

COUNTING THE OMER 5783

THE FRUIT OF THE SPIRIT

TRAINING OURSELVES TO
WALK BY THE RUACH



*“The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace,
patience, kindness, goodness,
faithfulness, humility, self-control.”*

– Galatians 5:22





WEEK 1 ♦ LOVE

WEEK 2 ♦ JOY

WEEK 3 ♦ PEACE & PATIENCE

WEEK 4 ♦ KINDNESS & GOODNESS

WEEK 5 ♦ FAITHFULNESS

WEEK 6 ♦ HUMILITY

WEEK 7 ♦ SELF-CONTROL

COUNTING THE OMER

Counting the Omer (based on Leviticus 23:9–16) takes us through seven weeks, from the Day of First Fruits and the anniversary of the resurrection of Yeshua to Shavuot, the culmination of the grain harvest and anniversary of the giving of the Torah on Mt. Sinai and the outpouring of the Ruach HaKodesh after the resurrection.

The Omer is the first sheaf of barley waved before the Lord to dedicate the whole harvest to him. In Galatians 5, Paul talks about another kind of harvest, the fruit of the Spirit, the evidence of a new way of living instilled by the Ruach into the followers of Yeshua. This year, as we count the Omer together, we'll focus on one (or sometimes two) of those fruits and how to nurture them in our words and deeds, especially toward those around us. We'll draw on the wisdom of Mussar, a traditional Jewish practice of developing character by focusing on specific positive traits called middot (singular, middah) day by day and week by week. The Hebrew word "mussar" means "correction" or "instruction," and appears many times in the Tanakh, especially Proverbs, beginning with 1:2.

Following the mussar tradition, we will count each Omer day as an opportunity to perfect a specific character trait or middah reflecting the fruits of the Spirit that Paul lists in Galatians 5. He says, "If we live by the Ruach, let us also walk by the Ruach," and walking implies the same real-life, step-by-step approach that characterizes Mussar. Counting the omer this year will mean not only keeping track of the 49 days or seven weeks leading up to Shavuot, but taking steps through those days and weeks to cultivate the fruit of the Spirit that was poured out on Shavuot.



HOW TO USE THIS JOURNAL

1. **Find a study buddy!** Mussar is normally practiced in small groups or with a partner or chevruva. Learning with another person enhances insight and accountability and helps you put your middah for the week into practice. As Rav Yehoshua said, “Get yourself a teacher, acquire a friend (chaver), and judge everyone with generosity” (Pirke Avot 1:6). Ask a close friend or family member to study with you day by day, or week by week.
2. **Count the omer daily.** Count the omer daily: in the evening, after sun-down, and on each date listed inside this journal. Recite the blessing:

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו, וְצִוָּנוּ עַל סְפִירַת הָעֹמֶר

Baruch atah Adonai Elohenu melech ha-olam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav vitzivanu al sefirat ha-Omer.

Blessed are you, Lord our God, King of the universe, who has sanctified us by his commandments and commanded us concerning the count of the Omer.

Today is day ____, which is ____ week(s) and ____ day(s) of the omer.

3. **Write in the journal.** Review the fruit of the week and write down brief answers to the reflection questions. Discuss your answers with your study buddy.
4. **Prepare to give.** Set aside one dollar per night to present as your offering for Shavuot, May 25–27.
5. **Register for Tikkun Leil Shavuot:** May 25/26, 2023, 9 PM–6 AM Eastern Time.

Late night torah study at your fingertips! Study the Torah with premier scholars of the Bible, Judaism, and Theology all from the comfort of your own home.

For details and FREE registration: umjc.org/events

WEEK 1 LOVE



If I speak with the tongues of men and of angels but have not love, I have become a noisy gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have all faith so as to remove mountains but have not love, I am nothing. If I give away all that I own and if I hand over my body so I might boast, but have not love, I gain nothing.

— 1 Corinthians 13:1–3 TLV

Love is expressed in compassion, but this must be practiced in balance. Am I compassionate to a fault? Or slow to show compassion?

To whom do I have difficulty showing compassion?

Who can I reach out to this week to extend compassion?

WEEK 2 JOY



*You make me know the path of life;
in your presence is unbounded joy,
in your right hand eternal delight.*

— Psalm 16:11 CJB

When does joy seem hardest to attain?

Joy is fueled by gratitude.

What have I begun to take for granted or feel entitled to?

Who can I show sincere gratitude to this week?

WEEK 3 PEACE & PATIENCE



Slowness to anger shows great understanding, but a short-tempered person exalts foolishness. A tranquil mind gives life to the flesh, but passion makes the bones rot.

— *Proverbs 14:29–30 literal translation*

In what situations do I find myself losing patience?

Is there a pattern or link between these situations?

What is one patience-testing situation I will likely encounter this week, and how can I approach it differently?

WEEK 4 KINDNESS & GOODNESS



What credit is it to you if you love only those who love you? Why even sinners love those, who love them? What credit is it to you if you do good only to those who do good to you? Even sinners do that. What credit is it to you if you lend only to those who you expect will pay you back? Even sinners lend to each other, expecting to be repaid in full. But love your enemies, do good, and lend expecting nothing back!
— Luke 6:32–35 CJB

Do I tend to lean towards excessive kindness, or towards stinginess, with my time, money, or words of encouragement?

What are the fears or longings that drive me in either direction?

Who have I been intending to show kindness to, but have neglected or avoided?
What can I do this week?

WEEK 5 FAITHFULNESS

*Lying lips are detestable to Adonai,
but those who act faithfully are His delight.
A clever person conceals his knowledge,
but the heart of a fool blurts out folly.*
— Proverbs 12:22–23 TLV



Have I recently betrayed a confidence or not followed through on a commitment?

Do I need to make amends with someone about this?

What specific opportunities to practice faithfulness am I likely to encounter this week?

WEEK 6 HUMILITY

I am telling every single one of you, through the grace that has been given to me, not to have exaggerated ideas about your own importance. Instead, develop a sober estimate of yourself based on the standard which God has given to each of you, namely, trust.

— Romans 12:3 CJB

In what ways do I tend to hold too high an opinion of myself? Too low an opinion?



When I receive praise or criticism, how do I tend to react?

What's a specific way that I can practice humility instead of an exaggerated idea of my own importance this week?

WEEK 7 SELF-CONTROL

*It isn't good to eat too much honey
or to seek honor after honor.
Like a city breached, without walls,
is a person who lacks self-control.
— Proverbs 25:27–28 CJB*



Are there areas of my life that reflect extreme order? That reflect chaos?

How do I respond when my plans are disrupted by others?

What areas of my life need more order or more flexibility? What can I do this week to make an improvement?

REGISTER FOR TIKKUN LEIL SHAVUOT

DATE: May 25-26, 2023

TIME: 9:00 PM - 6:00 AM EST

umjc.org/events

Set aside \$1 per day as a Shavuot Offering
Give in support of new Jewish immigrants to
Israel from Ethiopia, Ukraine, and Russia.
umjc.org/donate



*With special thanks to Rabbi Jason
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of Riverton Mussar, for inspiring this
Mussar-focused Omer calendar.*

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