Kosher or Not Kosher

Topic
Daily Life & Sacred Moments, Hebrew, *Mitzvot* and *Middot*

Grade Level(s)
2nd and Up

Goals for the Lesson/Activity
Students will:
- Recall the Hebrew names of different animals
- Identify what makes an animal kosher or not kosher
- Determine whether certain animals are kosher or not kosher

Materials needed
- "What Makes an Animal Kosher?" Pyramid (one copy per group)
- "What Makes Animals Kosher?" source sheets (one copy per group)
- Kosher or Not Kosher Flash Cards (one set printed on cardstock per group)

Technology needed (Optional)
- Tablet or Computer with Browser: A digital flashcard set is available on Quizlet. When prompted, enter the case-sensitive password: JTeach. You do not need to have the Quizlet app to use the flashcard deck. However, it is available for free for the iPhone, iPad and Android devices.
- Projector and necessary cables, if you want to use Quizlet as a whole class.

Background for Teachers
The Torah distinguishes among different types of animals when dealing with *kashrut*: sea creatures, flying animals, and land animals.

- Sea creatures are kosher when they have fins and scales.

- Flying animals (i.e. birds) are *not* kosher if they are mentioned specifically by the Torah. Today, birds are considered kosher only when there is a longstanding tradition to eat them.

- Land animals are kosher when they have cloven hooves and chew their cud. If an animal only chews its cud (e.g. camel) or only has a cloven hoof (e.g. pig), it is not kosher. While the Torah specifies only the cloven-hoof and cud-chewing criteria, there are other characteristics that help us to identify kosher animals. Kosher land animals have horns. Also, all kosher land animals are vegetarians.

Consider using the Create Your Own Kosher Animal lesson as a fun assessment for student understanding of what makes animals kosher.

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Description of Activities

1. Divide students into *hevruta* (partners/small groups) and give them the "What Makes an Animal Kosher?" pyramid, the "What Makes an Animal Kosher?" sources, and the Kosher or Not Kosher flash cards

2. Students sort the cards into Kosher and Non-Kosher Animal groups based on the pyramid and the sources.

3. Ask two different *hevruta* groups to work together and share how and why they sorted the animals as they did. For each animal, students should be able to explain what makes the animal kosher or not kosher.

4. Use the Reference Guide at the end of the lesson to review classifications with students.

Make Some Noise!

- To get your students moving around and making sound, you might choose to complement the activities with one of the following:
  - Ask students to make the sounds of the animals as they go through the flash cards.
  - Assign each student to be an animal and have the students group themselves according to different categories (kosher/not kosher, land animal/bird/creepy, crawly thing)
  - Ask students to imitate the movement of each animal
  - Play games with the animal cards. Suggested vocabulary games can be found on JTeach.org.

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Reference Guide

KOSHER

English Name of Animal	Hebrew Name of Animal	Category	Kosher?	Why Kosher or Not Kosher
Locust	אַרְבֶּה	Creepy, Crawly Thing	Y	The Torah specifies four types of locust that are fit for consumption.
Chicken	עוֹף	Bird	Y	Not forbidden by the Torah
Duck	בַּרְוָז	Bird	Y	Not forbidden by the Torah
Quail	שְׂלָו	Bird	Y	Not forbidden by the Torah
Turkey	הוֹדוּ	Bird	Y	Not forbidden by the Torah
Cow	פָּרָה	Land Animal	Y	Chews its cud Has a cloven hoof
Deer	אַיָל	Land Animal	Y	Chews its cud Has a cloven hoof
Giraffe	גִ'יְרָף	Land Animal	Y	Chews its cud Has a cloven hoof
Goat	עֵז	Land Animal	Y	Chews its cud Has a cloven hoof
Sheep	כֶּבֶשׂ	Land Animal	Y	Chews its cud Has a cloven hoof
Salmon	סַלְמוֹן	Sea Creature	Y	Fins Scales
Trout	טְרוּטָה	Sea Creature	Y	Fins Scales
Tuna	טוּנָה	Sea Creature	Y	Fins Scales

Kosher or Not Kosher

NOT KOSHER

English Name of Animal	Hebrew Name of Animal	Category	Kosher?	Why Kosher or Not Kosher
Eagle/Griffon Vulture*	נֶשֶׁר	Bird	N	Forbidden by the Torah
Falcon	בַּז	Bird	N	Forbidden by the Torah
Owl	יַנְשׁוּף	Bird	N	Forbidden by the Torah
Raven	עוֹרֵב	Bird	N	Forbidden by the Torah
Swan	בַּרְבּוּר	Bird	N	Forbidden by the Torah
Ant	נְמָלָה	Creepy, Crawly Thing	N	No creepy, crawly things
Bee	דְּבוֹרָה	Creepy, Crawly Thing	N	No creepy, crawly things
Fly	זְבוּב	Creepy, Crawly Thing	N	No creepy, crawly things
Snake	נָחָשׁ	Creepy, Crawly Thing	N	No creepy, crawly things
Spider	עַכָּבִישׁ	Creepy, Crawly Thing	N	No creepy, crawly things
Camel	גָּמָל	Land Animal	N	Chews its cud No cloven hooves
Cat	חָתוּל	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Dog	כֶּלֶב	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Donkey	חֲמוֹר	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Elephant	פִּיל	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Lion	אַרְיֵה	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Monkey	קוֹף	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Pig	חֲזִיר	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud Has a cloven hoof
Rabbit	אַרְנָב	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves

Kosher or Not Kosher

English Name of Animal	Hebrew Name of Animal	Category	Kosher?	Why Kosher or Not Kosher
Squirrel	סְנָאִי	Land Animal	N	Does not chew its cud No cloven hooves
Crab	סַרְטָן	Sea Creature	N	No Fins No Scales
Alligator	תַּנִּין	Sea Creature	N	No fins No scales
Lobster	לוֹבְּסְטֶר	Sea Creature	N	No fins No scales
Turtle	צָב	Sea Creature	N	No fins No scales

*The word "nesher" is commonly understood to mean "eagle." However, the word seems to refer to the griffon vulture. There is a long history of confusion about which animal the word refers to. There is a connection between the word's meaning and the identification of the animal. Thus the understanding of נשר, which is "his head and long neck are covered with a fine white hair and it looks like his feathers fell [נשרו]." Thus, the literal understanding would be "griffon vulture" while the accepted use today is for "eagle."