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2017

# UNCOVERING MY SOUL

Using Midrash to Discover our Hidden  
Truths and Big Life Questions

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# RATIONALE

*And God blew into the nostril the breath of life, neshimat chayim, and the human became a living being, nefesh chayah. – Genesis 2:7 (Mishkan T'filah)*

This verse from Genesis makes a distinction between a human and a living being. Jewish tradition understands that the *nefesh*, the breath or soul, is the key ingredient which transforms a human into a *nefesh chayah*, a living being, through the gift of *neshimat chayim*, the breath of life. Based on this understanding of life, *nefesh* is essential to human life. By understanding *nefesh* as “soul,” this text teaches us that humans cannot transform into living beings without a connection to our soul.

However, many people in the world operate as if they had no connection to their soul. In a world where humans are disconnected from their souls we can barely stand to hear the opinion of others despite the fact that Jewish tradition teaches that we are obligated to preserve the minority opinion alongside the majority opinion. Parker Palmer teaches, “As we become more obsessed with succeeding, or at least surviving, in [the] world, we lose touch with our souls and disappear into our roles... We sense that something is missing in our lives and search the world for it, not understanding that what is missing is us.” Our hearts hardened hide our souls and we live like contemporary pharaohs protected behind armors of anger and masks of mistrust, shouting “No!” preventing the redemption of the world. But today, there is no modern Moses shouting “Let my people go!” Today, each of us must act like a personal Moses, demanding of ourselves to, “Let my heart and soul go!”

While healing the brokenness in ourselves is an admirable cause in-and-of-itself, Jewish tradition understands that each life is integrally connected to the entire world. Our lives are broken because our private and public lives do not align; our authentic identity remains hidden for fear of being chastised, humiliated, criticized, and attacked.<sup>1</sup> We harden our hearts to protect our souls and begin to forget the authentic moral self which dwells within. We live like Pharaoh, with wounded hearts hardened, our internal moral lives divided and enslaved by our external lives. So, to release our souls from slavery we must start by looking within to heal and reintegrate ourselves. By healing the brokenness in ourselves we also heal the brokenness in the world.

We can start to heal ourselves by reconnecting with our souls. However, connecting with our soul is difficult work. Parker Palmer explains,

Like a wild animal, the soul is tough, resilient, savvy, and self-sufficient: it knows how to survive in hard places... Yet despite its toughness, the soul is also shy. Just like a wild animal, it seeks safety in the dense underbrush, especially when other people are around... But if we will walk quietly into the woods, sit patiently at the base of a tree, breath with the earth, and fade into our surroundings, the wild creature we seek might put in an appearance... Unfortunately, *community* in our culture too often means a group of people who go crashing

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<sup>1</sup> Adapted from (Palmer 2009, Loc. 111).

through the woods together, scaring the soul away... we scare off all the soulful things, like respectful relationships, goodwill, and hope.<sup>2</sup>

So, then how are we to reconnect with our souls, soften our hearts and live more integrated lives if our souls are too scared to even make an appearance in our lives? Palmer contends that we can help our souls emerge, “by exploring a topic metaphorically, via a poem, a story, a piece of music, or a word of art.”<sup>3</sup> Palmer calls these texts, “third things” explaining,

They represent neither the voice of the facilitator nor the voice of a participant. They have voices of their own, voices that tell the truth about a topic but, in the manner of metaphors... Mediated by a third thing, truth can emerge from, and return to, our awareness at whatever pace and depth we are able to handle—sometimes inwardly in silence, sometimes aloud in community—giving the shy soul the protective cover it needs.<sup>4</sup>

In other words, the “third thing” provides a non-judgmental protective shield from the harshness of the world so the soul feels safe to emerge. And the truth embedded within the “third thing” evokes in us whatever the soul wishes to respond to, whatever moral truth is embedded within us.

Palmer’s notion of the “third thing” is a compelling contemporary notion, but the “third thing” has been part of Jewish practice for millennia. For the rabbis, the “third thing” was the biblical text. They wrote midrash as a safe medium to explore their souls, when it might have been too painful or even dangerous to openly ask the questions about the meaning of life and interpersonal relationships. The rabbis had no problem exploring difficult issues and the biggest questions of life through the safe lens of biblical characters. The rabbis rewrote and added to the biblical narratives to express their own internal moral truths which allowed their souls to emerge.

As contemporary Jews, we can also explore bible as the “third thing.” But, even more compelling are the midrashim which resulted from the rabbi’s explorations. By using midrash as the “third thing” we are not only invited into the biblical text, but also into a conversation with the rabbis and a much more expansive and deep set of texts.

By using midrash as the “third thing” we follow in the tradition of our ancestors of using text as a protection for our souls so we can connect to the deep truths tucked inside. By connecting with our souls, we also discover internal moral truths which help us integrate our internal and external lives. Studying midrash can help us heal and move towards wholeness. But, midrash can do something that Palmer’s third thing cannot accomplish. At times the internal search can feel solitary and lonely, but midrash connects us to the larger Jewish community which has existed over millennia. The Jewish community has wrestled with the same internal struggles as we do today. midrash helps us understand

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<sup>2</sup> (Palmer 2009, Loc. 615).

<sup>3</sup> (Palmer 2009, Loc. 944).

<sup>4</sup> (Palmer 2009, Loc. 944).

that though the search for our soul can be painful and feel lonely, we are actually joining in the conversation started by our ancestors, and with them by our side we are never truly alone.

This course will use midrash, mostly narrative midrash, to invite students to explore their souls by seeking to uncover truths surrounding the big questions of human existence. At the heart of this course are the following enduring understandings:

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

While the exploration of midrash is worthwhile for people of all ages, this course will focus on high schoolers in eleventh through twelfth grade. Pulled between family, school, friends, and extra-curricular activities, these teens are at the beginning of their own struggle between integration of their internal and external lives. High external pressures to succeed force these students to neglect their internal lives beginning the process of hardening their hearts and scaring off their souls. Exploring midrash with this age group, at the crucial juncture, can provide them with the tools to access their souls and live lives of wholeness for the rest of their lives. By connecting with their souls through midrash and aspects of contemporary society, these teens will begin to learn who they are as unique individuals, separate from outside influences and external pressures. As the students learn to become self-differentiated living beings by exploring themselves and their own particular midrashic traditions, they will be better equipped to go out into the world and appreciate the traditions of others. Additionally, studying midrash will place these teens in a community of peers who all have similar struggles, helping them to feel less isolated in what can feel like a harsh world.

The authentic assessment for the curriculum will be for the students to identify a truth embedded within their soul and then participate in the rabbinic process of writing a midrash to explore the big question around that discovered truth. As students explore themselves and their lives through midrash they will feel safe allowing their souls to emerge and expressing their own truths to their community. Students will learn how to ask questions of “texts” and how to use “texts” as a means for self-exploration with the goals of uncovering big questions they are wrestling with in their life. Additionally, they will feel comfortable with midrash as a technology which invites the soul out to play. Play becomes a key aspect of this curriculum because it invites students to be vulnerable because playful experimentation is void of judgment. Using play to explore midrash also teaches students to approach the text and their lives from different vantage points. By playing with a biblical story each student will engage with the Jewish tradition of creating their own midrash which not only explores truths of their own soul, but is also equally as inviting to others.

# NOTE TO TEACHER

Dear Teacher,

You are about to set out on an expedition to uncover perhaps the most elusive creature known to humanity, the human soul. This curriculum is meant for you to act as the navigator on this journey as each of your students will act both as fellow explorers and as the holy vessels for exploration. You and your students will begin to uncover your whole selves and discover a deep connection to a Jewish midrashic tradition, which will act as a partner for you on your travels. The work you will do throughout this curriculum will be challenging, emotionally, intellectually, and spiritually. However, the reward at the end is a deeper understanding of yourself and your students' selves and a deeper connection to each other's souls.

Before you set out on this expedition please read the following manual to better understand this curriculum.

## WHO IS THE TEACHER FOR THIS CURRICULUM?

This curriculum is heavily based on midrashic text study. While it is scaffolded for students who have never had any exposure to Jewish texts, you, the teacher, must be an experienced connoisseur of Jewish text. Since the type of text study is about uncovering the deep psychological questions and truths imbedded within the texts you should also be comfortable moving beyond the basic understanding of the text and exploring deep and challenging questions about what it means to be human. Finally, while this text uses the intellect as the access point for textual understanding, most lessons focus on the emotion and the spirit, so you should be comfortable facilitating a holding environment for emotions and spirits which may have never before been explored.

## HOW TO USE THIS CURRICULUM GUIDE

### STRUCTURE

The structure of this curriculum is very carefully scaffolded. The lessons and units build very intentionally on the lessons and units that come before them so that the students feel more comfortable with midrash and exploring their souls and big questions as the curriculum progresses. It may be jarring for a student, intellectually, emotionally, and spiritually to jump into a place in the curriculum which they have not worked towards. Therefore, it would be difficult to do this curriculum out its designed sequence.

### ORGANIZATION

This curriculum guide is organized into five units. Each unit begins with a title page that states its particular enduring understandings, essential questions, goals, and objectives. Following the unit title page are the lessons for the unit. Each lesson contains its own distinct rational (for unscripted lessons), essential questions, goals, objectives, and material list. Any media that is referred to in the material list is hyperlinked to the corresponding media. Any worksheets, midrashim, pictures, or other text which

are needed in the lesson can be found in the Materials section, directly following the Lesson Plan section.

Most, but not all, lessons follow a similar four-part structure in order to scaffold the students' ability to ask big questions and uncover a piece of their soul based on a midrash. This structure will look something like:

1. Set induction – to introduce a concept to the students.
2. Activity related to the midrash – to give students a personal and relatable frame for understanding the midrash.
3. Learn the midrash – to dive deep into the midrash and develop a personal connection to it.
4. Personal connection and sharing – This is the most important part of each lesson. In this activity students will be invited to share the big questions they are wrestling with the entire group, based on their learning from the lesson and the midrash.

## ASSESSMENTS

This curriculum guide contains within it many different types of assessment. Each lesson contains its own assessments in the form of observable objectives to ensure that students learn the basic material in each lesson. Most lessons contain a moment of personal connection and sharing, the extent to which students openly share about deep, meaningful, and personally relevant questions will act as an authentic assessment for the lessons where this moment is included. Finally, the major authentic assessment for this curriculum guide is scaffolded in [Unit 5](#) when students create their own midrash that will connect a relevant big question in their lives to a biblical character or story.

## MEMORABLE MOMENTS \*\*\*

Memorable moments are denoted with “\*\*\*” and are special lessons which stand out from the other lessons because they engage multiple enduring understanding and intelligences in one lesson. In this curriculum, there are three memorable moments for the students to experience. The first is in [Unit 1 Lesson 4](#), when the students have the opportunity to explore a complicated midrash with the help of a Pixar director and the movie [Finding Nemo](#). The Second moment is in [Unit 2 Lesson 3](#), when the students have an opportunity to study midrash with and explore their congregation with the most tenured member of the senior staff. The third is the final lesson of the curriculum, [Unit 5 Lesson 5](#), when the students have the opportunity to share the midrash they created with the community and their parents. These lessons have enormous potential to be impactful for the students, so the teacher should take extra care to ensure they are included.

## TECHNOLOGIES

There are two technologies that are repeated throughout this curriculum guide and require deeper explanation.

## JOURNAL

Throughout the curriculum, the students are invited to journal their thoughts and feelings. The goal is to give students a safe and personal space to explore ideas and emotions, some of which they may not be ready to share out loud yet. These journals should be a safe and unique space for each student. Therefore, it would support the overall design of this curriculum guide to elevate these journals to a special level by either giving each student a very nice new journal or giving students time to decorate their journals to make them special, or both!

## BARD MIDRASH TOOLKIT

The BARD Midrashic toolkit is referenced frequently throughout this curriculum guide. This is the technology by which the students will frequently learn midrash. This technology was developed specifically for this curriculum to help students not only attain comprehension of the midrash, but also to help students uncover the big questions with which the midrash is engaged. BARD is an acronym of tools that can be used to develop various levels of understanding of a midrash. The acronym stands for:

1. Biblical Text – Compare to the biblical text to determine how the rabbis added to it.
2. Ask why? – “Why did the rabbis write this addition to the biblical text.”
3. References – Explore the other biblical quotes the midrash references. Go to the biblical quote location and understand the context from which the biblical quote comes to determine how the themes present around the biblical quote relate to the theme of its location in the midrash.
4. Devices – Learn the special literary devices the rabbis use in the midrashic text. These special literary devices will be pointed out as they appear in the lessons to come.

The following is a detailed example, which explains how to use the BARD midrashic Toolkit. The toolkit recommends for the learners to follow the tools in order (B then A then R then D), but it is not always necessary and not all *midrashim* contain the material necessary to use all the tools. The teacher should explore each midrash using the BARD toolkit before each lesson to ensure that they have a grasp of the midrash and some big questions with which it is wrestling. The following example uses the midrash in [Unit 1 Lesson 2](#).

## BARD EXAMPLE

The following are examples of how to use the BARD framework to deep read midrash, but invite your students to ask their own questions of the text. The idea is to understand how the midrash works and what the rabbis are doing so that the bigger questions can emerge from the deep understanding of the text.

Before a student can use the BARD Midrash Toolkit they need to have a basic cognitive understanding of the midrash. So, before a student uses the BARD method ensure they read through the midrash at least once.



## BIBLICAL TEXT

This midrash only uses the verse from Exodus 13:19 and then the rest is addition. Explore the context of the biblical text. Examples of questions the students might respond to are the following, but not limited to:

1. What story is this biblical text referring to?
2. To the story of the Exodus. This quote is taken right as Pharaoh tells Moses and the Israelites to leave Egypt, right after the 10th plague.
3. What promise is the biblical text referring to?
4. The promise that Joseph makes the Israelites swear to before he dies in Genesis 50:25.

## ASK WHY

This section invites the readers of the midrash to ask, “Why?” about all the sections that are added to the biblical text. Example of question the students might respond to are the following, but not limited to:

1. Why did the rabbis choose this verse to write a midrash about?
  - a. Maybe because they want to know what Joseph’s bones have to do with the exodus from Egypt.
  - b. Maybe the rabbis are asking, “Why did Moses carry Joseph’s bones with him when the Israelites left Egypt?”
2. Why do the rabbis compare the actions of Moses to the actions of the Israelites?
  - a. Because the rabbis want to show how righteous Moses was as a person. Maybe it is this righteousness that allowed him to be called on by God to lead the Israelite people.
3. Moses lived 430 years after Joseph died, how did he know where Joseph was buried?
  - a. The midrash says he asked Serach the daughter of Asher
4. Who is Serach the daughter of Asher?
  - a. She is a mythical *woman* that is referred to in the bible who never dies.
  - b. It is also significant to note the special role women play in the story of the exodus, without Serach daughter of Asher and other women (including Miriam, Pharaoh’s daughter, Shifra, Puah, etc.) the Israelites would never have been freed from slavery
5. Why did the rabbis imagine Joseph’s coffin at the bottom of the Nile?
  - a. In the rabbi’s imagination, the Egyptians know about the promise the Israelites made to Joseph, so they sunk his coffin in the Nile thinking that it could never be found so that the Israelites would forever have to remain in slavery.

## REFERENCES

1. Why the reference to Proverbs 10:8?
  - a. This is an answer to the question, “Why did Moses act differently than the Israelites.” Looking just as the verse referred to the rabbis are saying, “Moses is wise.” But, if we

- examine the verses in Proverbs around this verse more is revealed. The second half of the verse says, “*He* whose speech is foolish comes to grief.” This might be referring to Pharaoh who foolishly condemns his own child to the 10<sup>th</sup> plague. Verse seven says, “The name of the righteous is invoked in blessing, but the fame of the wicked rots.” This again might be a reference to Moses and Pharaoh saying, “Moses will be remembered for a blessing because of his righteousness, but Pharaoh, who was concerned with fame will have that very material thing which he valued rot because of his wickedness.”
2. Why the reference to II Kings 6:5-6?
    - a. This is the rabbinic answer to the question, “How did the coffin of Joseph rise out of the Nile?” The rabbis offer the story of Elisha and the proof text that there is precedent for very heavy thing floating on top of water. The next obvious question is, “Why are the rabbis comparing this situation to the situation of Elisha?” This question will be answered in the next section on “devices.”

## DEVICES

1. In this midrash, the device is called *Kal vakhomer*, which means “all the more so.” It works as a device to compare two ideas by stating that if idea “A” is true, then “all the more so” idea “B” must be true as well, i.e. if  $A < B$  and  $B < C$  then  $A < C$ .
  - a. In this midrash, this device works like this, “If Elisha is the disciple of Elijah (which he is in the bible) and he could perform a miracle like making an axe head float, then Moses who is the master of Elijah (because Moses is the greatest prophet of all) can just as easily make a coffin float.

## TERMS, ABBREVIATIONS, AND OTHER CONVENTIONS

The following are a list of terms and abbreviations that are using throughout the curriculum guide. Some of these terms deviate from the common definition and therefore require explanation here:

### TEXT

When the curriculum guide uses the word text, it means text in the broadest sense and may not be a written document. For example, a song, or picture, or video, or even a human being can be a text. The idea is that a text is something which can be read, in the broadest sense of the word, and searched for deeper meaning.

### READER

Like the use of the word text, reader is meant in broadest sense of the word. A reader is anyone who is uncovering, diving into, interpreting, or exploring a text.

### MEDIA

When media is used in the curriculum guide it refers to any type of consumable media, i.e., audio, video, or social.

## SWBAT

Short for “Students Will Be Able To.” This abbreviation is found in the objective sections of lessons and units and describes most literally the skills which students will be able to accomplish by the end of the lesson or unit. A student’s ability to accomplish these skills may also act as an assessment for the lesson or unit.

## SWHTOT

Short for “Students Will Have the Opportunity To.” This abbreviation is a derivation on SWBAT, which focuses on less tangible, less measurable objectives. This curriculum designs many experiences for students to explore different aspects of their souls and this objective ensures that a lesson or unit focuses on creating a particular experience for the student.

## ABBREVIATIONS OF PRIMARY WORKS

ARNA	Avot de Rabbi Nathan version A
ARNB	Avot de Rabbi Nathan version B
BT	Babylonian Talmud
CJ	Chronicles of Jerahmeel
DeutR	Deuteronomy Rabbah
ExR	Exodus Rabbah
EY	Ein Ya'akov
Jos	Josephus
LevR	Leviticus Rabbah
LotJ	Legends of the Jews
LotJN	Legends of the Jews Notes
MdRI	Mekhilta de'Rabbi Ishmael
MidrPM	Midrash Death of Moses
MidrPss	Midrash on Psalms
MidrTan	Midrash Tanchuma (Buber)
NJPS	New JPS Tanakh (1985)
NumR	Numbers Rabbah
PA	Pirke Avot
PdRK	Pesikta de'Rav Kahana
PSPH	Pseudo-Philo
PT	Palestinian Talmud
SD	Sifre Deuteronomy
SN	Sifre Numbers
Tos	Tosefta
TY	Targum Yerushalmi
YS	Yalkut Shim'oni

#### ABBREVIATIONS OF BIBLICAL BOOKS

Dan.	Daniel
Deut.	Deuteronomy
Ecc.	Ecclesiastes
Ex.	Exodus
Ezek.	Ezekiel
Gen.	Genesis
Hos.	Hosea
I Sam.	I Samuel
Isa.	Isaiah
Jer.	Jeremiah
Josh.	Joshua
Lev.	Leviticus
Mal.	Malachi
Mic.	Micah
Num.	Numbers
Prov.	Proverbs
Ps.	Psalms
SoS.	Song of Solomon

#### ABBREVIATIONS OF PARSHIOT AND TALMUDIC TRACTATES

Besh	Beshalach
Huk	Chukkat
Sot	Sotah
VE	va'Etchanan
VY	vaYelekh
VZB	v'Zot ha'Berakhah
Shab	Shabbat
Ned	Nedarim
AZ	Avodah Zarah
Men	Menachot
Hag	Chagigah
BB	Baba Batra
Taan	Ta'anit
Ber	Berakhot

## TRANSLITERATION OF THE HEBREW CONSONANTS

'	alef
‘	ayin
b	bet
g	gimel
d	dalet
h	heh
v	vet, vav
z	zayin
ch	het
t	tet, tav
y	yod
k	kaf
kh	khaf
l	lamed
m	mem
n	nun
s	samekh, sin
p	peh
f	feh
tz	tzadi
k	kof
r	resh
sh	shin

## PRONUNCIATION GUIDE FOR VOWELS

a	as in <i>farm</i>
ai	as in <i>eye</i>
e	as in <i>dent</i>
ei	as in <i>hay</i>
i	as in <i>hit</i> or <i>heat</i>
o	as in <i>hope</i>
u	as in <i>food</i>

# SCOPE & SEQUENCE

## 1. INTRODUCTION: MIDRASH IN MY LIFE

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This unit will explore big questions in student's lives as expressed by different media in their lives (music, blogs, social media, movies). This exploration of contemporary texts will act as a launching pad for exploring midrashim. Each lesson will contain both a contemporary and Jewish text to give the students exposure to the method the rabbis use to write midrashim and explore similar big questions.

## 2. STORYTELLING: HOW THE STORIES WE TELL EXPRESS OUR SOULS' DESIRES

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This unit will explore the different stories students tell in their lives: stories about their origin, their past, their community, and stories they tell about themselves. Exploring these stories will help students discover that the way they tell stories influence the way they understand the world and themselves soul. Students will explore various midrashim to understand how the rabbis used midrash to tell stories and wrestle with big questions.

## 3. RELATIONSHIPS: THE STORIES WE TELL ABOUT THE ONES WE LOVE

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Students will explore the different relationships in their lives (friends, family, romantic relationships, and God) as a way to uncover the big questions they are wrestling with about relationships at this point in their life. Students will explore various midrashim as a way to discover the questions the rabbis were wrestling with and as a way to invite the students to explore their own relationships.

## 4. ENDINGS: THE PAINFUL EMOTIONS ENDINGS CAN BRING

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Students will explore different sections of a midrash on Moses' death, *Petirat Moshe*. They will explore the different endings experienced by Moses, the Israelite People, Joshua, and God and the emotions created by experiencing each of those endings. In particular students will explore the painful emotions felt around endings as an invitation for the students to explore their own pain and suffering. Students will learn that they can explore big questions about endings, pain, and suffering by reading midrash and asking themselves how they can relate to the questions the rabbis are asking.

## 5. MY QUESTION, MY MIDRASH: MAKING MIDRASH OUT OF MY LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS

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In this unit students will uncover a big question that they are currently wrestling with and link it to a biblical character or story they particularly connect with. Students will then write their own modern midrash in which that character or story wrestles with the student's big question. Finally, the students will celebrate all their work throughout the year by sharing their midrash with the community and their family.

# UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION

## MIDRASH IN MY LIFE

### CURRICULUM ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own Midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

### UNIT 1 ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The literary devices used in modern media are comparable to the literary devices used in midrash.
2. In order to uncover big questions, we must understand literary technology.
3. The media we engage with is a vehicle by which we express life's big questions.

### UNIT 1 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How does a person's big life questions subconsciously emerge through the mediums they use to express themselves?
2. How do different types of "texts" help us ask big life questions of ourselves?

### UNIT 1 GOALS

- To show the students that they can uncover big life questions by exploring various forms of media.
- To give students the opportunity to use the BARD Midrash toolkit.
- To give students opportunities to practice asking big life questions of themselves.
- To show students how the rabbis played with and added to the biblical text.

### UNIT 1 OBJECTIVES

#### BY THE END OF THIS UNIT...

- SWBAT use and apply the BARD method to midrashic texts.
- SWBAT explore and probe "texts" for big questions.
- SWHTOT ask themselves big life questions which they discovered in "texts."



# LESSON 1: MUSIC

## RATIONALE

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This lesson introduces students to the idea that there is embedded meaning within texts. It teaches students that the bible is connected to other texts that playfully expand on the biblical story. Finally, introduces the idea of a safe space where you can explore your soul and ask big life questions.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How do texts subconsciously ask big life questions?
2. How does looking deeply at a text help me understand the big questions I am asking in my life?

## GOALS

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- To show students that music is a “text” which contains within it big life questions.
- To invite students to explore the music they are listening to and how that is connected to big questions they are asking themselves.
- To show students that biblical texts are reflected in contemporary music and how that contemporary music is a midrash on the biblical text.
- To invite students to explore what makes a safe space.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT begin picking apart “texts” to mine them for big life questions.
- SWBAT articulate how the creation story from Genesis is related to [“Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#)
- SWHTOT explore the big questions [“Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#) is asking.
- SWHTOT create a blessing to consecrate the sacred space of the classroom.

## MATERIALS

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- Computer or audio player to play the following song
  - [“Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#) (5:34)
- Handout: Lyrics of the song [“Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#)
- Handout: Questions for Deep Reading A “Text”

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION: INTRODUCTIONS

### INSTRUCTION TO TEACHER

1. Set the classroom up with chairs in a circle, or in such a way as to create an intimate space.
2. Once all the students are sitting, play the song [“Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch](#).
3. Invite each student to introduce themselves by sharing a song which they have been listening to this week.

### MUSIC: A “TEXT” OF MY LIFE

This first activity opens the students up to the idea that music is a “text” of our life and by exploring “why” we are drawn to a particular song we can learn more about the big questions we are asking ourselves. The teacher should invite students to explore for a minute the various songs they are listening to and what about those songs they are attracted to: maybe the melody and harmonies, maybe the beat and tempo, and maybe the lyrics, but more than likely we connect to a song because we connect to a combination of all three.

The teacher should explain that in this class students will pause and look at the various “texts” which define our lives because by looking at these “texts” we can learn more about ourselves and our souls.

1. Break students up into small groups, two to three students in a group.
2. Pass out the handout, Lyrics to “Origin of Love” – Hedwig and the Angry Inch, to each student.
3. Pass out the handout, Questions for Deep Reading A “Text,” one for each group.

Invite the students to listen to the song a second time and then answer the questions on the handout in their small group. This activity will help students learn how to pick apart “texts” and also introduces them to the BARD toolkit, which will be taught in depth in Lesson 2.

After students have completed the Questions for Deep Reading A “Text” handout, the teacher should invite students to share their answers with the class. When the class has shared, the teacher should lead a discussion and record answers on the board about the question, “Considering all that we have learned about this song, what seem to be some of the big questions about life that the song writer is asking?”

### BLESSINGS FOR SOUL STUDY

During each class students will be invited to explore the big life questions which were uncovered from studying the midrash for themselves. The purpose of this activity is to consecrate the sacred act of “text” study and “soul” study which the students and teacher will embark on during this course.

Teacher should write the blessing for Torah study on the board and lead a discussion prompted by the questions (note the **bolded** text are various translations of the Hebrew word, *laasok* לַעֲסֹק),

- Why do we way a blessing when we study Torah?

- Why do you think the rabbis wrote this specific blessing for Torah study?

#### BLESSING FOR TORAH STUDY

*Baruch atah, Adonai Eloheinu, Melech haolam, asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav laasok b'divrei Torah*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְהוָה אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ–הָעוֹלָם אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְעִסֵּק בְּדִבְרֵי-תוֹרָה

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe, who hallows us with mitzvot, commanding us **to engage/to busy ourselves/to work at/to be involved with** words of Torah.

After the discussion, the teacher should explain that,

“Torah is not just the five books of Moses; it is any Jewish teaching which brings meaning into our lives. In this class, we will be studying the Torah of our souls, which is just as, if not more important, than the five books of Moses. Just like we recognize the moment of studying Torah as sacred by saying a blessing, we should also recognize that studying the Torah of our souls is sacred by saying a blessing. I recognize that sharing what is deep in our souls might be hard or scary. So, what are the qualities of a safe space that you would like to create right here that would help each of you feel comfortable sharing the Torah in your souls.”

Then the teacher should explain, that in addition to creating a sacred space to study the Torah in our souls, we want to honor the Torah which has been shared and the sacred community which allowed for us to feel comfortable exploring our souls. The teacher should write the *shehecheyanu* prayer on the board and lead a discussion about it and how it helps us answer the following questions:

- “How should we give thanks to each other and to God for allowing us to participate and support each other in exploring our souls?”
- “How should we thanks God and each other for allowing us to share sacred time together?”

#### SHEHECHEYANU

*Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam, shehecheyanu, v'kiy'manu, v'higianu laz'man hazeh.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם שֶׁהַחַיָּנוּ וְקִיַּמָּנוּ וְהִגִּיעָנוּ לְזֶמֶן הַזֶּה:

Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of all: for giving us life, sustaining us, and enabling us to reach this season.

Teacher will lead the class in a discussion about the kind of safe space the students would like to create. After the discussion, the teacher will invite the students to come up with the blessings that they will recite at the beginning and end of each class to create a sacred and safe space.

#### CONCLUSION

Teacher and students should recite the blessings all together.

# MATERIALS

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## LYRICS FROM ["ORIGIN OF LOVE" – HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH](#)

THE TEXT IS BY JOHN CAMERON MITCHELL, AND THE MUSIC AND LYRICS ARE BY STEPHEN TRASK. (HEDWIG AND THE ANGRY INCH N.D.)

When the earth was still flat,  
And the clouds made of fire,  
And mountains stretched up to the sky,  
Sometimes higher,  
Folks roamed the earth

Like big rolling kegs.  
They had two sets of arms.  
They had two sets of legs.  
They had two faces peering  
Out of one giant head  
So they could watch all around them  
As they talked; while they read.

And they never knew nothing of love.  
It was before the origin of love.  
The origin of love

And there were three sexes then,  
One that looked like two men  
Glued up back to back,  
Called the children of the sun.  
And similar in shape and girth  
Were the children of the earth.  
They looked like two girls  
Rolled up in one.

And the children of the moon  
Were like a fork shoved on a spoon.  
They were part sun, part earth  
Part daughter, part son.

The origin of love

Now the gods grew quite scared  
Of our strength and defiance  
And Thor said,  
"I'm gonna kill them all  
With my hammer,  
Like I killed the giants."  
And Zeus said, "No,  
You better let me  
Use my lightening, like scissors,  
Like I cut the legs off the whales  
And dinosaurs into lizards."  
Then he grabbed up some bolts  
And he let out a laugh,  
Said, "I'll split them right down the middle.  
Gonna cut them right up in half."  
And then storm clouds gathered above  
Into great balls of fire

And then fire shot down  
From the sky in bolts  
Like shining blades  
Of a knife.  
And it ripped  
Right through the flesh  
Of the children of the sun  
And the moon  
And the earth.  
And some Indian god  
Sewed the wound up into a hole,  
Pulled it round to our belly  
To remind us of the price we pay.  
And Osiris and the gods of the Nile  
Gathered up a big storm

To blow a hurricane,  
To scatter us away,  
In a flood of wind and rain,  
And a sea of tidal waves,  
To wash us all away,  
And if we don't behave  
They'll cut us down again  
And we'll be hopping round on one foot  
And looking through one eye.

Last time I saw you  
We had just split in two.  
You were looking at me.  
I was looking at you.  
You had a way so familiar,  
But I could not recognize,  
Cause you had blood on your face;  
I had blood in my eyes.  
But I could swear by your expression

That the pain down in your soul  
Was the same as the one down in mine.  
That's the pain,  
Cuts a straight line  
Down through the heart;  
We called it love.  
So we wrapped our arms around each other,  
Trying to shove ourselves back together.  
We were making love,  
Making love.  
It was a cold dark evening,  
Such a long time ago,  
When by the mighty hand of Jove,  
It was the sad story  
How we became  
Lonely two-legged creatures,  
It's the story of  
The origin of love.  
That's the origin of love.

## QUESTIONS FOR DEEP READING A “TEXT”

### BIBLICAL TEXT

#### GENESIS 1:26

And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. **They** shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth."

#### GENESIS 5:1-2

<sup>1</sup>This is the record of Adam's line. -- When God created man, God made him in the likeness of God;  
<sup>2</sup>**male and female God created them.**

1. What biblical story is the song referring to?

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2. What do you notice about the **bolded** text in the biblical verses? How does the **bolded** text relate to the song?

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### ASK WHY

1. Why do you think the writer of this song wrote this song?

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2. What aspects of the biblical text do you think the writer of the song is trying to explore?

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## REFERENCES

Read the following texts, both Jewish and Greek, upon which the text of this song is based and then respond to the questions.

### PLATO: ARISTOPHANES' SPEECH FROM PLATO'S SYMPOSIUM

You all will learn about the nature of humanity and its experiences. For long ago [human's] nature was not as it is now - one became the other. For at first there were three species [or sexes] of humans, not two... Each human was in the shape of a rounded whole, its back and sides making a circle having four hands, and legs the same number as hands, and two faces upon a circular neck (identical in all ways), and a head for the faces (each one facing the opposite way), and four ears, and two genitals, and everything else likewise.

I have said there are three species and such things because the male was originally a descendant of the Sun, and the female of the Earth, and the species sharing both is of the Moon, because the Moon shares both [the Sun and the Earth] ... I have also said that their awesome strength, force, and pride made them formidable, so they attacked the gods... So, Zeus and the other gods counseled together because it was necessary to do something and retaliate. But neither could they slay them like they had thunder-bolted the Giants, and thus annihilate them (and forever end the honor and sacrifices due them from humanity) nor could they let them become uncharmed. With toil, Zeus devised a plan. "In my opinion," He said, "I have the means to both let the humans continue to be, as well as put an end to their 'unpruned' state, by making them weak. Now here is what I do to them," He said. "I slice each of them in two, and thus they will be weak, but at the same time more useful to us through being a greater number. [Zeus sliced] the humans in two just as one cuts fruit for preservation... He asked Apollo to... heal their wounds... but leaving a few around the navel, to remind them of how they were in their ancient state.

After that, with their natures hewn in two, each one missed the union with its other half. They threw their arms about each other and were woven together with one another, desiring to grow together...

## JUDAISM

Rabbi Samuel son of Nachman (4<sup>th</sup> century) believed God created Adam double-faced, connected back to back, then split Adam and made two separate human beings.<sup>5</sup>

1. How do these two texts help you better understand the song?

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1. Does knowing the origin of the story from the song change the way you relate to it? Why?

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## DEVICES

Music is comprised of many elements: notes, tempo, lyrics, etc. When placed together each of these elements creates the whole “feeling” of the song. To help you better understand the song, explore each of these elements below.

1. Think of the style of music to which the lyrics are set. How do the tempo, melody, and lyrics work together and separately to influence the message of the song?

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<sup>5</sup> See GenR 8:1.



# LESSON 2: SOCIAL MEDIA

## RATIONALE

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This lesson teaches students that they can uncover an author's big questions by examining and comparing smaller details within a text. It introduces students to the BARD method to study midrash. Finally, it introduces students to the idea of textual tools and how those tools help the reader uncover big life questions.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How do people consciously and unconsciously convey a message?
2. How does the truth in a person's soul appear in the shadows of everyday life?

## GOALS

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- Students will explore various social media personalities and uncover the big questions with which the personality is wrestling.
- Students will articulate the various mediums social media uses to convey messages.
- Students will examine both the conscious and unconscious messages and questions of various social media personalities.
- Students will explore how "texts" from social media and midrash both contain big questions.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT begin uncovering the hidden questions within a text which reveal deep questions within the writer's soul.
- SWBAT explain the various mediums social media uses to convey a message.
- SWBAT compare the tools used in social media and midrash which help the reader understand the "text."

## MATERIALS

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- Twitter samples from Lin-Manuel Miranda and Caitlyn Jenner, or social media personalities of your choosing.
- Twitter Worksheet
- Midrash on Joseph's Bones

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET-INDUCTION

As students walk in and sit down, have them compose a 140-character tweet about their last week. The tweet should contain something positive that happened to them and something challenging that happened to them.

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

When the students' tweets are completed, invite them to share with the group. After everyone has shared, explore the various tools used in a tweet and what that tool's purpose is:

@	Used to directly call out a particular twitter account / person
#	Used to create a community conversation around a topic OR tag tweets into a category
http://www.url.com	Used to link to a website, article, video, etc.
Emoji	Used to convey emotion
Pictures/Video	Used as a visual aid to the text

The students should understand the tools so that they can fully participate in the next activity.

## THE TRUTH HIDDEN IN TWEETS

Break the students up into *chevruta* pairs and give each pair the printouts of two twitter personalities (either the ones provided in this lesson, or two of your choosing). Give each group the Twitter Worksheet to fill out as they explore the tweets.

Examples of some big questions from both personalities might be:

Lin-Manuel Miranda

1. What is the role of Spanish in the English Language?
2. How do foreigners make for a more rich society?
3. Is it possible to care for the "other" as if they were part of our own family?
4. What role does tradition play in contemporary society?

Caitlyn Jenner

1. How can one live as a conservative liberal?
2. How does one define beauty for oneself?
3. How does a person live a life of truth when society tells them their life is a contradiction?

Explore with the students how the various twitter tools helped them uncover the big questions each of these twitter personalities is wrestling with. An example might be, "*I noticed from the # that Caitlyn*

*wants to be in the #trans, #golfingforfood, and #maccaitlynjenner communities. To be part of all those communities might seem like a contradiction at first glance, but she is trying to be her whole self and do it!”*

## DEEP READING MIDRASH – LEARN THE BARD METHOD

On the surface, midrash can often appear to be a nice addition to the biblical text; a pleasant story the rabbis added to the text. But, beneath the surface are big questions about life with which the rabbis are wrestling. In order to uncover these big questions, like we needed when uncovering the big questions in the tweets, we need tools to understand the midrash. The teacher should read through the midrash for student comprehension and then lead a mini-lecture on the BARD method (the BARD method is explained in the Note to Teacher section using the midrash from this lesson). The teacher will explore the BARD tools with students and determine how each of the tools helps better understand this midrash.

## BIG QUESTIONS: THE MIDRASH AND MY LIFE

After exploring the midrash in depth ask the students to take a step back and think about the midrash in its entirety. They can think about the following questions or more of your design,

1. What are the big themes of the midrash?
  - a. Moving from slavery to freedom (the Israelites being freed)
  - b. What makes a person righteous?
    - i. Fulfilling promises (Moses fulfilling the Israelite’s promise to Joseph).
    - ii. Being concerned with honoring other people and not with material things (Moses being concerned with Joseph’s bones vs. the Israelites being concerned with the jewels of Egypt.)
  - c. How does the path to redemption begin?
    - i. By honoring other people (Moses honoring Joseph)
  - d. Is this only about freedom from oppression or is it also about something bigger?
    - i. Moses is compared to Elijah who is supposed to bring about the Messiah and messianic age. In a sense this midrash is saying that the redemption of the world starts with Moses’ actions, which then begs the reader, “How can you act in similar ways to also help bring about the redemption of the world?”
2. How do these questions appear in your life?
  - a. To what are you feeling enslaved and what do you need to do to start moving towards freedom?
  - b. How can you become a more righteous person like Moses?
    - i. In what ways are you more concerned with the material than with the human?
  - c. Where does your path to redemption begin?
  - d. What does the redemption of the world look like to you, and how are you going to help the world get their through righteous actions?

- e. What do Moses' actions teach you about yourself?

## CONCLUSION

Pretend you are Moses about to leave Egypt and lead the Jewish people to freedom and the Promised Land, what is your tweet?

## MATERIALS

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LIN-MANUEL MIRANDA TWITTER FEED FROM 1/23/17

**Lin-Manuel Miranda** @Lin\_Manuel 7h7 hours ago

More

Good night from foggy ! \*squints\* I see you!



**Lin-Manuel Miranda** @Lin\_Manuel 7h7 hours ago

Lin-Manuel Miranda Retweeted The Mountain Goats

Same.

Lin-Manuel Miranda added,



**The Mountain Goats** @mountain\_goats

My favorite part of every trip to the pharmacy is locating the blank cassettes. It's like the best of all treasure hunts

35 replies 159 retweets 3,101 likes

35



**Lin-Manuel Miranda** @Lin\_Manuel 10h10 hours ago

Lin-Manuel Miranda Retweeted Mali



Oh yeah. I forgot. Thank you! ENLAÑOL!  
Lin-Manuel Miranda added,

[#Spanglañish](#)

**Mali** @daregust

@Lin\_Manuel @Residente @nytimes what happened with ENLAÑOL Lin? I had your back compadre

[Lin-Manuel Miranda Retweeted](#)



**REMEZCLA** @REMEZCLA 11h11 hours ago

.@Residente on Collabing with [@Lin\\_Manuel@Lin\\_Manuel](#) Miranda for His New Album & Rapping in English [j.mp/2jUtstd](#) [j.mp/2jUtstd](#)



[Lin-Manuel Miranda Retweeted](#)



**The Cinegogue** @TheCinegogue 15h15 hours ago

Prop room for Gremlins (1984) dir. Joe Dante



Lin-Manuel Miranda @Lin\_Manuel 14h14 hours ago

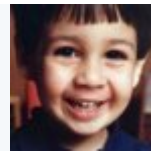
They let me call the [@Prizeo@Prizeo](https://youtu.be/aCeQJlcEbS4) winners again! [\\_youtu.be/aCeQJlcEbS4\\_youtu.be/aCeQJlcEbS4](https://youtu.be/aCeQJlcEbS4) You ALL raised a STAGGERING amount of money for [@PPFA@PPFA](#). THANK YOU!



Lin-Manuel

Miranda @Lin\_Manuel

Miranda @Lin\_Manuel 17h17 hours ago



Lin-Manuel

This happened to me 3 years ago. I still think about that dog.



And one morning you will emerge from Central Park with your dog only to see a pregnant, terrified, bleeding 60-lb. dog running in the middle of traffic. You will look around for its owner and see only concerned passersby. And suddenly you are running in traffic on Central Park West, trying to lure or at least scare the dog back on to the curb. And when it miraculously reaches the sidewalk unscathed and lingers for a moment, you will find yourself tackling a pregnant, terrified, bleeding 60-lb. dog and holding on for dear life until another kindly couple can get their dog's spare collar on it. All this while your own dog remains tethered to you, uncomplaining, like a saint. The couple will agree to take the dog to get medical care. You will walk away in a daze, thinking you have just done a host of terrifying things that would have paralyzed you if not for the overriding thought that kicks in and plays louder than everything else: "What if this were my dog What if this were my dog What if this were my dog." And you will hug the shit out of your own dog and go home. Anyway, that was my morning.

[Lin-Manuel Miranda Retweeted](#)



**Trooko** @itsTROOKO 8 Dec 2016

[#Tbt](#) when i played [@Lin\\_Manuel](#) and [@residente@Lin\\_Manuel](#) and [@residente](#) the

beat for "immigrants" at [@electricladystudios](#)



[#HamiltonMixtape](#)



**Lin-Manuel Miranda** @Lin\_Manuel 20h20 hours ago

1. [@Residente@Residente](#) contributes a BLISTERING verse to [#HamiltonMixtape#HamiltonMixtape](#)
2. I spit a verse in Spanglish for his solo debut <https://www.nytimes.com/2017/01/20/arts/music/residente-calle-13-solo-album-interview.html?smid=tw-share&r=0>

## CAITLYN JENNER TWITTER FEED FROM 1/23/17



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner Jan 18

Republicans need help understanding LGBTQ



issues and I'm here to help!



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner Jan 5

Caitlyn Jenner Retweeted MACcosmetics



It's here!!

Caitlyn Jenner added,



**MACcosmetics** @MACcosmetics

All Ages, All Races, All Sexes. #MACCaitlynJenner is online & in stores in the US & Canada now!  
[\\_maccosmetics.com/collections-ma...](http://maccosmetics.com/collections-ma...)





Caitlyn Jenner @Caitlyn\_Jenner Jan 3

2nd collaboration with  
[@MACcosmetics@MACcosmetics](#) coming Jan. 5th!!  
Who's ready to rock 2017? All sexes. All ages. All  
races. [#maccaitlynjenner#maccaitlynjenner](#)



[MACcosmetics](#)



Caitlyn Jenner @Caitlyn\_Jenner 4 Dec 2016

[#CaitlynJennerFoundation](#) has joined w. FireFan to raise money for our community.  
Download & play to help! [\\_bit.ly/2gPPgVk!](#)[\\_bit.ly/2gPPgVk!](#) [#FireFan](#)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 28 Nov 2016

Excited to share this with you all :)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 22 Nov 2016

Caitlyn Jenner Retweeted Brandon Jenner

Blown away by [@BrandonJenner@BrandonJenner](#)'s new video. What a great message for right now. So proud. [#IBelieve#IBelieve](#)  
Caitlyn Jenner added,

**Brandon Jenner** @BrandonJenner

The music video for "I Believe" has officially been released! [\\_youtu.be/85ep1AdR9ZA](https://youtu.be/85ep1AdR9ZA) [#IBelieve](#)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 16 Nov 2016

Time for a little light in the world. These people are so inspiring! Watch their stories to celebrate [#transvoices#transvoices](#) [glaad-transvoices.info](http://glaad-transvoices.info) [glaad-transvoices.info](http://glaad-transvoices.info)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 28 Oct 2016

So proud! All \$1.3 mil from [#MACCaitlynJenner#MACCaitlynJenner](#) sent to 21 [#trans#trans](#) orgs around the US! Thanks [@MACAIDSFund@MACAIDSFund](#) [@MACcosmetics!](#) [#MACCares](#)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 6 Oct 2016

More Couldn't be more proud of [@MISSBLOSSOM9210](#) on being among [@bustle's #BustleUpstarts](#) Award winners! [@MISSBLOSSOM9210](#) on being among [@bustle's #BustleUpstarts](#) Award winners! Congrats :)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 13 Sep 2016

Caitlyn Jenner Retweeted NCAA  
Great job [@ncaa.@ncaa](#). Let's keep it going!  
Caitlyn Jenner added,

**NCAA** @NCAA

NCAA to move 2016-17 championships from North Carolina due to state laws that limit civil rights protections: [on.ncaa.com/NC](http://on.ncaa.com/NC)



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 2 Sep 2016

Great piece from my friend [@nickgadams@nickgadams](#) on casting in Hollywood <http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/matt-bomer-transgender-movie-anything->

<http://www.hollywoodreporter.com/news/matt-bomer-transgender-movie-anything-guest-column-925170>



**Caitlyn Jenner** @Caitlyn\_Jenner 23 Aug 2016

Who's in for a round of golf? Help me promote social justice & bid on my [@charitybuzz](#) auction! [#golfingforgood@charitybuzz](#) auction! [#golfingforgood](#)

## TWITTER WORKSHEET

1. Who is the personality tweeting?

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2. Who are the people they are talking to both directly and indirectly?

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3. What issues are they concerned with?

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4. What communities are they a part of?

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5. Think about the issues this person is concerned with and the communities they are a part of. What are the tensions that this person is wrestling with?

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6. Examine all the tweets of this personality. Considering all the tweets together, what big question do you think you would be asking yourself? How did you come up with that question?

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## MIDRASH ON JOSEPH'S BONES<sup>6</sup>

### WITH SUPPORTING TEXT

ויקח משה את עצמות יוסף עמו - להודיע חכמתו וחסידותו של משה, שכל ישראל עוסקין בבזה - ומשה עוסק במצות עצמות יוסף. עליו הכתוב אומר (משלי י) "חכם לב יקח מצות, ואויל שפתים ילבט". ומשה, מהיכן היה יודע היכן היה קבור יוסף? - אמרו: סרה בת אשר נשתיירה מאותו הדור, והיא הראתה למשה קבר יוסף. אמרה לו: במקום הזה שמוהו!

עשו לו מצרים ארון של מתכת, ושקעוהו בתוך נילוס. בא ועמד על נילוס, נטל צרור וזרק לתוכו, וזעק ואמר: יוסף, יוסף, הגיעה השבועה שנשבע הקב"ה לאברהם אבינו, שהוא גאל את בניו. תן כבוד לה' אלהי ישראל, ואל תעכב את גאולתך, כי בגללך אנו מעוכבים. ואם לאו - נקיים אנחנו משבועתך! מיד צף ארונו של יוסף ונטלו משה. ואל תתמה בדבר הזה, הרי הוא אומר (מלכים ב ו) "ויהי האחד מפיל את הקורה והברזל נפל למים, ויצעק ויאמר אהה אדוני, והוא שואל!" והרי דברים ק"ו: ומה אלישע, תלמידו של אליהו, הציף הברזל - ק"ו למשה רבו של אליהו.

#### **Exodus 13:17-19**

<sup>17</sup> Now when Pharaoh let the people go, God did not lead them by way of the land of the Philistines, although it was nearer; for God said, "The people may have a change of heart when they see war, and return to Egypt." <sup>18</sup> So God led the people roundabout, by way of the wilderness at the Sea of Reeds. Now the Israelites went up armed out of the land of Egypt. <sup>19</sup> And Moses took with him the bones of Joseph, who had exacted an oath from the children of Israel, saying, "God will be sure to take notice of you: then you shall carry up my bones from here with you" (Gen. 50:25).

#### **Proverbs 10:7-9**

<sup>7</sup> The name of the righteous is invoked in blessing, But the fame of the wicked rots. <sup>8</sup> He whose heart is wise accepts commands, But he whose speech is foolish comes to grief. <sup>9</sup> He who lives blamelessly lives safely, But he who walks a

#### **II Kings 6:1**

<sup>1</sup>The disciples of the prophets said to Elisha, "See, the place where we live under your direction is too cramped for us. <sup>2</sup> Let us go to the Jordan, and let us each get a log there and build quarters there for ourselves to live in." "Do so," he replied. <sup>3</sup> Then one of them said, "Will you please come along with your servants?" "Yes, I will come," he said; <sup>4</sup> and he accompanied them. So they went to the Jordan and cut timber. <sup>5</sup> As one of them was felling a trunk, the iron ax head fell into the water. And he cried aloud, "Alas, master, it was a borrowed one!"

<sup>6</sup> "Where did it fall?" asked the man of God. He showed him the spot; and he cut off a stick and threw it in, and he made the ax head float. <sup>7</sup> "Pick it up," he said; so he reached out and took it.

(Exodus 13:19) "*And Moses took the bones of Joseph with him*": This apprises us of the wisdom and saintliness of Moses. All of Israel were occupying themselves with the spoils (of Egypt), and Moses was occupying himself with the mitzvah of the bones of Joseph. Of him it is written (Prov. 10:8) "*The wise of heart will take mitzvah*." And how did Moses know where Joseph was buried? It was said: Serach the daughter of Asher was left of that generation, and she showed Moses the grave of Joseph, saying to him: In that spot did they place him.

The Egyptians made a metal casket for him and sank it in the Nile. (Moses) thereupon stood at the Nile, threw a stone into it, and shouted: "Joseph, Joseph, the oath that the Holy One Blessed be He swore to our father Abraham that He would redeem His children, has materialized. Accord honor to God, the God of Israel, and do not delay our redemption, for it is on your behalf that we are delayed. If you reveal yourself, good; if not we are absolved of your oath (to take your bones with us)" — whereupon Joseph's casket rose to the surface and Moses took it. And do not wonder at this phenomenon. For it is written (II Kings 6:5-6) "*As one of them was felling a tree, the ax blade fell into the water, and he cried out 'Alas, master, (Elisha); it was borrowed!' And the man of God said: 'Where did it fall?' And he showed him the place and he (Elisha) cut off a stick and threw it there, and the iron floated.*" Now does this not follow a *Kal vakhomer*, viz.: If iron floated for Elisha, the disciple of Eliyahu, how much more so for Moses, the master of Eliyahu! ...

<sup>6</sup> Lauderbach Mekhilta, text from [www.Sefaria.org](http://www.Sefaria.org) (13:19), biblical translations form JPS 1985

# LESSON 3: BEHIND THE TWEET

## RATIONALE

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This lesson gives students a first to opportunity to share some of their big life questions. This lesson introduces students to the idea that they can ask the same questions of themselves that the rabbis asked of the biblical text.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How do we uncover the big questions which are underneath text?
2. How does engaging in the big questions of others help us uncover our own big questions?

## GOALS

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- To introduce students to the idea that the rabbis asked similar questions to the ones they are asking today.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWHTOT connect with big questions raised in the lesson and share how they would respond those questions.
- SWBAT uncover big life questions the rabbis are asking.

## MATERIALS

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- “Tweeting Death,” New Yorker Article by Meghan O’Rourke
- Tweets from Scott Simon
- Josephus’ midrash of Moses’ death
- Journals for each student

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Take Josephus' midrash of Moses' death and break up the four paragraphs onto a different page. Place each paragraph in a different section of the room. Tell students to go around the room and read each paragraph. They should pretend they are a social media blogger and have to write a tweet to describe what is happening in each paragraph. They should write their tweets below the paragraph from Josephus.

Teacher will frame this class by explaining that sometimes big questions about life can be hard and painful to explore, i.e. questions about death, suffering, and dying. Teacher will invite students to think about their own questions they have about these topics and then write down in their journals.

The teacher will explain, "Just like all of you have questions about these difficult topics, the rabbis also had questions, some similar and some different, about these topics."

## TWEETING DEATH

Break the students up into small groups of three to five. Pass out the article entitled "Tweeting Death." Invite each group to read through the article and stop after every paragraph to ask the questions:

- "What questions do you have about what Scott Simon is doing?"
- "How do you think Simon's mother felt about what he was doing?"
- "How do you think Simon's mom's doctors and nurses felt about what he was doing?"

The point is to get the students to uncover the larger questions about dying, i.e. "How do you honor someone who is dying?" and "How do you support the loved ones of a person who is dying?"

Bring the class back together and refer the students to a few of the actual tweets from Simon Scott, as needed (there are 24 pages of tweets, do not go through them all, only the ones the teacher feels will yield fruitful discussion), to help the students see what he was actually tweeting and how his tweets evolved over time. Ask each group to respond to the following question, "How do you think Scott might have been feeling and what big questions he might have been struggling with?" i.e. "Where do I go for support while my loved one is dying?"

Record the questions the students raise on the board to later compare when reading Josephus' midrash of Moses' death.

## JOSEPHUS' ACCOUNT OF MOSES' DEATH

Teacher should explain to the students, "The Bible doesn't tell us anything about the circumstances of Moses' death. Josephus had to create this midrash to try and fill in the details of Moses' death. As we read through this midrash we will ask, 'What's bothering Josephus? Why did he write this part of the story?'"

Read through this midrash in its entirety and then break the class up into four groups and give each group a paragraph of the midrash along with the tweets the students wrote at the beginning of class. Each group should compose a tweet which asks a question which they think prompted Josephus to write that paragraph of the midrash.

Invite the students to share their tweets with the class.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher should explain to the students, “Each of us connects to these questions in different ways, some of us have experienced family members or friends dying and some of us are scared about talking about this subject because it is painful and scary. We are about to enter a moment where we give each other the safe space to explore these big questions.”

Invite the students to choose one of the big questions they wrote down at the beginning of the lesson. The students should take five minutes and journal about how and why that question is relevant in your life right now. Why is this question significant to you? Are the people that are involved? What are their relationships to you? How does the midrash help you better understand or further complicate your question?

Teacher will ask any students who wish to share the question they are thinking about and why it is relevant to them right now.

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

### TWEETING DEATH

By Meghan O'Rourke July 31, 2013

<http://www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/tweeting-death>

On Sunday, July 21st, the NPR host Scott Simon's mother entered the I.C.U. at a Chicago hospital, following a surgery. She died on Monday night, at the age of eighty-four. In the week before her death, Simon began live-tweeting his mother's final days to his almost 1.3 million followers from her hospital room. The tweets were poignant and haunting, and have brought Simon—already a mini-celebrity—a new level of renown. Total strangers read what he wrote and responded deeply.

The tweets began, it seemed, almost as a way to pass the time, to alleviate anxiety: "Watching ChiSox vs Tigers game in ICU w/ mother. Score not improving MY blood pressure." They captured his mother's wisecracking, fierce personality: "I tell my mother, 'You'll never stop teaching me.' She said, 'Well don't blame me for everything.' " But as time passed, and her recovery seemed less likely, Simon's tweets became meditative, almost ceremonious in their portrayal of the physical difficulty of dying and the impossible pain of saying goodbye: "Mother asks, 'Will this go on forever?' She means pain, dread. 'No.' She says, 'But we'll go on forever. You & me.' Yes."

Katie Couric, the "Today" show, and many others retweeted these and similar sentences. The brevity and sequentiality of Twitter eerily evokes the reality of time, allowing us to witness an event. Watching someone die brings us powerfully in touch with how brief—yet intense—each life here is. The tweets, which felt almost aphoristic (a mere hundred and forty characters each), underscored one of the strangest things about being with someone at the end of her life: the surreality of time, the way that time bends and distorts, becomes material. Suddenly, we are aware that the sunny summer days won't go on forever. Our time is limited. It's the most obvious thing in the world, and yet the most elusive.

The extraordinary response to Simon's tweets also suggests a hunger on the part of Americans for a way to integrate death and mourning into our lives—a hunger that is being met by social media. Facebook and Twitter are changing the way we mourn—rescuing America from a world where grief was largely silenced and creating, instead, a kind of public space for it. As I observed in *The New Yorker* in 2010, and in my book "The Long Goodbye," in the twentieth century, we had forgotten how to mourn. Having lost the old intimacy with death—living longer, dying in hospitals—we turned it into something "shameful and forbidden," as the historian Philippe Ariès argued, in 1977, in "The Hour of Our Death." And so death and its aftermath became something to "heal" and "get over." Americans adopted a kind of muscle-through-it approach, exemplified in the TV series "24" by the female President staunchly (and, we're meant to think, appropriately) telling her aide, after her son's death, "Grief is a luxury I can't afford right now."

Before the twentieth century, though, private grief and public mourning were tied together. Your mother died, and your neighbors brought casseroles and sat Shiva or stayed for the three-day wake.

Often, the mourners washed the bodies themselves. Funerals (and final illnesses) took place at home. Death itself was hardly private; in the nineteenth century, people used to come and stand in your room, waiting to witness the solemn and ecstatic moment of death itself, as evoked by Emily Dickinson's deathbed poem "I heard a fly buzz when I died": "The Eyes around – had wrung them dry – / And Breaths were gathering firm / For that last Onset – when the King / Be witnessed – in the Room –"

So Simon's Twitter feed was not an imposition of his mourning on others, not some kind of gruesome exhibitionism. It was simply a modern version of what has always existed: a platform for shared grief where the immediate loss suffered by one member of a community becomes an opportunity for communal reckoning and mourning. As the novelist Marilynne Robinson once said, suffering is a human privilege. Grief is the flip side of love. Mourning has become an all too isolated experience—but Facebook and Twitter have become a place (strange as it may seem) where the bereaved can find community, a minyan of strangers to share their prayers. Yes, it might seem strange to stumble upon announcements of death or the intimate details of dying amidst updates about summer trips to Costa Rica, Anthony Weiner's escapades, and the arrival of a new puppy. But this strangeness is the strangeness of the real.

Will more and more people tweet from hospital rooms? It's possible. It's already common on Facebook, where people often announce that a loved one is in the hospital or has died. While some have bemoaned this—the Social Q's column, in my recollection, once pronounced that Facebook was not the place to announce a death—it doesn't feel morbid or inappropriate to me. It's our equivalent of the ringing of church bells in the town square, for better or for worse. And it reminds us to think about the choices we make, the pleasures we take or forget to take in our own daily lives. This unexpected tweet from Simon was among those that moved me the most: "Mother groans w/ pleasure—over flossing. 'When they mention great little things in life, they usually forget flossing.'"

## TWEETS FROM SCOTT SIMON

1. In reply to [Maria Shriver](#)



**Scott Simon** Verified account @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

[@mariashriver](#) Thank you so much for your words, Maria. My family and I so appreciate it.

21 replies 5 retweets 11 likes

2.  **Scott Simon** Verified account @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

Cemetery at first confuses my mother w/ another Patricia. Almost interred next to total stranger. Why not make new friends?

51 replies 31 retweets 108 likes

3.  **Scott Simon** Verified account @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

Bereaved families making arrangements are told to take a 1-800 DIGNITY number. Worthy of Evelyn Waugh...

20 replies 11 retweets 19 likes

4.  **Scott Simon** Verified account @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

But as my mother said, the nice thing about being a Chicagoan is that she'll continue to be able to vote on Election Day.

164 replies 405 retweets 718 likes



5. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

Worst: telling our daughters. Oldest was flinty, youngest sobbed. But guess which one cried long into the night. . .

46 replies23 retweets76 likes



6. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 30 Jul 2013

You wake up and realize: you weren't dreaming. It happened. Cry like you couldn't last night.

236 replies152 retweets274 likes



7. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Thank you for all yr warm wishes and prayers. Such love drives the world.

649 replies193 retweets609 likes



8. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

She will make the face of heaven shine so fine that all the world will be in love with night.

459 replies734 retweets1,612 likes



9. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

The heavens over Chicago have opened and Patricia Lyons Simon Newman has stepped onstage.

1,070 replies629 retweets1,013 likes




10.  **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Heart rate dropping. Heart dropping.

183 replies94 retweets131 likes

~

11.  **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

I think I can safely reveal now that last night we snuck a dram of "grape juice" to my mother. Nurses shocked, shocked!

52 replies37 retweets184 likes

~


12. In reply to [Michele Norris](#)



**Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

[@michele\\_norris](#) Thank you, Michele. I miss my friends & colleagues but am so grateful to hear such warm words from so many.

1 reply3 retweets16 likes

13.  **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

I know end might be near as this is only day of my adulthood I've seen my mother and she hasn't asked, "Why that shirt?"

115 replies175 retweets422 likes



14. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

The lovely cityscape at the foot of my mother's bed:



36 replies 36 retweets 167 likes



15. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Listening to Nat & Natalie sing Unforgettable. Mother & I sang it just two nights ago. Coles have better voices for sure.

31 replies 21 retweets 61 likes



16. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

When she asked for my help last night, we locked eyes. She calmed down. A look of love that surpasses understanding.

87 replies151 retweets427 likes



17. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Her passing might come any moment, or in an hour, or not for a day. Nurses saying hearing is last sense to go so I sing & joke.

66 replies116 retweets213 likes



18. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Can't hold my mother like a baby indefinitely--have to use the bathroom. My wife coming over w/ my mother's husband.

15 replies14 retweets36 likes



19. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

[@SarahJonesNews](#) Sarah contact kathy@kathylayne.com who is routing all contact.

2 replies0 retweets1 like



20. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 29 Jul 2013

Mother cries Help Me at 2:30. Been holding her like a baby since. She's asleep now. All I can do is hold on to her.

108 replies92 retweets190 likes



21. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

I love holding my mother's hand. Haven't held it like this since I was 9. Why did I stop? I thought it unmanly? What crap.

185 replies 1,393 retweets 1,748 likes



22. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

-you med people keep it down?") Tell my mother I'll see my wife downstairs, back in 10. Mother says, "Have a quickie!"

15 replies 15 retweets 145 likes



23. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Was my mother saving this line? My family flies in. My wife & I joke about me sleeping in the ICU ("All the beeps! Can't -

4 replies 9 retweets 29 likes



24. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

In another ICU, father of our friend @RobertFalls201 passed away this AM after a helluva fight. We send our love and prayers.

13 replies 9 retweets 15 likes



25. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

My family has landed! ICU nurse works on mother's hair, using makeup mirror. Almost falls. Mother: "Don't let that break!"

23 replies16 retweets45 likes



26. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Breathing hard now. She sleeps, opens eyes a minute, sleeps. I sing, "I'll always be there, as frightened as you," to her.

59 replies37 retweets89 likes



27. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Mother groans w/ pleasure--over flossing. "When they mention great little things in life, they usually forget flossing."

20 replies54 retweets131 likes



28. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

My mother now wakes only to be gracious. "Is Reggie or Don on-duty? They're both such exquisite gentlemen." (and they are)

18 replies16 retweets54 likes



29. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

-inaneities. I always wound up saying, as I do now, Maybe you're right. But it's not the way I want to live.

18 replies36 retweets114 likes



30. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Been mulling (friendly, Merlot-soaked) arguments with CHitchens on God. Hitch knew more bible & eloquently pointed to-

4 replies32 retweets71 likes



31. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Journos who say they're hard-boiled cause they see so much should know ICU nurses see more in a week. And come out kind.

58 replies686 retweets532 likes



32. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Oh, and: Oh earth, you're too wonderful for anyone to realize you. It goes too quickly.

45 replies370 retweets484 likes



33. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

And: listen to people in their 80's. They have looked across the street at death for a decade. They know what's vital.

40 replies589 retweets608 likes



34. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

I think she wants me to pass along a couple of pieces of advice, ASAP. One: reach out to someone who seems lonely today.

25 replies489 retweets554 likes



35. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

I am not sure my mother understands Twitter or why I tell her millions of people love her--but she says she's ver touched.

34 replies87 retweets185 likes



36. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Just spent 45 mins looking for mother' favorite dental floss. Waste of time? Act of faith.

28 replies20 retweets90 likes



37. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

City is cool, bright, & lovely this morning. My mother touches a splash of sunlight w/ her fingers. "Hello, Chicago!"

2 replies26 retweets77 likes



38. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

I just realized: she once had to let me go into the big wide world. Now I have to let her go the same way.

122 replies261 retweets772 likes



39. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

ICU seems to be staffed by good, smart young docs who think they know everything, and wise RN's who really do.

82 replies516 retweets546 likes



40. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

When my mother woke briefly I sang her My Best Girl. She replied w/ You Are the Sunshine of My Life. Broadway in the ICU.

22 replies61 retweets197 likes



41. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Derek, mother's kind & wise nurse, says "Get some sleep. Mothers like to see sons sleep." But I hold her hand while I can.

17 replies39 retweets107 likes



42. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

By request, my ICU bed. Hermes orange, my mother notes. Note functional nightstand, too:





12 replies6 retweets25 likes



43. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

If we only truly realized how little time we have...

36 replies308 retweets274 likes



44. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

A thought tonight for all who are in pain. We must be stronger than our fears.

22 replies296 retweets337 likes



45. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

I see dawn coming in sky and want to hold it back to keep my mother from what's ahead--to keep my mother, period.

31 replies74 retweets215 likes



46. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Family joins me today. Maybe they'll help me to be strong. My mother showed me how that's done, come to think of it.

14 replies14 retweets56 likes



47. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 28 Jul 2013

Wake up, see my hands shaking. Mother holds them, murmurs, "Goodnight Sweet Prince." Morphine, but no sleep for her.

8 replies18 retweets55 likes



48. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Mother asks, "Will this go on forever?" She means pain, dread. "No." She says, "But we'll go on forever. You & me." Yes.

65 replies281 retweets617 likes



49. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

I don't know how we'll get through these next few days. And, I don't want them to end.

63 replies42 retweets115 likes



50. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Watching 42, mother remembers Leo Durocher made passes at her twice: "Once as a Dodger, once as a Cub." Who's the all-star?

21 replies 38 retweets 141 likes



51. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Thanks for all kind messages. We're watching 42 (movie), cherishing every second of normalcy. Cherish yr mother tonight too.

39 replies 33 retweets 84 likes



52. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

My mother is breathing, finally sleeping. Docs asked what priority is. I just want to take her to sit in our favorite park.

75 replies 33 retweets 94 likes



53. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

-contrite about. But she is typically gracious in saying it w/ Fr. Chuck.

3 replies 5 retweets 12 likes



54. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Old friend, Fr Chuck, comes by to recite Act of Contrition w/ my mother. We love him. My mother has nothing to be-

4 replies8 retweets13 likes



55. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

We're singing through musicals my mother taught me to love (Fiorello now). She says, "I've seen so much talent in this world!"

19 replies8 retweets37 likes



56. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Anytime you've heard me being gracious & kind, it reflected my mother's teaching. Anytime I was unkind, I fell short.

40 replies391 retweets516 likes



57. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

I tell my mother, "You'll never stop teaching me." She said, "Well don't blame me for everything."

16 replies92 retweets214 likes



58. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Listening to La Boheme now, Bocelli. Mother can't keep eyes closed. "Maybe opera will help. I always slept when I went."

21 replies20 retweets90 likes



59. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

She's a tough Irish showgirl who doesn't quit on those she loves.

30 replies20 retweets59 likes



60. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Mother: "I don't know why this is going on so long. I'm late for everything I guess."

22 replies32 retweets135 likes



61. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

Mother: what time is it? Me: 6:30. Her: oh let's raise the curtains on the city we love.

19 replies20 retweets94 likes



62. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

My mother: "Believe me, those great death bed speeches are written ahead of time. "

33 replies129 retweets262 likes



63. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

That will be my life.s slogan from now on.

8 replies13 retweets38 likes



64. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 27 Jul 2013

No real sleep tonight. But songs poems memories laughs. My mother: "Thank you God for giving us this night & each other"

23 replies78 retweets237 likes



65. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

And yes, wish my family was here. But want our daughters just to remember the Grandmere who lavished them w/ smiles.

26 replies10 retweets42 likes



66. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Nights are the hardest. But that's why I'm here. I wish I could lift my mother's pain & fears from her bones into mine.

35 replies56 retweets159 likes



67. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Thanks for all good wishes. Mother says, "We can get through this, baby. The hardest part we'll be for you when it's over"

25 replies49 retweets135 likes



68. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Mother can't sleep. We listen to music, her face feels puffy, hot. We talk of much. I say "You need sleep." "Not really."

14 replies10 retweets23 likes



69. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

My mother drifts to sleep listening to Nat's Unforgettable. I keep things light, but moments like this hard, if sweet.

36 replies 12 retweets 69 likes



70. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

I consider this a good sign: mother sez when time comes, obit headline should be Three Jewish Husbands, But No Guilt.

14 replies 56 retweets 199 likes



71. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Tried to buy coffee for family w/ a mother in ICU too. Barista overheard, refused my card. "Your money's no good here."

26 replies 55 retweets 209 likes



72. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

My mother & I just sang Que Sera Sera 3 times. God bless you Doris Day for giving us such a great theme song.

38 replies 31 retweets 116 likes



73. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Our friend Wen Huang dropped by ICU to read to my mother from his book. She smiles, "Haven't we had a lovely day?"

10 replies8 retweets38 likes



74. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Bought air mattress for ICU floor. Told salesperson "All I know about outdoors is I loath them." "You looking for Bloomingdales?"

10 replies3 retweets14 likes



75. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

What is the idea behind deep fried onion rings in a hospital cafeteria?

68 replies25 retweets42 likes



76. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

My mother knows the name & story of every nurse & doctor in the ICU. She keeps no one a stranger.

15 replies21 retweets111 likes



77. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Tnx for all but wishes for my mother in ICU. Her anthem, more than ever, is But I'm Still Here. She inspires us all.

8 replies5 retweets34 likes





78. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 26 Jul 2013

Restorative night at Frontera. Tomato dish worth flying from Dubai to eat. Maybe [@rick bayless](#) Maybe [@rick bayless](#) can reveal how it's done.

1 reply 1 retweet 8 likes



79. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

In line at hospital Starbucks. Dancing in the Streets comes on. Line begins to sing, "They're dancin' in Chi-caw-go!"

6 replies 19 retweets 29 likes



80. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

I am getting a life's lesson about grace from my mother in the ICU. We never stop learning from our mothers, do we?

49 replies 195 retweets 271 likes

81. In reply to [101Below](#)



**Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

[@101Below](#) Thank you so much for your prayer for my mother in that historic church. Our whole family is grateful.

0 replies 0 retweets 4 likes



82. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

Man giving my mother meds asks " How they get \$500,000 to rehab Wrigley Field and not to keep those schools from closing?"

11 replies58 retweets44 likes



83. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

Thanks for prayers my mother in ICU. She greeted the woman who picks up trash: "Blanca, you herald a new day." Class.

11 replies17 retweets125 likes



84. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

All hospitals should have roll-out chairs in ICU rooms so loved ones can spend night w/ patients & not sleep on floor. [@NMHnews@NMHnews](#)

17 replies32 retweets55 likes



85. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 25 Jul 2013

Bless all ICU nurses who are getting people through pain & anxieties tonight.

14 replies57 retweets81 likes



86. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 24 Jul 2013

Watching ChiSox vs Tigers game in ICU w/ mother. Score not improving MY blood pressure.

11 replies5 retweets10 likes



87. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 24 Jul 2013

So whole raft of [@elischeesecake@elischeesecake](#) goodies just personally delivered to ICU. Delicious. More important--epochally thoughtful.

4 replies 1 retweet 13 likes



88. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 24 Jul 2013

Almost run over by texting driver. "That's illegal," I told her. "Arrest me, \*\*\*hole," she said. Helpful dialog.

34 replies 39 retweets 39 likes



89. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 23 Jul 2013

Also: just once I want disgraced pol to take his or her lumps by himself at a presser, not hide behind spousal forgiveness.

20 replies 52 retweets 63 likes



90. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 23 Jul 2013

Spouses of disgraced pols have lots of reasons--kids, career--to support the spouses who betrayed them. But do voters?

9 replies 17 retweets 13 likes



91. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 23 Jul 2013

My mother in ICU has first liquids in 2 days. Clear broth so good "[@Rick Bayless@Rick Bayless](#) could have made it." Power of suggestion.

13 replies2 retweets16 likes



92. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) [@nprscottsimon](#) 23 Jul 2013

My mother in ICU sees Kate & Will holding baby and tears: "Every baby boy is a little king to his parents. " So I tear too.

26 replies181 retweets333 likes



93. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) [@nprscottsimon](#) 23 Jul 2013

I just want to say that ICU nurses are remarkable people. Thank you for what you do for our loved ones.

17 replies100 retweets117 likes



94. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) [@nprscottsimon](#) 22 Jul 2013

I'm less upset at Ryan Braun for steroids than for trying to ruin the career of an honest man.

9 replies24 retweets23 likes

\_ In reply to [L Halse Anderson](#)



**Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) [@nprscottsimon](#) 22 Jul 2013

[@halseanderson](#) thank you so much Laurie. I guess that story is my favorite "driveway moment" too!

1 reply0 retweets5 likes



95. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 22 Jul 2013

I brought news to my Irish mother in hospital of the royal birth, & she said, "We have a king!" Always a UK, eh?

9 replies 9 retweets 21 likes



96. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 22 Jul 2013

At bedtime & on drives, we're reading [@halseanderson@halseanderson](#) 's outstanding American Revolution novels to daughters. Enthralled.

4 replies 3 retweets 19 likes



97. **Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 22 Jul 2013

-us up to hear his stories or he'd burst into tears. Ate everything in kitchen, then complained. Analysis, doctors?

17 replies 0 retweets 7 likes



**Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 22 Jul 2013

This is no joke: just awoke from a dream in which Ed Koch was our houseguest & had to borrow my clothes, even my briefcase. He'd keep-

3 replies 0 retweets 6 likes



**Scott Simon** [Verified account](#) @nprscottsimon 21 Jul 2013

This city fan watching [#ultimatesurvivalalaska#ultimatesurvivalalaska](#) with awe & popcorn.

2 replies0 retweets0 likes



98. **Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 21 Jul 2013

New family motto: no tamale left behind.

5 replies10 retweets16 likes



99. **Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 21 Jul 2013

Do you ever want to tell Siri just to put a cork in it?

34 replies12 retweets19 likes

100. In reply to [Christine Ducsai](#)



**Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 21 Jul 2013

[@ducsai](#) hmmm probably not. We were at Healdsburg FM. But I wouldn't know a zinnia from a zebra!

0 replies0 retweets0 likes

101. In reply to [Iris M. Gross](#)



**Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 20 Jul 2013

[@msirismg](#) my gosh yes. We have an Addy in our family!

0 replies0 retweets1 like



102.

**Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 20 Jul 2013

If you watchman American Girl movie at night w/ yr daughters, you'll learn something. Tonight is Felicity. Huzzah!

1 reply0 retweets7 likes

103.

In reply to [Cindy](#)



**Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 20 Jul 2013

[@cindybloch](#) what a beautiful pepper! Hard to find?

1 reply0 retweets0 likes



104.

**Scott Simon** **Verified account** @nprscottsimon 20 Jul 2013

How have I gotten so far in life without hearing about Padron peppers?

11 replies1 retweet9 likes

## JOSEPHUS' ACCOUNT OF MOSES' DEATH<sup>7</sup>

When Moses had spoken thus at the end of his life, and had foretold what would befall to every one of their tribes; afterward, with the addition of a blessing to them, the multitude fell into tears, insomuch that even the women, by beating their breasts, made manifest the deep concern they had when he was about to die. The children also lamented still more, as not able to contain their grief; and thereby declared, that even at their age they were sensible of his virtue and mighty deeds; and truly there seemed to be a strife betwixt the young and the old, who should most grieve for him. The old grieved because they knew what a careful protector they were to be deprived of, and so lamented their future state; but the young grieved, not only for that, but also because it so happened that they were to be left by him before they had well tasted of his virtue.

Now one may make a guess at the excess of this sorrow and lamentation of the multitude, from what happened to the legislator himself; for although he was always persuaded that he ought not to be cast down at the approach of death, since the undergoing it was agreeable to the will of God and the law of nature, yet what the people did so overbore him, that he wept himself.

Now as he went thence to the place where he was to vanish out of their sight, they all followed after him weeping; but Moses beckoned with his hand to those that were remote from him, and bade them stay behind in quiet, while he exhorted those that were near to him that they would not render his departure so lamentable. Whereupon they thought they ought to grant him that favor, to let him depart according as he himself desired; so they restrained themselves, though weeping still towards one another.

All those who accompanied him were the senate, and Eleazar the high priest, and Joshua their commander. Now as soon as they were come to the mountain called *Abarim*, (which is a very high mountain, situate over against Jericho, and one that affords, to such as are upon it, a prospect of the greatest part of the excellent land of Canaan,) he dismissed the senate; and as he was going to embrace Eleazar and Joshua, and was still discoursing with them, a cloud stood over him on the sudden, and he disappeared in a certain valley, although he wrote in the holy books that he died, which was done out of fear, lest they should venture to say that, because of his extraordinary virtue, he went to God.

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<sup>7</sup> (Whiston n.d., Book 4, 58)



# LESSON 4: MOVIES \*\*\*

## RATIONALE

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Some midrash are long and only by looking at each individual component and then taking a step back can we see clearly what the big questions are that the rabbis are asking. This lesson gives students an introduction to that process by examining the movie “Finding Nemo” because the technology of movies is an easy starting point as compared to midrash.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How does examining the structure of a text reveal big life questions?
2. How does the narrative structure of midrash parallel the narrative structure of modern film?
3. How does imagining an ending before we dive into an experience influence the experience itself?

## GOALS

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- To show the students that smaller sets of questions in midrash can help point the reader in the direction of the midrash’s larger more central question.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWHTOT imagine their ending to the course and their vision for the world.
- SWBAT deconstruct a story and use its structural elements to uncover a big question.

## MATERIALS

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- “Finding Nemo” movie
- Take the Time to Smell the Roses: A Study of *Sefrei Bamidbar* 42
- Midrash *Sifrei Bamidbar* 42

# LESSON PLAN

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## NOTE TO TEACHER

This lesson can take up two classes or just one depending on how in depth you want to go into the movie. You may choose to watch all or parts of the movie depending on how many classes you want to dedicate to this lesson.

This lesson has three elements to it that will repeat: The TED Talk, the movie, Finding Nemo, and a midrash from *Sefrei Bamidbar*. In each section, you will watch a segment of the TED Talk to learn about an element of storytelling structure and then watch a segment of Finding Nemo in order to apply the idea from the TED talk. Next, you will turn to the midrash in order to see how the same structure question or issue is at play there. The teacher will use the [Andrew Stanton TED Talk](#) as the structure for the class (**WARNING!** There is a crude joke at the beginning of the TED talk which is why the time stamp starts at 1:20). Each section of the TED talk is divided up into small chunks with questions and activities to explore Stanton's ideas. Each section uses both the movie Finding Nemo and the midrash from *Sefrei Bamidbar* to illustrate the points Stanton is making. Each big idea is spelled out under the appropriate section and time block.

The midrash is color coded to help understand what is happening technically. The changes in structure help the reader understand how the midrash is broken into paragraphs (the midrash is not normally broken into paragraphs, but I used these differences in structure to do so.) It is also possible to just focus on the larger narrative ideas. Here is the color key for your reference:

Rabbinic teachings

Repeated theme about peace

Technical device used to differentiate between paragraphs

Finally, this lesson focuses on opening our eyes to the structure of midrash beyond just the words on the 42" (included in the materials) as background before teaching this class.

## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Teacher will show the [opening scene of Finding Nemo](#) (0:50-5:00). Teacher will then explain that students will learn that great movies tell their stories by using a structure. We want to understand that structure to uncover the deeper question the movie/story is struggling with. Just like movies use structure to explore a big question, the rabbis use structure in midrash to do the same. The teacher should explain that this class will explore the structure of movie story telling as a way to better understand the structure of midrash.

## LEARNING FROM THE PROS

Teacher should explain that Andrew Stanton is the writer for Toy Story, Bug's Life, Monsters, Inc., Finding Nemo, Wall-E, etc.

### SECTION 1

In the opening two things must happen, the story must make the viewer/reader care and it must make a promise to the viewer.

TED TALK: 1:20 – 3:24

Make me care: What do you care about? If you were to imagine a story about that thing you care about, how would it end?

TED TALK: 3:25 – 5:14

Promise: Every story makes a promise

### APPLICATION

Watch the [opening scene of Finding Nemo](#) (0:50-5:00) again. Teacher will lead a discussion to explore what the story makes the viewer care about and what promise the story is making to the viewer.

Teacher will then pass out the *Sefrei Bamidbar* midrash and read the introductory paragraph as a class. Teacher should lead a discussion about what that paragraph makes the reader care about, i.e. “What does peace mean?” and what promise does this paragraph make to the reader, i.e. “How is home connected to the Davidic kingdom and to Torah? And what do all those have to do with peace?”

### SECTION 2

In this section, Stanton teaches that the order of a story is crucial to understanding the global theme. A good story gives the viewer/reader all the pieces and then expects the viewer/reader to put it all together.

TED TALK: 5:15 – 7:59

Unifying Theory of 2+2: Elements and order is crucial. What is the order of the midrash?

TED TALK: 8:00 – 9:45

Spine: The driving force for each character. What is the spine of the midrash?

### APPLICATION

Teacher should show the [second clip from Finding Nemo](#) (13:00-17:00). Then teacher will lead discussion which explores what students think Nemo's spine is and then compare it to Marlin's character spine, i.e. “Marlin wants to do no harm” and “Nemo wants to prove himself.”

Teacher will explain that just like characters in a movie a midrash can also have a spine, the big idea which drive the midrash. Teacher will invite students to explore the spine of the midrash (hint: it's highlighted in purple!) This midrash wants to understand why peace is so great.

### SECTION 3

This section explores the interplay between the small and large. In Finding Nemo it is the tension between the short tensions which drive the plot and the long tensions which undergird the entire movie. In the midrash, the short tensions are the main ideas of the individual paragraphs and the long tension is the overall big question with which the midrash is dealing.

TED TALK: 9:46 – 10:45

Anticipation mingled with uncertainty: Short tension v. Long tension

TED TALK: 10:46 – 12:29

Stories can be told in many different ways: Guideline not hard fast rules

TED TALK: 12:30 – 13:39

Liking main character: complex characters

### APPLICATION

Teacher will show [third clip from Finding Nemo](#) (17:00-18:45). Teacher will lead discussion on the interactions between the short and long tensions in Finding Nemo, i.e. “Will Dori forget?” and “Will Marlin find Nemo?”

Teacher will then lead a discussion about the short tensions in the middle three paragraphs of the midrash. Each middle paragraph represents a short tension. Teacher should feel free to use the BARD method to explore each midrash paragraph more deeply. Some options for tensions are the following (see “Take the Time to Smell the Roses: A Study of Sefrei Bamidbar 42” for a more in-depth explanation of the midrash and its themes):

Paragraph 1 tension: How to create peace in the home or in the temple? How to words contribute to that peace?

Paragraph 2 tension: How to create peace in the community or to bring about the messianic era? How do we treat other human beings, even those with which we do not agree?

Paragraph 3 tension: How does Torah or doing mitzvot contribute to bringing about peace?

### SECTION 4

This section brings all of the structure together. How do all the short tensions, long tensions, spines, and the overall order of a story point to a larger theme and grand design?

TED TALK: 13:40 – 15:19

Stories have a theme, grand design: Who are you?

TED TALK: 15:20 – 17:12

Wonder: Can you make me wonder?

## APPLICATION

Teacher should show the following three clips from Finding Nemo: [Clip 4](#) (6:45-10:45), [Clip 5](#) (48:15-51:25), [Clip 6](#) (1:26:20-1:29:25) and tell students that each of these clips represents a short tension in the film. The teacher should lead a discussion after viewing the clips about how the three short tensions point to a larger theme which makes the viewer wonder at a big deep question.

There might be many possible ways to answer this question, but the most apparent is that the larger question is, “How to be a good parent?” Clip 4 presents Marlin’s parenting style of being overly cautious which smothers Nemo. Clip 5 presents Gill’s parenting style of throwing caution to the wind which almost gets Nemo killed. But, Clip 6 shows how Marlin has learned throughout the film and now not only trusts in Nemo’s own judgment, but also in a larger community beyond himself.

The teacher should invite the students to look back at the midrash and lead a discussion about how the three paragraphs work together as a grand design to point to a larger big idea. See “Take the Time to Smell the Roses: A Study of Sefrei Bamidbar 42” in the materials section for one possible way to understand the grand design and big idea of the midrash.

## SECTION 5

This section explores the end of the midrash and works as a charge to the students for the rest of the course. The students will explore many different midrash as a way to discover their own truth embedded in their souls and tell their own story.

TED TALK: 17:13 - END

What’s your story? Use what you know

## APPLICATION

Teacher will invite the students to read the last paragraph of the midrash and lead a discussion about why this was the ending written for this midrash. Students should be encouraged to try and bring it all together to articulate what they think the big question is of this midrash. One possible question might be, “What is the blueprint for life?” To which the midrash answers, “We can bring about the messianic era, an era of peace on earth, by starting to create peace at home and in our communities by studying Torah and doing mitzvot.”

## CONCLUSION

Teacher should explain that just like Stanton “started at the end” with his final sentence to imagine his story, we can only know the world we want to create by first “starting at the end” and imagining that world. Then teacher should invite students to imagine the world as they would like it to be, they should write that image as their final “sentence” for this unit.

# MATERIALS

## SEFREI BAMIDBAR, PISQA 42

TRANSLATION BY [WWW.SEFARIA.COM](http://WWW.SEFARIA.COM) WITH ADDITIONS FROM RABBI ADAM LUTZ

### INTRODUCTION

"and grant you peace": peace in your coming in and peace in your going out and peace with all men. R. Chanina, the adjutant high-priest says: "and grant you peace" — in your house. R. Nathan says: This is the peace of the Davidic kingdom, of which it is written (Isaiah 9:6) (the king) "who increases the governance (of God), and his peace will be endless. Upon the throne of David and upon his kingdom" (shall this peace be). Variantly: This is the peace of Torah, of which it is written (Psalms 29:11) "God gives strength (Torah) to His people; God blesses His people with peace."

### PARAGRAPH 1

Great is peace, the Holy One Blessed be He deviating from the truth for its sake in the instance of Sarah, who said "I am old" (see *Bereshit* 18:12-13). Great is peace, the Holy One Blessed be He deviating from the truth for its sake in the instance of holiness for its sake. Great is peace, the angel deviating from the truth for its sake in the instance of Manoach for its sake (viz. Judges 13). Great is peace, the Name written in holiness being erased by the bitter waters (of the *sotah*) to make peace between a man and his wife. R. Elazar says: Great is peace, the prophets only exhorted all men for its sake. R. Shimon b Chalafta says: Great is peace, it being the only vessel which contains all of the blessings, it being written "God gives strength to His people; God blesses His people with peace." R. Elazar Hakappar says: Great is peace, the only way to seal a blessing is with peace, viz.: "God bless you and keep you. God cause His countenance to shine upon you and be gracious unto you. God lift His countenance unto you and grant you peace."

"וישם לך שלום" בכניסתך שלום וביציאתך שלום עם כל אדם. רבי חנינא סגן הכהנים אומר: "וישם לך שלום" בביתך. רבי נתן אומר: זה שלום מלכות בית דוד, שנאמר (ישעיהו ט): "למרבה המשרה ולשלום אין קץ". דבר אחר: זה שלום תורה, שנאמר (תהלים כט): "ה' עוז לעמו יתן ה' יברך את עמו בשלום."

גדול השלום ששינה מעשה שרה, שנאמר (בראשית יח) ואני זקנתי. גדול השלום ששינה קדוש מפני שלום. גדול השלום ששינה מלאך מפני שלום. גדול השלום ששם שנכתב בקדושה נמחה ע"י המים (מפני שלום) בשביל להטיל שלום בין איש לאשתו. ר' אלעזר אומר גדול השלום שלא טענו הנביאים בפי כל הבריות אלא שלום (סוף עוקצין). ר' שמעון בן חלפתא אומר גדול השלום שאין כלי מחויק ברכה אלא שלום. שנאמר ה' עוז לעמו יתן וגו'. ר' אלעזר הקפר אומר גדול השלום שאין חותם בו הברכות אלא בשלום שנאמר יברך ה' וישמרך יאר ה' פניו אליך ויחונך ישא ה' פניו אליך וישם לך שלום.

## PARAGRAPH 2

R. Elazar the son of R. Elazar Hakappar says: Great is peace, for even if the idolators live in peace, the Holy One, as it were, does not "touch" them, as it is written (*Hoshea* 4:17) "Ephraim (Yisrael) has bound himself (in friendship to serve) idols — Let him be." But when they were divided amongst themselves, what is written of them? (Ibid. 10:2) "Their hearts are divided — Now they will be laid waste!" How great is peace! — How abhorrent is contention! Great is peace, for even in time of war, peace is needed, viz. (*Devarim* 20:10) "If you draw near a city to do battle with it, then you shall call out to it for peace," (Ibid. 2:26) "And I sent messengers from the desert of *Kedemoth* to *Sichon*, king of *Moav*, (with) words of peace," (*Judges* 11:12) "And *Yiftach* sent messengers ..." What did he (the king of Ammon) say? (13) "And now, return them (the lands you took from us) in peace." Great is peace, for even the dead need peace, as it is written (*Bereshit* 15:13) "And you will come to your fathers in peace," and (*Jeremiah* 34:5) "In peace will you die, and as the burnings of your fathers, etc."

## PARAGRAPH 3

Great is peace, which is given to the penitent, as it is written (*Isaiah* 57:19) "(I will) create (for him [the penitent a new]) expression of the lips:" Shalom Shalom! (And both will be alike, both) the far (i.e., one who had served God from his youth) and the near (i.e., one who had sinned and had just repented), etc." Great is peace, which was given in the portion of the righteous, as it is written (Ibid. 2) "Let him (the righteous one) come in peace (to the grave). Let them (the men of lovingkindness) rest (peacefully) where they lie." Great is peace, which was not given in the portion of the wicked, viz. (Ibid. 21) "There is no peace, says God, for the wicked." Great is peace, which was given to the lovers of Torah, viz. (*Psalms* 119:165) "Peace in abundance for the lovers of Your Torah." Great is peace, which was given to the humble, viz. (Ibid. 37:11) "and the humble will inherit the land and

ר' אלעזר בנו של ר"א הקפר אומר גדול השלום שאפילו עובדי עבודת גלולים ושלום ביניהם כביכול אין (השטן) נוגע בהם שנאמר (הושע ד) חבור עצבים אפרים הנח לו. אבל משנחלקו מה נאמר (שם י) חלק לבם עתה יאשמו. הא גדול השלום ושנאוי המחלוקת. גדול השלום שאפילו בשעת מלחמה צריכים שלום שנא' (דברים כ) כי תקרב אל עיר, להלחם עליה (לתפשה) וקראת אליה לשלום. (שם ב) ואשלח מלאכים ממדבר קריות אל סיחון מלך חשבון דברי שלום ואמת. (שופטים יא) וישלח יפתח מלאכים. מהו אומר ועתה השיבה אתה בשלום. גדול שלום שאפילו מתים צריכים שלום שנאמר (בראשית ט"ו) ואתה תבוא אל אבותיך בשלום. ואומר (ירמיה לד) בשלום תמות ובמשרפות אבותיך וכו'.

גדול השלום שניתן לעושי תשובה שנאמר (ישעיה נז) בורא ניב שפתים שלום שלום לרחוק ולקרוב. גדול השלום שניתן בחלקם של צדיקים שנאמר (שם) יבוא שלום ינוחו על משכבותם. גדול השלום שלא ניתן בחלקם של רשעים שנאמר (שם) אין שלום אמר ה' לרשעים. גדול השלום שניתן לאוהבי התורה שנאמר (תהלים קי"ט) שלום רב לאוהבי תורתך. גדול השלום שניתן לענוים שנאמר (שם לז) וענוים ירשו ארץ והתענגו על רוב שלום. גדול השלום שניתן ללומדי תורה שנאמר (ישעיה נ"ד) וכל בניך למודי ה' רב שלום בניך. גדול השלום

rejoice in an abundance of peace." Great is peace, which was given to the learners of Torah, viz. (Isaiah 59:13) "And all your children will be (as if) taught by God, and (there will be) an abundance of peace (among) your children." Great is peace, which is given to the doers of righteousness, viz. (Ibid. 32:7) "And the reward of righteousness will be peace."

## CONCLUSION

Great is peace, for the name of the Holy One Blessed be He is "Peace," viz. (Judges 6:24) "and he called it (the altar) 'God is Peace.'" R. Chanina, the adjutant high-priest says: Great is peace, which is over and against the entire creation, as it is written "who makes peace ... and creates all" (viz. Isaiah 45:7). Great is peace, which is needed (even) by the celestial creations, viz. (Job 25:22) "Governance and fear is with Him: He makes peace in His heights." Now does this not follow a fortiori, viz.: If in a place where there is no enmity, or rivalry, or hatred, or hostility, peace is needed — how much more so, in a place where all of these obtain!

שניתן אל עושי צדקה שנאמר (שם ל"ב) והיה מעשה הצדקה שלום.

גדול השלום ששמו של הקב"ה קרוי שלום שנאמר (שופטים ו) ויקרא לו ה' שלום. ר' חנינא סגן הכהנים אומר גדול השלום ששקול כנגד כל מעשה בראשית שנאמר (עמוס ד) כי הנה יוצר הרים ובורא רוח. (ישעיה מ"ה) עושה שלום ובורא (רע) [כל]. גדול השלום שהרי עליונים צריכים לו, שנאמר (איוב כה) המשל והפחד עמו עושה שלום במרומו. והרי דברים קל וחומר, ומה במקום שאין איבה ותחרות ושנאה ובעלי דבבו צריכים שלום, קל וחומר למקום שיש בו כל המידות הללו.



## TAKE THE TIME TO SMELL THE ROSES

### A STUDY OF SEFREI BAMIDBAR 42

In contemporary culture, the quick quest for answers is ubiquitous. Although, immediately gratifying, these searches do not result in the awe and wonder provided through exploration and discovery. Taking the time to sit with a Jewish text may not provide the instant gratification of a Google search, but it does allow for meaningful discovery. Sefrei Bamidbar exemplifies how spending just a small amount of time with a Jewish text can lead to awe, wonder, and meaning.

Sefrei Bamidbar focuses on the meaning of “shalom.” A quick skim of the text would yield only a base reading, resulting in some stories and quotes from the *Tankakh* that use the word “shalom.” But, quality time spent with Sefrei Bamidbar paints a more nuanced and meaningful picture. On the surface this text from Sefrei Bamidbar seems to be a collection of texts related to peace with no real rhyme or reason for their placement. However, deeper meaning is found by examining the syntactic patterns within the text. These syntactic patterns reveal an interplay between content and structure that carries with it a profound teaching. Examining the syntactic patterns of the text reveals distinct sections similar to a five-paragraph essay: an introduction, three “body paragraphs”, and a conclusion.

Four patterns reveal the opening paragraph. The first pattern is, in fact, the lack of the words "גדול השלום" which permeates the rest of the text. The absence of "גדול השלום" is striking and forces the reader to recognize this section as different. The second pattern is the cluster of three early Tannaitic rabbis, each stating their opinion as to what “shalom” refers. The third pattern is the use of "זה שלום" which relates the response of Rabbi Natan to Yehudah Ha Nasi. This possibly indicates that the two texts were craft by a single hand and were attributed to early rabbis for credibility. Finally, each of the rabbis’ definitions of “shalom”--shalom in the house\Temple, shalom in the community\messianic era, shalom of the Torah\mitzvot--are discussed in their respective order throughout the text.

If the first “body paragraph” of the text deals with “shalom in the house\Temple,” corresponding to Rabbi Hanina the Chief of the Cohenim’s opinion. This section is denoted by the syntactic pattern of "ששינה ... מפני" and "שלא/אין ... אלא." It starts with “גדול השלום ששינה מעשה שרה.” This “body paragraph” can be further broken down into “shalom for the home” and “shalom for blessing.” These sub-sections are marked by the different syntactic structures "ששינה ... מפני" and "שלא/אין ... אלא." In both of these situations (home and blessings) “shalom” is created through speech. “Shalom for the home” refers to the stories of Sarah and Manoach. In both stories a heavenly source does not divulge information to one party so as to prevent the other party’s embarrassment, shame, or worse. “Shalom for blessing” suggests that the greatest way to bless God is through peace.

The use of “שאפילו” reveals the next “body paragraph,” focusing on the “community\messianic era.” It starts with, “גדול השלום שאפילו ישראל עובדין.” This section corresponds to rabbi Natan’s opinion (the second rabbi in the introduction). Here, “שאפילו” is spaced out three times denoting the need for

communal peace, even when communal dissention is great, when the nation is at war with another nation, and for those members of the community who die.

The last “paragraph” before the “conclusion” is marked by the use of “ניתן” eight times in a row. It starts with, “גדול השלום שניתן לעושי תשובה.” Corresponding to the opinion of Yehudah Ha Nasi, this section refers to the “shalom” of Torah/mitzvot. In this case “shalom of Torah” are the mitzvot: doing *Teshuva*, becoming *Tzadikim*, not being evil, loving Torah, learning Torah, being humble, and doing *Tzedakah*.

The concluding paragraph concludes with the message of peace in Heaven and Earth. It begins with a declaration that “shalom” is in the name of God, “גדול השלום ששמו של הקב”ה.” This section feels separate from the previous section in form and content. The content has shifted from Torah/mitzvot to God, Heaven, and Earth. Additionally, there are none of the repeated patterns that demarcated the middle “paragraphs.” But, this concluding “paragraph” does contain a reference to Rabbi Hanina the Chief of the Cohenim which feels like a bookend to his opening response. Finally, this section ends with an “all the more so” statement which states if “shalom” is needed in Heaven than surely it is needed on Earth.” This final argument feels very much like the closing line of any modern essay.

The structure and the syntactic patterns of *Sefrei Bamidar* are too deliberate and too thoughtful for the text to have been thrown together at random. A careful and deliberate editor crafted this beautifully orchestrated compilation of texts. However, a question remains concerning the grouping of the texts, were certain chunks of text already “traveling” together when the editor compiled the texts or did the editor cleverly craft each section of the text?

For Example, each of the three “body” paragraphs use a different syntactic device to signify a change in idea. Did the editor know about different chunks of text with similar ideas and just place them in order? Or, did the editor purposely change the syntactic devices to illustrate to the reader a new idea (similar to a modern paragraph)? It is hard to say, an argument could be made for either case.

If the editor cleverly used the syntactic changes to illustrate changing ideas, then why does the first body paragraph use two syntactic devices “ששינה ... מפני” and “שלא/אין ... אלא” instead of one? Why does the second body paragraph contain “הא גדול השלום ושנואה מחלוקת” which feels like a summary of an idea that other sentences do not have? But, if the text was not cleverly crafted using syntax changes to signify a change idea why does almost the entire text use “גדול השלום...” to illustrate each point. The phrase is used far too much for it to be a coincidence, it feels very much like an editor at work.

It seems more likely that some smaller sections of text were preexisting and some were edited together with “גדול השלום...” as the thread used to tie everything together. Perhaps the two sections, containing “ששינה ... מפני” and “שלא/אין ... אלא,” in the first “body paragraph” preexisted as separate texts and the editor used both of them together. This would explain the different syntactic styles in a single “paragraph” which the other two “body paragraphs” do not contain. Additionally, the quotes from Rabbi Natan and Yehudah Ha Nasi seem to be an original set of text grouped together due to the

similar language of “זה שלום.” Finally, the editor appears to have used either two preexisting texts from Rabbi Hanina the Chief of the Cohenim or split an originally grouped preexisting text and used it as the bookends of the entire edited text.

However, the text was edited, the editor showed skill in crafting a text with the message made clear only by examining the combination of content and structure. Taking the time to examine the structure of Sefrei Bamidbar creates a sense of awe and appreciation for the editor of the text. Through the words and structure the editor has created a flow from home/Temple to community/messianic era by using the Torah/mitzvot.

A quick read of Sefrei Bamidbar would miss the beautiful message presented by the combination of syntactic flow and content. Without spending the time to sit with the text the flow is not readily apparent. Additionally, the double meaning of words is not clear: “בביתך” – can mean home or, for the Chief Cohen, the Temple, “מלכות דוד” – can refer to a general kingdom or community or to the messianic era, “תורה” – can mean literally the Torah or a more metaphorical “life of Torah” or mitzvot. These double meanings spell out a blueprint for life, both on the personal\earthly and global\heavenly levels.

On the personal\earthly level, one learns that at home words are important. In order to create “shalom” at home one needs to be cognizant of word choices and be delicate when dealing with sensitive subjects. One also learns that it helps the “shalom” of the home to say blessings which bring God into the home as a constant partner. On the larger communal level one learns that a united community is better than a fractured community, “shalom” should be the goal in any cross communal wars, and that honoring those who die is a path to “shalom.” Finally, each of these great practices is taught by studying Torah and doing mitzvot.

On the global\heavenly level, one learns that first comes the “shalom” of the Temple. As a community we must worship God, be mindful of our words and prayers, and perform rituals in our daily lives. If we do those “Temple” practices we can bring about the Kingdom of David, the messianic era. But, how are we to move from “Temple” worship to the Kingdom of David? By loving and learning Torah and by performing acts of *teshuva* and *tzedakah*. If we can do these things we can rid ourselves of a world filled with envy, competition, hatred, and conflict. Only then can we create “shalom” in this world just like in heaven above.

The beautiful messages in Sefrei Bamidbar only reveal themselves to one who seeks discovery. One who takes just a little more time can see the interplay between structure and content revealing a treasure of meaning. The idea of the messianic era as an eternal Shabbat could not be more apropos. If we could each just take a little more time, slow down just a little bit more, make our lives a little bit more like Shabbat, then we could see the interplay between structure and content. Then, if we bring just a little more Shabbat into the world, only then can we see the blueprint that will help bring about the Kingdom of David.

# UNIT 2: STORY TELLING

HOW THE STORIES WE TELL EXPRESS OUR SOULS' DESIRES

## CURRICULUM ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own Midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

## UNIT 2 ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Storytelling helps us uncover the big questions and deep truths in our lives.
2. The stories we tell influence the way we understand ourselves and the world around us.

## UNIT 2 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How do the stories we tell influence the way we interact with the world?
2. How do the stories we tell ourselves shape our big questions?
3. How do the stories we tell help us uncover the truths in our souls?

## UNIT 2 GOALS

- To explore the different stories, we tell in our lives and how they influence our understanding of the world and ourselves.
- To examine different midrashim in order to discover how to ask big questions expressed through storytelling.

## UNIT 2 OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT...

- SWBAT tell the story of their family.
- SWBAT tell the story of their personal past.
- SWBAT tell the story of their community.
- SWBAT tell the story of who they are right now.
- SWBAT tell the story of the person they want to become in the future
- SWHTOT explore many stories in their lives and develop deeper connections to them

# LESSON 1: FAMILY HI"STORY"

## OUR ORIGIN STORIES AND WHAT THEY TEACH US ABOUT OURSELVES

### RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will explore the origin story of their family and the Jewish origin story as compared to origin stories of other Ancient Near East peoples. They will explore how these different origin stories emerge from big questions (i.e. "How was the world created?" "Why was the world created?" "What is the purpose of humanity?") and purport to answer that question with a truth.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How does the story about where I come from influence and help me better understand who I am today?

### GOALS

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- To explore the origin stories of our lives and the Jewish understanding of the origin of the world.
- To explore the Jewish origin story along with other Ancient Near East origin stories.

### OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT articulate their own family origin stories.
- SWBAT compare different ancient near east origin stories
- SWHTOT explore their own origin story and how it influences their life.

### MATERIALS

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- TV or projector to show video clip
- [Clip from Lion King – Remember Who You Are](#)
- Paper and pens/pencils
- Enûma Eliš - Babylonian Creation Story
- Greek Creation Story
- Jewish Creation Story Genesis 1
- Jewish Creation Story Genesis 2:4-25

# LESSON PLAN

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## NOTE TO TEACHER

In this lesson students will be exploring their family origin stories about how they came to this country and how their grandparents set the stage for their parents to follow. If you think your students don't know these family stories be sure to ask the students to ask their parents before this class.

## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Show [Clip from Lion King – Remember Who You Are](#) and lead a short discussion about the questions, “What does Mufasa remind Simba of? And how does that help Simba understand who he is?” The point the class should get to is that Mufasa reminds Simba of where he comes from and who is family is and that helps Simba understand who he is in the world. Mufasa reminds Simba of his origin story.

The teacher should explain that in this unit we will explore different stories we tell about ourselves about how those stories influence how we understand ourselves and the world around us.

## WHAT’S MY ORIGIN STORY?

The teacher should explain that this lesson focuses on our origin stories and invites us to explore how those stories influence how we understand ourselves and the world. Teacher should divide the students into *chevruta* pairs and explain that they are going to interview each other about their family origin stories. The students who are the “interviewer” should jot down relevant points to the “interviewee’s” story. Additionally, the “interviewer” should use, but is not limited to, the following questions:

1. What is the story about how your family came to America? OR What story do you know about how your family came to this city?
2. Where was your family before they came to America/this city and why did they leave?
3. How does your family feel about having to make that move?

After each interview is completed, the *chevruta* pair should compose a 140-character tweet which encapsulates the “interviewee’s” origin story. The “interviewee” is responsible for ensuring that the tweet captures the essence of their origin story. Each student should then record the tweet in their journals and then share it out loud with the class.

## ORIGIN STORIES OF THE ANCIENT NEAR EAST

The teacher should explain that just like we have family origin stories we also have origin stories about the groups with which we affiliate that influence the way we understand the world and ourselves. We are going to examine the origin stories of three ancient near east cultures and four different origin stories to compare the different ways they influence how we might understand the world if we lived in those cultures.

Divide the students up into four groups. Each group should act out the story as if they were reporting on it at the scene of a live event, the event being the creation story. Additionally, the group should create a 140-character tweet that captures the event to tweet out after they have completed covering the live event. Finally, each group should include a wrap-up to their news segment which reflects on the following big questions:

1. How was the world created?
2. Why was the world created?
3. What is the purpose of human beings in that world?
4. As a human being who is now living in this newly created world, how do you understand your place and purpose in it?

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Here is some background on the Enûma Eliš:

The Enûma Eliš, is the Babylonian creation myth. It was recovered by Austen Henry Layard in 1849 in the ruined Library of Ashurbanipal at Nineveh, and published by George Smith in 1876. The Enûma Eliš has about a thousand lines and is recorded in Old Babylonian on seven clay tablets, each holding between 115 and 170 lines of Sumerian-Akkadian cuneiform script. Most of Tablet V has never been recovered but, aside from this lacuna, the text is almost complete.

This epic is one of the most important sources for understanding the Babylonian worldview, centered on the supremacy of Marduk and the creation of humankind for the service of the gods. Its primary original purpose, however, is not an exposition of theology or theogony but the elevation of Marduk, the chief god of Babylon, above other Mesopotamian gods.

The Enûma Eliš exists in various copies from Babylon and Assyria. The version from Ashurbanipal's library dates to the 7th century BCE. The composition of the text probably dates to the bronze age, to the time of Hammurabi or perhaps the early Kassite era (roughly 18th to 16th centuries BCE), although some scholars favor a later date of c. 1100 BCE. (Enûma Eliš n.d.)

### PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher should invite the students to open their journals and look at the tweet they each wrote about their own origin stories. Then the teacher should remind the students that just like the reporters understood their place and purpose in the world differently based on the different origin stories, we are also shaped by our personal origin stories. The students should write for a few moments on the question, “What does my origin story teach me about the ‘world’ my family created and my place in it?” And, “How does my family’s origin story influence the way I understand the world?”

After the students are finished reflecting, explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share what they wrote, whether they want to live in the world created by their origin story, and any big questions their story or the other origin stories made them think about. If they are struggling with any of the questions they should share why they are struggling with that question.

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).



## MATERIALS

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### ENÛMA ELIŠ - BABYLONIAN CREATION STORY<sup>8</sup>

In the beginning there was only undifferentiated water swirling in chaos. Out of this swirl, the waters divided into sweet, fresh water, known as the god Apsu, and salty bitter water, the goddess Tiamat. Once differentiated, the union of these two entities gave birth to the younger gods.

These young gods, however, were extremely loud, troubling the sleep of Apsu at night and distracting him from his work by day. Upon the advice of his Vizier, Mummu, Apsu decides to kill the younger gods. Tiamat, hearing of their plan, warns her eldest son, Enki (sometimes Ea) and he puts Apsu to sleep and kills him. From Apsu's remains, Enki creates his home. Tiamat, once the supporter of the younger gods, now is enraged that they have killed her mate. She consults with the god, Quingu, who advises her to make war on the younger gods. Tiamat rewards Quingu with the Tablets of Destiny, which legitimize the rule of a god and control the fates, and he wears them proudly as a breastplate. With Quingu as her champion, Tiamat summons the forces of chaos and creates eleven horrible monsters to destroy her children.

Ea, Enki, and the younger gods fight against Tiamat futilely until, from among them, emerges the champion Marduk who swears he will defeat Tiamat. Marduk defeats Quingu and kills Tiamat by shooting her with an arrow which splits her in two; from her eyes flow the waters of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Out of Tiamat's corpse, Marduk creates the heavens and the earth, he appoints gods to various duties and binds Tiamat's eleven creatures to his feet as trophies (to much adulation from the other gods) before setting their images in his new home. He also takes the Tablets of Destiny from Quingu, thus legitimizing his reign.

After the gods have finished praising him for his great victory and the art of his creation, Marduk consults with the god Ea (the god of wisdom) and decides to create human beings from the remains of whichever of the gods instigated Tiamat to war. Quingu is charged as guilty and killed and, from his blood, Ea creates Lullu, the first man, to be a helper to the gods in their eternal task of maintaining order and keeping chaos at bay. As the poem phrases it, "Ea created mankind/On whom he imposed the service of the gods, and set the gods free." Following this, Marduk "arranged the organization of the netherworld" and distributed the gods to their appointed stations. The poem ends in Tablet VII with long praise of Marduk for his accomplishments.

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<sup>8</sup> <http://www.ancient.eu/article/225/>

## GREEK CREATION STORY<sup>9</sup>

In the beginning, Chaos, an amorphous, gaping void encompassing the entire universe, and surrounded by an unending stream of water ruled by the god Oceanus, was the domain of a goddess named Eurynome, which means "far-ruling" or "wide-wandering".

She was the Goddess of All Things, and desired to make order out of the Chaos. By coupling with a huge and powerful snake, Ophion, or as some legends say, coupling with the North Wind, she gave birth to Eros, god of Love, also known as Protagonus, the "firstborn".

Eurynome separated the sky from the sea by dancing on the waves of Oceanus. In this manner, she created great lands upon which she might wander, a veritable universe, populating it with exotic creatures such as nymphs, Furies, and Charites as well as with countless beasts and monsters.

Also born out of Chaos were Gaia, called Earth, or Mother Earth, and Uranus, the embodiment of the Sky and the Heavens, as well as Tartarus, god of the sunless and terrible region beneath Gaia, the Earth.

Gaia and Uranus married and gave birth to the Titans, a race of formidable giants, which included a particularly wily giant named Cronus.

In what has become one of the recurrent themes of Greek Mythology, Gaia and Uranus warned Cronus that a son of his would one day overpower him. Cronus therefore swallowed his numerous children by his wife Rhea, to keep that forecast from taking place.

This angered Gaia greatly, so when the youngest son, Zeus, was born, Gaia took a stone, wrapped it in swaddling clothes and offered it to Cronus to swallow. This satisfied Cronus, and Gaia was able to spirit the baby Zeus away to be raised in Crete, far from his grasping father.

In due course, Zeus grew up, came homeward, and into immediate conflict with the tyrant Cronus, who did not know that this newcomer was his own son. Zeus needed his brothers and sisters help in slaying the tyrant, and Metis, Zeus's first wife, found a way of administering an emetic to Cronus, who then threw up his five previous children, who were Hestia, Demeter, Hera, Hades, and Poseidon. Together they went to battle against their father. The results were that all of his children, led by Zeus, vanquished Cronus forever into Tartarus' domain, the Dark World under the Earth.

Thus, Zeus triumphed over not only his father, and his father's family of Giants, he triumphed over his brothers and sisters as well, dividing up the universe as he fancied, in short, bringing order out of Chaos.

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<sup>9</sup> [http://www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/europe/greek/greek\\_creation\\_myths.html](http://www.pantheon.org/areas/mythology/europe/greek/greek_creation_myths.html)

He made himself Supreme God over all, creating a great and beautiful place for his favored gods to live, on Mount Olympus, in Thessaly. All the others were left to fend for themselves in lands below Mount Olympus.

Zeus made himself God of the Sky and all its phenomena, including the clouds as well as the thunderbolts. Hestia became goddess of the Hearth. To his brother Poseidon, he gave the rule of the Sea. Demeter became a goddess of Fertility, Hera (before she married Zeus and became a jealous wife), was goddess of Marriage and Childbirth, while Hades, one of his other brothers, was made god of the Underworld.

Zeus did indeed bring order out of Chaos, but one of his failings was that he did not look kindly upon the people, those creatures that populated the lands over which he reigned. Many were not beautiful, and Zeus had contempt for anyone who was not beautiful. And of course they were not immortal, as the Olympian gods were, and they complained about the lack of good food and the everlasting cold nights. Zeus ignored their complaints, while he and the other gods feasted endlessly on steaming hot game from the surrounding forests, and had great crackling fires in every room of their palaces where they lived in the cold winter.

Enter Prometheus, one of the Titans not vanquished in the war between Zeus and the giants. It is said in many myths that Prometheus had molded a race of people from clay, or that he had combined specks of every living creature, molded them together, and produced a new race, The Common Man. At the very least he was their champion before Zeus.

Fire for cooking and heating was reserved only for the gods to enjoy. Prometheus stole some of the sparks of a glowing fire from the Olympians, so that the people below Olympus could have fire for cooking and warmth in the winter, thus greatly improving their lot in life.

Zeus was furious at this insult to his absolute power, and had Prometheus bound and chained to a mountain, sending an eagle to attack him daily.

Adding insult to injury, Zeus had his fellow Olympian, Hephaestus, fashion a wicked but beautiful creature to torment Prometheus. It was a woman, whom they named Pandora, which means "all gifts". She was given a precious and beautiful box, which she was told not to open, but curiosity got the better of her, and out flew "all the evils that plague men." The only "gift" that stayed in the box was "Hope".

So, from "far-ruling" Eurynome to the creation of the Common Man, Greek creation myths are inextricably filled with difficulties, though often ameliorated by the gift of Hope. A myriad of other myths tell of the joys and adventures of great heroes and heroines, other gods and goddesses, as well as fantastic creatures from all parts of ancient Greece.

## JEWISH CREATION STORY GENESIS 1<sup>10</sup>

<sup>1</sup> When God began to create heaven and earth -- <sup>2</sup> the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water -- <sup>3</sup> God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. <sup>4</sup> God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day.

<sup>6</sup> God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water." <sup>7</sup> God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. <sup>8</sup> God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day.

<sup>9</sup> God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was so. <sup>10</sup> God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was good. <sup>11</sup> And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. <sup>12</sup> The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good. <sup>13</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a third day.

<sup>14</sup> God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times -- the days and the years; <sup>15</sup> and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth." And it was so. <sup>16</sup> God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars. <sup>17</sup> And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, <sup>18</sup> to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. <sup>19</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day.

<sup>20</sup> God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." <sup>21</sup> God created the great sea monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this was good. <sup>22</sup> God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." <sup>23</sup> And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day.

<sup>24</sup> God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so. <sup>25</sup> God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good. <sup>26</sup> And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." <sup>27</sup> And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them. <sup>28</sup> God blessed

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<sup>10</sup> (The Jewish Publication Society 1985).

them and God said to them, "Be fertile and increase, fill the earth and master it; and rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, and all the living things that creep on earth." <sup>29</sup> God said, "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant that is upon all the earth, and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit; they shall be yours for food. <sup>30</sup> And to all the animals on land, to all the birds of the sky, and to everything that creeps on earth, in which there is the breath of life, *I give* all the green plants for food." And it was so. <sup>31</sup> And God saw all that He had made, and found it very good. And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

## JEWISH CREATION STORY GENESIS 2:4-25<sup>11</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Such is the story of heaven and earth when they were created. When the LORD God made earth and heaven -- <sup>5</sup> when no shrub of the field was yet on earth and no grasses of the field had yet sprouted, because the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth and there was no man to till the soil, <sup>6</sup> but a flow would well up from the ground and water the whole surface of the earth -- <sup>7</sup> the LORD God formed man from the dust of the earth. He blew into his nostrils the breath of life, and man became a living being.

<sup>8</sup> The LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east, and placed there the man whom He had formed. <sup>9</sup> And from the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that was pleasing to the sight and good for food, with the tree of life in the middle of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and bad.

<sup>10</sup> A river issues from Eden to water the garden, and it then divides and becomes four branches. <sup>11</sup> The name of the first is Pishon, the one that winds through the whole land of Havilah, where the gold is. ( <sup>12</sup> The gold of that land is good; bdellium is there, and lapis lazuli.) <sup>13</sup> The name of the second river is Gihon, the one that winds through the whole land of Cush. <sup>14</sup> The name of the third river is Tigris, the one that flows east of Asshur. And the fourth river is the Euphrates.

<sup>15</sup> The LORD God took the man and placed him in the garden of Eden, to till it and tend it. <sup>16</sup> And the LORD God commanded the man, saying, "Of every tree of the garden you are free to eat; <sup>17</sup> but as for the tree of knowledge of good and bad, you must not eat of it; for as soon as you eat of it, you shall die."

<sup>18</sup> The LORD God said, "It is not good for man to be alone; I will make a fitting helper for him." <sup>19</sup> And the LORD God formed out of the earth all the wild beasts and all the birds of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them; and whatever the man called each living creature, that would be its name. <sup>20</sup> And the man gave names to all the cattle and to the birds of the sky and to all the wild beasts; but for Adam no fitting helper was found.

<sup>21</sup> So the LORD God cast a deep sleep upon the man; and, while he slept, He took one of his ribs and closed up the flesh at that spot. <sup>22</sup> And the LORD God fashioned the rib that He had taken from the man into a woman; and He brought her to the man. <sup>23</sup> Then the man said, "This one at last Is bone of my bones And flesh of my flesh. This one shall be called Woman, For from man was she taken." <sup>24</sup> Hence a man leaves his father and mother and clings to his wife, so that they become one flesh. <sup>25</sup> The two of them were naked, the man and his wife, yet they felt no shame.

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<sup>11</sup> (The Jewish Publication Society 1985).

# LESSON 2: MY PAST

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will explore a story of their own past and how that story they tell themselves influences their big questions and the truths in their souls.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How does the story I tell about myself influence who I am today?

## GOALS

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- To explore how the stories we tell about our past influence our identity today.
- To explore the Genesis Rabbah midrash about God's call to Abraham.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT tell the story of their past.
- SWBAT retell a midrash of God's call to Abraham.
- SWHTOT explore how the story of their past and their Jewish past interact.

## MATERIALS

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- Song: [Prologue: What Have I Done – Les Misérables](#)
- Lyrics: Prologue: What Have I Done – Les Misérables
- Worksheet: The Call to Abraham
- Worksheet: Midrash and Me

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Hand out the lyrics and play the song Prologue: What Have I Done – Les Miserables. Teacher should explain that this song is from the musical “Les Miserables” and that this is one of the opening scenes to the play. The character Jean Valjean spent years in prison for stealing a loaf of bread and now that he has been released he has stolen silver from a priest. When the priest found out, he gifted the silver to Jean Valjean instead of turning him in. In this scene, Jean Valjean is reflecting on his past.

Teacher should lead a discussion about how the story Jean Valjean tells himself influences the way he sees himself in this song. What are the other possible ways Jean Valjean could tell his story and how would that change the way he sees himself in this song?

Teacher should explain that in the last lesson we looked at how our family origin story influences our understanding of the world and today students will look at how the story we tell about our own past influences the way we understand ourselves today.

## OUR JEWISH HISTORY

Teacher should explain that we can learn how to look at the story of our past by examining midrash about our Jewish past. Just like we can ask, “How did I get here today,” we can ask, “How did the Jewish people get here today?”

As a class, use the BARD method to study the midrash on the worksheet The Call to Abraham.

Teacher should then explain/ask, “God called to Abraham only when Abraham saw the world as both on fire and glowing brightly. How does your understanding of what it means to be Jewish change now that you know this?” The teacher should then pass out the worksheet, Midrash and Me and explain to the students that they should draw/write how they understand their Jewish self (in the left-hand box) now based on the midrash.

## NOTE TO TEACHER

The following are important points for each part of BARD:

### ASK

There is no biblical reason given for why God called to Abraham, that is one reason this midrash was written.

### DEVICES

These are the keys to this midrash and must be covered for the students to understand its point.



Parable – A parable is like an analogy in English literature. The analogy here is that the *bira* or castle is the world and the owner of the building in the window is God.

*Doleket* – This entire midrash is a play on the ambiguity of the word *doleket*, which is reflected in the English translation of the midrash. The word has multiple meanings, “on fire,” “glowing,” “radiating,” “ablaze,” etc. Most people will know the root of the word from the candle blessing on Shabbat, *I’hadlik ner shel Shabbat*, “to light/ignite/set on fire the candles of Shabbat. For the rabbis the question is, “is the house on fire, or radiating light?” So then the question is, “Is the world burning down with God in it? Or is the world radiating light?” For the rabbis, the answer is both. Only when Abraham recognizes that the world is both burning and radiating does God call out to him.

## MY STORY

Explain that now the students should think about their own personal story of their past. They should open up their journals and respond to the prompt, “I am who I am today because\_\_\_\_\_.” Additionally, they should give their story a title, which starts with the phrase, “The Story of How I Became \_\_\_\_\_.” After the students are finished writing they should draw a picture of their story in the blank, right-hand box, on the Midrash and Me worksheet.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

Explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share and explain the picture of their own story. The teacher should invite the students to reflect on any big questions that either the midrash or their own story has raised for them.

After the individual students have shared, the teacher should ask the group to reflect on the following question, “How does your understanding of the story of our Jewish past conflict or align with the story of your past?”

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

# MATERIALS

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## PROLOGUE: WHAT HAVE I DONE – LES MISERABLES

What have I done?  
Sweet Jesus, what have I done?  
Become a thief in the night,  
Become a dog on the run  
And have I fallen so far,  
And is the hour so late  
That nothing remains but the cry of my hate,  
The cries in the dark that nobody hears,  
Here where I stand at the turning of the years?  
  
If there's another way to go  
I missed it twenty long years ago  
My life was a war that could never be won  
They gave me a number and murdered Valjean  
When they chained me and left me for dead  
Just for stealing a mouthful of bread  
Yet why did I allow that man  
To touch my soul and teach me love?  
  
He treated me like any other  
He gave me his trust  
He called me brother  
My life he claims for God above  
Can such things be?  
For I had come to hate the world  
This world that always hated me

Take an eye for an eye!  
Turn your heart into stone!  
This is all I have lived for!  
This is all I have known!  
  
One word from him and I'd be back  
Beneath the lash, upon the rack  
Instead he offers me my freedom  
I feel my shame inside me like a knife  
He told me that I had a soul,  
How does he know?  
What spirit comes to move my life?  
Is there another way to go?  
  
I am reaching, but I fall  
And the night is closing in  
As I stare into the void  
To the whirlpool of my sin  
I'll escape now from the world  
From the world of Jean Valjean  
Jean Valjean is nothing now  
Another story must begin!

## WORKSHEET: THE CALL TO ABRAHAM

### GENESIS 12:1-2<sup>12</sup>

<sup>1</sup> God said to Abram, "Go forth from your native land and from your father's house to the land that I will show you. <sup>2</sup> I will make of you a great nation, And I will bless you; I will make your name great, And you shall be a blessing.

<sup>1</sup> וַיֹּאמֶר יְהוָה אֶל-אַבְרָם לֵךְ-לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ  
וּמִמְּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ אֶל-הָאָרֶץ אֲשֶׁר אֲרָאָךְ:  
<sup>2</sup> אֶעֱשֶׂה לְךָ גִּדּוֹל וְאֶבְרַכְךָ וְאֶגְדָּלְךָ שְׁמִי וְהָיָה  
בְּרָכָה:

### MIDRASH RABBAH 39:1<sup>13</sup>

God said to Abram, "Go you forth from your land..." ... Rabbi Yitzchak said: this may be compared to a man who was traveling from place to place when he saw a **bira doleket/castle aglow/lit up (full of light/in flames)**. He said, "Is it possible that this castle lacks a person to look after it? The owner of the building looked out and said, "I am the owner of the castle." Similarly, because Abraham our father said, "Is it possible that this castle has no guide, no one to look after it?" the Holy Blessed One looked out and said to him, "I am the Master of the Universe." ... Hence, God said to Avraham, Lech Lecha.

וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם לֵךְ לְךָ מֵאֶרֶץ וּגְו' (בראשית  
יב, א), רַבִּי יִצְחָק פָּתַח (תהלים מה, יא): שְׁמַעֲנִי  
בֵּת וּרְאִי וְהָטִי אֲזִנִּי וְשִׁכְחִי עִמָּךְ וּבֵית אָבִיךָ, אָמַר  
רַבִּי יִצְחָק מְשַׁל לְאַחַד שְׁהִיָּה עוֹבֵר מִמָּקוֹם לְמָקוֹם,  
וְרָאָה בִּירָה אַחַת דּוֹלֶקֶת, אָמַר תֹּאמַר שְׁהִיָּה  
הַזֶּה בְּלֹא מְנַהִיג, הֲצִיץ עָלָיו בַּעַל הַבִּירָה, אָמַר לוֹ  
אֲנִי הוּא בַּעַל הַבִּירָה. כֹּךָ לְפִי שְׁהִיָּה אָבִינוּ אַבְרָהָם  
אוֹמַר תֹּאמַר שְׁהֲעוֹלָם הַזֶּה בְּלֹא מְנַהִיג, הֲצִיץ עָלָיו  
הַקָּדוֹשׁ בְּרוּךְ הוּא וְאָמַר לוֹ אֲנִי הוּא בַּעַל הָעוֹלָם.  
(תהלים מה, יב): וַיִּתְּאוּ הַמָּלָךְ יִפְיָהּ כִּי הוּא אֲדֹנָיָהּ.  
וַיִּתְּאוּ הַמָּלָךְ יִפְיָהּ, לִיְפוֹתָהּ בָּעוֹלָם, (תהלים מה,  
יב): וְהִשְׁתַּחֲוִי לוֹ, הִנֵּה וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֶל אַבְרָם.

<sup>12</sup> (The Jewish Publication Society 1985).

<sup>13</sup> (Sefaria n.d.).

## WORKSHEET: MIDRASH AND ME

JEWISH STORY	MY STORY

# LESSON 3: MY COMMUNITY \*\*\*

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson, the students will have an opportunity to study midrash with the most tenured member of the senior staff (MTMSS) and also explore the story of the congregation's history and how the objects and symbols around the congregation tell that story or only tell a piece of that story.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How do the objects and symbols in my community tell a story?

## GOALS

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- To learn with the congregational MTMSS.
- To explore the congregation's story and how it is represented by the objects and symbols around the congregation.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWHTOT connect with the MTMSS.
- SWBAT identify significant congregational objects and symbols and explain how they are a part of the congregation's story.

## MATERIALS

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- Pictures: Declaration of Independence, Star Spangled Banner, 9/11 Memorial, and Gettysburg
- 3x5 Index cards
- Pencils/pens
- Midrash on Moses' Staff

# LESSON PLAN

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## NOTE TO TEACHER

This lesson should be done in conjunction with the MTMSS. Before this lesson, have a conversation with the MTMSS about the congregational history and the different objects and symbols around the synagogue that contribute to that historical story. The MTMSS should also be able to reflect on whether the object and symbols around the congregation tell the whole story or only a particular story.

## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Teacher should tape pictures around the room before the students walk in. As the students walk in the room the teacher should hand each student an index card and invite them to tour the room. They should construct a story of America based on the objects and symbols displayed in the pictures and write that story on their index card.

Teacher/ MTMSS should then lead a discussion where the students share the stories they have constructed. Then respond to the questions, “What narrative of the American story do you think these symbols/object were telling?” “What symbols were left out that would have added to the story and made the story more complete?” How would those other symbols change the story?

## MIDRASH

The MTMSS should invite students to list on the board all the Jewish objects/symbols which they think play a significant roles in Jewish practice or Jewish history. The MTMSS should then pass out the midrash on Moses’ staff and lead a discussion about the question, “Of all these Jewish symbols and objects, why do you think the rabbis chose to focus so much energy on Moses’ staff?”

The MTMSS should then read and lead a discussion of the midrash with the students. They should explore the questions:

- “Why is Moses’ staff used as the symbol that carries humanity from creation to redemption?”
- “What big questions does this midrash lead you to ask about the world?”
- “What other symbols or objects could the rabbis have used?”
- “How would the story have changed if any of these different objects were used?”
- “How would the big ideas about of the story and your big questions change with those different symbols/objects?”

## CONGREGATIONAL STORY

The MTMSS should teach the students both the full history of the congregation and perhaps a popular story that the congregation likes to tell of itself. Some talking points can be, but are not limited to the following:

- “When was the congregation founded?”
- “How was the congregation founded? By whom?”
- “Is this the original location? Did it move? Why?”

The MTMSS should point out any differences in the two narratives and ask the students how those two stories influence how they either see themselves as a part of or apart from the congregational community.

## CONGREGATIONAL TOUR

The MTMSS will then take the students on a tour of the congregation and point out all the historical objects/symbols. At each location lead a discussion with the students about the question, “Does this object/symbol contribute to either the congregational story or history? If so, why do you think this story is or is not publicly articulated?”

The MTMSS should conclude the tour by asking the students, “How did touring these objects/symbols influence how you see yourself in this community space? Do they make you feel more a part of or apart from this community? Are there any objects you would like to see incorporated into the congregational story? What objects would you add to or remove from the congregation’s story?”



# MATERIALS

## DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

IN CONGRESS, JULY 4, 1776.

### The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen united States of America.

When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation. — We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness. — That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, — That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shown, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. — But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Tyranny, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security. — Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. — To prove this, let Facts be presented to a candid world. — He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good. — He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them. — He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only. — He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures. — He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people. — He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected, whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within. — He has endeavored to prevent the Population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Law for Naturalization of Strangers; refusing to pass Laws to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands. — He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers. — He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries. — He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harass our People, and eat out their substance. — He has kept among us, in Times of Peace, standing Armies without the Consent of our Legislature. — He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power. — He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our Laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation: — For quartering large bodies of armed troops among us: — For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States: — For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world: — For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent: — For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by jury: — For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences: — For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies: — For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments: — For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with powers to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever. — He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us. — He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our People. — He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to complete the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of cruelty, perfidy and parsimony in the most barbarous age, and tottering unworthy the Head of a civilized nation. — He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands. — He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavored to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions. In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered by insult and contempt. A Prince, whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people. Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their Legislature to extend an unconstituted jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of conjuncture. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends. We, therefore, the Representatives of the united States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of Divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

Walter Livingston  
Lynman Hall  
Geo. McClen.

John Hancock  
Joseph Hewes  
John Penn

Edward Rutledge

Thos. Mifflin  
Thos. Lynch  
Arthur Middleton

Samuel Chase  
Wm. Paca  
Thos. Stone

George Wythe  
Richard Henry Lee  
Th. Jefferson  
Wm. Harrison  
Th. Mifflin  
James Easton  
Charles Bracken

John Morison  
John Smith  
Geo. Taylor  
James Wilson  
Gt. Mifflin

Samuel Chase  
Richard Henry Lee  
Th. Jefferson  
Wm. Harrison  
Th. Mifflin  
James Easton  
Charles Bracken

John Jay  
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John Adams  
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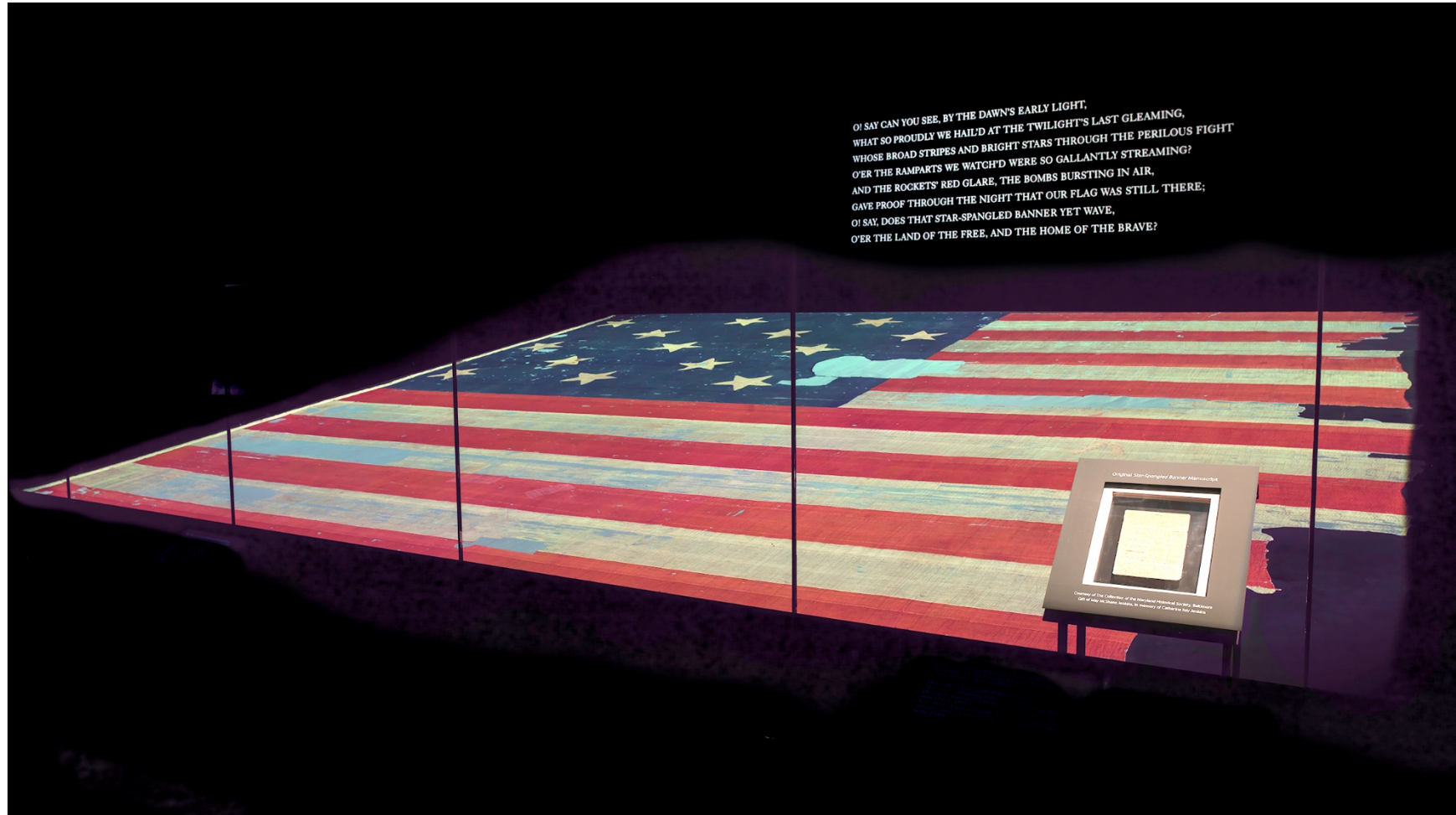
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## STAR SPANGLED BANNER





## 9/11 MEMORIAL





## GETTYSBURG



## MIDRASH ON MOSES' STAFF<sup>14</sup>

God created it in the twilight of the sixth day of Creation, and delivered it to Adam when the latter was driven from paradise. After it had passed through the hands of Shem, Enoch, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob successively, it came into the possession of Joseph. On Joseph's death, the Egyptian nobles stole some of his belongings, and, among them, Jethro appropriated the staff. Jethro planted the staff in his garden, when its marvelous virtue was revealed by the fact that nobody could withdraw it from the ground; even to touch it was fraught with danger to life. This was because the Ineffable Name of God was engraved upon it. When Moses entered Jethro's household he read the Name, and by means of it was able to draw up the rod, for which service Zipporah, Jethro's daughter, was given to him in marriage. Her father had sworn that she should become the wife of the man who should be able to master the miraculous rod and of no other.

Additionally, the staff with which Jacob crossed the Jordan is identical with that which Judah gave to his daughter-in-law, Tamar. It is likewise the holy rod with which Moses worked, with which Aaron performed wonders before Pharaoh, and with which, finally, David slew the giant Goliath. David left it to his descendants, and the Davidic kings used it as a scepter until the destruction of the Temple, when it miraculously disappeared. When the Messiah comes it will be given to him for a scepter in token of his authority over the heathen.

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<sup>14</sup> <http://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/5-aaron-s-rod>

# LESSON 4: MY PRESENT

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will explore the story that they tell about themselves to describe who they are today. They will explore how that story reflects the stories of the family, past, and community.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. Who am I and what's my story?
2. How is the story, which I tell about who I am, influenced by the stories of my community, my past, and my family?

## GOALS

---

- To introduce the idea that the story we tell about ourselves is influenced by other stories in our lives.
- To explore a midrash which gives us insight into how Moses understands himself.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT articulate the story they tell about themselves to describe who they are.
- SWHTOT explore and probe their personal story for truth.
- SWBAT explain how Moses understood himself in a midrash and how his understanding of himself might have been biased.

## MATERIALS

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- Song: [Who am I? – Les Miserables](#)
- Lyrics: Who am I? – Les Miserables
- Pens/markers
- *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses' Death 3.3

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Hand out the lyrics and play the song Who am I? – Les Miserables. Teacher should explain that this song comes a little bit after the song we heard two lessons ago in the musical “Les Miserables.” This scene comes after an innocent man is accused of being Jean Valjean because the real Jean Valjean has been pretending to be someone else for many years and has become a successful businessman.

The teacher should lead a discussion about the values that Jean Valjean is struggling with in this song and which values ultimately lead to his decision. Also, the teacher should ask the question, “What is the story that Jean Valjean wants to tell about himself in this moment, and how does it relate to the story of his past?”

## WHO AM I?

Teacher should ask each student to trace their hand on a page in their journal and write a quality/characteristic in each finger that they would use to describe who they are today. When the students are finished, they should open up their journals and write a paragraph or two story about themselves which describes themselves using the characteristics/qualities they wrote down and why they chose each of those characteristics/qualities.

The teacher should then invite the students to reflect on their community, past, and family stories. They should notice any qualities/characteristics they think were influenced by those other stories.

## HOW DOES MOSES UNDERSTAND HIMSELF?

Teacher should explain that everyone builds the story of themselves on the stories that surround their lives, even Moses!

Divide the students up into *chevruta* pairs and instruct the students to use the BARD method to study the midrash. When students are finished, each group should answer the questions:

- “What qualities/characteristics does Moses think he embodies and what stories does he use to prove his point?”
- “In what ways is Moses’ story about himself truthful and in what ways is it not the complete truth?”

## NOTE TO TEACHER

Here are some helpful notes to better understand the midrash:

***Moses began to implore God*** After Moses’ realization that he would become jealous of Joshua if he served as Joshua’s servant, he changes tactics. Moses tries to appeal to God’s reason, explaining that he has done nothing wrong to deserve death. This entire section compares Moses to Adam and to the three patriarchs. This thematic structure of moving from Adam to

Moses is common in the midrash. Sometimes its purpose is to praise God through the generations (TY 34). However, in many other cases, the structure is used as an attempt to show how Moses is a greater hero than all the ones who came before him (DeutR 11:3, MidTan VE 6, and LotJN 888).

***What sin have I committed that I should die*** Moses does not understand why he must die. Another tradition (ARNB 25) explains that Moses accepts his punishment of not entering the Land of Israel for striking the rock, but he does not understand what sin he committed, perhaps unknowingly, that he should be punished by death. According to this tradition, God swears to Moses that he is only dying because of the decree against Adam – in other words, Moses must die because he is human not God.

***Now that man has become like one of us*** God tells Moses that he must die, not for any sin he committed, but because of the sin of Adam in the Garden of Eden – eating from the tree of knowledge of good and evil (see parallel tradition in SD 323 which stresses that all the descendants of Adam will die). More interesting is that MidrPM quotes this particular part of the verse from Genesis – the sin is not “eating” of the tree, but “becoming” like God. This reflects section one where MidrPM points out that the boundaries between God and Moses have been blurred. The point here is that God is supreme; none, not even Moses can become like God.

***run before your children like a horse*** The expression “running like a horse” refers to Moses’ leadership of the Israelite people while laboring like a horse who pulls a heavy load behind him. Here, Moses wonders if he labored for nothing.

***Easy commandment and he transgressed it*** See BT Shab 55b.

***Ishmael issued from him*** Though MidrPM makes it appear like this is a quote from the Bible, this verse appears nowhere in Scripture in this exact form. For MidrPM, Ishmael represents the Muslim world which in this section is the birth of whom is portrayed as a sin committed by Abraham worthy of death. See MidTan Huk 16 which reads: “whose descendants arouse your anger, as it said: “The tents of robbers prosper” (Job 12:6). See also DeutR 11:3. Though not exactly the same, it is possible that this verse refers to Jer. 41:6, אִשְׁמָאֵל בֶּן-נִחֵם. This section of the book of Jeremiah portrays a different Ishmael (though presumably a descendant of Abraham’s Ishmael) leading a Babylonian insurrection against Judah and Gedaliah.

***Esau issued from him*** Another quotation that MidrPM wants to make look like it is from Scripture, though it is not. To the rabbis, Esau represents Christianity, Rome and the ultimate enemies of Israel. The comparison between Isaac and Esau here is interesting though. God praises Isaac for his willingness to sacrifice himself on the altar. See, for example, DeutR 55:4. But, Moses criticizes him for giving birth to Esau, the progenitor of the enemy.



*[He] didn't ascend to the firmament* In a last effort, Moses attempts to thwart God's comparison to Jacob. Jacob, like Moses, was the leader of the twelve tribes of Israel. God asserts that unlike the twelve tribes whom Moses led through the desert, the twelve tribes of Jacob never angered God. However, Moses retorts that Jacob (possibly referring to Jacob's dream of the staircase ascending to heaven) never actually saw God face-to-face or ascended to the firmament as Moses did to receive the Ten Commandments.

*Let it suffice you.* Though other traditions (e.g. DeutR 11:3) appear to view Moses as greater than the heroes who come before him, MidrPM does not take that stance. In fact, God seems to be left aggravated with Moses' attempt to prove that he is greater than his predecessors.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share and explain their hand of qualities/characteristics and the story they wrote about who they are today. The teacher should invite the students to openly reflect on how their personal story is influenced by any of the other stories they explored and if there are any pieces of themselves that are not included in those stories. Also, is any part of their story not the whole truth, like Moses' story? Additionally, they should share any big questions that either the midrash or reflecting on their own story has raised for them.

After the individual students have shared, the teacher should ask the group to reflect on the following question, "How do you feel about the idea that your own understanding of yourself is influenced by the stories of your community, your past, and your family?"

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, "We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together."

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).



## MATERIALS

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### WHO AM I? – LES MISERABLES

He thinks that man is me  
He knew him at a glance!  
That stranger he has found  
This man could be my chance!

Why should I save his hide?  
Why should I right this wrong  
When I have come so far  
And struggled for so long?

If I speak, I am condemned.  
If I stay silent, I am damned!

I am the master of hundreds of workers.  
They all look to me.  
Can I abandon them?  
How would they live  
If I am not free?

If I speak, I am condemned.  
If I stay silent, I am damned!

Who am I?  
Can I condemn this man to slavery  
Pretend I do not feel his agony

This innocent who bears my face  
Who goes to judgement in my place  
Who am I?

Can I conceal myself for evermore?  
Pretend I'm not the man I was before?  
And must my name until I die  
Be no more than an alibi?  
Must I lie?  
How can I ever face my fellow men?  
How can I ever face myself again?

My soul belongs to God, I know  
I made that bargain long ago  
He gave me hope when hope was gone  
He gave me strength to journey on  
Who am I? Who am I?  
I am Jean Valjean!

And so Javert, you see it's true  
That man bears no more guilt than you!  
Who am I?  
24601!

## PETIRAT MOSHE - MIDRASH ON MOSES' DEATH 3.3

### 3.3 MOSES COMPARES HIMSELF TO OTHER BIBLICAL HEROES

Moses began to implore God and said before God, “Master of the Universe, what sin have I committed that I should die?! The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, “For the sin of Adam,” as it is written, *Now that man has become like one of us* (Gen. 3:22). Therefore, you will die. Moses responded, “Master of the Universe, was it in vain that my feet trod on the clouds and for nothing did I run before your children like a horse?” [God] said to him, “I already charged Adam with death.” [Moses] replied, “Master of the Universe, You gave The First Man an easy commandment and he transgressed it, but I have not transgressed. [God] said to him, “Behold, Abraham sanctified My Name in the world and he died. [Moses] said to [God], *Ishmael issued from him etc.* [God] responded, “Behold, Isaac, his son, stretched out his neck on the alter. Moses replied, *Esau issued from him.* [God] said to him, “Behold, Jacob, from whom issued the twelve tribes and they didn’t anger Me.” [Moses] said to [God], “[He] didn’t ascend to the firmament and [his] feet did not tread on the clouds, and You didn’t speak with him face to face, and [he] didn’t receive Torah from your hand. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Moses], “Let it suffice you. Speak no more to me of this matter.”

התחיל משה לתבוע אותו בפיו ואמר לפניו רבש"ע מה חטא בידי כדי שאמות? א"ל הקב"ה הן, מחטאו של אדם הראשון שכתוב בו הן האדם היה כאחד ממנו לפיכך אתה מת. א"ל רבש"ע לשוא דשו רגלי בערפל ולשוא רצתי לפני בניך כסוס? א"ל כבר קנסתי מיתה על אדם. א"ל רבש"ע אדם הראשון מצוה קלה צוית אותו ועבר עליה ואני לא עברתי. א"ל הרי אברהם קדש שמי בעולם ומת, א"ל יצא ממנו ישמעאל וכו'. א"ל הרי יצחק בנו שפשט צוארו ע"ג המזבח, א"ל יצא ממנו עשו וכו'. א"ל הרי יעקב שיצאו ממנו י"ב שבטים ולא הכעיסוני, א"ל לא עלה לרקיע ולא דשו רגליו בערפל ולא דברת עמו פנים אל פנים ולא קבל התורה מידך, א"ל הקב"ה רב לך אל תוסף דבר אלי עוד בדבר הזה.

# LESSON 5: MY FUTURE

## RATIONALE

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This lesson uses a midrash about the Israelites crossing the Sea of Reeds to teach that none of us is bound by our stories and that the story of our future is for us to write.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How can I craft the story of my own redemption?
2. How does my story for my future also create my future?
3. How do I bring about my own redemption?

## GOALS

---

- To explore the concept of redemption.
- To explore how the midrash about Nachshon teaches that our own *action* brings about redemption.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT tell the story of their future.
- SWHTOT explore what redemption means to them.
- SWBAT explain how the story of Nachshon influences their concept of redemption.

## MATERIALS

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- Song: [Redemption Song – Bob Marley](#)
- Lyrics: Redemption Song – Bob Marley
- Midrash *Mekhilta Beshalach*, Parasha 6

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Teacher should place the students in *chevruta* and pass out the lyrics and play Bob Marley's "Redemption Song." Students should then ask the students to discuss why the song is called, "Redemption Song" and then share their answers with the class.

## VISION FOR A WORLD REDEEMED

Teacher should ask students what are the qualities of a redeemed world and list those on the board. The teacher should then add to the list (if they don't already exist on the board): Judaism would also say that a world redeemed is a world whole, healed, and free from evil. It is the Jewish aspiration for the world.

The teacher should then place the students into small groups of 3-4 and explain that they are going to rewrite the redemption song to reflect their vision for a world redeemed. After the groups are done, each group should perform their version for the class.

## PERSONAL REDEMPTION

The teacher should explain that, just like we have a vision for redemption and aspirations for the world, we can also have aspirations and a vision for our personal redemption. The teacher should invite the students to open their journals and respond to the question, "Who are the people we want to become and how are we going to get there?"

## BECOMING LIKE NACHSON

Teacher should explain to the class that this midrash takes place when the Israelites are standing at the Sea of Reeds, with the Egyptian army bearing down on them, but the sea won't part and the people and the leadership are all deliberating about what to do. The teacher should pass out the midrash to the class and use the BARD method to explore the midrash together. As part of the BARD process the teacher should explain that the sea represents redemption in Judaism since it is the moment where the Israelite people are redeemed and brought to freedom.

The teacher should then lead a discussion about the question, "What does this midrash about Nachshon teach us about how we need to approach getting to redemption?" The big point here is that we have to take *action* to get to redemption.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher should explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share their story about their vision for their future. Additionally, they should share any big questions that either the midrash or reflecting on their own story has raised for them.

After the individual students have shared, the teacher should ask the group to reflect on the following question, “Both Bob Marley and Nachshon teach us that we are in charge of bringing about our own future and redemption, how does it make you feel to know that your redemption is under your control?”

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

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### REDEMPTION SONG – BOB MARLEY

Old pirates, yes, they rob I  
Sold I to the merchant ships  
Minutes after they took I  
From the bottomless pit  
But my hand was made strong  
By the hand of the Almighty  
We forward in this generation  
Triumphantly  
Won't you help to sing  
These songs of freedom?  
'Cause all I ever have  
Redemption songs  
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery  
None but ourselves can free our minds  
Have no fear for atomic energy  
'Cause none of them can stop the time  
How long shall they kill our prophets  
While we stand aside and look? Ooh  
Some say it's just a part of it  
We've got to fulfill the Book

Won't you help to sing  
These songs of freedom?  
'Cause all I ever have  
Redemption songs  
Redemption songs  
Redemption songs

Emancipate yourselves from mental slavery  
None but ourselves can free our minds  
Wo! Have no fear for atomic energy  
'Cause none of them-a can-a stop-a the time  
How long shall they kill our prophets  
While we stand aside and look?  
Yes, some say it's just a part of it  
We've got to fulfill the book  
Won't you have to sing  
These songs of freedom?  
'Cause all I ever had  
Redemption songs  
All I ever had  
Redemption songs  
These songs of freedom  
Songs of freedom

## MIDRASH MEKHILTA BESHALACH, PARASHA 6<sup>15</sup>

Because they stood and deliberated, Nachshon the son of Aminadav leaped into the sea. Of him Scripture writes (Psalms 69:2-3) "Save me, O God, for the waters have reached my soul. I am sinking in the slimy depths and I find no foothold. I have come into the watery depths, and the flood sweeps me away." (Ibid. 16) "Let the floodwaters not sweep me away, and let the deep not swallow me, and let the mouth of the pit not close over me." At that time Moses waxed long in prayer — whereupon the Lord said to him: My loved ones are drowning in the sea, and the sea is raging, and the foe is pursuing, and you stand and wax long in prayer? To which Moses replied: Lord of the universe, what can I do? And He said to him (Exodus 14:16) "And you, raise your staff, etc."

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<sup>15</sup> (Sefaria n.d.).

# UNIT 3: RELATIONSHIPS

THE STORIES WE TELL ABOUT THE ONES WE LOVE

## CURRICULUM ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own Midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

## UNIT 3 ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Relationships of all shapes and sizes can teach us about who we are.
2. Our lives are full of relationships and none of them are simple.
3. We can better understand the big questions in our personal relationships by exploring biblical relationships.

## UNIT 3 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. How can the relationships in the bible help us better understand our own relationships?
2. How do our big questions about relationships help us develop clarity about the way we approach the relationships in our lives?
3. How does a more nuanced understanding of relationships deepen our connection to others?

## UNIT 3 GOALS

- To explore the different types and qualities of relationships in the bible.
- To generate big questions about the relationships in our lives.
- To grow deeper more nuanced characterizations of the relationships in our lives.

## UNIT 3 OBJECTIVES

- SWBAT create a more nuanced definition about the ‘nature’ of relationships.
- SWBAT identify the various types of relationships in their lives.
- SWHTOT generate and explore the big questions they have about relationships.
- SWHTOT to explore the emotions connected to various human relationships.



# LESSON 1: INTRODUCTION TO RELATIONSHIPS

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. What is a relationship?
2. What are the characteristics of different relationships?

## GOALS

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- To explore the biblical characters, their families, and their relationships with each other.
- To develop a more nuanced and unique definition of “relationships.”
- To explore different types of relationships in our lives.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT identify the major biblical characters’ familial relationships.
- SWBAT create their own definition for “relationships.”
- SWBAT distinguish between different types of relationships.

## MATERIALS

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- Index cards with names of major biblical characters from Genesis.
- Biblical Family Tree

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION: INTRODUCTION TO RELATIONSHIPS

### NOTE TO TEACHER

As students walk into the room tape one index card on their back with the name of the character showing, but do not tell the student who the character is that they have taped on their back.

Here is a list of potential characters to use for this exercise:

Adam	Ishmael	Simeon	Asher
Eve	Rebecca	Levi	Joseph
Cain	Jacob	Judah	Benjamin
Able	Esau	Issachar	Ephraim
Abraham	Laban	Zebulun	Manasseh
Sarah	Leah	Dan	
Hagar	Rachel	Naphtali	
Isaac	Reuben	Gad	

### EXPLAIN

Each of you has a biblical character's name taped to your back. Go around the room and ask questions of your classmates to try and guess your biblical character's identity. You may ask questions about who the character is related to and about the character's actions, but you may not directly ask their name or, how it is spelled, or what it rhymes with.

After you figure out and confirm who your character is make a human family tree of the biblical characters by sitting on the floor in a shape that will represent the character's relationships with each other.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

See the Materials section for a Biblical Family Tree of all the biblical characters. You may choose to pass this out to the students so they can check their work.

### ASK

- What are the different types of relationships between the characters?
  - Father, mother, brother, sister, etc.
- What do you know about how different characters treated one another?
  - i.e. Cain killed his brother Abel

### EXPLAIN

So, we know how the different characters were related to each other in a familial way and we know how they are related to each other based on actions they took towards one another, but we don't really

know about the way they internally related to one another; what their thoughts and feelings were about each other.

As we uncovered, there are many ways we can relate to one another. Just as relationships themselves are complicated, the idea of relationship is complicated. We are now going to explore the idea of relationships to see if we can come to a better understanding of this complicated idea.

## SYNECTICS ON THE IDEA OF RELATIONSHIPS

### PART 1: DIRECT ANALOGY

Have students complete the following phrase and write their answers on the board:

“Fill in the following sentence: Relationships are like \_\_\_\_\_ when/because \_\_\_\_\_.”

#### NOTE TO TEACHER

The idea is to have students come up with analogies which may not be obvious, like:

- “Relationships are like pineapples because they might appear prickly on the outside, but on the inside, they are sweet.”
- “Relationships are like the Pentagon because only the people on the inside know what is really happening.”
- “Relationships are like a hamster wheel because they take work to keep going.”

After the students have created a list of analogies. Have a student choose one analogy to use for the next part.

### PART 2: PERSONAL ANALOGY

Invite students to use the chosen analogy and create a list of adjectives to describe it and write their responses on the board.

#### NOTE TO TEACHER

For example, if the students chose “Relationships are like pineapples because they might appear prickly on the outside, but on the inside, they are sweet,” they would make a list of adjectives to describe “pineapples.”

### PART 3: COMPRESSED CONFLICT

Invite students to choose two descriptions from part 2 that are either opposites or unlikely partners and write those combinations on the board.

#### NOTE TO TEACHER

For example, the students might choose “sweet and spiky.”

### PART 4: DIRECT ANALOGY

Invite one student to choose one pair from part 3. Then invite students to come up with a list of things that can be described by the part 3 pair. Write their answers on the board.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

For example, a list of other things which are “sweet and spiky,” i.e. roses, cactus, a back-handed-compliment, constructive criticism, etc.

### PART 5: REEXAMINATION OF THE ORIGINAL TASK

Invite students to choose one of the items from part 4 and explain how that is like “relationships.”

### NOTE TO TEACHER

The idea here is to choose something very different from the original object. So, “roses” or “cactus” should not be selected. However, “constructive criticism” would be a good choice. So, the final analogy to explore would be, “Relationships are like constructive criticism when/because \_\_\_\_\_”

### PART 6: SYNTHESIS

Invite students to create their own definition for “relationship” based on their exploration of the concept. Then ask, “How does your new definition for relationships help you better understand the ‘nature’ of relationships, rather than their mere structure?”

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Following the example above a new definition might be something like, “Relationships are interactions between people where the people feel close enough to offer help and feedback which sometimes feels good and other times feels uncomfortable.”

The point of the question is to get the students away from answers like, “a relationship is when you are related in some way to another person” (structural), and more towards answers like “a relationship is a human connection with another person in which you experience both the good and bad of life together.”

### EXPLORATION OF RELATIONSHIPS

### NOTE TO TEACHER

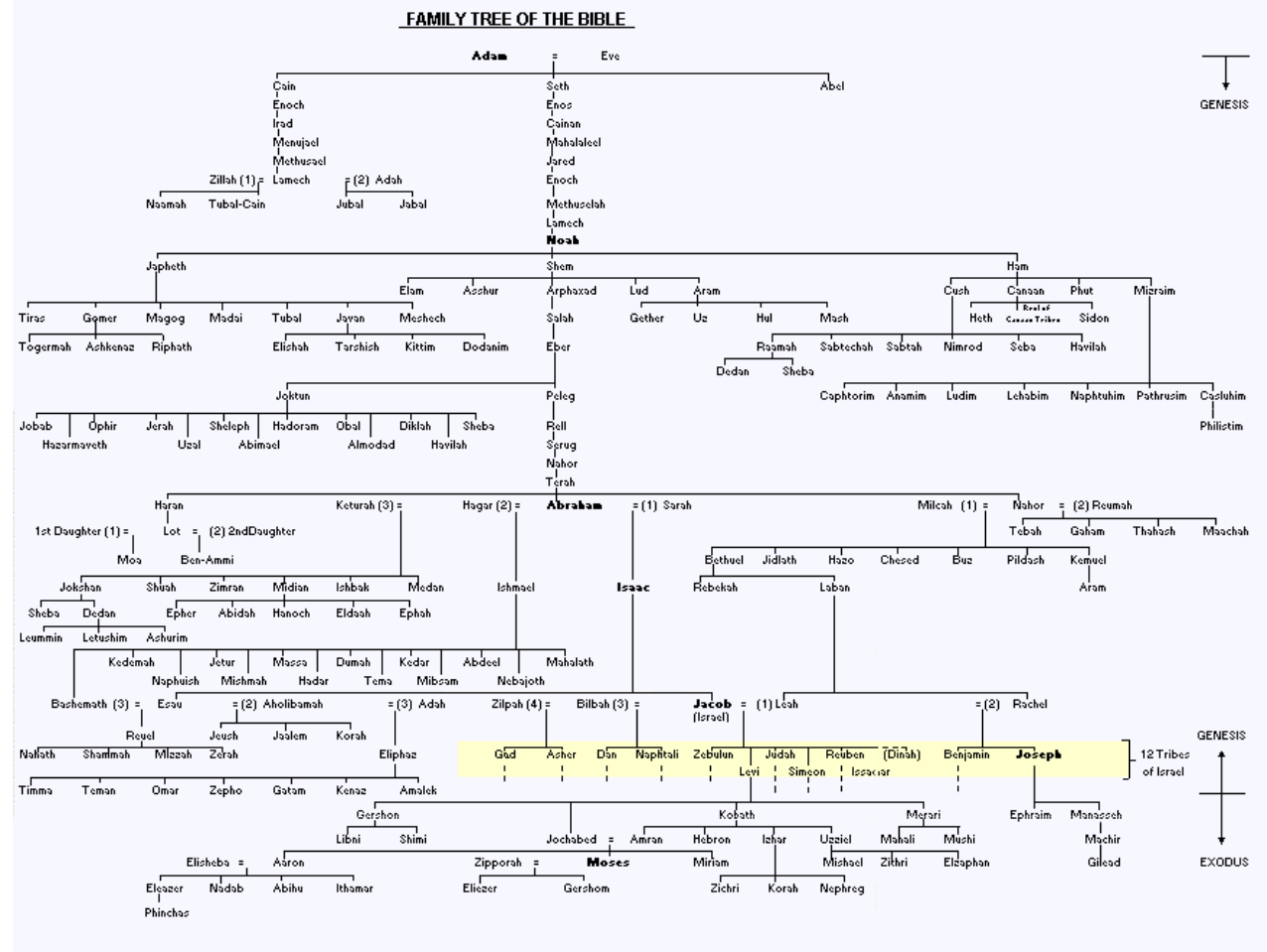
Record the answers to the following questions on the board in two columns, one column for each question.

### ASK

- Based on your new definition of relationships, who are the people in our lives we have a significant relationship with? Think about the biblical examples and example the bible leaves out.
  - Parents, siblings, grandparents, cousins, aunts, uncles, friends, teachers, etc.
- What are the different ways we relate to each of these people?
  - Familiarly, emotionally, physically, intellectually, financially, etc.

## EXPLAIN

In this unit, students will use midrashim to explore significant relationships you have in your life so you can uncover, not only the different ways you relate to people in your life, but also to uncover the big questions which influence how you approach each of those relationships. Hopefully, by the end of this unit you will have more clarity about how and why you approach each relationship the way you do and have a few midrashim to help you better understand yourself in those relationships.

BIBLICAL FAMILY TREE<sup>16</sup>

<sup>16</sup> <http://ilovecharts.tumblr.com/post/9600943984/i-found-a-bible-family-tree>

# LESSON 2: NATURE AND NURTURE

ADAM, EVE, CAIN AND ABEL

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

---

1. From where do we get our identities?
2. What role do relationships play in our lives?

## GOALS

---

- Lead students in the exploration the story of Cain and Abel.
- Lead students to participate in the same approach to text as the rabbis did before them.
- Invite students will discover how the story of Cain and Abel helps them better understand themselves.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT tell the story of Cain and Able.
- SWBAT identify and fill gaps in the biblical text.
- SWBAT articulate questions the rabbis asked about the Cain and Able story.
- SWBAT apply questions derived from the midrashic text to their own lives.

## MATERIALS

---

- Cain and Abel story cards, make sure to shuffle each set before handing to students.
- Biblical story worksheets
- Midrash on Cain and Abel

# LESSON PLAN

---

## SET INDUCTION: THE STORY CAIN AND ABEL

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Then hand each student a stack of the Cain and Abel story cards.

### EXPLAIN

You are to place the story in the order you think it goes and when you are done compare it with another student's story. If you have a different order of the story, decide an order you both agree on.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

After each pair has decided on an order for the story invite each pair to compare their story with the biblical order of the story. Chances are that the discrepancy is due to the lack of details and holes in the biblical narrative, which is good and the point!

## STEPPING INTO THE SHOES OF THE RABBIS

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Pass out the Biblical story worksheets.

### EXPLAIN

Place the story in order on the worksheets. In-between each piece of the story you will see two columns. In the first column, you will write how you think each piece of the story leads to the next piece of the story. Some will be obvious and some will not. If it is not obvious, in the second column write down any questions you have or would want answered to be able to explain how the two pieces of the story are connected. For example, let's look at verses one and two:

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gained a male child with the help of The Eternal."

Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Cain and Abel are twins. Abel is born right after Cain, so there is no gap in the story.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• If Cain and Able are not twins, what happens between their births?</li><li>• What happened between Cain and Abel's birth and when they became a farmer and shepherd?</li></ul>
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)



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She then bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Give the students 10 minutes to finish the activity. When they are done, go through each step as a class and make note of the gaps the students noticed in the story and how they think those gaps should be filled.

### EXPLAIN

You just participated in a two-thousand-year-old activity called midrash; the rabbis also saw gaps in the biblical narrative and decided to fill in the gaps. Just like you thought about how different parts of the story lead to each other, the rabbis also tried to fill the gaps in the biblical narrative. And since the bible doesn't tell us, the only way we can fill those gaps in a way that makes sense for us is to fill the gaps with things we know and questions we are thinking about. The way we fill those gaps in the biblical narratives can teach us about the biggest questions we are wrestling with. By looking at midrash we can see the questions the rabbis were wrestling with, which will then spark questions for us today.

### THE MIDRASH

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Divide the students into *chevruta* partners or trios and hand them the midrash text.

### EXPLAIN

Read the midrash with your *chevruta* and mark all the details that are not in the original biblical narrative and are the rabbis' attempts to fill in the gaps. When you find an added detail to the story return to your original worksheet and in the first column beneath your addition write the rabbis' addition to the biblical narrative. Then in the column on the right, write in the question you think the rabbis needed to ask themselves in order to arrive at that addition to the biblical narrative.

### EXAMPLE FOR TEACHER

Examining verses one and two, this rabbinic addition comes really in verse two, after Abel is born. There is nothing in the biblical text which explains why Cain and Abel have different professions. Here the rabbis are attempting to explain that the boys are separated into two different professions for their own protection.

<i>Rabbinic Addition</i>	<i>Question the Rabbi Was Asking</i>
<i>And Eve said to Adam: 'My lord, while I slept, I saw a vision, as it were the blood of our son Abel in the hand of Cain, who was gulping it down in his mouth. Therefore I have sorrow. And Adam said, 'Alas if Cain slew Abel. Yet let us separate them from each other mutually,</i>	<i>How did Abel become a shepherd while Cain became a farmer?</i>

### NOTE TO TEACHER

After the students are finished have them share with the class the rabbinic additions and add any that the class missed. Then go through each rabbinic addition and have each group share the question they think the rabbi was trying to answer and collect the questions on the board.

### EXPLAIN/ASK

After looking at all the questions the rabbis might have asked, take a step back and look at the big picture, considering all the questions and additions the rabbis made. Discuss with your partner what you think the overall question or theme is that the writer of this midrash is concerned with.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Record the answers the students give on the board. The students may come up with many different questions and themes. An example might be, “*Can parents determine/control the lives of their children?*”

### PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

### NOTE TO TEACHER

The next activity, which asks students to share about themselves and how they relate to the midrash in this lesson. It is critical that each student feels heard when they share and safe to be vulnerable. Students who are not sharing should give their one-hundred percent attention to the one who is sharing.

### EXPLAIN/ASK

Choose one of the big questions or themes from the board that you are thinking about in your life right now. Take five minutes and journal about how and why that theme or question is relevant in your life right now. Who are the people that are involved? What are their relationships to you? How does the midrash help you better understand your role in that question/theme?

### EXPLAIN/ASK

Who would like to share a big question and some of what they wrote about and how you are struggling with that big question in your life right now?

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

Continue to let students share until it seems like everyone who wants to share has done so.

### **EXPLAIN/ASK**

What did it feel like to share with the group today? Was it hard/easy? What can the group do to help you feel safer and heard?

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

This last part allows students to reflect on the sharing process and offer suggestions for improvement and affirmations of the parts that are working. Try and work this feedback into the next sharing session.

### **CONCLUSION**

#### **EXPLAIN**

We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. Let's recite the blessing we created to give thanks to each other and God for the sacred sharing we just participated in.

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

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### CAIN AND ABEL STORY CARDS

Now the man knew his wife Eve, and she conceived and bore Cain, saying, "I have gained a male child with the help of The Eternal."

She then bore his brother Abel. Abel became a keeper of sheep, and Cain became a tiller of the soil.

In the course of time, Cain brought an offering to The Eternal from the fruit of the soil;

and Abel, for his part, brought the choicest of the firstlings of his flock. The Eternal paid heed to Abel and his offering,

but to Cain and his offering He paid no heed. Cain was much distressed and his face fell.

And The Eternal said to Cain, "Why are you distressed, And why is your face fallen?

Surely, if you do right, There is uplift. But if you do not do right Sin couches at the door; Its urge is toward you, Yet you can be its master."

Cain said to his brother Abel ... and when they were in the field, Cain set upon his brother Abel and killed him.

## BIBLICAL STORY WORKSHEET

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

--

Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

--

Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)

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Addition to Fill the Gap	Your Question(s)
Rabbinic Addition	Rabbinic Question(s)



## MIDRASH ON CAIN AND ABEL<sup>17</sup>

<sup>1</sup> And Adam carried Eve and the boy and led them to the East.

<sup>2</sup> And the Lord God sent divers seeds by Michael the archangel and gave to Adam and showed him how to work and till the ground, that they might have fruit by which they and all their generations might live.

<sup>3</sup> For thereafter Eve conceived and bare a son, whose name was Abel; and Cain and Abel used to stay together.

<sup>4</sup> And Eve said to Adam: 'My lord, while I slept, I saw a vision, as it were the blood of our son Abel in the hand of Cain, who was gulping it down in his mouth. Therefore I have sorrow.'

<sup>5</sup> And Adam said, 'Alas if Cain slew Abel. Yet let us separate them from each other mutually,

<sup>1</sup>And they made Cain an husbandman, (but) Abel they made a shepherd; in order that in this wise they might be mutually separated.

<sup>2</sup> And thereafter, Cain slew Abel, but Adam was then one hundred and thirty years old, but Abel was slain when he was one hundred and twenty-two years.

<sup>3</sup> And thereafter Adam knew his wife and he begat a son and called his name Seth.

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<sup>17</sup> (Charles 1913).

# LESSON 3: WHEN PARENTS HURT OUR FEELINGS

ABRAHAM AND ISAAC

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

---

1. How did Isaac experience the Akeidah?
2. How did the Akeidah change Isaac and Abraham's relationship?
3. How do we react when our parents hurt our feelings?

## GOALS

---

- To explore parent child relationship dynamics when the child's feelings are hurt.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT identify a time in their life when their parent(s) hurt their feelings.
- SWHTOT connect with Isaac and his struggle with Abraham.
- SWHTOT explore a moment when their feelings were hurt by their parent(s).

## MATERIALS

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- Biblical text of the Akeidah
- Midrash on the Akeidah
- Interview question sheet

# LESSON PLAN

---

## SET INDUCTION

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Place students in *chevruta* pairs and invite them to share their answers to the following question: Describe a time when your parents didn't understand you or hurt your feelings.

This lesson is designed to focus on hurt feelings, not physical hurting. Nevertheless, it is possible that students share about either physical or emotional abuse. If a student discloses significant information of that sort, ensure to follow reporting guidelines of your institution and state.

## THE BIBLICAL TEXT

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Have students remain in their *chevruta* pairs and pass out the biblical text of the Akeidah.

### EXPLAIN

In your pairs, you will act out the text of the Akeidah in front of the class. You will have ten minutes to read the biblical story, write a script, and rehearse.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

When students are done, rehearsing invite each group to act out their version of the Akeidah in front of the class (it is possible that there will be many similar versions of the same skit, if you notice that students are mostly doing the same skit feel free to save time and only invite a couple groups to act out their skits). The groups who are not acting out their skits will take notes on the skit and note any actions or words that deviate from or add to the biblical text. After each presentation, the groups who are watching the skit will share what they noticed and ask the presenters why they chose to make the change or addition. When the presenters are explaining why, note on the board any big questions the text left unanswered that the presenters needed to fill in.

## THE MIDRASH: AN INTERVIEW WITH ISAAC

### EXPLAIN

You and your *chevruta* partner are now Isaac and a news reporter who is interested in asking these unanswered questions on the board. First read the midrash to get into the head of Isaac. Then choose one person to be the reporter and one person to be Isaac. Use the questions on the board and/or write new questions to record and interview Isaac. Use your phones to record and edit the news interview.

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

When the students are done recording the interviews, watch them as a class. Pass out interview question sheets to the students for them to respond to the following questions as the watch.

- What questions does the interviewer ask?
- What emotions does Isaac appear to feel as he/she is expressing him/herself?

### **ASK**

What was similar and what was different about all the interviews?

### **PERSONAL REFLECTION AND SHARING**

#### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

The next activity, which asks students to share about themselves and how they relate to the midrash in this lesson. It is critical that each student feels heard when they share and safe to be vulnerable. Students who are not sharing should give their one-hundred percent attention to the one who is sharing.

### **EXPLAIN/ASK**

Think of the story when your parent hurt your feelings. Take five minutes and journal about how and why your feelings were hurt. What did your parent not understand? What do you wish they would have done instead? How did you respond? How do you wish you responded differently? How does the midrash help you better understand what happened? What big question about relationships does this raise for you?

### **EXPLAIN/ASK**

Who would like to share a big question and some of what they wrote about and how you are struggling with that big question in your life right now?

#### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

Continue to let students share until it seems like everyone who wants to share has done so.

### **EXPLAIN/ASK**

What did it feel like to share with the group today? Was it hard/easy? What can the group do to help you feel safer and heard?

#### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

This last part allows students to reflect on the sharing process and offer suggestions for improvement and affirmations of the parts that are working. Try and work this feedback into the next sharing session.

## CONCLUSION

### EXPLAIN

We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. Let's recite the blessing we created to give thanks to each other and God for the sacred sharing we just participated in.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

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### MIDRASH<sup>18</sup>

“The road to the top of the mountain was rugged and we climbed with considerable difficulty. When we reached the top, I unloaded the kindling wood which father had put on my back, and he took the firebrand and the slaughtering knife. ‘But where is the lamb for the offering?’ I asked in wonderment. My father remained silent for a moment, then he said: ‘Adonai will select the lamb for the offering.’ ‘Adonai? I don’t understand. What does Adonai have to do with this?’ And then my father said: ‘My son....’ It was painful for him to say that. His voice seemed to break. And then I finally understood. No.... I don’t think I really understood. But this much I know. My father seized me and brought me to the heap of wood. He bound my hands and feet tightly. My eyes stared wide, desperately wide; his eyes were glassy and without expression. I wanted to stammer: ‘Adonai.’ I tried to whisper ‘Adonai.’ ‘Adonai?’ I asked. And my father unsheathed the knife, and it drew closer and closer and closer. ‘Adonai!!’ I cried out inaudibly, ‘Adonai, Lord of the universe, where are you?’ And my father placed the blade to my throat.... ‘What are you doing?’ ‘Are you crazy?’ ‘I do not want to die.... Why are you doing this?.... Let me go!!.... Let me go, I tell you!’

Father is now dead, and his death does not pain me in the least. On the contrary, I am almost glad that it happened. I feel like singing aloud; making an end of this mockery; tearing off the mask of mourning.... Do you know that ever since that day I never spoke another word to my father. There was only silence between us. I hated my father! I always see him standing there with the knife in his hand... ready to kill me.”

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<sup>18</sup> (Wiesel 1976) and (Cohen 1995).

# LESSON 4: APOLOGIES & FORGIVENESS

JOSEPH AND HIS BROTHERS

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. Can we face those we have wronged?
2. Can we forgive those who have wronged us?

## GOALS

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- To explore the emotions created by apologies and forgiveness.
- To explore occurrences in our lives where we feel the need to apologize or forgive.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT identify people in their life to whom they should to apologize and from who they would like an apology.
- SWHTOT explore the story of Joseph and his brothers and the emotions which encapsulate forgiveness.
- SWHTOT practice apologizing and forgiving.

## MATERIALS

---

- Song: [Joseph's Dreams - Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#)
- Lyrics: Joseph's Dreams - Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat
- Midrash on Joseph

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

### NOTE TO TEACHER

As the students walk in hand them two index cards.

### EXPLAIN

Do not write your name on these. On one index card write down something a friend or family member has done to you for which you want an apology. On the other index card write down something you have done to a friend for family member for which you should apologize.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Collect all the index cards. Keeping the two stacks separate, shuffle each of them, and set them aside for later.

## THE BIBLICAL TEXT

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Hand out the lyrics to and play the song [Joseph's Dreams - Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat](#). Then divide the class into two groups. One group will be Joseph and the other will be his brothers.

### EXPLAIN

Listen to the song and imagine you are Joseph/Joseph's brothers as we listen to the song. Write down how you would be feeling if you were Joseph/Joseph's brothers.

### ASK

(To the brothers group) If you were Joseph's brothers, how would you feel he has wronged you and what would you want him to apologize for?

(To Joseph group) If you were Joseph, how would you feel telling your brothers about your dreams?

### EXPLAIN

(To the whole class) now imagine you are all Joseph, you know how your brothers feel about you, and Jacob, your father asks you to go visit them out in the wilderness, alone. You are terrified, but you go anyways. You arrive at the location where your brothers are supposed to be, but they are nowhere to be found. Instead you find a stranger where they are supposed to be.

## THE MIDRASH

### EXPLAIN

Read the midrash individually, then create a Snapchat/Instagram story of how you would be reacting as the stranger approached you. Make sure that the Snapchat/Instagram story reflects the midrash.



### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

These are “snap” (10 sec or less) reactions which can be made using various social media platforms or just a phone camera. The idea is to take a series of very short face shots.

After students have created their Snapchat/Instagram stories, have each student share it with the class. Ask the class to identify any emotions they see in the Snapchat/Instagram story and record their answers on the board.

### **EXPLAIN**

Somehow the simple question the stranger asked Joseph allowed Joseph to realize that he had wronged his brothers, that he deeply cared about them, and that he needed to apologize.

### **REFLECTION AND SHARING**

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

The next activity, which asks students to share about themselves and how they relate to the midrash in this lesson. It is critical that each student feels heard when they share and safe to be vulnerable. Students who are not sharing should give their one-hundred percent attention to the one who is sharing.

### **EXPLAIN**

Just as a stranger helped Joseph, we can also help each other. I am going to pass around a box with the index cards you wrote at the beginning of class. You will select two of them, one apology card and one forgive card. You will then read the card aloud and respond by filling in the following sentences respectively:

### **FOR THE APOLOGIZE CARD**

- If I were the person who needed to apologize I would be feeling \_\_\_\_\_
- If I were to apologize I would say \_\_\_\_\_

### **FOR THE FORGIVE CARD**

- If I were the person who needed to forgive I would be feeling \_\_\_\_\_
- If I were to forgive I would say \_\_\_\_\_

### **EXPLAIN/ASK**

Who would like to share a big question they are wrestling with about apologies and/or forgiveness and how you are struggling with that big question in your life right now?

### **NOTE TO TEACHER**

Continue to let students share until it seems like everyone who wants to share has done so.

### EXPLAIN/ASK

What did it feel like to share with the group today? Was it hard/easy? What can the group do to help you feel safer and heard?

### NOTE TO TEACHER

This last part allows students to reflect on the sharing process and offer suggestions for improvement and

### CONCLUSION

#### EXPLAIN

We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. Let's recite the blessing we created to give thanks to each other and God for the sacred sharing we just participated in.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

# MATERIALS

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## JOSEPH'S DREAMS - JOSEPH AND THE AMAZING TECHNICOLOR DREAMCOAT

### **Narrator**

Joseph's coat annoyed his brothers

### **Brothers**

But what makes us mad  
Are the things that Joseph tells us of the  
Dream's he often had

### **Joseph**

I dreamed that in the fields one day,  
The corn gave me sign  
Your eleven sheaves of corn  
All turned and bowed to mine  
My sheaf was quite a sight to see  
A golden sheaf and tall  
Yours were green and second-rate  
And really rather small

### **Brothers**

This is not the kind of thing  
We brothers like to hear  
It seems to us that Joseph and his  
Dreams should disappear

### **Joseph**

I dreamed I saw eleven stars,  
The sun the moon and sky  
Bowing down before my star,  
It made me wonder why  
Could it be that I was born  
For higher things than you?  
A post in someone's government,  
A ministry or two

### **Brothers**

The dreams of our dear brother are  
The decade's biggest yawn  
His talk of stars and goldens sheaves  
Is just a load of corn  
Not only is he tactless but  
He's also rather dim  
For there's eleven of us and  
There's only one of him  
The dreams of course will not come true  
That is, we think they won't come true  
That is, we hope they won't come true  
What if he's right all along?  
The dreams are more than crystal clear,  
The writing on the wall  
Means that Joseph some day soon  
Will rise above us all  
The accuracy of the dreams  
We brothers do not know  
But one thing we are sure about  
The dreamer  
Has to go

## MIDRASH<sup>19</sup>

At first he was afraid since he could not make out the stranger's features. His mind flashed back to a story his father had told him about a similar encounter he had many years ago with a strange man near the Jabbok before he was reunited with his brother Esau. He recalled how Jacob was literally shaking when he recounted wrestling with the stranger until dawn broke, and how the limp he had was the result of the battle. His father also said the struggle with the man had prepared him for the moment when he saw Esau again. If he could survive the battle with the powerful, almost god-like stranger, then he knew he surely could find the strength to confront his own flesh and blood. As these memories flooded his head, Joseph became even more afraid of the man who appeared larger as he approached. Perhaps he, too, had to overcome this stranger, this apparition on the road, before he could find his brothers.

But when the stranger came closer, Joseph saw his slight smile and heard him asking something, though he was not sure of the exact words. Joseph thought he had said, "What are you searching for," so simply answered, "It is my brothers whom I desire." (Genesis 37:15–16) With these words, Joseph began to cry silently. He, indeed, needed and felt absolutely lost without them. He pleaded with the stranger to tell him if he knew where his brothers had pastured their flocks.

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<sup>19</sup> (Cohen 1995).

# LESSON 5: LOVE IS COMPLICATED

JACOB, RACHEL, AND LEAH

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. Is love blinding?
2. How do we see the wholeness of the ones we love?
3. What do the ones we love reveal about our innermost desires?

## GOALS

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- To explore different categories of human attraction.
- To explore different types of beauty.
- To explore the complicated nature of love.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT identify the qualities of the type of person they are attracted to.
- SWHTOT explore different ways to understand beauty.
- SWHTOT explore the different ways they connect with the physical and spiritual of other human beings.

## MATERIALS

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- Midrash on Leah, Rachel, Jacob, and Esau
- Worksheet: J-Date Profile

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

### EXPLAIN

Write down all the qualities of the person you want to spend the rest of your life with. Text your answers to the [Poll Everywhere](#).

### NOTE TO TEACHER

[Poll Everywhere](#) is an online polling system where students can text in their answers to a question. This poll should be set up as a word cloud of responses so that student answers are compiled as a word cloud. If you cannot access [Poll Everywhere](#) then any way to collect student answers in a word cloud format will suffice.

It will be interesting to see which qualities appear as the majority for the group. Invite the students to notice what characteristics pop up.

### ASK

- Are the majority of qualities physical, intellectual, spiritual or emotional?
- If we were to place these qualities into larger general buckets, what would the buckets be labeled, and how would they rank?
- Do you think it's possible to find a person who exemplifies all these qualities?

## THE BIBLICAL TEXT

### EXPLAIN

The bible doesn't often offer descriptions of characters outside of the actions they take and the people they are related to, but it does offer a description of Rachel and Leah. Since there is a notion that there is nothing superfluous in the Torah, when we do see descriptions offered, it is a sign for us to pay attention to them.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Read the biblical description of Rachel and Leah.

“Now Laban had two daughters; the name of the older one was Leah, and the name of the younger was Rachel. 17 Leah had weak eyes; Rachel was shapely and beautiful.” (Gen. 29:16-17)

### ASK

- Which bucket would this biblical description fall into?
  - Physical
- Why do you think the biblical text describes Rachel and Leah in this way?
- Do you think this biblical description is problematic? Why? Why not?

## THE MIDRASH

### ASK

- What is missing from the biblical description?
  - Any other descriptions about Rachael and Leah other than about their physicality

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Ask students to get into *chevruta* and pass out the midrashic texts.

### EXPLAIN

In your *chevruta* use the midrashic texts to create a J-Date profile for Leah.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Pass out the J-Date Profile worksheet. When students are finished, have each group share with the class and explain how the midrash influenced their choices.

### ASK

- Why do you think it was important for the rabbis to supplement the description of Leah?
  - There are many different kinds of beauty

## REFLECTION AND SHARING

### NOTE TO TEACHER

The next activity, which asks students to share about themselves and how they relate to the midrash in this lesson. It is critical that each student feels heard when they share and safe to be vulnerable. Students who are not sharing should give their one-hundred percent attention to the one who is sharing.

### EXPLAIN

In the mystical tradition, Rachel represents *alma d'itgalia*— the physical world, while Leah is considered a paradigm of *alma d'itkasia*, the spiritual world.

### ASK

- In what ways do we as humans become too focused on the physical world and not focused on the spiritual world?
- What are some examples of this in your life?

### EXPLAIN

Some even believed Rachel and Leah to be twins. (According to *Sefer ha-Yashar* 23:28, Adinah, Laban's wife, conceived and bore twin daughters.) So, it should not be surprising that Rachel and Leah often act as parts of a whole—two sides which complement or parallel each other.

- How can the physical world sometimes distract us from looking at someone's wholeness?
- In what does our attraction to either the physical or spiritual world teach us about ourselves?

## CONCLUTION

### EXPLAIN

We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. Let's recite the blessing we created to give thanks to each other and God for the sacred sharing we just participated in.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).



## MATERIALS

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### MIDRASH<sup>20</sup>

Perhaps Leah was fittingly described as having *einayim rakkot*, weak eyes, since her very name, Leah, means weak or tired. And over the course of time a legend grew that Leah's eyes indeed were weakened and she herself became weary from weeping over her fate. (See *Bereshit Rabbah* 70:16, *Tanhuma ha-Nidpas*, *Va-Yetze* #4, *Bereshit Rabbati* to Genesis 29:31, and B.T. Baba Batra 123a.) For when she and her sister were born, her father, Laban, had arranged with his sister, Rebekkah, living in Canaan, that their two firstborn children, Leah and Esau, would one day marry, as would their younger offspring, Rachel and Jacob. But when Leah heard of the kind of person Esau was, she prayed to God, beseeching, "May it be Your will that I do not fall to the lot of that wicked man." Leah's eyes were weak because of her deeply sensitive nature.

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<sup>20</sup> (Cohen 1995).

## WORKSHEET: J-DATE PROFILE



Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Gender: \_\_\_\_\_

Sexual Orientation: \_\_\_\_\_

From: \_\_\_\_\_

Age: \_\_\_\_\_

Height: \_\_\_\_\_

Eye Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Hair Color: \_\_\_\_\_

Religion: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation: \_\_\_\_\_

Education: \_\_\_\_\_

About Me: \_\_\_\_\_

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Picture

Lifestyle

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# UNIT 4: ENDINGS

THE PAINFUL EMOTIONS ENDINGS CAN BRING

## CURRICULUM ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own Midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

## UNIT 4 ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Exploring the pain and suffering I feel during a life ending makes that experience meaningful.
2. All life changes are also experiences of endings.
3. Experiencing the pain and suffering of an ending is a defining characteristic of human beings.

## UNIT 4 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. Why do we experience pain and suffering during an ending?
2. How do our life's needs change when we are faced with an ending?
3. How do I find meaning in the pain and suffering I feel during an ending?

## UNIT 4 GOALS

- To explore the nuances of the emotions we feel at endings.
- To explore Moses' death from the perspective of all the characters involved.
- To connect the learners lives to Moses' experience of endings.

## UNIT 4 OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT...

- SWBAT retell a midrashic understanding of Moses' death scene.
- SWHTOT explore their own feelings and big questions about endings.
- SWHTOT explore the endings of new beginnings in their lives.
- SWBAT describe the difference between wants and needs.

# LESSON 1: UNFULFILLED ENDINGS

YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

## RATIONALE

---

This lesson introduces students to the idea that, even though we work really hard for something, sometimes we still don't reap the results we were expecting. That reality can be hard and painful.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How does it feel to work for something extremely hard and then not get what you worked for?

## GOALS

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- To explore some reasons why Moses was not allowed to enter the Promised Land.
- To begin exploring how other characters in the biblical narrative respond to Moses' fate.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWHTOT to explore the emotions one feels when they don't get what they want.
- SWBAT outline Moses' life.
- SWHTOT explore Moses' and God's relationship with each other.

## MATERIALS

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- "You Can't Always Get What You Want," The Rolling Stones – lyrics
- Deuteronomy 3:23-28

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

As the students walk in and sit down, pass out the lyrics to “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” by The Rolling Stones. Play the song and then lead a discussion asking, “What do you think the song writer means when he says, “ You can't always get what you want, but if you try sometimes well you just might find you get what you need?”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## SING-DOWN: YOU DON'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

Teacher should invite students to open up their journals and respond to the following question. “When in your life have you tried really hard for something, but then didn’t get it? How did that make you feel?” The teacher should then collect all the feelings and write them on the board.

After all the feelings are written on the board, the teacher should put the students into *chavruta* pairs and invite them to think of all the biblical characters who “don’t always get what they want.” The teacher should explain that this is a “sing-down” game where each group will share specific incidents and how it would make them feel if they were the character, until there are no more examples left.

When all the groups have finished, go around the room and invite each group to share. Each group who shares a unique incident gets one point and the group with the most points wins. If a group has the same incident as another group, but a different emotion, they don’t get a point, but they should share the emotions.

While each group is sharing, the teacher should continue to collect the different emotions on the board, adding a check mark next to the repeated feelings.

The teacher should then invite the students to notice when emotions are the most common (most likely, anger, sadness, loss, pain, etc.) and lead a discussion about why the students think that those emotions are the most common.

## MOSES’ LIFE IN REVIEW

Chances are that one of the characters the students mention is Moses. Teacher should explain that even the major character of Moses, who knew God face-to-face, didn’t get everything he wanted. Teacher should review Moses’ life with the students to ensure that they understand the significance of Moses in Jewish history. Below are some major points:

1. Moses was born and placed in a Basket
2. Moses was pick up out of the water and adopted by Pharaoh’s daughter
3. Moses kills an Egyptian who is beating a Hebrew slave
4. Moses runs away to the land of Midian
5. Moses sees God in a burning bush, which he is a shepherd in Midian

6. God sends Moses to free the Israelites
7. Moses and God bring ten plagues down upon Egypt
8. Moses leads the Israelite people to freedom through the parted Sea of Reeds
9. Moses leads the Israelite people for forty years in the desert to bring them to the Promised Land
10. Moses receives Torah and teaches it to the people
11. Moses builds the *mishkan*, the place where God dwells on Earth

Teacher will then explain to the students that despite all that Moses did for the Israelite people, he didn't get to finish their journey with them. He never got to enter the Promised Land and he died alone on the top of a mountain, overlooking the land he worked his whole life to bring the Israelite people.

Further, the teacher should explain to the students that this unit will focus on Moses' death and all the emotions that the rabbis imagined he would have felt at the end of his life when he did not get to finish all that he started. The teacher should remind the students that they already learned a little bit of midrash about Moses' death when they studied Josephus in [Unit 1, Lesson 3](#), but that this unit will cover the subject more in depth.

## WALKING IN THEIR SHOES

Teacher should break the class up into groups of three and pass out the text from Deuteronomy 3:23-28. Then the teacher should explain that each group will make a skit acting out the text from these verses. The teacher should explain that this is a section of the Torah where Moses pleads with God to change God's mind about letting Moses enter the Promised Land. Each student should play a different character, one will be God, one will be Moses, and one will be Joshua. In each skit group should address the following questions:

1. Why is Moses upset that he is not allowed to enter the Promised Land?
2. Why is God not letting Moses enter the Promised Land?
3. What role is Joshua playing in all this and how does Moses feel about it?
4. How do you think the Israelite people feeling about all this?

Each group will then share their skit with the class.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher and class will compare all the different ways students interpreted the text. The teacher should then remind the students of their journal reflection from the beginning of class and invite them to imagine that they were Moses and how hard it must have been for him not to ever get to enter the Promised Land. During this unit, we will use Moses' story as an invitation for each of us to explore our own feelings about pain, loss, disappointment, and suffering.

# MATERIALS

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## YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

THE ROLLING STONES

I saw her today at the reception  
A glass of wine in her hand  
I knew she was gonna meet her connection  
At her feet was footloose man

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you might find  
You get what you need

I went down to the demonstration  
To get my fair share of abuse  
Singing, "We're gonna vent our frustration  
If we don't we're gonna blow a 50-amp fuse"

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just might find  
You get what you need

I went down to the Chelsea drugstore  
To get your prescription filled  
I was standing in line with Mr. Jimmy  
And man, did he look pretty ill  
We decided that we would have a soda  
My favorite flavor, cherry red  
I sung my song to Mr. Jimmy  
Yeah, and he said one word to me, and that was  
"dead"  
I said to him

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just  
might find  
You get what you need

You get what you need, yeah, oh baby

I saw her today at the reception  
In her glass was a bleeding man  
She was practiced at the art of deception  
Well I could tell by her blood-stained  
hands

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just  
might find  
You just might find  
You get what you need

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes you just might  
find  
You just might find  
You get what you need

## DEUTERONOMY 3:23-28<sup>21</sup>

<sup>23</sup> I pleaded with the LORD at that time, saying,

<sup>24</sup> "O Lord GOD, You who let Your servant see the first works of Your greatness and Your mighty hand, You whose powerful deeds no god in heaven or on earth can equal!

<sup>25</sup> Let me, I pray, cross over and see the good land on the other side of the Jordan, that good hill country, and the Lebanon."

<sup>26</sup> But the LORD was wrathful with me on your account and would not listen to me. The LORD said to me, "Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again!

<sup>27</sup> Go up to the summit of Pisgah and gaze about, to the west, the north, the south, and the east. Look at it well, for you shall not go across yonder Jordan.

<sup>28</sup> Give Joshua his instructions, and imbue him with strength and courage, for he shall go across at the head of this people, and he shall allot to them the land that you may only see."

(Deu 3:23-28 TNK)

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<sup>21</sup> (The Jewish Publication Society 1985).



# LESSON 2: AVOIDING ENDINGS

CAN WE AVOID THE PAIN OF AN ENDING WITHOUT SUFFERING?

## RATIONALE

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This lesson further explores how alternatives to a painful ending might be even more painful and cause more suffering than the ending itself.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How can a painful ending be preferred to an alternative non-ending?
2. Why is it so hard for a leader to become a follower?

## GOALS

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- To explore how the rabbis split up biblical verses to create entire *midrashim*.
- To explore the emotions felt about endings and imagined non-endings.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT deconstruct a biblical narrative.
- SWHTOT create their own scene to fill in the gaps in the biblical narrative.
- SWHTOT connect the big questions in their lives to Moses and Joshua.

## MATERIALS

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- Worksheet: The “Art” of the Biblical Narrative
- *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses’ Death 3.1-3.2

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Review all the emotions Moses might have been feeling at the end of his life from the last lesson.

## THE “ART” OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

Teacher should explain that the rabbis loved to split up biblical verses and turn them into longer narrative. We are going to try out that process with the verse from the bible where God tells Moses it is getting close to the time where he will die. Considering all the emotions we thought Moses might be feeling at this time, you are going to draw the five-part scene which unfolds in Deuteronomy 31:14 which reads:

God said to Moses: The time is drawing near for you to die. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him. Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting.

The Torah gives us three parts to this scene:

1. God said to Moses: The time is drawing near for you to die.
2. Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him.
3. Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting.

The teacher should explain that the students will draw pictures for the three scenes given, and create the fourth and fifth scene in art and in words which occur between the given scenes. Pass out The “Art” of the Biblical Narrative worksheet.

When students are finished, they should share their work with the class and the teacher should lead a discussion about the differences in interpretation and how each student filled in the blank scenes differently.

## “BARD”ING THE MIDRASH

Teacher should break the class into *chevruta* pairs and pass out the midrash. Each group should use the BARD method to explore the midrash and write down their ideas in the journals. The students should take particular note of all the big questions about life they think the rabbis are asking. Finally, each student should ask themselves and record their answers in their journal, “What big questions about life does this midrash make me think about?”

Some possible big questions might include:

1. When do I have to end something in my life to make room for someone/something else?
2. Would I be able to step aside from a leadership role for someone else and then follow them?
3. When do we trick ourselves into thinking we don’t have to face an ending?

4. What things in my life cause me to feel jealous or envious?
5. Is it better to feel the pain of an ending or experience suffering by not experiencing the ending?

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Here are some footnotes to better understand the midrash.

**When the time arrived for Moses** By splitting the first half of the Biblical verse in two, Midrash *Petirat Moshe* reimagines the verse from Deut. 31:14 as a conversation between Moses and God.

**after all that I have labored** Though Moses argues for his life by invoking his labors as a leader, Midrash *Petirat Moshe* acknowledges Moses' transgressions through the invocation of Ps. 118. The verse following the verse cited here in Midrash *Petirat Moshe* is significant: "The Eternal punished me severely, but did not hand me over to death" (Ps. 118:18). The citation of this Biblical verse suggests that Moses is not attempting to escape punishment, after all, he is willing to serve Joshua and forgo his position as leader; he is only trying to avoid death. Though it does not appear to fit the context of Midrash *Petirat Moshe*, Deuteronomy Rabbah 11:5 suggests another possibility is that Moses is concerned that without him, there will not be enough praise of God on Earth.

**Let it suffice** This is the first of four times Midrash *Petirat Moshe* references this quote from Deut. 3:26. In the Biblical context, God is "wrathful" with Moses when he requests to enter the Land of Israel and God says to him, "Enough! Never speak to Me of this matter again."

**Call upon Joshua and I will give him instructions** It should be noted here, that God, The Divine Self, prefers to teach Joshua. This is in contrast to other traditions (e.g. Pirke Avot 1:1) which depict Moses as the one who begins the chain of oral tradition by first passing it to Joshua.

**Will you treat him, as he would treat you** God's question to Moses points out God's worry that perhaps Moses will not be able to be subordinate to Joshua – he might become jealous of Joshua (see Chronicles of Jerahmeel 15:6). Perhaps this is also why God feels Moses is incapable of teaching Joshua himself; maybe in an effort to demonstrate that his life is of critical importance, Moses would sabotage his teaching of Joshua.

**Do for you what you did for me** Joshua served Moses for all the years in the desert. Here, Moses suggests that he and Joshua switch roles – Joshua will become the leader and Moses, the servant. However, the role reversal is not quite comparable because Moses appears to see his role as servant ("I will [be able to] teach you") as an advisor, not purely as a servant. He is reluctant to give up his position as "The Teacher." In Babylonian Talmud Sotah 8a he is punished for this.

***I will see your face*** Rabbinically, this biblical phrase – seeing someone’s face – is tantamount to embracing the person’s core being. For example, Jacob’s comment to Esau in Gen. 33:10, “No, I pray you; if you would do me this favor, accept from me this gift; for to see your face is like seeing the face of God, and you have received me favorably.”

***Joshua was inside and Moses was outside*** The Torah tells us that God tells Moses to call Joshua and appear in the Tent of Meeting; there God appears in a pillar of cloud. Midrash *Petirat Moshe* creatively interprets the verse from Deut. 31:15 to answer the question, “Why is the pillar at the entrance of the tent?” Midrash *Petirat Moshe*’s interpretation explains that the pillar of cloud blocked Moses from entering the tent, suggesting that God rejects Moses’ proposition to serve Joshua. God has determined that Joshua will become the leader and together they (God and Joshua) will lead the Israelite people.

***[Better] one hundred deaths than a single envy*** At the moment that God separates Moses from Joshua and leaves him outside the Tent of Meeting (the place he has had access to since it was built), Moses realizes that in fact he cannot truly serve Joshua. It would be impossible for Moses to serve and not become jealous of Joshua’s role as leader. Deuteronomy Rabbah 9:9 explains that Moses is forced to ask Joshua what God revealed to him. Joshua would not reveal the secret to Moses. At that moment Moses realizes that he would rather die than be jealous.

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share one of their big questions this midrash is making them think about, why they are struggling with that question, and any story in their life that questions reminds them of.

The teacher should then lead a discussion with the group about the question, “How does the midrash help you better understand your big question, or your relationship to that big question?”

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

# MATERIALS

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## THE “ART” OF THE BIBLICAL NARRATIVE

### INSTRUCTIONS

The rabbis loved to split up biblical verses and turn them into longer narrative. Below is the verse from Deuteronomy 31:14 split into five scenes, three of which the bible has given us words for. Draw a picture for each section, representing how you understand the scene to unfold. For the two blank sections, draw and explain what you think transpired between each of those sections that the bible give us.

### SCENE 1



The LORD said to Moses: The time is drawing near for you to die.

### SCENE 2



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### SCENE 3

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Call Joshua and present yourselves in the Tent of Meeting, that I may instruct him.

### SCENE 4

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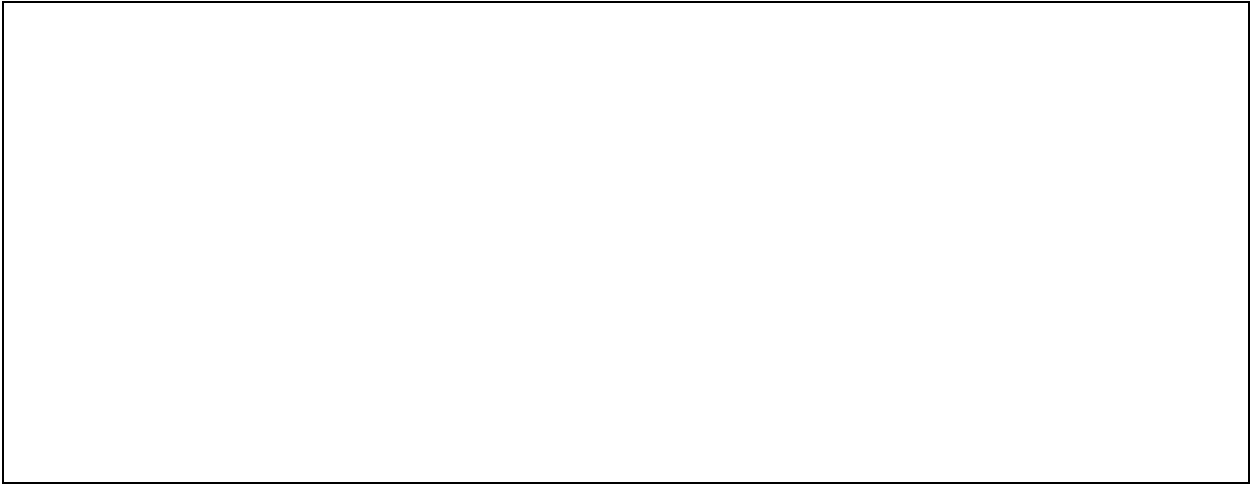
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## SCENE 5



Moses and Joshua went and presented themselves in the Tent of Meeting.

## PETIRAT MOSHE - MIDRASH ON MOSES' DEATH 3.1-3.2

### 3.1 MOSES PLEADS WITH GOD

When the time arrived for Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, to leave this world, The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “*Behold, the days of your death approach* (Deut. 31:14).” [Moses] responded, “Master of the World, after all that I have labored, you say to me that I will die. *I shall not die, but live etc.* (Ps. 118:17). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “*Let it suffice* (Deut. 3:26). You have done enough until now. You will come this far and no further. *Call upon Joshua and I will give him instructions* (Deut. 31:14).”

Moses replied, “Master of the Universe, why should I die? If it’s because of Joshua’s honor; let him rule and I will leave.” The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “Will you treat him as he would treat you?” Moses replied, “Yes.”

וכשהגיע יומו של מרע"ה ליפטר מן העולם א"ל הקב"ה הן קרבו ימיו למות, אמר לפניו רבש"ע אחר כל היגיעה שיגיעתי תאמר לי שאמות, לא אמות כי אחיה וגו', א"ל הקב"ה רב לך עד פה תבוא ולא תוסיף, קרא את יהושע ואצונו,

אמר לפניו רבש"ע מפני מה אני מת? אם בשביל כבודו של יהושע יכנס יהושע לשררה ואני אצא. א"ל הקב"ה ותעשה לו כמו שהיה עושה לך? א"ל הן.

### 3.2 MOSES IS WILLING TO SERVE JOSHUA

Immediately, Moses agreed and went to get Joshua and called him “My teacher, Joshua.” And Joshua became terrified and said [to Moses,] “You call me My teacher?!” Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, said to Joshua, “Wouldn’t you rather I live and not die? Joshua said to him, “Yes.” [Moses] said to him, “And would it not be better for you that I not [die] in this way? If anything is hard for you, I will [be able to] teach you. If so, it must be acceptable to you that I should live and do for you what you did for me.” Joshua said to Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, “All that you will declare to me, I will accept [and do], in order that I will see your face. And Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him, began to show all the honor to Joshua, that [Joshua] showed him. When they entered the tent of meeting, the pillar of cloud came down, as it is written, *The Eternal appeared in the tent in a pillar of cloud* (Deut. 31:15), and it separated Joshua and Moses, Joshua was inside and Moses was outside. When [Moses] saw this, he said, *[Better] one hundred deaths than a single envy* (DeutR VY 9).

מיד הסכים משה והלך אחר יהושע וקרא לו רבי יהושע, נתיירא יהושע מאד וא"ל ולי אתה קורא רבי! א"ל מרע"ה ליהושע רוצה אתה שאחיה ולא אמות? א"ל הן, א"ל ולא טוב לך שלא אמות באופן כזה? ואם יקשה בעיניך שום דבר אני מלמדך, אבל קבל עליך שאחיה ואעשה לך כמו שהיית עושה לי. א"ל יהושע למרע"ה כל מה שתגזור עלי אני מקבל בשביל שאראה פניך. והתחיל מרע"ה לעשות ליהושע כל הכבוד שהיה עושה לו יהושע. כיון שנכנסו לאהל מועד ירד עמוד הענן שנאמר וירא ה' באהל בעמוד ענן והפסיק בין משה ליהושע, יהושע מבפנים ומרע"ה מבחוץ. כיון שראה כך אמר מאה מיתות ולא קנאה אחת.



# LESSON 3: DYING IS HUMAN

ARE SUFFERING AND DYING INHERENTLY HUMAN CHARACTERISTICS?

## RATIONALE

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This lesson is intended to explore the ending of all endings, dying, and many of the emotions and questions that surround this human experience.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How does our understanding of God influence our understanding of pain, suffering, death, and dying?
2. What makes us human?

## GOALS

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- To explore the relationship between death, dying, and God.
- To explore the reasons Moses doesn't think he needs to die.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWHTOT explore their big questions about how God and dying are/aren't connected.
- SWHTOT explore the differences between humans and God.
- SWHTOT connect to Moses in his plea to live.
- SWBAT articulate at least one big question they have about the ending of a life.

## MATERIALS

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- *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses' Death 5.3
- "Pick a Color," by Etgar Keret

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## ACTING OUT THE MIDRASH

Teacher should explain to the class that the midrash today is a conversation between Moses and God about why Moses has to die. As a class use the BARD method to study the midrash. Then divide the class into groups of three students, one student to play Moses, one to play God, and one to film the encounter. Students should read through the midrash first and decide how they are going to play each role. After the filming is completed the students will each present their video to the class.

The teacher should lead a discussion about how the video interpretations of the midrash were similar and different. Then the teacher should continue the discussion by asking the following questions,

- “What kinds of relationship that you have experienced, does this conversation remind you of?”
- “Why do you think Moses thinks he’s so special he doesn’t have to die?”
- “Why do you think God will not let Moses live?”
- “How would you feel if you were Moses at the end of this conversation?”

## NOTE TO TEACHER

The following are notes which can help you better understand the midrash:

***son of Amram*** Referenced in Ex. 6:20, Amram is described as the father of Moses and Aaron. Amram himself lived 137 years.

***son of Itzhar*** This seems to be an error in the text. Ex. 6:18 tells us that Itzhar is Amram’s brother and Kohat is their father.

***remained alive*** God wants to point out that Moses is a human and not a god. All men die and therefore Moses must also die.

***trusted in all my house*** Literally, Moses wants to prove that unlike Adam, he can be trusted by God and will not steal from “God’s garden” like Adam stole the fruit from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil which made him more like a god. Moses wants to show God that unlike Adam, he has no desire to be like God. However, the cited verse from Num. 12:7ff explains that unlike other prophets, who God speaks to in dreams and visions, God speaks directly to Moses – thus elevating his status above all other prophets. Additionally, another tradition (MidrPss 90) uses this verse while explaining how Moses is like “man” and “god” – explaining that Moses is the Master of God’s Palace. The message here then is complicated, Moses thinks he is proving to God that he doesn’t want to be like God, but in reality, Moses must die because he has become too god-like!

***through a serpent*** This refers to the story from Num. 21:4ff where the Israelites complain about their journey in the wilderness and God sends serpents which bite and kill many Israelites. Moses petitions God on behalf of the people. God instructs Moses to make a copper serpent and mount it on a standard; anyone who was bitten would look at the copper serpent and recover.

***erase me*** Moses points out that he, in contrast to Noah, was willing to die for his people; Noah did not offer himself up to prevent the destruction of the world. Interestingly, later in MidrPM, God uses this same citation to prove to Moses that he in fact desired to die.

***destroy Your children*** This is a parallel concocted citation to the one found in Section 3.3, though here the reason for Ishmael's evil is given. As mentioned before, it is possible that this concocted citation is based on the story in Jer. 41:6. DeutR 9:4 and 11:3 have parallel examples of biblical figures who are very human!

***destroy Your Temple*** This is another parallel concocted citation to the one found in Section 3.3 in an expanded form. It possibly refers to the Babylonian destruction of the Temple in 586 B.C.E., but it more likely refers to the Roman sack of the Temple in 70 C.E. which sent the Jews into exile for almost two thousand years.

***Your Levites*** This section which compares Moses to Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob is parallel to Section 3.3. However, here Moses is only compared to Abraham and Isaac. This highlights the “negative” progeny of these patriarchs whose descendants kill Moses' descents, the priests and Levites.

***kill the Egyptian*** Reference to the story from Ex. 2:11ff where Moses kills an Egyptian taskmaster and flees to Midian for safety.

***the Egyptian first born*** Reference to the final plague God brings upon Egypt causing Pharaoh to finally free the Israelite slaves (Ex. 12:29ff).

***Are you equal to Me?*** Perhaps the central theme of this section is that Moses is not equal to God. Moses might be greater than all men, even the heroes of the Bible who precede him, but Moses is not equal to God. The boundary between man and God which MidrPM points out is that men die and God is eternal.

## SUFFERING AND BEING HUMAN

Teacher should focus the class on the last line of the midrash,

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Moses], “Are you equal to Me? I bring death and restore to life. Can you revive the dead like me?”

Then the teacher should point out that the midrash seems to be making a distinction between human beings and God; that Moses cannot live forever because he is human and not God. Teacher should give the students a minute or two to respond to the follow questions in their journals,

- “If Moses has to die, because he human and not God, do you think Moses has to experience suffering for the same reason?”
- “How do you think God feels about Moses needing to die?”

Teacher should then pass out the short story, *Pick a Color*,” by Etgar Keret and read it together with the class. After reading the story the teacher should lead a discussion with the class about how the ideas about God, dying, and suffering in the Etgar Keret story might change the way they understand the midrash.

### PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share one of their big questions that they are now considering based on the short story and the midrash, why they are struggling with that question, and any story in their life that questions reminds them of.

The teacher should then lead a discussion with the group about the question, “How has the midrash and the short story changed or reinforced your questions about death and suffering?”

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

### CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

### PETIRAT MOSHE - MIDRASH ON MOSES' DEATH 5.3

#### 5.3 GOD AND MOSES ARGUE: TO WHOM IS MOSES' EQUAL?

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Moses], “Whose son are you? [Moses] said to [God], “The son of Amram.” [God] said to [Moses], “And whose son is Amram?” [Moses] said to [God], “The son of Itzhar.” [God replied], “And whose son is Itzhar?” [Moses] said to [God], “The son of Kohat.” [God replied], “And whose son is Kohat?” [Moses] said to [God], “The son of Levi.” [God] said to [Moses], “And from whom do they all descend?” [Moses] said to [God], “From the First Man.” [God] said to him, “Have any of them remained alive?” [Moses] said to [God], “They all died.” The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “And you want to live on?!” [Moses] said to [God], “Master of the Universe, Adam stole [the forbidden fruit], and ate [it] against Your will and You punished him with death. But, I stole nothing from you. And You already wrote about me, *My servant Moses; he is trusted in all my house* (Num. 12:7). The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, “Are you more righteous than the First Man and his generation?” [Moses] said to [God], “Yes. Adam and Eve were tempted by the serpent, but I gave life to the dead through a serpent.”

The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, “Are you greater than Noah and his generation?” [Moses] said to [God], “Yes. You brought on Noah and his generation the waters of the flood, but Noah didn't ask mercy for his generation. But I said, *Now, if You will forgive their sins, [well and good]; but if not, erase me from the book which You have written* (Ex 32:32).

[God] said to [Moses], “Are you greater than Abraham, whom I tested with ten trials?” [Moses] said to [God], “Ishmael issued from him, *Whose children will destroy Your children*. [God] said to him, “Are you greater than Isaac?” [Moses] said to [God], “From his loins issued he who would destroy Your Temple, and his sons will kill

א"ל הקב"ה משה בן מי אתה?  
א"ל בן עמרם, א"ל ועמרם בן מי  
הוא א"ל בן יצהר, ויצהר בן מי  
הוא א"ל בן קהת, וקהת בן מי  
הוא א"ל בן לוי, א"ל וכולם ממי  
יצאו א"ל מן אדה"ר, א"ל נשאר  
מהם שום אדם חי? א"ל כולם  
מתו, א"ל הקב"ה ואתה רוצה  
לחיות? א"ל רבש"ע אדה"ר גנב  
ואכל מה שלא רצית וקנסת עליו  
מיתה ואני גנבתי כלום לפניך?  
וכבר כתבת עלי עבדי משה בכל  
ביתי נאמן הוא, א"ל הקב"ה  
למשה כלום אתה צדיק מאדה"ר  
ודורו? א"ל כן, אדה"ר וחזה  
פיתה אותם נחש ואני החייתי  
מתים בנחש,

א"ל הקב"ה כלום אתה גדול מנח  
ודורו? א"ל כן, נח הבאת עליו  
ועל דורו מי המבול ונח לא בקש  
רחמים על דורו ואני אמרתי  
ועתה אם תשא חטאתם ואם אין  
מחני נא מספרך אשר כתבת.

א"ל כלום אתה גדול מאברהם  
שנסיתי אותו בעשרה נסיונות?  
א"ל יצא ממנו ישמעאל שיאבדו  
בניו את בניך וכו'. א"ל האתה  
גדול מיצחק? א"ל יצא מחלציו  
מי שיחריב את ביתך ובניו יהרגו

Your sons, Your priests, and Your Levites. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Moses], “Did I tell you that you should kill the Egyptian?” [Moses] said to [God], “You killed all the Egyptian first born, and I should die on account of one Egyptian?!” The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to [Moses], “Are you equal to Me? I bring death and restore to life. Can you revive the dead like me?”

את בניך כהניך ולויך, א"ל  
הקב"ה כלום אמרתי לך שתהרוג  
את המצרי? א"ל ואתה הרגת כל  
בכורי מצרים ואני אמות בשביל  
מצרי אחד? א"ל הקב"ה ואתה  
דומה אלי ממית ומחיה? כלום  
אתה יכול להחיות כמוני,

## PICK A COLOR

ETGAR KERET

A black man moved into a white neighborhood. He had a black house with a black porch where he used to sit every morning and drink his black coffee, until one black night, his white neighbors came into his house and beat the crap out of him. He lay there curled up like an umbrella handle in a pool of black blood and they kept on beating him, until one of them started yelling that they should stop because if he died on them they might end up in prison.

The black man didn't die on them. An ambulance came and took him far, far away to an enchanted hospital on the top of an inactive volcano. The hospital was white. Its gates were white, the walls of its rooms were white, and so was the bedding. The black man began to recover. Recover and fall in love. Fall in love with a white nurse in a white uniform who took care of him with great devotion and kindness. She loved him too. And like him, that love of theirs grew stronger with every passing day, grew stronger and learned to get out of bed and crawl. Like a small child. Like a baby. Like a black man who had been badly beaten.

They got married in a yellow church. A yellow priest married them. His yellow parents had come to that country on a yellow ship. They had been beaten up by their white neighbors too. But he didn't get into all that with the black man. He barely knew him, and anyway, he didn't want to go there, what with the ceremony and everything. He planned to say that God loves them and wishes them all the best. The yellow man didn't know that for sure. He'd tried lots of times to convince himself that he did. That he knows that God loves everyone and wishes us all only the best. But that day, when he married that battered black man, not even thirty and already covered with scars and sitting in a wheelchair, it was harder for him to believe. "God loves you both," he finally said anyway. "God loves you and wishes you all the best," he said, and was ashamed.

The black man and the white woman lived together happily, until one day, when the woman was walking home from the grocery store, a brown man with a brown knife who was waiting for her in the stairwell told her to give him everything she had. When the black man came home, he found her dead. He didn't understand why the brown man had stabbed her, because he could have just taken her money and run. The funeral service took place in the yellow priest's yellow church, and when the black man saw the yellow priest, he grabbed him by his yellow robe and said, "But you told us. You told us that God loves us. If he loves us, why did he do such a terrible thing to us?" The yellow priest had a ready-made answer. An answer they'd taught him in priest school; something about God working in mysterious ways and that now that the woman was dead, she was surely closer to Him. But instead of using that answer, the priest began cursing. He cursed God viciously. Insulting and hurtful curses the likes of which had never been heard in the world before. Curses so insulting and hurtful that even God was offended.

God entered the yellow church on the disabled ramp. He was in a wheelchair too; He had once lost a woman too. He was silvery. Not the cheap, glittery silver of a banker's BMW, but a muted, matte silver. Once, as He was gliding among the silvery stars with his silvery beloved, a gang of golden gods attacked them. When they were kids, God had once beaten one of them up, a short, skinny golden god who had now grown up and returned with his friends. The golden gods beat Him with golden clubs of sunlight and didn't stop until they'd broken every bone in His divine body. It took Him years to recuperate. His beloved never did. She remained a vegetable. She could see and hear everything, but she couldn't say a word. The silvery God decided to create a species in His own image so she could watch it to pass the time. That species really did resemble Him: battered and victimized like Him. And His silvery beloved stared wide-eyed at the members of that species for hours, stared and didn't even shed a tear.

"What do you think," the silvery God asked the yellow priest in frustration, "that I created all of you like this because it's what I wanted? Because I'm some kind of pervert or sadist who enjoys all this suffering? I created you like this because this is what I know. It's the best I can do."

The yellow priest fell to his knees and begged His forgiveness. If a stronger God had come to his church, he probably would have carried on cursing him, even if he had to go to hell for it. But seeing the silvery, disabled God made him feel regret and sorrow, and he really did want His forgiveness. The black man didn't fall to his knees. With the bottom half of his body paralyzed, he couldn't do things like that anymore. He just sat in his wheelchair and pictured a silvery goddess somewhere in the heavens looking down at him with gaping eyes. That imbued him with a sense of purpose, of hope, even. He couldn't explain to himself exactly why, but the thought that he was suffering just like a god made him feel blessed.



# LESSON 4: ENDINGS OF BEGINNINGS

EVERY NEW BEGINNING ALSO HAS AN ENDING

## RATIONALE

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This lesson will explore the emotions experienced as a person moves through the transition into a new beginning. The point is that every new beginning comes with it, losses and endings.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How is it that new beginnings are also endings?
2. How does one approach replacing a significant person in their life?
3. Why can transition be so hard and painful?

## GOALS

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- To explore how beginnings also bring endings.
- To explore an understanding of the Israelite experience of Moses' death.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT identify a new beginning in their life.
- SWHTOT explore the endings that their new beginning brings.
- SWHTOT connect with the Israelites as they transition from Moses to Joshua.

## MATERIALS

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- Poster board
- Markers/pencils/paint/pens/etc.
- Paper
- *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses' Death 7.2.4

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

Teacher should invite the students to think of a new beginning they have experienced or one that is coming up for them in their lives. The teacher should explain that every time we experience a new beginning we must go through a transition of three phases: endings/uncertainty/beginnings. The students should write down that new beginning in their journal and respond to the following questions,

- “How did/are you feel(ing) about the new beginning?”
- “What were the endings that occurred?” (Endings can also be changes of status, i.e. not seeing the same friends every day, changing from child to teenager, different relationship to a parent, etc.)
- “When/how did you feel uncertain?”
- “Are there other endings/beginnings that are connected to this moment? Is there a ripple effect of endings/beginnings?”

## ADVERTISING FOR A NEW LEADER

The teacher should break the class into small groups. Then the teacher should explain that each group is the advertising agency trying to secure the job to advertise on behalf of the Israelite people for the leader who will replace Moses. The advertisement should include a graphic poster and a written job description. The job description should include the following sections:

1. Seeking: Description of the type of person you are looking for.
2. Situation: What has happened that you need to look for a new leader and how you are feeling about losing the old leader and acquiring a new leader.
3. Responsibilities: What will be the responsibilities of the new leader?
4. Characteristics & Qualities: List of the five more important characteristics of the new leader.

After all the groups have completed their advertisements, they should present them to the class.

## MIDRASH: ISRAELITE ANXIETY

Teacher should use the BARD method to explore the midrash with the class.

Teacher should then lead a discussion which compares and contrasts how the students imagined the Israelites to feel and how the midrash portrays the Israelites. Be sure to explore the following questions:

- What worries does this midrash emphasize, and what worries did the students emphasize?
- How does the midrash portray the Israelites feeling about the new beginning they are facing? Which phase of transition do they seem to be in?

- How does the midrash suggest the Israelites be guided through the ending and into the new beginning?
- Would you guide them through the transition differently? If so, how?

### NOTE TO TEACHER

The following are notes which can help you better understand the midrash:

***I have a headache*** When Israel hears that Joshua is taking over as the leader of the Israelite people, the people refuse to go witness his transfer of power.

***your king is a child*** Fox (Fox 2004) explains that “child” might better be read as slave since it is placed in contrast with “master” from Ecc. 10:17. He writes, “Koheleth believe that a slave (servant) or lowly person who has come to power, having risen so far above his station, will be unworthy and degenerate” (Fox 2004, 70). This perfectly describes the Israelites’ negative and skeptical opinion of Joshua at this point in MidrPM, especially compared to their deporting master, Moses.

***a Voice from Heaven said... the earth...said*** Both the heavens and the earth attempt to persuade the Israelite people to accept the new leadership of Joshua. The verse from Hosea explains that since God, the Master of the Universe, loves the “slave,” how much more so should the Israelite people, who were once slaves themselves, love Joshua. Even the earth itself weighs in with the verse from Psalms which continues, “but I have never seen a righteous man abandoned” (NJPS). In this citation, the earth appears not only to be arguing for Joshua, but also admonishing the Israelites for acting in a way the earth has never seen – “abandoning” this righteous man.

***gathered together*** Despite the fact that the people refused to gather at the tent of Joshua, all the leaders of Israel gathered there to show their loyalty for Joshua. These heads of Israel served as models to try and convince the people to follow Joshua as well.

### PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to share one of their big questions that they are now considering based on the short story and the midrash, why they are struggling with that question, and any story in their life that questions reminds them of.

The teacher should then lead a discussion with the group about the question, “Considering all that we have now learned about how new beginnings bring with them endings, how has your understanding of your new beginning changed, and what big questions do you now have about new beginnings?”

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MATERIALS

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### PETIRAT MOSHE - MIDRASH ON MOSES' DEATH 7.2.4

#### 7.2.4 THE PEOPLE ARE SKEPTICAL

At that very moment, every person in Israel who heard the herald was afraid and began shaking, and said, "I have a headache," so he would not [have to] go," and cried, "*Woe to you, O' land, that your king is a child* (Ecc. 10:16)!" But a Voice from Heaven said, "*When Israel was a child, I loved him* (Hos. 11:1)." Also the earth opened up its mouth and said, "*I have been young and am now old* (Ps. 37:25)." The elders of Israel, all the leaders of the brigades and the heads of the tribes and the captains of the thousands and hundreds and of tens gathered together. When they came to Moses, he sat each of them according to his rank.

באותה שעה כל יחיד ויחיד  
שבישראל שהיה שומע הכרוז היה  
מפחד ומזעזע ואומר אני חושש  
בראשי כדי שלא ילך, ובוכה אוי  
לך ארץ שמלכך נער! ובת קול  
אומרת כי נער ישראל ואוהבהו,  
גם הארץ פתחה פיה ואמרה נער  
הייתי גם זקנתי, ומתקבצים זקני  
ישראל וכל שרי הגדודים וראשי  
השבטים ושרי האלפים והמאות  
והעשרות. כשבאו אצל משה היה  
מושיב כל אחד ואחד לפי גדולתו,

# LESSON 5: I NEED WHAT I WANT

BUT, I GET WHAT I NEED

## RATIONALE

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- This lesson will revisit some of the ideas from the first lesson about unfulfilled endings and will focus on how changing our expectations might not rid ourselves of the pain of the ending, but might help us reframe it in a more helpful way.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. When do life circumstances turn essential needs into wants?
2. How do we respond when we don't get what we want, but only a less necessary need?

## GOALS

---

- To explore Moses' wants and needs at the end of his life.
- To explore the differences between wants and needs.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT identify Maslow's hierarchy of needs.
- SWBAT differentiate between wants and needs.
- SWHTOT explore what happens when endings turn certain needs into wants.

## MATERIALS

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- "You Can't Always Get What You Want," The Rolling Stones – lyrics
- Post-its – two different colors
- 6 Large Post-its or 7 pieces of butcher paper
- Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs
- Worksheet: Moses' Needs and Wants
- *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses' Death 7.11.1

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

As the students walk in and sit down, pass out the lyrics to “You Can’t Always Get What You Want” by The Rolling Stones. Play the song; remind the students that they listened to this in the first lesson of this unit. Explain that in the first lesson we focused on the first of the verse, “You can’t always get what you want, but if you try sometimes well you just might find you get what you need.” But, now think about the second half together with the first half.

Teacher should lead a discussion asking, “What does it mean to not ‘get what you want,’ but to ‘get what you need?’

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## MASLOW: WANTS AND NEEDS

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Prior to class set up the seven large Post-its around the room. Place a title and short description on each one then cover them until the activity begins. The six titles and descriptions are as follows:

1. Physiological: food, water, warmth, rest
2. Safety: Security, Safety
3. Belongingness and Love: intimate relationships, friends
4. Esteem: prestige and feeling of accomplishment
5. Self-actualization: achieving one’s full potential, including creative activities
6. Other: things that don’t fit

Teacher should give each student a stack of each of the two colors of Post-its. Then the teacher should instruct the students to write all their “wants” on one color and all their “needs” on another color Post-it. As the students are completing their notes, the teacher can uncover the six posters on the walls. When students are done have them go around the room and place their wants/needs Post-its on the posters in the categories to which they fit.

When students are finished placing their Post-its, the teacher should pass out Maslow’s Hierarchy of Needs and invite the students to rearrange the large Post-its into the Maslow hierarchy and place the “other” Post-it to the side. The purpose of the “other” box is for all the “wants” and the hierarchy is for the needs. The teacher should invite the class to reassess their wants and needs and place them in the appropriate Post-its. Then the teacher should lead a discussion about the differences between wants and needs.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

Here is some background information on Maslow’s hierarchy of needs:

Maslow's hierarchy of needs is often portrayed in the shape of a pyramid with the largest, most fundamental levels of needs at the bottom and the need for self-actualization and self-transcendence at the top.

The most fundamental and basic four layers of the pyramid contain what Maslow called "deficiency needs" or "d-needs": esteem, friendship and love, security, and physical needs. If these "deficiency needs" are not met – with the exception of the most fundamental (physiological) need – there may not be a physical indication, but the individual will feel anxious and tense. **Maslow's theory suggests that the most basic level of needs must be met before the individual will strongly desire (or focus motivation upon) the secondary or higher level needs.** Maslow also coined the term "metamotivation" to describe the motivation of people who go beyond the scope of the basic needs and strive for constant betterment.

The human brain is a complex system and has parallel processes running at the same time, thus many different motivations from various levels of Maslow's hierarchy can occur at the same time. Maslow spoke clearly about these levels and their satisfaction in terms such as "relative", "general", and "primarily". Instead of stating that the individual focuses on a certain need at any given time, Maslow stated that a certain need "dominates" the human organism. Thus Maslow acknowledged the likelihood that the different levels of motivation could occur at any time in the human mind, but he focused on identifying the basic types of motivation and the order in which they should be met.<sup>22</sup>

### MIDRASH: OUR NEEDS WHEN OUR BASIC NEEDS CANNOT BE MET

Teacher should place students in *chevruta* pairs and pass out the Moses' Needs and Wants worksheet and the Midrash *Petirat Moshe* - Midrash on Moses' Death 7.11.1. Students should read through the midrash and fill in the Moses' Needs and Wants worksheet based on their understanding of the midrash.

When students are finished, the teacher should invite each group to look at how they filled in the section on "Basic Needs." The teacher should then explain that Moses is about to die, so he is not able to fulfill his "Basic Needs" so they really turn into "wants."

Then teacher should lead a discussion about questions:

- "What areas of Moses' needs were fulfilled?"
- "When in our lives are certain levels of our needs converted into wants?"

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<sup>22</sup> [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s\\_hierarchy\\_of\\_needs](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Maslow%27s_hierarchy_of_needs)



## NOTE TO TEACHER

The following are notes which can help you better understand the midrash:

***forty days and nights*** The point here is that Moses is different from other mortals; like God he does not need food and drink. Additionally, another tradition (MidPss 90:6) explains that an ordinary man will stand and pray for two hours, an exceedingly righteous man will stand and pray for a day, but Moses stood and prayed for those forty days and nights. In that same tradition, God likens Moses to the angels.

***I will bury you*** God's burying Moses was mentioned at the outset of MidrPM in relationship to Joseph's bones.

***I will go before you*** God will come down, receive Moses and bury him. In another tradition (LotJ pg. 471), God says to Moses, "Moses, be not afraid. 'Thy righteousness shall go before thee; the glory of the Lord shall be thy reward.'" This tradition is significant because earlier in MidrPM, Section 6.3, Moses requested a reward from God for his years of leadership. He was not rewarded with extended life or permitted to enter the Land of Israel, but he was rewarded with the "glory of God."

***Michael, Zagzagel, and Gabriel*** In a separate tradition, (TY on Deut. 34:6) many more angels are involved in the burial. Michael and Gabriel prepare the bier in a fashion to befit a king and Metatron (Zagzagel), Jophiel, Uriel, and Jephphya, laid Moses upon it.

***Gabriel on [Moses's] left*** Omitted here is the tradition (LotJ pg. 472) that God was at Moses' head. This is similar to the tradition (BT Ned 40a) that the *Shekhina* rests at the head of the bed of the sick.

***your chest*** MidrTan VE 6 reads "heart."

## PERSONAL CONNECTION AND SHARING

The teacher explain that students will enter our space of sacred sharing and invite the students to first reflect in their journals on the question, "How would I feel if I were Moses and my 'Basic Needs' were converted into wants?"

Then the teacher should ask the students to think of their big questions that they are now considering based on the short story and the midrash, why they are struggling with that question, and any story in their life that questions reminds them of.

The teacher should then lead a discussion with the group about the question, "How does our new understanding of needs and wants help us better understand the pain we feel when we don't get what we want at an ending?"

After all students who wish to share have shared, ask the students to reflect on the moment to explore how it felt to share and how it felt to listen to others sharing. They may also choose to reflect silently in their journals.

## CONCLUSION

The teacher should explain, “We just heard each other share very intimate things about our lives. By doing so, we made this space holy and thus should bless this space. We sanctify this unique time, space, by reciting the blessing we created together.”

Invite students to recite the class blessing together ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

# MATERIALS

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## YOU CAN'T ALWAYS GET WHAT YOU WANT

THE ROLLING STONES

I saw her today at the reception  
A glass of wine in her hand  
I knew she was gonna meet her connection  
At her feet was footloose man

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you might find  
You get what you need

I went down to the demonstration  
To get my fair share of abuse  
Singing, "We're gonna vent our frustration  
If we don't we're gonna blow a 50-amp fuse"

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just might find  
You get what you need

I went down to the Chelsea drugstore  
To get your prescription filled  
I was standing in line with Mr. Jimmy  
And man, did he look pretty ill  
We decided that we would have a soda  
My favorite flavor, cherry red  
I sung my song to Mr. Jimmy  
Yeah, and he said one word to me, and that was  
"dead"  
I said to him

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just  
might find  
You get what you need

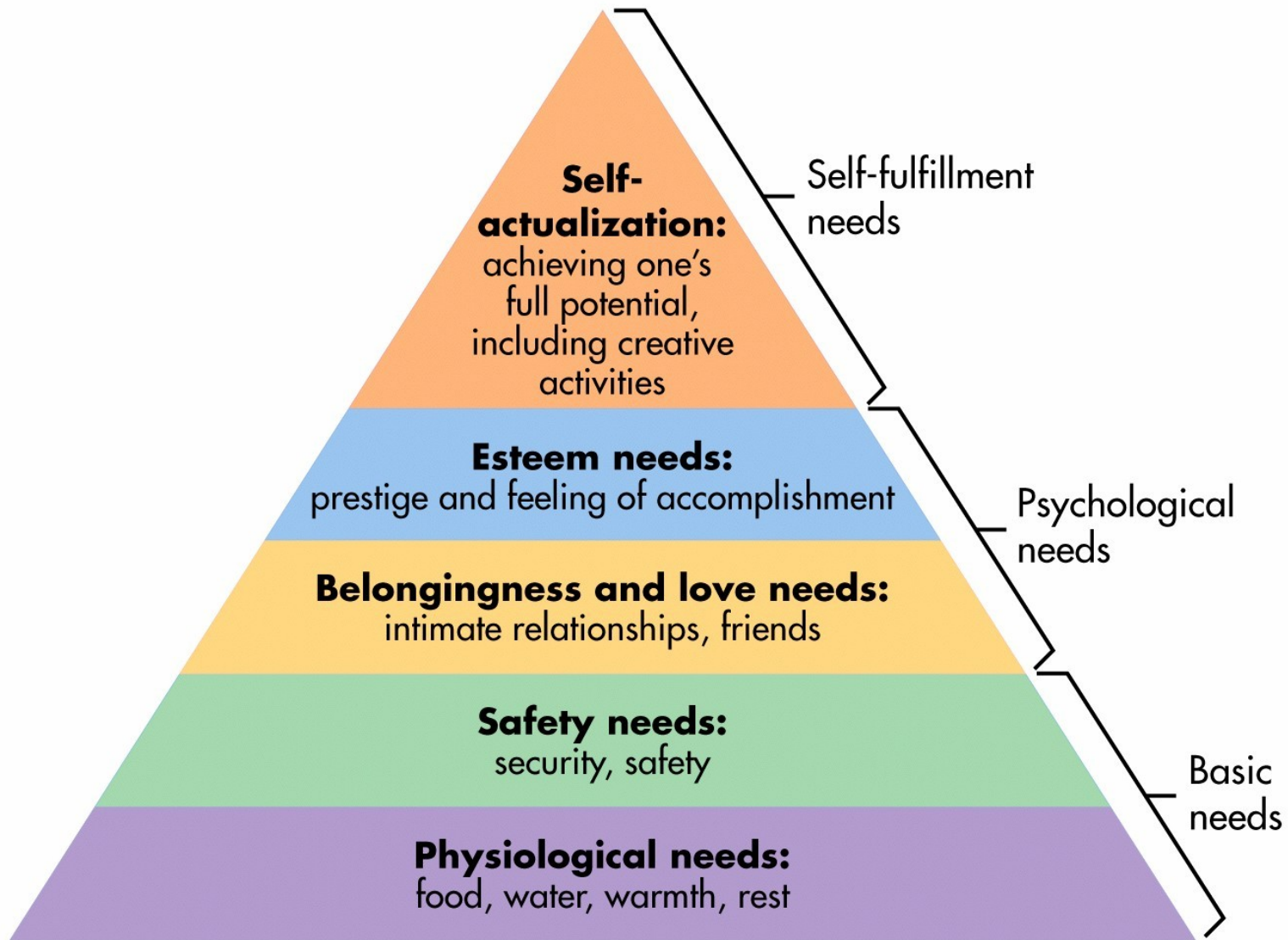
You get what you need, yeah, oh baby

I saw her today at the reception  
In her glass was a bleeding man  
She was practiced at the art of deception  
Well I could tell by her blood-stained  
hands

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes well you just  
might find  
You just might find  
You get what you need

You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
You can't always get what you want  
But if you try sometimes you just might  
find  
You just might find  
You get what you need

## MASLOW'S HIERARCHY OF NEEDS



## WORKSHEET: MOSES' NEEDS AND WANTS

Basic Needs	Physiological Needs	
	Safety Needs	
Psychological Needs	Belongingness and Love Needs	
	Esteem Needs	
Self-Fulfilment Needs	Self-Actualization	
Other Wants	Wants	

## PETIRAT MOSHE - MIDRASH ON MOSES' DEATH 7.11.1

### 7.11.1 MOSES PRAYS FOR GOD TO TAKE HIM

In the meantime, a half a moment had passed, A Heavenly Voice came out and said to him, "Moses why do you trouble yourself so? The last hour has come to an end." Moses stood in prayer and said, "Master of the Universe, remember when you revealed Yourself to me in the bush; remember that you made me ascend to the firmament and I did not eat or drink for forty days and nights? You Compassionate and Merciful [One], do not deliver me into the hand of Sammael." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said, "I have accepted your prayer; I Myself will attend [to you] and I will bury you." Immediately [Moses] sanctified himself like the Seraphim that are part of God's majesty. And The Holy One, Blessed be He, revealed [Godself] from the highest heaven to receive the soul of Moses, our teacher, peace be upon him. When Moses saw the Holy One, Blessed be He, he fell upon his face and said, "Master of the Universe, with the attributes of kindness and compassion you created your world. May you treat me with the attribute of compassion." The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to him, "I will go before you." And three angels accompanied The Holy One, Blessed be He, and they were Michael, Zagzagel, and Gabriel. Gabriel laid out Moses' bier, Michael spread a sheet upon it, and Zagzagel laid down a wool spread at the foot of the bier. Michael was on [Moses's] right, and Gabriel was on [Moses's] left. The Holy One, Blessed be He, said to Moses, "Cross your hands and place them on your chest, and close your two eyes." And [Moses] did so.

עדיין עלתה לו חצי רגע יצתה  
ב"ק ואמרה לו משה למה תצער  
עצמך הגיע סוף השעה, עמד  
משה בתפלה ואמר רבש"ע זכור  
שנגלית אלי בסנה, זכור [עמוד  
368] שהעלית אותי לרקיע ולא  
אכלתי ולא שתיתי ארבעים יום  
וארבעים לילה, רחום וחנון אל  
תמסרני ביד ס"ם, אמר הקב"ה  
קבלתי תפלתך, אני בעצמי  
אטפל ואקבור אותך, מיד קדש  
עצמו כשרפי ההוד ונגלה  
הקב"ה משמי מרום העליונים  
לקבל נשמתו של מרע"ה. כיון  
שראה משה להקב"ה נפל על  
פניו ואמר רבש"ע במדת חסד  
ובמדת רחמים בראת עולמך  
ובמדת רחמים אתה תנהג עמי,  
א"ל הקב"ה אני אלך לפניך  
ושלשה מלאכים באו עם  
הקב"ה והם מיכאל וזגזאל  
וגבריאֵל, גבריאֵל הצייע מטתו  
של משה, מיכאל פירס מילת  
מראשותיו וזגזאל הניח כלי  
מילת במרגלותיו, מיכאל מימינו  
וגבריאֵל משמאלו, אמר לו  
הקב"ה למשה תקף שתי ידיך  
והניחן על החזה, העצם שתי  
עיניך ועשה כן,

# UNIT 5: MY QUESTION, MY MIDRASH

MAKING MIDRASH OUT OF MY LIFE'S BIG QUESTIONS

## CURRICULUM ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. Midrash is the technology which creates a safe space to explore our souls by asking the biggest questions in our lives.
2. Our Jewish authenticity demands that we engage with and create our own Midrash.
3. We uncover the truth in our souls at the intersection of life and text.
4. Play is a key to unlocking profound meaning.
5. The essential questions of today are the essential questions of yore.

## UNIT 5 ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS

1. The challenge of uncovering my life's big questions is what makes the search for it meaningful.
2. The people in my life help me better grapple with my life's big question even though they all understand it differently.
3. Connecting my life's big question to Jewish tradition connects me to Jews across time and space.

## UNIT 5 ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

1. What is my life's big question?
2. How can I explore the nuances of my life's big question?
3. How connect my life's big question to Jewish tradition?

## UNIT 5 GOALS

- To explore relevant big questions in students' lives.
- To connect the struggles and questions in students' lives with the struggles and questions of biblical characters.
- To give students the opportunity to ask big questions to other people in their lives.

## UNIT 5 OBJECTIVES

BY THE END OF THIS UNIT...

- SWBAT identify a big question in their lives.
- SWBAT apply a big question in their life to a biblical character.
- SWBAT create a midrash which reflects a big question in their lives.

# LESSON 1: MY QUESTION

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will develop the question from which they will create their midrash.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. What are the big questions in my life?
2. How can others help me explore the big questions in my life?

## GOALS

---

- To explore big questions in students' lives.
- To practice good interviewing techniques.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT explain the criteria for big questions.
- SWBAT articulate their own big questions.
- SWHTOT explore big questions in their life.
- SWBAT conduct an interview that explores big questions.

## MATERIALS

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- Computer and projector/screen



# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

Invite each student to write in their journals a reflection (at least a paragraph long) on the following questions:

1. What are some of the things you are struggling with or worried about right now in your life?
2. For each of those things you wrote down, explain in a couple sentences, why you are struggling or worried about that right now.

When the students are done writing, invite each one to type up all their answers and submit them to [www.wordle.net](http://www.wordle.net), or a similar word cloud creation engine. When each student has their own word cloud, print them out and hand them to their respective owners.

### NOTE TO TEACHER

It might be possible to skip a step here and have the student type on their phones/tablets/computers directly instead of first writing in their journals. However, it would be nice to have these reflections in their journals. So, if you choose to have the students only type you might want to print out their answers and have the students paste them into their journals.

## IDENTIFYING SOME OF MY QUESTIONS

Place students in *chevruta* pairs. Invite the students to share their word clouds with each other. They should try to notice the big themes that appear in each other's word clouds. Each student should take turns identifying the big themes in their word cloud and their partner's word cloud. They should record those themes on a piece of paper and then help each other respond to the following questions:

1. Looking at the big themes in my life, how do those themes come into tension or conflict with each other?
2. Considering each of those tensions or conflicts, what are the big questions about life that that conflict/tension raises for you?

Students should record all answers to these questions in their journals. Students should then mark three of those questions which they feel they really connect with and reflect what they are struggling with in their life right now.

## DISCOVERING MY BIG QUESTION

Each student will share their three questions with the entire class. The class as a whole will help determine which of the questions is actually a big question. If none are big questions, the class and teacher will help refine the question which is closest to a big question.

Criteria for Big Questions are the following:<sup>23</sup>

1. Are meant to be explored, argued and continuously revisited (and reflected upon).
2. Have various plausible answers. Often the answers to these questions raise new questions.
3. Should spark or provoke thought and stimulate students to engage in sustained inquiry and extended thinking.
4. Reflect genuine questions that real people seriously ask, either in their work or in their lives – not a ‘teacherly’ question only asked in school.

After each student has discovered their big question, they should write it down in their journal.

## RESEARCHING MY BIG QUESTION

As homework before the next lesson, students will interview three people about their big question to discover more in depth how other people think about their big question. In preparation for their homework students will practice by interviewing each other (two to three interviews, depending on time) about their big questions. Students should use the following protocol to interview each other and also make sure to record other people’s responses in their journals.

### SAMPLE INTERVIEW

1. Lately I’ve been thinking a lot about (insert big question here). How have you experienced this question in your life?
2. How do you think about this question?
3. Is this question difficult for you to answer? Why?
4. In what ways to you respond to this question today?
5. How has your thinking about this question changed throughout your life? How so? / Why Not?
6. In what phase of your life did this question have the most relevance? Why?

## CONCLUSION

Teacher should explain to students that they should further research their big question before the next class. They should interview at least three different people in their life about their big question, trying to cover the following categories of people: a parent, a teacher, and a clergy member. Explain that they should write down the answers to their interviews because students will use them in our next class.

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<sup>23</sup> (Wiggins and McTighee 2005, 73 & 77).

# LESSON 2: EXPLORING MY QUESTION

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students examine and explore how other people responded to their big question.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How can others help me explore and clarify my life's big question?

## GOALS

---

- To explore and uncover the nuances of our life's big questions.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT create a nuanced expression of the various ways of responding to their big question.

## MATERIALS

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- Blank Paper
- Markers / crayons / colored pencils / pens / pencils
- Rulers

# LESSON PLAN

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## NOTE TO TEACHER

This lesson may take more than one day to teach. The Comparing Ideas and Questions in Comic Strips activities may take an entire day each. Plan to give enough time for the students to fully explore each activity.

## SET INDUCTION

Invite students to re-read over their interviews from the past week to refresh themselves with all the different ways people responded to and thought about their big question.

## COMPARING IDEAS

Invite students to make a compare and contrast list for all the people they interviewed. The students should list the ideas, questions, and experiences which were similar and which were different from all their interviewees. Have the students take note and mark areas where there seems to be particular alignment or disagreement. Teacher should invite the students to share their findings with the class and ask them why they think they discovered these particular areas of connection and disconnection and whether they personally connect more with the people who are in alignment or disagreement.

## QUESTIONS IN COMIC STRIPS

Students will create a comic strip placing all of the people they interviewed in conversation with each other about their big question. The comic strip should represent each person's ideas in some way and explore how each person might have responded to the other's ideas. The students should also include their own ideas in the comic strip and place them in dialogue with the other ideas.

After students have completed their comic strip place them on the wall around the room. Invite all the students to tour the room and their classmates' comic strips. Place a blank sheet of paper next to each comic strip so that students can comment on each other's work as they circle the room. Students should comment on any questions they have about the comic strip, anything that doesn't make sense, and any big ideas / questions / characters with which they connect.

## CONCLUSION

Teacher should invite each student to go back to their own comic strip and read over their classmates' comments. The students should notice areas where their classmates were particularly interested and make note of those areas in their journals. The students should conclude the day by reflecting on the process and whether or not they agreed with their classmates and why.

# LESSON 3: BIBLICAL CONNECTIONS

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will identify a biblical character or story with which they connect and begin exploring how the character or story provides insight into and offers guidance on their question.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

---

1. How do I connect my life to the Bible?

## GOALS

---

- To explore the connections between big questions and biblical stories / characters.

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWBAT ask questions about the gaps in a biblical story.
- SWBAT connect their big life question to a story or character in the Bible.

## MATERIALS

---

- Large Sheets of butcher paper
- Markers
- Bibles (physical or digital)

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

As the students walk in, invite them to open up their journals and look through them to find all the biblical stories and characters they studied throughout the year. Have the students write down all the stories and characters that they found inspiring or that particularly challenged them on the butcher paper in a large font size. They can place a star or checkmark next to any stories or characters they remember which have already be written down.

After all the students are finished, tape the butcher paper to the wall and invite the students to explore it for a minute. After a minute ask the students if there is anything on the butcher paper that they do not remember. For any item that a student does not remember invite the class to teach them about that story or character.

## PICK A STORY

Invite each of the students to choose a character or a story that has the most themes similar to their personal big question.

Once each of the students has chosen a character/story they should research the story in the Bible either by finding the character/story in a physical bible or from an online source. The students should perform their research by going through the following steps:

1. Read the whole story once through.
2. Read the story again, but this time annotate the story with any questions you have for the characters, or any questions you have because there are gaps in the story you want filled.

## CONNECTING THE STORY AND QUESTION

Give each student their own piece of butcher paper and invite them to write their big question in the center. Explain to them that they are now going to be like our rabbis, they are going to brainstorm all the different ways their big question can connect to the story/character they are interested in.

On the butcher paper, around the big question, they should write down all the questions they have about the story, either about the characters or about the gaps that need to be filled in. Then invite the students to fill in the space between the questions from the story and their big question with how they would fill in the gaps or explore the unanswered questions from the biblical story from the perspective of their big question.

## EXAMPLE FOR THE TEACHER

If the student's big question is: "How do I balance my life between my obligations at home, school, and with friends?" And the character they are really interested in is Moses, some of the questions they could have about Moses are: "Does he have any friends?" "Why does he get so angry all the time?" "Why doesn't he always listen to God?" Then with the big question in mind the following could be responses to the questions:

- “Does he have any friends?”
  - Moses lost all his friends when he only listened to God
- “Why does he get so angry all the time?”
  - He is angry all the time because he is in the middle of all these people, he doesn’t know where his allegiances should be.
- “Why doesn’t he always listen to God?”
  - He doesn’t always listen to God because sometimes his family and community have better ideas.

## CONCLUSION

When the students are done, put up the butcher paper around the room and invite all the students to walk around the room and pose additional question or suggest additional answers to each other’s questions. Remind them that what they just did is exactly what our rabbis did when they wrote midrash, something they will get to do next week!

# LESSON 4: MY MIDRASH

## RATIONALE

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In this lesson students will create their own midrash to demonstrate their learning over this entire curriculum.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How can feedback help me create better work?
2. What is the most authentic way for me to represent my life's big question?

## GOALS

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- To practice offering and receiving constructive feedback.

## OBJECTIVES

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- SWBAT offer and receive constructive feedback.
- SWBAT create a midrash about a biblical character or story they care about which reflects their life's big question.

## MATERIALS

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- Any that the students request to help them create their midrash.



# LESSON PLAN

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## NOTE TO TEACHER

This project is the culmination and the authentic assessment for the entire curriculum. Therefore, this lesson may (and really should) take more than one class period. There is no set time limit on how long it will take a student to create their own midrash. If one or two students work really fast, encourage them to revise and refine their work before the class offers feedback. Additionally, if the class responds well to feedback and you notice they are excited to create really excellent work, you may decide to add more rounds of feedback to the process.

## SET INDUCTION

Invite each student to walk around the classroom to look one more time at all their classmate's butcher paper sketches of their ideas from last class. Teacher should explain to the students that today they will continue to create their own midrash about the biblical character/story they chose considering the big question they have been considering.

## MY MIDRASH

Teacher should explain that their final midrash project will be created in two drafts (though the following feedback cycle may be repeated more than once). They will first create a fully flushed out draft of their midrash. When they are done with their draft, they will present it to the class. The teacher should explain to the class that feedback is not a judgment; it is feedback data to help us create better material. The class will offer feedback to the student on how well the midrash adheres to the criteria below. Additionally, students should offer feedback on any areas which the midrash is unclear. The student receiving feedback should write down all the feedback and then decide which feedback to incorporate into the second and final product.

Teacher should explain to students that they are going to rewrite a biblical story, filling in all the gaps and exploring all the questions they came up with in the previous class with a focus on trying to offer insights on their life's big question. They can use any medium they wish: film, poetry, creative writing, song writing, art (with a written explanation), a play, etc. The following are the criteria for a successful midrash:

1. The story/biblical character of focus should be obvious to the "reader."
2. The midrash should significantly explore the student's big question in a deep and nuanced way.
3. The midrash does not need to answer all the questions the student raised, but it should at least explore those questions.
4. The midrash should use details from the biblical narrative.
5. The midrash should represent the tensions the student discovered in their research of their big question.

## CONCLUSION

When students have all completed their midrashim, explain to them that they have just participated in a tradition many thousands of years old and they should be proud of themselves for all their work. The teacher should explain that the next class will be a celebration and presentation of their midrashim, to which they should invite their family to attend.

# LESSON 5: CULMINATION \*\*\*

## RATIONALE

---

In this lesson students will share their midrashim with each other and then examine how their midrashim resonate with each other.

## ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS

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1. How do we celebrate completing a yearlong dive into a tradition thousands of years old?

## GOALS

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- To celebrate the year of learning!

## OBJECTIVES

---

- SWHTOT share their work with the community.
- SWHTOT celebrate their work with their classmates and with the community.

## MATERIALS

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- Any materials the students need to present their midrashim.
- *Kaddish D'Rabbanan*

# LESSON PLAN

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## SET INDUCTION

The entire group should recite the blessing the students created and have been reciting all year for sacred sharing and studying Torah ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)).

## PRESENTATIONS

This lesson is a celebration of all the learning the students have accomplished over the year. The teacher should make this lesson into a celebration and invite the student's parents, clergy, other staff, etc. into the classroom for this lesson.

Each student will have an opportunity to present their midrash to the group. The teacher should ensure that the group gives the student sufficient praise for their hard work. Finally, to continue in the midrashic tradition that the students have participated in throughout the year, after each presentation the teacher should ask the group what big questions about life the midrash raises for them.

## CONCLUSION

Everyone should recite the ending blessing ([created in Unit 1 Lesson 1](#)) followed by *Kaddish D'Rabbanan*. This is a special *kaddish* which acknowledges “those who study Torah, indicating the role of Torah study as both an intellectual and a spiritual activity.”<sup>24</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> (Frishman 2007, 90).

# MATERIALS

## KADDISH D'RABBANAN<sup>25</sup>

YITGADAL v'yitkadash sh'meih raba  
b'alma di v'ra chiruteih,  
v'yamlich malchuteih  
b'chayeichon uv'yomeichon  
uv'chayei d'chol beit Yisrael,  
baagala uvizman kariv,  
v'imru: Amen.  
Y'hei sh'meih raba m'varach  
l'alam ul'almei almaya.  
Yitbarach v'yishtabach v'yitpaar  
v'yitromam v'yitnasei,  
v'yit'hadar v'yitaleh v'yit'halal  
sh'meih d'kudsha b'rich hu,  
l'eila min kol birchata v'shirata,  
tushb'chata v'nechemata,  
daamiran b'alma, v'imru: Amen.

Al Yisrael v'al rabanan,  
v'al talmideihon  
v'al kol talmidei talmideihon,  
v'al kol man d'askin b'oraita,  
di v'atra hadein v'di  
v'chol atar vaatar.

Y'hei l'hon ul'chon sh'lama raba,  
china v'chisda v'rachamin,  
v'chayin arichin,  
um'zonei r'vichei, ufurkana,  
min kadam avuhon  
di vishmaya v'ara v'imru: Amen.

Y'hei sh'lama raba min sh'maya,  
v'chayim tovim aleinu v'al kol  
Yisrael v'imru: Amen.

Oseh shalom bimromav  
hu b'rachamav yaaseh shalom  
aleinu v'al kol Yisrael, v'al kol  
yoshvei teiveil, v'imru: Amen.

יתגדל ויתקדש שמה רבא  
בעלמא די ברא כרעותיה,  
וימליך מלכותה  
בחייו וביומיו  
ובחיי דכל בית ישראל  
בעגלא ובזמן קרוב.  
ואמרו אמן  
יהא שמה רבא מברך  
לעלם ולעלמי עלמאי  
יתברך וישתבח ויתפאר ויתרומם  
ויתנשא ויתעלה ויתקלל  
שמה דקדשא ברין הוא.  
לעלא מן כל ברכתא ושירתא,  
תשבח תא ונתתא,  
דאמרון בעלמא. ואמרו אמן

על ישראל ועל רבנן,  
ועל תלמידיהון  
ועל כל תלמידי תלמידיהון,  
ועל כל מן דעסקין באורייתא,  
די באתרא דיין ודי  
בכל אתר ואתר.

יהא להון ולכון שלמא רבא,  
חנא וחסדא ורחמין,  
וסיי אריכין,  
ומזוני רויסי, ופורךנא,  
מן קדם אבוהון  
די בשמאי וארעא ואמרו אמן

יהא שלמה רבא מן שמיא,  
וחיים טובים עלינו ועל כל  
ישראל ואמרו אמן.

עושה שלום במרומיו,  
הוא ברחמיו יעשה שלום  
עלינו ועל כל ישראל, ועל כל  
יושבי תבל, ואמרו אמן.

<sup>25</sup> (Frishman 2007, 90-92).

EXALTED and hallowed be God's great name,  
in the world which God created, according to plan.  
May God's majesty be revealed in the days of our lifetime  
and the life of all Israel —  
speedily, imminently.  
To which we say: Amen.

Blessed be God's great name to all eternity.

Blessed, praised, honored, exalted,  
extolled, glorified, adored, and lauded  
be the name of the Holy Blessed One,  
beyond all earthly words and songs of blessing, praise, and comfort.  
To which we say: Amen.

GOD OF HEAVEN AND EARTH, grant abundant peace  
to our people Israel and their rabbis, to our teachers and their disciples,  
and to all who engage in the study of Torah here and everywhere.

Let there be for them and for us all, grace, love, and compassion,  
a full life, ample sustenance, and salvation from God, and let us respond: Amen.

For us and all Israel, may the blessing of peace and the promise of life come true,  
and let us respond: Amen.

May the One who causes peace to reign in the high heavens,  
let peace descend on us, and on all Israel, and on all the world,  
and let us respond: Amen.

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