

Omer Gratitude One-Line-A-Day Journal

In the Song of Songs, the *Haftarah* (a selection from the Book of Prophets) for Passover, we read, “The long wet months are past, the rains have fed the earth and left it bright with blossoms.”

How do we, the weary, gain strength? As the Song of Songs teaches us: by having the courage to be in the present, while also looking towards the future.

In this activity from the Foundation for Jewish Camp, we create our own Omer Gratitude Journals, helping us appreciate the journey from our liberation at Passover to our revelation at Shavuot by noticing how the seasons unfold along the way.



Counting the Omer is a commandment (Leviticus 15) to count the days from Passover until the festival of Shavuot. Agriculturally, it is a period between the first signs of spring and the first fruits of summer, which were part of the Shavuot offerings at the ancient Temple in Jerusalem.

To count the Omer, we traditionally start on the second night of Passover and add a number each evening. This tradition has inspired a modern practice to use this period as a time of reflection between the moment of liberation at Passover and the moment of receiving of the Ten Commandments on Mount Sinai at Shavuot.

In *Sefer haChinukh*, a Jewish text that discusses the 613 commandments of the Torah, we learn that we count Omer “so many days have passed out of the total” instead of counting “so many days remain for us to that time”; this instruction helps us remain in the present moment instead of indulging our often deep desire to fast forward to the future.

In this activity, we will create an Omer One-Line-A-Day Journal, helping us to use our gratitude and senses to anchor us in the present.

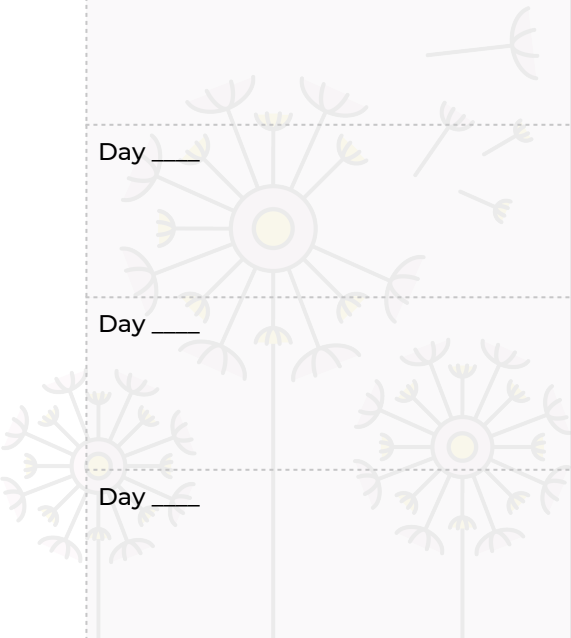
Just before Passover, construct this One-Line-A-Day Journal by printing the template below and clipping or stapling the two pages together.

Then, follow the instructions on the final page of this activity.

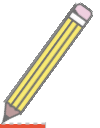
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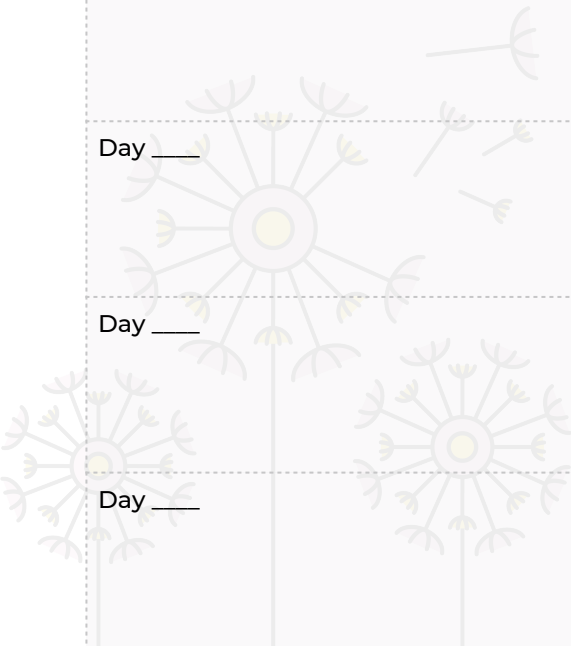
SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
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THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
Day ____	Day ____	Day ____
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Day ____	Day ____	Day ____



Journaling Instructions

Starting the second night of Passover, spend a little time focusing on how the seasons are changing. What are you noticing outside, and how does it inspire gratitude in you? You might start seeing buds on the trees, feeling the temperature rising bit by bit, or realizing that the sunlight lasts a bit longer each day. Use your senses to be present with nature, and see how it shifts how you feel and what you notice. You might record sounds, smells, or the feeling of the weather. What new opportunities do the changing seasons reveal?

Record what you sense in the first box of the “Sunday” column in your journal; on day two, record them in the first box of the “Monday” column; and so on as you move through the week. Instead of words, you might choose to use images or pictures to reflect that for which you are grateful. Sketch or doodle a little picture, use colors, or find any creative way to capture your reflections in your journal each day. You could also record a voice memo, or take a photograph or short video each day with your phone and store them in an album for reflection.

Try focusing on the same element over time: your mood, a scene outside your window, the way a plant or tree smells, or even the time of sunset. Consider what’s changing and why you are grateful for it, and record your thoughts. In this way, your journal will help you open up to notice the journey from spring to summer.

Once you complete the first week of journaling through the Omer, you will return back to the Sunday column on the first page and move through the following week by recording your notes in the second box of the columns, then the following week using the third box, and so on. In this way, you’ll always be able to reference the reflection that you had the week prior and note what’s changed week to week.

As we move past winter and reflect on the goodness we sense each day, we have the power to transform ourselves: to go from thinking of how long we have been tired, enslaved, and lacking freedom to counting toward revelation and the warm embrace of the summer sun.



#gratitudedays

Days of
Gratitude

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