

# Bottle Cap Torah

## Topic

Torah, art

## Grade Level(s)

3<sup>rd</sup> grade and up

## Goals for the Lesson/Activity

### **Students will:**

- gain familiarity with the first few verses of *Parashat Terumah*
- harness the power of working collaboratively to create a communal art piece, based on lessons learned from *Parashat Terumah*



## Materials needed

- Assorted bottle caps and lids (In the example, 54 bottle caps were use representing the 54 Torah portions)
- Assorted beads, sequins, buttons and stones to use as filler for the caps and lids
- Large plain canvas (sample was created on a 22"x28" canvas)
- Foamboard to use as a backing to reinforce the canvas
- Multiple bottles of white glue for students to share
- Mod Podge or Dick Blick Polymer Medium
- Foam brushes
- Assorted colors of tissue paper or wrapping paper for background
- Glue gun to adhere the decorated lids to the canvas
- Optional: Ribbon for a "frame"

## Prepare in advance

- The canvas must be reinforced so that it can support the weight of the bottle caps and not sag. To strengthen the canvas, cut foam board to a size that will fit tightly inside the backside of the canvas. Spread white glue liberally over one side of the board. Place the gluey side of the board against the canvas, and press hard to make sure that it is secure. Allow to dry overnight.
- Ask students to bring in a variety of lids and caps lids from home.
- Wash and dry all the lids. Gather supplies into a big tub, but do not organize them.
- If possible find little bowl and plates students can use to organize the beads, etc.



# Bottle Cap Torah

## Background for Teachers

Inspiration for this project was drawn from the first few verses of *Parashat Terumah*, (Exodus 25:1- 8.) While בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל (literally the children of Israel, or Israelites) traveled through the desert on their way from Egypt to the Promised Land, God instructed them to build a מִקְדָּשׁ *Mikdash*, a sanctuary, where God could dwell among them. This sanctuary was the מִשְׁכָּן *Mishkan*, usually translated as the tabernacle, the structure that was to hold the Ark and its holy contents. The Israelites were instructed to aid in the construction by donating gifts from the heart. The text reads: “*Adonai* spoke to Moses, saying: Tell the Israelite people to bring Me gifts; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart is so moved” (Exodus 25:1-2).

Later, in taking a census of the people, God commanded that Moshe collect exactly a half shekel from each Israelite over the age of 20 for atonement to be donated to the *Mishkan* (Shemot 30:13-16). Thus, each Israelite, at minimum, contributed something to the *Mishkan*. However, each also was also responsible to give from the heart in order to beautify the *Mishkan* and make it a special communal space.

## Description of Activities

### Text Study

Begin with a short text study of Exodus 25:1- 8. This will serve as the foundation for working together to create a work of art.

Some questions for students to consider:

According to a simple or surface reading of the text:

- Who is obligated to contribute? (Nobody)
- Who is encouraged to contribute? (Everybody)
- Why is it important that people give from their hearts and not just out of obligation?
- In what ways might a community be elevated when people give generously from their hearts?
- How is a communal space/project different from an individual space/project?

### Making Art

Explain the art project and the different jobs needed to complete the piece.

Break into 3 groups, according to students' interests.

**Group 1 is responsible for laying out the design on the canvas.** Before using pencil to draw the outline of the Torah on the canvas, map out how much space to allocate for the עֲצֵי חַיִּים, *atzei chaim* or Torah rollers, and how much of the canvas is needed for the “parchment”. Will the finished piece have a border? If yes, make sure to leave enough room for it, too. After Group 1 has finished their drawings, they can join Group 2 to decorate the lids.



## **Bottle Cap Torah**

**Group 2 is responsible for making design decisions for the rollers and the center of the Torah and organizing supplies.** For example, will certain colored lids be used for the rollers? Are there some beads that will only be used for the center of the Torah? Create separate piles of supplies for the rollers and for the center of the Torah. Lay all supplies out in an organized way so participants can find items easily. Once they have the supplies set up, begin decorating the inside of the caps. (Squeeze white glue inside of the cap – enough to coat the entire inside lid. Push beads, sequins, buttons etc. into the glue in a pattern or random design. Let dry.)

**Group 3 is responsible for the background.** Pick colored papers to decorate the background. This group should first check with Group 1 about the border and coordinate with Group 2 on color choices. Once the paper is selected, tear it into approximately 1" squares. Use foam brushes and Mod Podge or Dick Blick Polymer Medium to glue the torn papers to the canvas. It is ok if the papers overlap – it adds to the beauty of the piece. Be mindful not to cover up the Torah outline drawn by group 1. If there is time left over, Group 3 may also help decorate the lids.

**The decorated lids and background collage will need to dry completely before the lids can be secured to the canvas with the glue gun. Drying time can take up to 3 hours.**

Students can take turns gluing their lids on to the canvas during the next class session, or students can rest their cap to dry on top of the canvas in their chosen spot and a teacher can secure them at another time.

While all the pieces are drying, discuss how each of them used their own gifts (in this case, talents!) to create a communal work of art.

## Bottle Cap Torah

### *Parashat Terumah*

<b><u>Exodus 25:1-27:19</u></b>	<b><u>שמות כ"ה:א'-כ"ז:י"ט</u></b>
<sup>1</sup> Adonai spoke to Moses, saying:	א'וַיִּדְבֹּר יי אֶל־מֹשֶׁה לֵאמֹר :
<sup>2</sup> Speak to <i>B'nei Yisrael</i> (the Israelite people), and they shall take gifts to Me; you shall accept gifts for Me from every person whose heart so moves him.	ב'דַּבֵּר אֶל־בְּנֵי יִשְׂרָאֵל וְיִקְחוּ־לִי תְרוּמָה מֵאֵת כָּל־ אִישׁ אֲשֶׁר יִדְבְּנוּ לְבוֹ תִּקְחוּ אֶת־תְּרוּמָתִי :
<sup>3</sup> And these are the gifts that you shall accept from them: gold, silver, and copper;	ג'וְזֹאת הַתְּרוּמָה אֲשֶׁר תִּקְחוּ מֵאֲתָם זָהָב וְכֶסֶף וְנֹחֶשֶׁת :
<sup>4</sup> blue, purple, and crimson yarns, fine linen, goats' hair;	ד'וְתִכְלֹת וְאַרְגָּמָן וְתוֹלַעַת שָׁנִי וְשֵׁשׁ וְעִזִּים :
<sup>5</sup> tanned ram skins, dolphin skins, and acacia wood;	ה'וְעֹלֹת אֵילִם מְאָדָּמִים וְעֹלֹת תְּחָשִׁים וְעֹצֵי שִׁטִּים :
<sup>6</sup> oil for lighting, spices for the anointing oil and for the aromatic incense;	ו'יֶשֶׁן לַמָּאֵר בְּשָׂמִים לְשֶׁמֶן הַמִּשְׁחָה וְלִקְטֹרֶת הַסָּמִים :
<sup>7</sup> lapis lazuli and other stones for setting, for the ephod and for the breastpiece.	ז'אֲבִי־שֵׁהָם וְאַבְנֵי מַלְאִים לְאַפֹּד וְלַחֹשֶׁן :
<sup>8</sup> They shall make Me a <i>Mikdash</i> (sanctuary) that I may dwell among them.	ח'וַעֲשׂוּ לִי מִקְדָּשׁ וְשָׁכַנְתִּי בְּתוֹכָם :