



KAKADU-STYLE CHALLAH TRAY

Topic

Israeli culture/art, Shabbat, *Hiddur Mitzvah*

Grade Level(s)

Grades 3 and up. Also may be used for a family education program



Goals for the Lesson/Activity

Students will be able to:

- Describe the artwork of Aharon and Reut Shahar, and their Israeli company, Kakadu
- Relate Jewish and Israeli motifs with artistic ideas and processes to deepen understanding
- Create a personalized challah tray

Materials needed

- 1/8" thick birch plywood, cut into 12" x 16" pieces, or your chosen size (one per student); available at a local hardware store
- Sketch paper and pencils (for planning the design) cut to the same size as the wood
- #180-grit sandpaper for each child, cut into pieces about 3" x 3"
- Small containers with acrylic paint diluted with water - red, blue, green, yellow
- A soft brush for each paint container
- Containers with water
- Clear protective spray
- Four glass nuggets per tray for "feet" (must have flat surfaces)
- 3.7 oz. tube of E7000 Glue
- Plastic table covers and smocks
- Paper towels

Note: This lesson plan requires material preparations, a bit larger budget for materials, and help of a parent volunteer, but the result is a unique and durable product that may be used for years to come!

Technology needed

Device, access to internet and a projector to show images of Kakadu artwork

Background for Teachers

Kakadu is a company in Israel that was created by carpenter Aharon Shahar and his artist wife Reut in 1990. They make hand-painted plywood objects like trays, mirrors,



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placemats, and even furniture. Kakadu's products have bright colors, and are built for daily use. Because Kakadu cares about *Tikkun Olam* (repairing the world,) they use fast-growing timber, and process it with minimal waste.

While the company is named after an Australian bird, many of its themes relate to Israel and to Jewish tradition. Kakadu's distinctive creations use abstract motifs such as the Seven Species, Jerusalem buildings, Shabbat candles, and *Magen David*. To better understand Kakadu, [click to explore images](#) of their artwork.

Description of Activities

- If appropriate, review Shabbat customs, items on the Shabbat table and the המוציא (*hamotzi*) blessing.
- Share the Kakadu slide show with your students. Ask them to pay attention to the artistic elements in Kakadu products: use of vivid translucent colors, abstraction, Jewish and Israeli symbols. Discuss what they noticed. Write responses on the board.
- Brainstorm additional Jewish and Israeli symbols or Hebrew writing (שבת שלום (Shabbat Shalom), the המוציא (*hamotzi*) blessing, family last name, and more) that they might incorporate in their trays – add responses to list on the board.
- Distribute one wood piece to each participant. Have them sand the wood piece with sandpaper, and wipe off the dust with a damp cloth.
- Direct students to plan out their challah tray design on paper. Use large images and bubble letter writing that a brush can color. Make sure all words are spelled correctly.
- Transfer the design onto the tray using a pencil with a very light touch. Be careful not to leave an impression on the wood.
- Color the wood using brushes and paint according to the design.
- After the background paint is dry, use a permanent marker or paint marker to add one of the texts from your brainstorming session.
- Let the work dry completely for at least 24 hours, then sign it with a pen.
- An adult should apply two coats of protective clear spray in a well-ventilated area. Make sure the surface is dry to the touch before applying a second coat.
- Glue four glass nuggets to the bottom of each tray. Set aside to dry upside down for a few minutes.
- To clean the tray, use a damp cloth.
- Enjoy using the tray in your next Shabbat celebration!