

Greetings! This book and these lesson plans will help you easily create in your study group meaningful interaction with the text and with each other. Here are some tips to get the most out of your Tiptoe study time together. Nancy

Keep it simple. - These one hour lesson plans are self-contained. Choose a few ideas or do them all, depending upon size of group.

Keep it comfortable. - There are no right and wrong answers to questions posed, only personally honest ones. Honoring answers keeps it comfortable.

Keep It Moving - Occasionally build positively on what someone has said by focusing on an interesting word or concept that catches your curiosity. Explore it aloud to keep things moving or go to next lesson idea.

Keep It Inclusive - It is always nice to be asked to “weigh in” on a topic. (Often people don’t know when to jump in or a conversation gets dominated by a few.) If they don’t want to weigh in, that’s okay too.

Keep it Meaningful - By being authentic when answering questions, you encourage others to be real and create a time of sharing.

A few practical hints on reading aloud from the book.

- When reading 1 page only, then read the bracketed introductions.
- When reading continuous pages aloud, skip the bracketed introductions between pages.
- With groups which come having read the portion, consider having participants discuss their favorite page or most challenging question.

Tiptoe Through Genesis - 4 Week One Hour Class Lesson Plans

WEEK 1

- Read aloud the first page and answer questions.
 - Compare Hebrew-English translations. (Ex. Ruach Elokim - God's spirit (Kaplan) Divine Presence (Stone) spirit of God (Steinsaltz), breath of God (Hirsh) the Presence of the Divine (Schottenstein) wind from God (JPS)).
 - Discuss aspects of a word or phrase - Ex. surface of the deep - literal like water depth, relatable now as in someone being superficial, spiritual as in understanding what precedes or sets stage for personal awakening or spiritual transformation
- Read aloud first seven days of creation (pages 15-22).
 - Answer questions on pages or choose among them.
 - Focus on themes of separation, balance, equality, time.
 - Focus on Sabbath on how impacted humanity and individuals, what it means today, traditions, personal understanding.
- Zero in on one parsha and discuss the questions posed.

WEEK 2

- Read aloud beginning of Noah (page 46)
 - Answer questions on pages or choose among them.
 - Discuss translation of *tzaddik* as righteous or perfect, personal meanings and examples
 - Focus on Noahide laws, their meaning and origins and relevancy - Not to worship idols, Not to curse God, To establish courts of justice, Not to commit murder, Not to commit adultery or sexual immorality. Not to steal. Not to eat flesh torn from a living animal.
- Read aloud Tower of Babel page
 - Answer questions or choose among them.
 - Focus on personal themes of communication, miscommunication, cross cultural communication, shared language and shared goals
- Zero in on the entire portion, discuss questions posed.

WEEK 3

- Read Lech Lecha (pages 73-76)
 - Discuss what the relationship is between personal transformation and accepting a covenant with God
 - Focus on what it means, as an individual and as a nation, to embrace an All-Sufficing God
- Focus on the legacy of Abraham and Sarah of the personal struggles and hard choices made as individuals, as a couple, and as parents.
- Explore Hagar (pg 70-72) in view of her status as a maidservant, Abraham's wife and mother of Ishmael, or in submission and suffering.
- Zero in on the entire portion, discuss questions.

WEEK 4

- Read aloud the first page of Vayera (pg 79)
 - Focus on Abraham's perception of strangers and explore how perceptions are formed and what affects them and how to check them to avoid bias
 - Explore hospitality as a gift and share meaningful experiences of being guest/host, and impact of giving and receiving.
- Read aloud Vayera (pg 81)
 - Focus on personal experiences with (tzedakah) charity as a giver and/or receiver and experiences with (shofetim) justice.
 - Discuss and 'create' list of levels of charity then compare to Maimonides 8 Levels of Charity (see back)
- Read aloud Vayera (pg 82)
 - Discuss how you understand God as God of Justice.
 - Explore Abraham's technique and your own when trying to persuade God.
- Focus on Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar and how inheritance, jealousy and control affected their relationships and how those issues remain today.
- Zero in on the entire portion, and discuss questions posed

Maimonides 8 Levels of Charity

Mishneh Torah, Laws of Charity, 10:7–14

There are eight levels of charity, each greater than the next.

[1] The greatest level, above which there is no greater, is to support a fellow Jew by endowing him with a gift or loan, or entering into a partnership with him, or finding employment for him, in order to strengthen his hand so that he will not need to be dependent upon others . . .

[2] A lesser level of charity than this is to give to the poor without knowing to whom one gives, and without the recipient knowing from who he received. For this is performing a mitzvah solely for the sake of Heaven. This is like the “anonymous fund” that was in the Holy Temple [in Jerusalem]. There the righteous gave in secret, and the good poor profited in secret. Giving to a charity fund is similar to this mode of charity, though one should not contribute to a charity fund unless one knows that the person appointed over the fund is trustworthy and wise and a proper administrator, like Rabbi Chananyah ben Teradyon.

[3] A lesser level of charity than this is when one knows to whom one gives, but the recipient does not know his benefactor. The greatest sages used to walk about in secret and put coins in the doors of the poor. It is worthy and truly good to do this, if those who are responsible for distributing charity are not trustworthy.

[4] A lesser level of charity than this is when one does not know to whom one gives, but the poor person does know his benefactor. The greatest sages used to tie coins into their robes and throw them behind their backs, and the poor would come up and pick the coins out of their robes, so that they would not be ashamed.

[5] A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person directly into his hand, but gives before being asked.

[6] A lesser level than this is when one gives to the poor person after being asked.

[7] A lesser level than this is when one gives inadequately, but gives gladly and with a smile.

[8] A lesser level than this is when one gives unwillingly.