

Making a *succah*

Religious education, not art and craft

Before making a succah it is important to know *why* we are getting the pupils to do this. For good RE to have taken place (as opposed to good art) pupils must have developed further their knowledge, understanding, skills and/or attitudes as laid out in the agreed syllabus. The making of any model needs to be accompanied by careful introduction of the topic and relevant written or oral work appropriate to the age of the children. Focussed follow-up is also needed, perhaps in terms of group or paired presentations, talking about their model etc. Thus the model may well be a way of reinforcing or developing previous learning that has taken place This implies the planning of clear learning objectives before hand that are then made clear to the pupils.



Here are some **reasons** for choosing to make a succah:

- Practical work helps kinaesthetic learners take on board previous learning
- It introduces an element of fun and enjoyment into RE
- It allows time for pupils to talk and reflect further on the issues raised

What **learning objectives** might be achieved through making a succah? Examples include:

- Pupils understand why Jews are so thankful to God for his protection and provision during the 40 years the Israelites spent in the desert.
- Pupils understand more of what it means to a believer to feel totally dependant on God for their needs.
- Pupils experience something of the fun and joy associated with many Jewish festivals.

Methods

- A pattern for a paper succah can be found in the book *Festivals (Copy and Cut)*, published by A & C Black (**ISBN-10:** 0713659254 **ISBN-13:** 978-0713659252). This is a simple, quick and cheap way of introducing a practical activity in the classroom. (Note: the baseboard can be strengthened with cardboard and allows space for some minimal writing.)
- A more elaborate model can be made using a shoebox with one large side cut away. The roof can be made with strips of card or wooden BBQ/kebab skewers in a lattice formation and hung with paper or modelling clay fruits. Pupils could draw scenes from the wilderness wanderings to decorate the inside walls. Felt or paper greenery can be added and simple furniture can be made (or dolls furniture put in) from card or Lego with Lego figures etc.
- An interesting variation on the above could be made with chocolate matchmakers and coloured icing on a large iced sponge cake. The matchmakers could be joined together either with icing or melted chocolate. The rest of the cake could be decorated with marzipan or icing fruits, leaves and Jewish symbols or drawn with edible ink on edible paper.
- It might be possible to build a small but 'life-size' succah in part of the classroom (for example by removing and recreating the roof of the Wendy house) or outside the classroom door, where pupils could take turns to eat their lunch in it throughout the week.