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Classroom Connections to Israel:

Connecting to Israel through the Land

by MEREDITH SALAMON

After returning from my trip to Israel, sponsored by the Jewish Federation and the Partnership for Jewish Life and Learning, I had a new awareness of what makes our homeland in Israel different from the land here in Maryland. With the help of Shoshi, my counterpart in Beit Shemesh, I found a way to incorporate the land into all of our lessons.

Beginning the Year

I began the year with bulletin boards depicting the appearance of trees here and in Israel. The children and I discussed that while our trees here grew apples, the trees in Israel were producing *rimonim* (pomegranates). We talked about the climate and soil, and tasted the apples and the bright red seeds of the *rimon*. As the season began to change, Shoshi sent me pictures of newly-sprouting olives and I sent her images of our magnificent colored trees of autumn.

Wintertime in the Classroom

During the wintertime, Shoshi visited our classroom. The children met her and saw pictures she took of trees around her *Gan*. After she returned home, we continued e-mailing pictures of the ever-changing foliage. The opportunity for the children to see the pictures we received and understand that it actually came from Shoshi in Israel was awesome.

The Year Progresses

As the year progressed, the bulletin boards changed, illustrating the snow here and the beautiful blossoms of the *shkedia* (almond) tree in Israel. Projects included pressing olives, rubbing bark, and tasting different tree fruits from here and abroad.

A Partnership

Together, we will continue our partnership towards educating our children about each others' lands.

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Rimonim/Apples



Olives blossoming/Autumn leaves



Olives/Snow and Fallen Leaves



Shkedia blossoms/Snow