

Objectives:

- Learn how Dovid succeeded Shaul
 - Understand the significance of Yerushalayim
 - Begin to discuss the concept of the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple)
 - Become familiar with Dovid’s legacy
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Background Ideas for the Teacher:

Condensing the majority of Dovid’s life into a single lesson is a particular challenge. Aside from his many positive accomplishments, Dovid showed amazing resilience throughout the many troubles and travails that occurred during his reign. Indeed, if we follow the description of Dovid’s life in Shmuel 2 (Book of Samuel 2), it seems as if the majority of it was spent dealing with one difficulty after another. Some reference to this aspect of Dovid’s life is made in the lesson, but I wanted to keep the tone of the lesson primarily positive.

With this in mind I chose to focus on Dovid’s role in establishing Yerushalayim (Jerusalem) as the spiritual center of the Jewish people, as well as his preparing for the building of the Bet Hamikdash (Holy Temple) therein. These two concepts certainly possess sufficient significance by themselves to get so much focus in the lesson. In addition, they provide fundamental themes around which much of the following lessons develop.

In the strongest of our times, the Jewish people were united in their devotion to Hashem and the Torah. This unity is expressed in our shared spiritual center, culminating in the time of Shlomo (Solomon) with the building of the Bet Hamikdash in Yerushalayim. But as our devotion became lax following Shlomo’s reign, the unity of the people also deteriorated, first in the splitting of kingdom and continuing as different segments of the nation were exiled off the land. The destruction of the Bet Hamikdash and subsequent exile of the rest of the people seemed to indicate a complete loss of center for the Jewish people. In exile, we had to discover a deeper level of spiritual center, around which we could reinvigorate our bond with Hashem, and return to the Land of Israel. These ideas are developed with greater detail in the subsequent lessons of this year of the curriculum.

Many lessons can be taught regarding Yerushalayim, and greater attention given to its various aspects - it’s walls, gates, and elevated holiness, for example. There simply wasn’t enough room for all these aspects to get fleshed out in the lesson. A teacher with more time, or if it occurs in some other context, could use this lesson as a platform to delve more deeply into the other features of

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Yerushalayim. Also of note is the earlier significance of Yerushalayim, which goes all the way back to the formation of Adam. This will be brought up in the next lesson’s discussion of the Bet Hamikdash.

At the end of the lesson, mention is made of the most well-known accomplishments of Dovid, along with his legacy. Again, a teacher could spend much more time developing these ideas, especially Tehillim. This may come up in another context (like discussions/explanations of Davening), and this lesson can provide a reference point for further learning. The concept of Moshiach will be dealt with more thoroughly at later points in the curriculum, including later this year.

*******A note on language:** I try to use the Hebrew version of names and terms, as much as possible, to help students become familiar and comfortable with them. I consistently wrote in the lesson Bet Hamikdash and Yerushalayim. However, since the students may hear the English versions often- Holy Temple and Jerusalem - it makes sense to switch back and forth during the lesson to reinforce what they’ve already heard about those terms.

For more on Dovid’s reign:

http://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/463954/jewish/King-David.htm

and Shmuel 2 (The entire second book of Samuel).

Lesson:

Succeeding King Shaul

Activity 1

- Begin class with a drawing activity. Hand out paper and pens or pencils to the students. Ask for a volunteer who will be the ‘drawing-king’ (or queen). The drawing-king’s job is to draw a picture, one line at a time, on the board, pausing after each line so the other students can follow what he just did, trying to draw the same picture, line-by-line, on their sheets. Give the drawing-king a simple object to draw for round 1, such as a table, a crown, house. Do a quick first round, and the students should show their pictures to compare the accuracy of their drawings.
Round 2 is the opposite procedure. For every line the drawing-king draws, the students should draw a different line. In other words, they must ‘disobey’ the drawing-king’s instructions, and using the same number of lines, draw something different. Then they should show their pictures to see the differences between everyone’s drawings and that of the drawing-king’s.

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- Ask the students: when was the drawing-king really like a king? Answer: The first round. Why? Because everyone followed his lead. Continue: was the drawing-king really like a king the second round? Answer: No, not all! Why not? Because no one followed his lead!
- Explain: one of the most important parts of being a Jewish king is that the people accept you. The fact that a person might be called king is not important, what matters is that the people recognize you as king, and accept your kingship. Remember: a Jewish king rules by respect, not force. This means the people turn to the king for leadership, and follow his lead. If they don't, then he's not really king!
- Continue from the last lesson: After Shaul's passing, it would seem easy for Dovid to now act as king. He had been anointed king, and Shaul was gone! But it wasn't so simple.
- Not everyone was ready to accept Dovid as king. His own tribe, the tribe of Yehuda, immediately accepted Dovid. But the other tribes didn't immediately, because one of Shaul's sons was still alive - Ish Boshet (pronounced eesh Bo shet). Shaul's main general, a great warrior named Avner, crowned Ish Boshet as Shaul's successor. Avner was very influential, and still led the army Shaul had formed. So the other tribes listened to him and didn't accept Dovid as king.
- On the other hand, the people didn't really respect Ish Boshet. He didn't act as a leader, and didn't involve himself with them. But the people already realized that Dovid was both a great leader and very righteous person.
- Sometimes Avner and his army actually fought with Dovid's followers. Soon however, Avner realized that Dovid was the real leader, and agreed to follow him. Around the same time, Ish Boshet was murdered, after being 'king' for just 2 years. The whole nation now acknowledged Dovid as the sole king over all of Israel! Dovid's first capital was in the city of Chevron (Hebron), in the territory of Yehuda. (It's a good idea to show the location of Chevron on a map to help the students visualize the story).

One Nation, Undivided

- Ask: Why do you think only the tribe of Yehuda was ready to follow Dovid immediately? Why were they different?
- Explain: Dovid came from the tribe of Yehuda, his own tribe felt closer to him, and so it was easier for them to accept Dovid.
- Ask: What might be a problem then with Dovid making his capital in Chevron?
- Explain: Chevron is in the territory of Yehuda. It might make the other tribes feel like Dovid was more concerned with his own tribe than the others.

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- Continue: Although the people were one nation, they each identified with their own tribe first. Dovid wanted the entire nation to accept his kingship, and feel connected to him and his leadership. He needed to get beyond the tribal differences, to make sure the entire nation felt attached to him. Otherwise his kingship wouldn't be real.
- If anyone asks: Why wasn't this a problem for Shaul? Several answers could be offered, pick the one(s) your students will understand the best.
 1. Chazal explain Shaul was only king for 2 years, and most of this time was spent fighting other nations and dealing with the internal issue of Dovid. He never was settled enough to deal with unifying the nation.
 2. Shaul came from the tribe of Binyamin, which was a smaller, weaker tribe. The other tribes felt less threatened by Binyamin. The tribe of Yehuda on the other hand was by far the largest, strongest tribe. The other tribes might feel more insecure because Yehuda by itself could be a strong nation, even without the other tribes. So Dovid in particular had to show he was king over the entire nation, not just the powerful Yehuda.
 3. Since Dovid started out as king only over Yehuda, it was important to show he now was acting as king over the entire nation.
- Dovid wanted to pick a new capital, a neutral city that all the tribes would be happy to recognize as their capital.

The City of Yerushalayim

- Remember, what was the Jews' first mission upon entering the land? Answer: Conquering it! When Dovid became king, the Jews had already been in the land for more than 400 years! But still, there were areas the Jews had not yet conquered.
- To give the students an idea how much time 400 years is, point out that America is only about 235 years old! Four hundred years ago there were barely even settlers in America.
- One of these yet - unconquered cities was Yerushalayim (Jerusalem). Ask the students if they've heard of it before, and (briefly) what they know about it. Their knowledge is possibly very rough or inaccurate; tell them today they will learn what makes it such an important city for Jews.
- Yerushalayim was located on the border between the tribes of Yehuda and Binyamin. It was on a mountain, which made it very hard to defeat. It's always hardest to attack uphill, and easiest to defend something from on top. The city was controlled by the Yevusim (Jebusites), one of the 7 nations that ruled Israel before the Jews.
- Dovid decided he could make Yerushalayim his capital, since it was not part of just one tribe's territory. He prepared to conquer it, but it's walls were so strong, and being on a mountain,

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- the Yevusim felt very secure. They placed crippled or blind soldiers as guards over the city, to show how little they feared Dovid.
- In the end, one of Dovid’s main warriors, Yoav, snuck into the city. He found the underground stream that provided the city with water, and used it to enter the city. He then opened Yerushalayim’s gates and allowed Dovid and his men to enter and conquer the city!
 - If you’ve been to Ir David in Yerushalayim, you can describe some of the archeology of what you saw/ experienced there.
3D-like video of ancient Yerushalayim
http://www.cityofdavid.co.il/ArticleDetails_eng.asp?id=283
Recently, archeologists found remains of Dovid’s palace in Ir Dovid.
 - Yerushalayim finally became Dovid’s capital, and a great city famous throughout the world. To this day, it is called ‘The City of Dovid’!

Yerushalayim: Spiritual Center

- But the significance of Yerushalayim goes beyond just being the capital - the place where Dovid built his palace and from where Dovid ruled.
- In fact, it might seem like a capital isn’t such an important thing to begin with. Does a king really need to put his palace in just one city? He can have a bunch of homes! Why not make every city a capital, who needs just one?!
- Actually, Hashem also insisted on a capital. In the Torah (Devarim ch.12, v.10-14, for example) Hashem promised to choose one city from all the cities of the Land of Israel, where the Jewish people would build the Bet Hamikdash (the Holy Temple) for Hashem. Only one city, and only one Holy Temple.
- What’s the Bet Hamikdash? It’s not just a synagogue; it was the place where people could feel the closest to Hashem. They felt so close to Hashem, Hashem called it His home. Just like your home is where we would go to be with you, the Bet Hamikdash is Hashem’s home where we go to be with Hashem.
- We will learn more about the Bet Hamikdash in later lessons, including who built it and how it was later destroyed. One fact for now: Hashem has always insisted on just one single Bet Hamikdash, in just one city. Seem strange? Why just one city, and one Temple? Hashem is really everywhere, not just in the Bet Hamikdash. So why does Hashem insist on just one Holy Temple? We will learn why through some activities.

Finding Center

Activity 2

- Tell the students they will be using their sheets of paper and pens or pencils again. Ask them to draw a perfect circle, using nothing but their pen. After allowing a few attempts, explain it's almost impossible to draw a good circle freehand; only very experienced artists can come close.
- Ask: How can we make a perfect circle? If students suggest tracing it from something else, like using a cup-top, say there must be a different way - after all, someone found a way to make the cup top also.
- Demonstrate: tie a piece of string around a pen, and attach the other end to the center of the paper with a thumbtack or by holding it down. Pulling the string taut, move the pen in an arc over the paper, forming a circle. (Some tips: Make sure the string is short enough so the circle stays on the paper. Do not use string that has any give or stretch to it; otherwise the circle may get distorted. It's a good idea to try this before to see how it works.) Let the students try it themselves. http://www.ehow.com/how_2239326_draw-circle-string.html
- Ask: What makes this work? What makes something a perfect circle? It must have what? Answer: A center! (If the students get stuck on this, you could begin the word, saying cen...or play a quick game of hangman.)
- Explain: A circle is a line whose every point is the same distance from a single, central point. Having a center is very important, a center keeps all the points of a circle together and united.

Activity 3

- This activity requires sheets of paper with a circle in the center, one for each student. (Provided at the end of this document.)
- Ask the students to think of good things about themselves, for example things or activities they like, family members, good qualities and especially ways they help others. Then, they should write these down on their circle sheets, radiating out from the circles. For example, if they decide to write 'likes baseball', the letter 'L' of 'likes' should be written next to the circle, and the following letters moving away from the circle. Give the students 3-5 minutes to write all around the circle.
- As time permits, allow some or all of the students to share from their circles. Then, ask "What do you think should go at the center of the circle? What do all these things have in common?"

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Answer: You! Your name should go at the center! Ask the students not to write their names though.

- Instead, ask them to cross off from their circles anything that doesn't involve other people (including team sports, favorite foods, etc). Ask again "what now should go at the center of the circle? The same as before, or maybe different?" Allow students to suggest whatever answers they think, and continue: When we do things for others, it's not just about us, it means we are thinking about other people as well. As Jews, why do we do mitzvot for other people? Because Hashem wants us to! (Or, it says so in the Torah Hashem gives us.) Hashem made us so we actually enjoy helping others. Let's put 'Hashem' in the center of our circle.
- Continue: In a way, everyone has a 'circle' of things that describe their life. For some people, they are the center of their life's circle. That means: they live their lives just for themselves. People like that each have their own center, different from other people.
- What happens when one person whose life is about just themselves meets another person whose life is just about themselves? Answer: They don't get along! They're only thinking about themselves! But if the center of my life is Hashem, and the center of your life is Hashem, then we feel together, we get along and we help each other.
- Optional activity: To reinforce this concept, you could have them act out skits about self-centered and shared-centered people. Offer a scenario, and ask two volunteers to improvise the scene for the class. Examples: what happens when two hungry people see there's only one piece of cake if they are 1) self-centered or 2) not self-centered. A couple similar examples will help drive home the point and provide another kinesthetic element in the lesson.

Yerushalayim: Eternal Center of the Jewish People

- The Torah wants us to have a shared center, which is Hashem. To help us do that, Hashem chose to give us a single center in this world, a place around which all Jews would unite. This center is the one city Hashem would choose, where His Bet Hamikdash would stand.
- Remember our question? Why did Hashem only give us one city, and one Bet Hamikdash? The answer is: it can only be one city, and one Bet HaMikdash, because this shows and reminds us that Hashem wants us to have only one center - Hashem!
- When Dovid chose Yerushalayim for his capital, he also wanted it to be Hashem's capital - the place where the Bet Hamikdash would be built. Hashem agreed to this, and ever since then Yerushalayim has been the physical center of the Jewish people.

Dovid’s Legacy

- Dovid is one of the greatest leaders in all our history. He had many accomplishments, for which he is still known and remembered.
- Dovid was a great poet and musician. He composed a book of prayers to Hashem, called in Hebrew Tehillim (Psalms). Many of the prayers we say nowadays come from Dovid’s book of Tehillim. (Reference any examples you can. Ashrei is a likely example of an entire chapter recited regularly. There are many single-line quotes from Tehillim the students probably recite. For example, in the Bircat HaMazon - grace after meals - the last line of the first blessing comes from Psalms ch. 145, v. 16. Use a siddur as needed to find more references.) Tehillim is part of the third section of Tanach, Ketuvim, which we talked about at the beginning of the year. (It’s a good idea to show and pass around a copy of Tehillim for the students to look at.)
- Dovid had to deal with many difficulties in his life - from running from Shaul, to fighting within his own family. Throughout it all, he also kept his trust in Hashem, and prayed for Hashem’s help in even the worst circumstances. Many Tehillim are Dovid’s prayers for help in hard times. They have been a source of encouragement for Jews throughout our history, during the many times we also dealt with hardship and difficulties.
- Dovid completed the task that Yehoshua had begun - conquering the entire Land of Israel for the Jewish people. It took many years, but through his strong connection to Hashem, Dovid was able to defeat all the enemies of the Jews, and fully settle the land.
- Dovid truly loved Hashem, and he dedicated his whole life to doing whatever he could for Hashem. Hashem, in turn, promised Dovid that kingship would be his forever. Unlike Shaul, whose kingship ended when he made mistakes, and didn’t remain with his descendants, kingship would be Dovid’s forever. Hashem promised that even if Dovid’s descendants would make mistakes, they would keep the right to be king.
- Today there are still people who can trace their family trees, all the way back to King Dovid!
- Even now, when we don’t have a king, Hashem has promised that kingship will return, and we will have a king once again, descended from Dovid. This person is called Moshiach. When he becomes king, he will be king of not only the Jewish people, but the whole world. We will talk more about Moshiach in later classes.
- One thing Dovid wanted to do was actually build the Bet Hamikdash. He even gathered the materials needed for making the Bet Hamikdash. But Hashem didn’t allow Dovid to build it. Dovid spent most of his kingship fighting, but Hashem wanted the Bet Hamikdash built in a time of peace. Still, because of his hard work to prepare for the Bet Hamikdash, Hashem sometimes calls it by Dovid’s name.

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- We will learn about the king who came after Dovid, and the building of the Bet Hamikdash, in the next class!

Review:

- After Shaul passed away, a period of conflict followed between Dovid and Shaul’s son Ish Boshet. In the end, Dovid became the king of the whole people.
- Dovid conquered Yerushalayim, and it became the eternal capital of the Jewish people.
- Having a single center unites the people in their connecting to Hashem.
- Dovid accomplished many great things, for which he is still remembered, including composing Tehillim, fully conquering the Land of Israel, and preparing for the Bet Hamikdash.

