Honor Your Mother

Topic
Mitzvot, Middot, and Sacred Moments
Mother's Day

Grade Level(s)
All

Big Ideas
Honoring the maternal figures in one's life is an important mitzvah.

Learning Targets
Students will:

1. Gain a deeper understanding of the mitzvah of *Kibbud Av v'Em*
2. Understand the connection between *Kibbud Av v'Em* and Mothers Day
3. Show appreciation for the maternal figures in their lives

Relevant Vocabulary

כִּבּוּד אָב וָאֵם *(Kibbud Av v'Em)*	Honoring one's father and mother
הַר סִינַי *(Har Sinai)*	Mount Sinai
בְּרֵאשִׁית (*Beresheet*)	The Book of Genesis
שְׁמוֹת *(Shemot)*	The Book of Exodus
וַיִּקְרָא *(Vayikra)*	The Book of Leviticus
דְּבָרִים *(Devarim)*	The Book of Deuteronomy
שׁוֹפְטִים (*Shoftim*)	The Book of Judges
מְגִילַת אֶסְתֵּר (*Megillat Esther*)	The Scroll of Esther
מְגִילַת רוּת (*Megillat Rut*)	The Scroll of Ruth
תַּנַ"ךְ (*Tanakh*)	The Hebrew Bible

Materials / Technology Needed
- Assorted colored papers and card stock
- Markers, pens, pencils, etc.
- Copies of the Mother's Day Hebrew vocabulary sheet from JTeach.org; printed onto different colored papers
- Glue
- Fun designs to glue onto cards
- Stickers

Background for Teachers
The holiday of Mother's Day has a strong connection to the values espoused in the Torah. Twice, the Torah commands that we honor our parents, once during the giving of the Torah on *Har Sinai* and once when Moses recounts the giving of the Torah.

כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ לְמַעַן יַאֲרִכוּן יָמֶיךָ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ׃ (שמות כ׳:יב)

Honor your father and your mother in order that your days will be long on the earth that YHVH your God gives to you. (*Shemot* 20:12)

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כַּבֵּד אֶת־אָבִיךָ וְאֶת־אִמֶּךָ כַּאֲשֶׁר צִוְּךָ יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְמַעַן | יַאֲרִיכֻן יָמֶיךָ וּלְמַעַן יִיטַב לָךְ עַל הָאֲדָמָה אֲשֶׁר־יְיָ אֱלֹהֶיךָ נֹתֵן לָךְ׃ (דברים ה׳:טז)

Honor your father and your mother as YHVH your God commanded you in order that your days will be long and in order that it will be good for you on the earth that YHVH your God gives to you. (*Devarim* 5:16)

In the middle of these two commands comes a command to hold one's parents in awe.

אִישׁ אִמּוֹ וְאָבִיו תִּירָאוּ וְאֶת־שַׁבְּתֹתַי תִּשְׁמֹרוּ אֲנִי יְיָ אֱלֹהֵיכֶם׃ (ויקרא יט׳:ג)

Each person shall hold their mother and father in awe and they will guard my Shabbat. I am YHVH your God. (*Vayikra* 19:3)

While the Torah does not explicitly say how one should honor and revere one's parents, Mother's Day gives us the opportunity to demonstrate how we honor, revere, and love the different maternal figures in our lives.

Description of Activities

Activity #1: Discussion

Spend time with your students reviewing some of the women portrayed in the *Tanakh* and rabbinic literature and the positive characteristics that made them role models. Some examples might include:

- Sarah – *Hachnasat Orchim* (Hospitality, *Beresheet* 18:1-8)
- Rebecca – *Hesed* (Kindness, *Beresheet* 24:10-27)
- Rachel – *Yafet To'ar* (Beauty, *Beresheet* 19:17)
- Leah – *Poriyut* (Fertility, *Beresheet* 19:32-35, 20:15-17)
- Shifra and Puah – *Ometz Lev* (Courage, *Shemot* 1:15-21)
- Deborah – *Tzedek* (Justice, *Shoftim* 4:4-5)
- Miriam – *Manhigut* (Leadership, *Shemot* 2:1-9, 15:20-21)
- Esther – *Ometz Lev* (Courage, *Megillat Esther* 4:15-5:8)
- Ruth – *Ne'emanut* (Loyalty/Commitment, *Megillat Rut* 1:1-22)
- Bruriah – *Chochma* (Wisdom, e.g. Tractate *Pesachim* 62b)

Ask students to make connections between these women and the traits they see in their own mothers and additional important women in their lives.

For example: Just as Sarah demonstrated *Hachnasat Orchim* when strangers came to her tent, my mom …

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Activity #2: Creating Meaningful Mother's Day Cards

Invite students to write poetry or prose based on the connections that they made during the discussion. This writing will be the starting point for the meaningful cards they will create.

Make available a variety of art supplies and let the students create beautiful cards for their moms and other significant women in their lives. Be sure to encourage them to include their original poetry/prose and other references to the Jewish women discussed earlier in the lesson. They can also cut out Hebrew phrases from the Mother's Day Hebrew vocabulary sheet and collage the words onto their cards.

For Example:

Thank You – תּוֹדָה
i. Happy Mother's Day – יוֹם הָאֵם שָׂמֵחַ
ii. I love you (from a boy) – אֲנִי אוֹהֵב אוֹתָךְ
iii. I love you (from a girl) – אֲנִי אוֹהֶבֶת אוֹתָךְ

Please note: In addition to cards, students' answers may be made into a "crown of a good name" hanger that rests on the back of a student's mother's chair. Write the poetry on the crown and then embellish with sequins and glitter. Use a beautiful ribbon to suspend the crown from the back of mom's chair.

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