart. Believe in yourself, For that's the place to start.</p> <p>And I say - Hey! (Hey!) What a wonderful kind of day If we could learn to work and play And get along with each other.</p> <p>Hey! What a wonderful kind of day. Hey! What a wonderful kind of day. Hey!</p>	<p><u>Phineas and Ferb</u> There's 104 days of summer vacation And school comes along just to end it So the annual problem for our generation Is finding a good way to spend it</p> <p>Like maybe... Building a rocket Or fighting a mummy Or climbing up the Eiffel Tower</p> <p>Discovering something that doesn't exist (Hey!) Or giving a monkey a shower</p> <p>Surfing tidal waves Creating nanobots Or locating Frankenstein's brain (It's over here!)</p> <p>Finding a dodo bird Painting a continent Or driving your sister insane (Phineas!)</p> <p>As you can see There's a whole lot of stuff to do Before school starts this fall (Come on Perry)</p> <p>So stick with us 'cause Phineas and Ferb Are gonna do it all So stick with us 'cause Phineas and Ferb are Gonna do it all! (Mom! Phineas and Ferb are making a title sequence!)</p>
<p><u>Sesame Street</u> Sunny Day Sweepin' the clouds away On my way to where the air is sweet Can you tell me how to get? How to get to Sesame Street</p> <p>Come and play Everything's A-OK Friendly neighbors there That's where we meet Can you tell me how to get How to get to Sesame Street</p>	<p><u>Jessie</u> Oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh, oh Hey, Jessie! Hey, Jessie It feels like a party everyday Hey, Jessie! Hey, Jessie But they keep on pulling me every which way Hey, Jessie! Hey, Jessie My whole world is changing, turning around They got me going crazy Yeah, their shakin' the ground But they took a chance in the new girl in town And I don't want to let them down, down, down Hey, Jessie (Whoa) Hey, Jessie (Whoa) It feels like a party everyday Hey, hey, hey, hey, hey, Jessie</p>	<p><u>Austin and Ally</u> When the crowd wants more I bring on the thunder Cause you got my back and I'm not going under You're my point, you're my guard, you're the perfect chord And I see our names together on every billboard We're headed for the top, we got it on lock We'll make 'em say hey And we'll keep rockin' Ohh There's no way I could make it without you Do it without you Be here without you It's no fun when you're doin it solo With you it's like whoa Yeah and I know that I own this dream Cause I got you with me</p>

Hatikva Hebrew

כֹּל עוֹד בְּלֵבָב פְּנִימָה
נֶפֶשׁ יְהוּדֵי הוֹמִיָּה,
וּלְפָאֲתַי מִזְרָח, קַדִּימָה,
עַיִן לְצִיּוֹן צוֹפִיָּה,
עוֹד לֹא אֲבִדָּה תִקְוַתְנוּ,
הַתִּקְוָה בַּת שָׁנוֹת אֲלֵפִים,
לְהִיּוֹת עִם חֹפְשֵׁי בְּאֶרְצֵנוּ,
אֶרֶץ צִיּוֹן וִירוּשָׁלַיִם.

Hatikva Transliteration

Kol od balevav penimah,
Nefesh yehudi homiyah,
Ulefa-atei mizrach, kadimah,
Ayin letziyon tsofiyah.
Od lo avdah tikvateinu
Hatikva bat shnot alpayim,
Lihyot am chofshi be-artzeinu,
Eretz tzion, virushalayim.

Hatikva Translation

As long as in the heart within,
The Jewish soul yearns,
And toward the eastern edges, onward,
An eye gazes toward Zion.
Our hope is not yet lost,
The hope that is two-thousand years old,
To be a free nation in our land,
The Land of Zion, Jerusalem.

יד אחים	Yad Achim - Transliteration	Yad Achim - English Translation
<p>יד אחים לכם שלוחה הנוער החביב על דגלנו כולכם חנו מסביב יזהיר לכם כוכב תורה דרככם סוגה בעבודה</p>	<p>Yad Achim lachem shelucha hano'ar he'chaviv Al digleinu kulachem chanu misaviv Yazhir lachem kochav Torah Dar'kechem sugah ba'Avodah</p>	<p>A brotherly hand is stretched out to you, O beloved youth: Gather yourselves around our flag. The star of the Torah shall shine for you, Your path shall be one of labour.</p>
<p>בלב אמיץ ובעזרת ה' עלה נעלה קדימה בני עקיבא הידד במעלה</p>	<p>B'leiv amitz b'ezrat Hashem aloh na'aleh Kadimah Bnei Akiva heidad b'ma'aleh!</p>	<p>With a sturdy heart, with the help of God, we will go up Forward, Bnei Akiva, forward to the heights!</p>
<p>מולדת זו, ארץ אבות ארצנו הקדושה מידי אביר-יעקב לנו מורשה ראשינו בעמקי תורתה כפינו ברגבי אדמתה</p>	<p>Moledet zo eretz avot artzeinu hak'doshah Midei avir Ya'akov lanu morasha Rasheinu bi'imkei Toratah Kapeinu bir'gvei admatah</p>	<p>This homeland, the holy Land of our fathers, our heritage from the hand of the Mighty One of Jacob. Our minds are steeped in her Torah, Our hands are immersed in her soil.</p>
<p>בלב אמיץ ובעזרת ה' עלה נעלה קדימה בני עקיבא הידד במעלה</p>	<p>B'leiv amitz b'ezrat Hashem aloh na'aleh Kadimah Bnei Akiva heidad b'ma'aleh!</p>	<p>With a sturdy heart, with the help of God, we will go up Forward, Bnei Akiva, forward to the heights!</p>

Additional Information about Hatikva:

The history of the lyrics and melody, much as Israel, is complex, and told in slightly different ways depending upon the source. We do know the lyrics were adapted from the nine-stanza poem, “Tikvateynu” (“Our Hope”) written in 1877 by poet Naphtali Herz Imber (1856-1909) from Galicia, in the wake of the establishment of Petah Tikva, one of the first Jewish settlements in Ottoman Palestine.

Generally, Samuel Cohen is credited with the 1888 adaptation of the melody we now know of as *Hatikvah*. But here, there has been a dispute with some crediting Iyar Belzer. The origin of the music has also been disputed. Cohen claimed it was based upon the Moldavian/Romanian folk song he heard as a child.¹

Additional Information about Yad Achim:

Yad Achim is the movement’s anthem, composed by Rav Moshe Tzvi Neriya during Chol Hamoed Succot 5692 (1932) at a gathering of madrichim in Kfar Saba.

The anthem soon spread to become one of the movement’s symbols, and was recognised as the official movement song at the inaugural World Veida in 1954.

Although the words have changed somewhat, and in the beginning of the 1950s the tune was also changed, no-one can imagine a movement occasion without the singing of the anthem. Yad Achim is sung alongside Hatikvah, Israel’s national anthem, during Mifkad, the official ceremony held at every Bnei Akiva event.²

¹ http://www.aish.com/j/as/The_History_of_Hatikvah.html

² <https://www.worldbneiakiva.org/symbols>

Choveret Chinuch Iyar 5778
Peula #2: Fighting for Atzmaut, Together
Written by Ariel Shields, Mazkir Artzi BANA

Goals:

1. To learn about the power of Yom Ha'atzmaut. How so many different Jews came together to fight as an Am, and why it was so important for the Jews to have an independent state in 1948.
2. To understand that the battle for Yom Ha'atzmaut applies to us today and we can only truly appreciate Geulah by looking at Yom Ha'atzmaut as part of a cycle of Yom Hashoah and Yom Hazikaron.

Materials:

Israeli Flag, 6 cards with characters, 2 lists of 6 people each (below)

Game #1: Steal the Cheese

- Split the chanichim up into two teams; the British and the Palmach.
- Have the two teams line up on opposite ends of the room, and each player from both teams has a number. An Israeli flag is placed in the middle.
- When the leader calls out a number, that player (from each team) must run and try to "steal" the flag and return with it to his team without being tagged. If he is not tagged, he scores two points. If he is tagged, the tagger scores one point.
- The team with the most points wins.
- Variation: The leader may call two or three numbers or even call "scramble" in which case everyone tries to steal the "cheese."

Game #2: Streets and Alleys

- Two players are chosen, one to be the "Palmach" and the second to be the "British".
- The other players stand in opposite rows (at arm's length). When they face front with their arms extended out, they are in the "streets" position. When they turn to their right and extend their arms they are in the "alleys" position. Enough space is left so that the Palmach guy and the British soldier can run through the streets and alleys.
- Players start in the "streets" position. The British soldier must try to tag the Palmach guy. The British soldier begins by chasing the Palmach through the streets, until the

- leader shouts: “Alleys!” Then the players face front and form “alleys” which change the course for the Palmach and the British soldiers who are now running through alleys.
- Neither the Palmach nor the British may go through, or reach over lines to get from one alley or street to another. They must go around the end players to change “streets” or “alleys.”
- If the British soldier tags the Palmach before 60 seconds (or timing of your choice) is up, he wins; if not he loses. Two other players are then chosen and the game continues.
- Variation: Split everyone up into two teams. Each team selects one player to represent them as either a Palmach or British soldier. The team scores one point if their player wins. The first team to get to 10 points wins.

Game #3: Human Bingo

Choose 12 chanichim and have each of them choose a character card. The rest of the chanichim are divided up into two teams and become Palmach generals. The point is that the Palmach generals have to go around and recruit an army to fight the British. Each of the two teams has a list of six people they need to find. The rest of the chanichim who are playing parts scatter, and the generals have to run around interviewing and asking questions of the chanichim to find their six people and bring them back to base. Whichever team puts together an army first wins. Each army must have:

1. Dvir the Israeli Kibbutznik: Dvir was born in Israel and so were his grandparents. He wants to fight and defend his homeland, is very active in the Hagana, and believes in self-defense.
2. Yechiel the Holocaust survivor: A Polish survivor of Treblinka who came to Israel on an illegal boat, and just wants to survive. Yechiel just found freedom and will not let anyone take that away from him.
3. Yonatan the Religious Zionist student: Yonatan learns in Ateret Kohanim Yeshiva, and is ready to fight for a religious state to bring the Geulah.
4. Mark the American Soldier: A non-observant Jew who fought in World War II for the American Army, Mark saw the concentration camps and now wants to fight for a cause he believes in, having a Jewish Homeland.

5. Leibel the Chareidi Jew: A Mea She'arim Yerushalmi Jew, who does not believe in Zionism. Leibel's community is under attack so his Rabbi ordered him to help build trenches and do Shmirah for the neighborhood under the local Palmach leader.
6. Merav the Resistance Fighter: Merav grew up on one of the first Kibbutzim in Israel. Her brother was killed in riots by the Arabs, and she turned to the Irgun because she believes that we will only be able to be free if we show the power that we have as a nation.

Sicha

Have the chanichim sit down in their two groups (or more if there are more chanichim) and look at the six different characters.

- Ask them which of these people they think helped the most in achieving independence in 1948.
- To which do they think having independence and a Jewish State made the biggest difference? Why?
- Which would you see yourself as if you were fighting in 1948?
- Why is it important to have independence and our own Jewish State?
- What brought all these different people together to fight for the same country?
- What ideals do they all have in common?

Explain to the chanichim that Tzahal did not exist back then. There was just a salad bowl of many different Jews who came together as a nation, all fighting for independence.

- Ask if they think achieving independence and a Jewish state was hard or easy?

Tie this into the games we played. Who were the Jews fighting in 1948 to get independence before they went to war with the Arabs? Was it a regular battle or not?

Explain that the Jews were fighting within the cities as resistance fighters against the British. It was similar to the Streets and Alleys game where you, the Jewish resistance fighter, were being chased by a British soldier. The ideals that we saw within the different types of people from Human Bingo are what empowered the Jews to win.

Finally, point out to the Chanichim how the games we played were similar to the battles that went on in 1948. Many of the Jews we spoke about ended up giving up their lives so that we can have a Jewish State today.

Ask the chanichim if they have ever been in Israel on Yom Hashoah, Yom Hazikaron, or Yom Haatzmaut. Does the experience of these days feel different in America versus in Israel? Why?

In Israel Yom Haatzmaut is a cycle. Only after commemorating those who we lost in the Holocaust, on Yom HaShoah, and the soldiers who were killed defending our country, on Yom HaZikaron, can we celebrate the existence of our Jewish State. Only within the context of understanding that these Jews gave their lives for us to be free, can we truly feel Geulah.

Conclusion

When we think about all of the different Jews who came together to fight for Medinat Yisrael, and why they came and fought, can we understand that although it was hard, it was important for the Jews to be free and have our own Medinah.

Choveret Chinuch Iyar 5778
Peula #1: Mascots: Rabbi Akiva
Written by Jen van Amerongen, Merakezet Chinuch BANA

Goal: Learn why Bnei Akiva is named for Rabbi Akiva. Who was he? What did he stand for? Additionally, this can be an opportunity to learn about the Sisma and Semel of Bnei Akiva.

Overview: This peula will introduce the chanichim to Rabbi Akiva by first understanding what a mascot or a leader is. Then you will teach them the famous stories that depict Rabbi Akiva's character and will conclude with a discussion and reflection on those stories.

Trigger- Mascots:

Rabbi Akiva is like a "mascot" of Bnei Akiva. He is a symbol of what we believe in and strive to emulate. To start this conversation with the chanichim, start off with a general discussion about mascots. Hold up the pictures of famous sports team mascots.

- Ask the chanichim if they recognize any one them.
- Which is their favorite?
- What is the purpose of a mascot?
 - A mascot brings people together. Unites fans with an image they can connect to.
Gets people excited.
- What does each mascot represent?
 - The teams ideals, values, or spirit.

Game #1: Indian Chief

1. Have the group sit or stand in a circle.
2. One person (i.e., the guesser) goes out of hearing and sight range of the group.
3. After the person has left the group, one person must be picked to be the "Indian chief." The "Indian chief" decides on some kind of motion and the whole group copies the movement.
4. The guesser comes back into the group and tries to figure out which person is leading the motions (i.e., the Indian Chief).
5. The guesser gets three tries to guess who is the Indian Chief.

6. The person who was the Indian Chief now leaves the group to be the guesser and a new Indian Chief is chosen.

Similar to Indian Chief, in Bnei Akiva we have a leader that we emulate (or copy). Lets learn what we copy from Rabbi Akiva and why.

Meet Rabbi Akiva:

In this section of the Peula you will introduce the chanichim to the character of Rabbi Akiva. Before acting out or telling the stories, introduce Rabbi Akiva. Explain that the name Bnei Akiva means “Children of Akiva,” and we are named for Rabbi Akiva. Through these stories we will learn why. Following the stories follow up with a discussion and reflection on the stories. Discussion points are below the stories.

“Rabbi Akiva combined being a great Torah scholar with visionary leadership and a genuine love for his fellow Jew. Although he only took up Torah learning at the age of 40, he became one of the greatest ever teachers, raising up the generation of rabbis who compiled the Mishna. Despite witnessing the destruction of the Second Temple and the failed Bar Kochba Rebellion, which aimed to restore Jewish independence in the Land of Israel, Rabbi Akiva remained full of hope, confident that the land would one day become a Jewish homeland again. As this prediction unfolds before our very eyes, we commit ourselves to emulating his character traits and fulfilling his ideals.”³

“Thus we strive to be like Rabbi Akiva for his three qualities: (a) his love of Hashem, a steadfast devotion to the Torah and his ultimate martyrdom at the hands of the Romans, (b) his love of Israel and his fight for its independence, (c) his love of labour and his respect for it, remembering always his early life.”⁴

These 3 main stories, about Torah, Avodah/Eretz Yisrael/Geula, should either be performed as a skit or told as a story to the snif (to get the chanichim more involved, you can give them parts!):

³ <https://www.worldbneiakiva.org/symbols>

⁴ <https://bnei.co.za/about/ideology/>

Additional Sources: <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/rabbi-Akiva/>

1. Torah:

Rabbi Akiva started learning Torah at 40 years old and became one of the biggest Torah scholars in Jewish History.

A shepherd was tending flock in the hills of Judah. He became thirsty and went to his favorite brook in the hills to take a drink. As he was drawing the crystal clear water in his palm and putting it to his mouth, something caught his eye. He saw drops of water falling on a huge stone – drip, drop – and directly where the drops were falling there was a deep hole in the stone. The shepherd was fascinated. He gazed at the drops and at the stone.

“What mighty power there is in a drop of water,” thought the shepherd. “Could my stony heart ever be softened up that way?”

“Hello, Akiva! What are you gazing at?” It was Rachel, his master’s daughter. She was wise and kind and fair.

“Look what the little drops of water did to the rock,” Akiva exclaimed. “Do you think there is hope for me? Suppose I began to study the Torah, little by little, drop by drop. Do you think my stony heart would soften up?”

“Oh yes! Akiva. If you persevere, if you keep it up as these drops of water.”

But I am forty years old! Is it not too late to start?”

“Oh no, Akiva. It is never too late. If you promise to learn our holy Torah, I know you will not be ignorant for long.”

The shepherd gazed at the drops of water for a long time, and then his mind was made up.

And this is how Akiva the shepherd became the great Rabbi Akiva, the greatest and wisest scholar and teacher of his day, who had 24 thousand pupils! He often told them that it was a drop of water that changed his life.⁵

2. Eretz Yisrael/Avodah:

Rabbi Akiva fought for Judaism in the Land of Israel and supported the Bar Kochba revolt against the Roman Empire.

*This revolt began as small, spontaneous clashes between Jews and Roman forces. Jews were hiding in caves in order to be able to perform the mitzvahs. When discovered by Roman soldiers, they resisted, in some cases successfully. Eventually, a great warrior, Shimon ben Kozba, united the disparate armed Jewish groups into a cohesive fighting force, which then captured Jerusalem from the Romans. **Ben Kozba further proclaimed himself as Mashiach, and had the backing of the greatest sage of his time, Rabbi Akiva, along with many other sages.** Shortly,*

⁵ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/111924/jewish/Rabbi-Akiva-A-Drop-of-Water.htm

Ben Kozba became known as Bar Kochba, which means son of a star, based on a verse in the Torah (Numbers 24:17) that likens the Messiah to a star.

During the cruel persecution by the Roman Emperor Hadrian, when the Talmudic Academies were shut down and the study of the Talmud was forbidden on penalty of death, **Rabbi Akiva continued to teach the Talmud publicly, and his devoted pupil Shimon stayed at his side, until Rabbi Akiva was arrested.** Even then, Shimon continued to visit his master in prison to receive instruction there. Only death finally separated them, for Rabbi Akiva was condemned to die a martyr's death for Kiddush Hashem (the sanctification of G-d's name).⁶

3. Geula:

Rabbi Akiva foresaw the redemption of the Jewish people in the Land of Israel.

Again it happened that Rabban Gamliel, Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria, Rabbi Joshua and Rabbi Akiva went up to Jerusalem. When they reached Mt. Scopus, they tore their garments. When they reached the Temple Mount, they saw a fox emerging from the place of the Holy of Holies. The others started weeping; Rabbi Akiva laughed.

Said they to him: "Why are you laughing?"

Said he to them: "Why are you weeping?"

Said they to him: "A place [so holy] that it is said of it, 'the stranger that approaches it shall die,'¹ and now foxes traverse it, and we shouldn't weep?"

Said he to them: "That is why I laugh. For it is written, 'I shall have bear witness for Me faithful witnesses—Uriah the Priest and Zechariah the son of Jeberechiah.'² Now what is the connection between Uriah and Zechariah? Uriah was [in the time of] the First Temple, and Zechariah was [in the time of] the Second Temple! But the Torah makes Zachariah's prophecy dependent upon Uriah's prophecy. With Uriah, it is written: 'Therefore, because of you, Zion shall be plowed as a field; [Jerusalem shall become heaps, and the Temple Mount like the high places of a forest.]'³ With Zachariah it is written, 'Old men and women shall yet sit in the streets of Jerusalem.'⁴

"As long as Uriah's prophecy had not been fulfilled, I feared that Zechariah's prophecy may not be fulfilled either. But now that Uriah's prophecy has been fulfilled, it is certain that Zechariah's prophecy will be fulfilled."

With these words they replied to him: "Akiva, you have consoled us! Akiva, you have consoled us!"⁷

⁶ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/2713668/jewish/Bar-Kochba-Revolt.htm

⁷ https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/296637/jewish/The-Laughter-of-Rabbi-Akiva.htm

Discussion points:

- What happened in each story? Break it down for the chanichim.
- What did we learn about Rabbi Akiva in these stories?
- What character traits can we see in Rabbi Akiva? How would you describe him?
(Idealistic, brave, courageous, smart, optimistic, hard-working...)
- Let's go back to our conversation about mascots- Why do you think, based on these stories, Rabbi Akiva was chosen as the Mascot of Bnei Akiva?
- What do we do in Bnei Akiva to emulate (copy) Rabbi Akiva?
 - We strongly believe in the balance of Torah and Avodah.
 - While in recent years we have moved from the agricultural Avodah of the land, we still believe in working and settling the Land of Israel as well as defending the State of Israel by fighting in and supporting the IDF. Just like Rabbi Akiva as a young shepherd and as a supporter of Bar Kochva's resistance army.
 - Just like Rabbi Akiva who started learning Torah at age 40 and became one of the most prominent Torah scholars of all time, we push serious Torah study for all members of Bnei Akiva.
 - We look forward, optimistically, to the future Geula in the Land of Israel just like Rabbi Akiva who laughed when he saw foxes on Har HaBayit because he knew that the Geula could now come.

These traits can be summed up by the 3 parts of our Sisma, or Motto, of Bnei Akiva that we say at the end of each Mifkad:

מה סימתנו?	What is our Motto?
"עם ישראל בארץ ישראל על פי תורת ישראל"	"The people of Israel, in the Land of Israel, according to the Torah of Israel"

This peula can also be used as an opportunity to explain the Semel of Bnei Akiva, because it also is a symbol of what we stand for.

The semel is the emblem of Bnei Akiva, and is made up of the following components:

- Wheat - symbolizing the seven species of the Land of Israel, and representing the agricultural heritage of Bnei Akiva.
- Olive branch - representing the peace that we hope all Jews will live together by.
- Scythe & fork - representing the tools used to work the Land of Israel.
- The Luchot - representing the Torah, the framework by which we live our lives.
- The Hebrew letters ת (tav) and ע (ayin) stand for **T**orah Va'**A**vodah, Bnei Akiva's motto.



