

Shine a Light 2022

Lesson 2: Who Are You? Ally, Advocate, or Activist

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**SHINE
ALIGHT**
on Antisemitism

Educator Background Information/ Knowledge

The #ShineALight Campaign

The #ShineALight Campaign is a national initiative to create a collective light of celebration spreading the Jewish joy of Chanukah. Sponsored by two NY-based funders and the UJA-Federation of NY, the campaign is designed as a counter-expression to antisemitism and other messages and acts of hate towards Jews and Israel. The Jewish Education Project is a proud content partner of the #ShineALight Campaign and is delighted to provide these materials to Jewish educators. We encourage you to utilize this education content in the weeks leading up to and through Chanukah (this year and in the future), and if applicable, at other times of the year.

Purpose:

Students play many roles in their day-to-day life ... child of, student, friend, athlete, and more. In a time when much is happening in the world, it is important for them to understand new ways of being that make a real impact on those around them and the world at large. This lesson hopes to “shine a light” on and motivate students to make an impact to rid society of antisemitism in big and small ways.



Overview:

- 1) Being an ally, advocate or activist
- 2) Create an incubator organization to disrupt antisemitism



Supplies Needed:

- Paper/pens or computer/other note taking devices
- Print of have accessible electronically the Jewish graffiti story ([link here](#) or print from page 5)
- Roles typed/written on small pieces of paper for ally, advocate, or activist (print from page 6)



Timing (80 minutes total):

- 1) Being an Ally, Advocate or Activist – 40 minutes
- 2) Create an incubator organization to disrupt antisemitism – 40 minutes



Lesson:

- 1) The goal of this part of the lesson is for students to understand what antisemitism is, and imagine the ways that they can make an impact on fighting against it.
 - a. Display or read [the International Holocaust remembrance Alliance's definition of antisemitism](#) to students
 - i. “Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”
 - b. This part of the lesson can be done as:
 - i. Whole class
 - ii. Chevruta
 - iii. Small groups

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- c. Have students read [the story about the man who scrubbed anti-Jewish graffiti in NY subway](#)
 - i. The “shine a light” metaphor can be used in a few ways here
 1. The story shines a negative ‘spotlight’ on the issue of antisemitism/hate
 2. The story shines a positive ‘spotlight’ on the fact that one person can make a difference
 3. The story shines a positive ‘spotlight’ on how one person taking action can motivate others to take the same/similar action (can be used for good and bad)
 - ii. Have students respond to the following questions:
 1. What kind of feelings did you walk away with after reading the story?
 2. Do you think the original ‘scrubber’ intended on inspiring others to help him or was he content simply scrubbing the graffiti himself? Why do you think the way you do?
 3. This may have been a case of when you pay it forward, it pays you back. What do you think about that concept? i.e. you do something good, so others jump in and help; when others jump in and help, you feel even better
- d. Take a moment to expand student’s understanding of antisemitism as persecution and hatred of the Jews to additionally encompass those who hate out of fear other the “other”.
 - i. Explore a few excerpts from the [Politico article written by Leon Saltiel on June 20, 2022](#) for additional context and understanding.
 1. While it denotes hatred of the Jewish people, anti-Semitism actually threatens all societies and is an indicator of wider problems. As the world’s “oldest hatred,” it exposes the failings in each society, and though Jews are often the first group to be scapegoated, unfortunately, they are not the last. History has shown us, time and again, that hateful discourse initially targeting Jews soon broadens to other members of society.
 2. Shortly after the liberation of Paris from the Nazis, French philosopher Jean-Paul Sartre wrote that the anti-Semite is “a man who is afraid.” He’s afraid “not of the Jews, to be sure, but of himself, of his own consciousness, of his liberty, of his instincts, of his responsibilities, of solitariness, of change, of society and of the world — everything except the Jews,” Sartre stated, adding, “If the Jew did not exist, the antisemite would invent him.”
 3. We can also see a direct line between conspiracy myths and disinformation, which often spread virally, and violence, as regrettably, people are still being victimized today — some even killed — by those with anti-Semitic motives, in cities ranging from Buffalo, New York to Halle, Germany. When left unchecked, anti-Semitism enables prejudice and active discrimination against multiple communities within societies, threatening the rule of law and human rights protections. It emboldens intolerant members of society wherever they may be.
- e. Explain to students that people often take on different roles when it comes to helping fight for or against a cause.
- f. The three primary roles are:
 - i. Ally: Someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that are supportive of someone else. *Example:* Hearing someone use an antisemitic slur and reaching out to that person and telling them you think that was wrong.
 1. Sarah Silverman, Jewish comedian, spoke about the issue of allyship in her podcast recently. [Link to this approximately 5-minute video](#) ($\frac{3}{4}$ of the way down in the article).
 2. The main point that Sarah Silverman makes that resonates here is her campaign entitled, “Stop rolling your eyes and be our allies.” She makes a point of saying that Jews, as a people/ community regularly stand up as allies for others. And that now is the time for others to stand up as allies to the Jews.

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Lesson, Continued



- ii. Advocate: Someone who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.
Example: Writing a letter to your Congressperson to urge her/him to support legislation about antisemitism.
- iii. Activist: Someone who gets involved in activities that are meant to achieve political or social change; this also includes being a member of an organization which is working on change.
Example: Participating in a demonstration that is focusing on antisemitic hate crimes.
- g. Ask students to share a time when they played one of these roles. This will help them move into the next part of the lesson.
- h. Have students, in chevruta (pairs) or small groups, find as many antisemitic incidents as they can by searching the web for 5-7 minutes. For each one they find, write the following:
 - i. Date of the incident
 - ii. Description of the incident
- i. At the end of the time, ask student pairs/groups to choose the incident that most impacted/bothered/shocked them..
- j. Go around the room and have each group briefly share (less than 3 minutes each) the incident that they chose and why.
- k. Explain to students that now that they have learned about some of the recent incidents of antisemitism in the U.S., they are going to think together about what can be done about it by engaging in role playing around being an ally, advocate or activist.
- l. Depending upon the number of students, this next part can be done in
 - i. Chevruta
 - ii. Small groups
 - iii. Independently
- m. Below is a list of roles that students can occupy, either in chevruta, small groups, or as individuals. They can be assigned a role or they can pick one written on a slip of paper out of a hat.
 - i. Individual person
 - ii. School principal
 - iii. Legislator (senator, congressperson, city council)
 - iv. News reporter
 - v. Social media influencer
 - vi. Social justice group
 - vii. Community-based organization
 - viii. Faith-based organization
- n. Playing the role of the group/person assigned to them, have students brainstorm what they can do about incidents of antisemitism from the perspective of their assigned role. For example, if they are in a faith-based organization, one of their ideas may be to go as a congregation and paint over a swastika that was painted on a neighboring synagogue.
- o. Keeping in mind some of the antisemitic incidents they read about earlier, ask the groups to come up with 3–5 ideas that will be shared later with the rest of the class. Give students up to 10 minutes to complete the task.
- p. Have each small group share their ideas with the whole class.

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Lesson, Continued



2) Create an incubator organization to “disrupt” antisemitism

- a. In this activity, students will use their creativity to invent a project or organization that will address the rise in antisemitism.
- b. Let students know that one organization working hard to combat antisemitism as well as other issues that directly impact the Jewish people is the [America Jewish Committee \(AJC\)](#). Their homepage says, “AJC is building a safer, more secure future for the Jewish people, Israel, and all humanity.”
- c. AJC recently launched a program for students that encourages young American Jews to “develop bold ideas to take on antisemitism locally, nationally, or virtually.” This program is called, Disrupt Antisemitism Campaign.
- d. As individuals, chevruta, or small groups, advise students to imagine that they will be applying for this program. As such, they are to create a program or organization that fights antisemitism. They need to create a
 - i. Name
 - ii. Mission
 - iii. Using the metaphor, “shine a light”, what is the specific area of antisemitism that this project or organization will bring attention to (spotlight)?
 - iv. How will it achieve its mission?
- e. Encourage students to go to the [Disrupt Antisemitism Campaign](#) website to see what others have done.
- f. Give students about 20 minutes.
- g. After time is up, have each student, group, or pair share what they created. Allow other students to ask clarifying questions following each presentation.
- h. You could make this into a contest by having classmates vote on the project or organization that they believe will be most impactful. The winning team could get a small gift card or a certificate at the end of the presentation.



Wrap-up:

Students will have had the opportunity to use their creativity to imagine specific roles they can play to combat antisemitism as well as create a program or organization that is able to address the challenges of antisemitism. The goal was for this lesson to “shine a light” on and motivate students to make an impact to rid society of antisemitism in big and small ways.

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Resources

The definition of antisemitism:

Antisemitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of antisemitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.

<https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/resources/working-definitions-charters/working-definition-antisemitism>

Article: **Man who scoured swastikas from subway train honored**

By Shirley Chan

Posted: 2/16/2017 @ 12:16 am EST

NEW YORK – The Anti-Defamation League honored New York resident Jared Nied tonight with its “Stand-Up New Yorker” Award for his actions earlier this month on-board a subway train.

Swastikas and anti-Semitic statements were found scrawled all over an uptown No. 1 train on February 4. Nied, a sous-chef at a Manhattan restaurant, boarded the subway car and was disgusted to see the hate-filled graffiti. He jumped into action and led the other passengers in removing the markings.

The graffiti was drawn using a Sharpie marker onto the door, window, wall, even over a map inside the subway car.

“I looked up and saw the map scrawled with graffiti and thought to myself ‘oh really who would do this?’ and who wants to see this right now? Somebody asked me if I could erase it and I thought yes I can. Let’s all make this right so we all came together for that one beautiful moment it just felt fantastic to be able to fight hate,” said Nied.

The incident made national and worldwide headlines. It shocked, saddened, yet uplifted people. Perhaps because it’s a great example of the spirit and humanity of New Yorkers.

“It’s overwhelming but in a really positive way,” Nied said. “I’ve certainly never been this famous before but it feels really good to be getting attention for all the right reasons.”

Straphangers were uncomfortable and unsure of what to do. Nied stood up and said hand sanitizer with its alcohol base, gets rid of Sharpie markings.

Recalling that night, Nied said “I asked any of you have more hand sanitizers? Hundreds of hands popped up with tissues, there wasn’t a lot of talking going on we were just focused on erasing the hate.”

So they all banded together got to work. And along with tissues and a little elbow grease scrubbed away the hate.

The Stand-Up New Yorker Award is given by the ADL to a recipient for taking immediate action to help others being singled out for bigotry, or initiating efforts to denounce hate.

“He’s the one who stood up he was the first one, to be a leader is a difficult thing to be,” said Evan Bernstein, ADL NY Regional Director. “He did the hardest thing which was to be the first one and that’s why we felt we needed to honor him. We need more New Yorkers to do what Jared did to stand up in the face of hate and when you see something do something and that’s exactly what he did. We think he’s the perfect example of what we hope all New Yorkers can do.”

Our subway hero has choice words for the racist graffiti artist.

“You are a terrible person whoever wrote that is a terrible person,” he said. “I think we are all intrinsically good and the majority want to be good but whoever wrote that you are a horrible person and a disgrace to humanity.”

Jared Nied is only the second person to receive the Stand-Up New Yorker Award, the first was Hassan Askari in 2007, who also stood up to hate and anti-Semitism in a subway car.

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Resources, Continued

Ally, Advocate, & Activist Definitions

Ally: Someone who speaks out on behalf of someone else or takes actions that are supportive of someone else.

Example: Hearing someone use an antisemitic slur and reaching out to that person and telling them you think that was wrong.

Advocate: Someone who publicly supports or recommends a particular cause or policy.

Example: Writing a letter to your Congressperson to urge her/him to support legislation about antisemitism.

Activist: Someone who gets involved in activities that are meant to achieve political or social change; this also includes being a member of an organization which is working on change.

Example: Participating in a demonstration that is focusing on antisemitic hate crimes.

Roles (print and separate to put into a jar/hat/box for random selection)

Individual person

School Principal

Legislator
(senator, congressperson,
city council)

News Reporter

Social Media Influencer

Social Justice Group

Community-Based
Organization

Faith-Based
Organization