Caring for Plants to Care for the Future

Framing this unit
Trees have always been very important in Judaism – they even have their own holiday! Today we will look at a photograph and a text from the Talmud to see what we can learn about trees, the environment, and the future.

Prepare printed copies of the Honi the Circle Maker Talmud text worksheet and/or Video of the story of Honi the Circle Maker and/or Text of the story of Honi the Circle Maker

Group Activity
Analyzing a photograph
In pairs or alone, students complete the worksheet in order to understand the photograph of a man watering a tree on Kibbutz Ginegar.

Learning about Honi the Circle Maker
Students read a Talmudic text about Honi the Circle Maker (Honi HaMa’agel) and the importance of planting trees, even though they only provide fruit for the next generations.

Students can work in pairs to read the text and answer the questions on the worksheet.

You can teach the text to the class, using the worksheet and a printed version of the text or show the text on a screen.

You can tell the story to the children or show a video.

Discussion
Before learning the Talmudic story:

What is the importance of trees for you?
What is the importance of trees for the environment?
How long does it take for a tree to grow to full height?

After learning the Talmudic story:

1. Why was Honi surprised that the man was planting a tree that would only give fruit in another 70 years?
2. What was the man’s answer? What did it mean?
3. What might Raphael Stern have been thinking about while he was watering the tree? Do you think he was thinking about the future?
4. What Jewish holiday celebrates trees?

How did it go? Let us know! learning@nli.org.il
5. Have you ever planted or cared for a tree? Did you also have to wait patiently until you could enjoy the fruit of the tree? Do you feel a special connection to that tree?

Creative Activity
Choose one of the following:

● A planting science activity: Easy Plant Science Experiments for the Classroom, Project Learning Tree

● Write a journal entry for the man in the photograph. Reference Honi in the entry.

Primary sources in this lesson
Photograph of a man watering a tree on Kibbutz Ginegar