



# Journey With No End:

## *A Middot Curriculum for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Families*

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SPRING 2018



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## Educational Rationale

I recently sat down for a one-on-one conversation with Rachel, a Reform Jewish mother in the Los Angeles area, for the sake of a class assignment. The assignment was to have a conversation with a Jewish parent about their Jewish educational choices. During this conversation, Rachel used the phrase “Jewish values” repeatedly. Jewish values were at the forefront of her Jewish consciousness. Why do you send your kids to religious school? Jewish values. How does your Judaism manifest in everyday life? Jewish values. What do you appreciate about being Jewish? Jewish values (S. Rosenbaum, personal communication, October 19, 2017).

This probably comes as no surprise to most Jewish professionals. Rachel’s brand of rhetoric about the importance of Jewish values pervades Jewish organizations’ mission statements and websites. Research supports this claim. At the end of the 2013 Pew Report, each Jewish respondent was asked this question: “Is there anything I haven’t mentioned that is an essential part of what being Jewish means to you? Of those who responded “yes,” the largest percentage asserted that “Ethics and Values” are essential parts of what being Jewish means to them (Pew Research Center, 2013).

Jewish values, often referred to as *middot*, matter to Jews. Jewish values reside at Judaism’s core. They are embedded into the texts, theology, and ideology of the Jewish people, persisting throughout time. Furthermore, Jewish values influence the way we display our Jewishness in the world. They color our collective consciousness and the lenses through which we relate to society at large.

Based on these realities alone, many Jewish educators feel compelled to teach Jewish values as a way to ensure Jewish identity and continuity. However, such an approach can result in an unproductive pedagogy. As Tali Zerkowicz describes, “under the weight of such high-stakes extreme pressures to save and preserve the next generation of American Jews, even the best teachers can become insecure, didactic, and moralizing” (Zerkowicz, Not Yet Published). This teacher approach may stifle students’ thinking and pressure them to carry a torch that they cannot bear.

When faced with this perspective, teaching *middot* feels inauthentic. Who are we to tell impressionable Jewish learners precisely how to enact their Jewishness? However, we would be remiss to toss aside this crucial and substantial content area. *Middot* are central components of what it means to be Jewish today, and Jewish educators are right to gift their learners the rich potential of a values-based education. When done with thoughtful pedagogy and intentions to help students uncover their own truths, *Middot* curricula have the power to transform learners’ lives and, in turn, contribute to the

good of our world. When it comes to *middot* curricula, Jewish educators must actualize Rav Kook's famous refrain. "What is old you will make new, and what is new you will make holy." When Jewish educators revisit and revitalize old models of *middot* curriculum, they will be able to create authentic, transformational, and holy experiences for their learners.

This *middot* curriculum diverges from many previous *middot* curricula because it abandons all moralizing attempts to "make Jews" out of prescriptive "Jewish values" (Zelkowitz, Not Yet Published). Instead, this curriculum opens learners' minds to a vast array of lenses through which to approach *middot*. It recognizes each learner's unique struggle to make sense of *middot*. Learners will examine the texts of our tradition and the texts of their lives to gain more nuanced perspectives of *middot*. They will delve into challenging scenarios with their classmates, parents, and teachers, guided by the wisdom of Jewish tradition and the power of their own consciences. They will understand that learning and living by *middot* is a lifelong process that requires perseverance. This curriculum is just the first step each learner will take to "[navigate] the invaluable and necessary work that each Jew must undertake" on the winding road toward a life of integrity.<sup>1</sup> By the year's conclusion, this curriculum's students will learn to cradle the paradox of having ended a process that has no end.

Driving this guide are the following Enduring Understandings:

- Jewish texts stimulate deep Jewish learning about enduring values.
- Jewish values inspire meaningful discourse about contemporary moral issues that leads to righteous action in society.
- Jewish values fuel Jews' journeys toward virtuous and gratifying relationships with themselves, other people, and God.

This curriculum helps families continue the work of fostering their Jewish selves when their children are in fifth grade. Late elementary school is the ideal time for such work. As psychologist Jean Piaget describes in his stage-theory of cognitive development, children around eleven years old become more aware of people and events around them, yet still maintain some egocentrism from childhood. This transitional period allows them to balance the self-centeredness and the selflessness that a values-based curriculum requires, providing a pivotal moment when a *middot* curriculum can best touch their lives.

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<sup>1</sup> Integrity is when values match actions, as taught by Martin Buber in *The Way of Man According to the Teachings of Hasidism*.

*Middot* remain relevant throughout the Jewish life cycle, and this curriculum's parent participants will benefit as much as their children. In a time when pre-adolescents are beginning to crave independence from their parents, this curriculum intends to help parents and pre-adolescents build deeper intimacy through shared knowledge and experience. Much of this knowledge and experience will be new for both age groups. This curriculum's same-age learning blocks will provide opportunities for both adults and children to learn and build meaningful relationships with their peers. When they join together for family learning, parents and children will bring different knowledge and skills to the table and learn from each other. The learning does not stop when families leave the synagogue. This curriculum is based on an understanding that family education allows Jewish content to become family content, and it provides tools for families to bridge their synagogue learning to their everyday lives.

Fifth graders and their parents will progress through this curriculum's *middot* in a three-unit sequence, arranged according to classical Jewish categorization: *bein adam l'atzmo* (between one and oneself), *bein adam l'chavero* (between one and one's fellow), and *bein adam l'makom* (between one and God). With each succeeding unit, learners will expand their circle of interest from themselves, to others, and eventually to God. Every unit calls for decreasing egotism and greater skills of abstraction.

During my one-on-one conversation with Rachel, I asked what she meant by "Jewish values." She responded with uncertainty. "Oh, you know, community, and family, mitzvahs. That sort of thing" (S. Rosenbaum, personal communication, October 19, 2017). When its pre-adolescent and adult learners complete this curriculum, no longer will "Jewish values" be a response laden with ambiguity and discomfort. Rather, their *middot* schemas will be woven from a web of hard work, textured from an array of textual interpretation, and layered with complexities created through connection and conflict.

## Letter to the Educator

Dear Educator,

Thank you for considering this Curriculum Guide for your family education program! Like me, you believe that family education is a powerful tool to bring families together to explore Judaism's richest topics and build Jewish lives, and that your families deserve to study *middot*, Jewish Values, in a way that reflects their dynamic Jewish journeys. This Curriculum Guide encourages kids and parents to engage with Jewish tradition's varied perspectives on *middot*. Based on Jewish tradition and their own experiences, learners will grapple with the many ways that *middot* can affect their relationships and actions every day. This curriculum is just the beginning of their journeys to create fulfilling Jewish lives.

Here are some questions you might have about this curriculum:

### ***Who are the educators needed to teach this curriculum?***

This curriculum requires educators who are skilled with and passionate about Family Education. Though the educators would benefit from Jewish textual knowledge, they need not be experts in Jewish sources—this material can be studied and learned during the course of the curriculum. However, educational pedagogy is less effectively learned “on the job” and should be a prerequisite for the educators who are teaching this curriculum.

The curriculum requires *at least* 3 educators for every 10 families participating. If you have more than 10 families participating, consider creating parallel tracks instead of single classrooms. You will need:

- A lead educator who can prepare for and lead the Family Learning components.
- A 5<sup>th</sup> grade educator who has experience working with this age group.
- A parent educator. Ideally this person is also a parent and has experience leading adult education.

Additional staff members include:

- A musically-skilled educator, if none of the 3 primary educators are musical. Every lesson of this Curriculum Guide includes a musical component.
- Trained high school madrichim who can serve as leaders for Family Learning and co-teach same-age learning with the 5<sup>th</sup> grade educator.
- An administrator or lead teacher who can prepare materials in advance and tend to any family needs that arise during sessions.

### ***What do I need to know to be able to teach this curriculum?***

An effective *middot* educator understands that teaching *middot* is not simply about their learners' journeys, but also about their own personal journeys. *Middot* are complex and the journey towards a fulfilling Jewish life based on *middot* is perpetual. This curriculum's ideal educators are open-minded, introspective, and willing to delve into life's most complex questions with *anavah* (humility) and *kavod* (honor). You may find that you have just as many questions as their learners—and this is great!

This Curriculum Guide is based heavily on Alan Morinis's *Everyday Holiness*. I encourage you to read this text before teaching the curriculum, and to refresh your learning about each *middah* before its lesson.

You might also enjoy a little light reading through Joseph Telushkin's *The Book of Jewish Values: A Day-by-Day Guide to Ethical Living*. It's a great way to supplement your personal journey while teaching this curriculum, and it only takes a couple of minutes each day!

### ***How is this curriculum organized?***

This curriculum consists of 5 units. The first unit is a 2-lesson introduction to the concept of *middot* and the last unit is a 2-lesson conclusion of the curriculum. The 3 intermediary units are the bulk of the curriculum. These follow a traditional Jewish categorization typically applied to *mitzvot*, but adapted to categories of *middot* for the sake of this curriculum: *Bayn adam l'atzmi* (between one and oneself), *bayn adam l'chavero* (between people), and *bayn adam l'makom* (between one and God). Though all *middot* apply to each of these categories, as uncovered in unit 1 lesson 2, this categorization serves as a helpful means of focusing the *middot* and applying the *middot* to learners' lives. Within each unit, you will find a lesson introducing the category, 4-5 lessons focusing on singular *middot*, and a Storybook workday (see following question "How is learning assessed?" for more information). Each lesson spans 2.5 hours and includes family learning components, in which the families will learn all together, as well as same-age components, in which the 5<sup>th</sup> graders and parents will separate for more focused and developmentally-targeted learning. The **blue** headings signify whether the section is "Family Learning," "Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade," or "Same-Age Learning: Parents." The **orange** headings designate each learning activity.

*Note:* If you are using the print version of this guide, you will not see the colored headings. See the digital guide for full color.

### ***Can I use the lessons individually, rather than using the entire Curriculum Guide?***

Many Jewish educators have written lesson plans about *middot*. One way in which this Curriculum Guide differs from others is its cohesive and scaffolded structure. Lesson content builds throughout the curriculum and learners may feel inadequately prepared for a singular lesson without the entire curricular framework. For instance, it would be difficult to teach a lesson about *middot bayn adam l'atzmo* if the learner has not learned about *middot*, it would be difficult to learn about *bitachon* (trust in God) without first learning about *emunah* (faith in God), and so forth.

If you would like to use individual activities from this curriculum's lessons, I invite you to do so with an educator's keen eye towards learners' prior knowledge and educational scaffolding.

### ***Why is this curriculum designed for 5<sup>th</sup> Grade Families? Can it be used for other age groups?***

This question is explored in the Educational Rationale and I encourage you to read that for a thorough answer to this question. With some minor adjustments, this curriculum could be adapted for 4<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> grade families, or for a group of 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade families, as children in these grades are at similar developmental levels to 5<sup>th</sup> graders. If you use it for 4<sup>th</sup> grade families, you would likely need to add additional support for the 4<sup>th</sup> grade learners to grasp the abstract concepts, especially in the final unit, *bayn adam l'makom*. If you use it for 6<sup>th</sup> grade families, you may add increasingly complex discussion questions. If used for a 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade group with an adequate number of participants to do so, I suggest you divvy up the 4<sup>th</sup>, 5<sup>th</sup>, and 6<sup>th</sup> graders into grade-level teams for same-age learning and encourage the grade-level educators to adjust the lesson plans for their particular age group. Feel free to tweak and re-

work the curriculum as best fits your families—you know them best, and all will benefit from a dynamic *middot* curriculum adjusted to meet their developmental-stages and needs.

***Do my participant families need to be traditionally structured to join this learning group?***

The word “family” encompasses a wide range of structures in our contemporary society. I intend for this curriculum to include all types of family structures in which there lives a 5<sup>th</sup> grader (or, as the previous question raises, a 4<sup>th</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grader). If you plan to implement this curriculum in your institution, I hope you will welcome all family structures—those with single parents, same-sex parents, grandparents as guardians, more than 2 parents, and the list goes on—and ultimately the choice about who to include is yours, as the educator.

***Why do you use “they” instead of “he and she?” Isn’t this incorrect grammar?***

The choice to use “they” instead of “he and she” is intentional. I recognize that not all our learners will identify with the gender binary that English grammar reenforces with its use of gendered pronouns such as “he and she.” In order to be inclusive of all learners, both gender-conforming and gender-nonconforming alike, I chose to use the gender-neutral third-person singular pronouns “they/them/their.” I hope that you will join me to create a learning environment that is inclusive of all learners’ gender identities.

***How is learning assessed?***

In addition to small assessments throughout the curriculum, the Authentic Assessment for this curriculum is a *Middot* Storybook that the families will create and eventually present to the Kindergarten families. If you do not have Kindergarten families, you can do this experience with any grade younger than the 5<sup>th</sup> graders. Families will dream up a character and describe the trials and tribulations their character faces while trying to live a virtuous life. At the conclusion of each unit, families will create a new chapter of their *Middot* Storybook that incorporates their learning about that unit’s *middot*. This is an innovative way for parents and kids to collaborate on a project together, represent their learning through an imaginative medium, and give back to their Jewish community. The final experience of the entire curriculum is a Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* day with the Kindergarten families. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade families will present their storybooks to the kindergarten families in order to teach them about *middot* and form bonds across age groups. Their storybooks will then serve as keepsakes for the 5<sup>th</sup> grade families to remind them of their *middot* journeys and cherish for years to come.

I have personally witnessed the deep bonds and meaningful learning that family *middot* education nourishes, and I hope that this curriculum helps you create sacred learning experiences for your community’s families. May this *middot* journey enable you and your learners to grow as individuals, families, and a learning community that embraces virtuous Jewish living.

Sarah Rosenbaum, Rabbinical Education Student  
May 2018



## Scope & Sequence

### UNIT 1: INTRODUCTION TO *MIDDOT*

In the first unit, learners will become acquainted with *middot*, both as a concept and through examples. They will begin to explore how *middot* apply to their individual and family lives. In order to scaffold the curriculum's categorical organization, they will uncover the categories *Bayn Adam L'Atzmi*, *L'Chavero*, and *L'Makom* and consider how particular *middot* fit into these categories.

### UNIT 2: *BAYN ADAM L'ATZMI* (BETWEEN ONE AND ONESELF)

This unit explores the category of *bayn adam l'atzmi*, the necessity of Jews to engage in processes that facilitate self-awareness and self-development. Learners will engage with four *middot* that encourage introspective behavior: *Anavah* (Humility), *Hakarat HaTov* (Gratitude), *Briyut* (Wellness), and *Teshuvah* (Repentance).

### UNIT 3: *BAYN ADAM L'CHAVERO* (BETWEEN PEOPLE)—SCRIPTED UNIT

In Unit 3, learners will explore the category *bayn adam l'chavero*, the way in which people can form virtuous and gratifying relationships with each other. The *middot* in this unit can help learners make informed and intentional choices during their encounters with other people, both those with whom they interact regularly and those they encounter outside their typical spaces. The *middot* in this unit include: *Chesed* (Loving Kindness), *Achrayut* (Responsibility), *Savlanut* (Repentance), *Tzedek* (Justice), and *Shmiat HaOzen* (Attentive Listening).

### UNIT 4: *BAYN ADAM L'MAKOM* (BETWEEN ONE AND GOD)

Now that learners have explored their relationships with themselves and with other people, they will explore their relationships with God, *bayn adam l'makom*. This unit offers multiple opportunities for learners to uncover their personal theologies and the ways in which *middot* can enhance their spiritual lives. The *middot* in this unit include: *Emunah* (Faith), *Kavod* (Honor), *Emet* (Truth), and *Bitachon* (Trust).

### UNIT 5: MY JOURNEY CONTINUES

To conclude the curriculum, learners will consider how this *middot* journey has affected them individually and as families. Parents will finalize and present their Ethical Wills to their children in the penultimate lesson. They will have worked on these throughout the entire curriculum,. The final lesson is the culmination of their Storybook creation work and all they learn throughout the curriculum. They will present their Storybooks at Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day.

## Unit 1: Introduction to *Middot*

### UNIT EUs:

- Jewish values affect our relationships with ourselves, other people, and God.
- *Middot* are uniquely Jewish values, rather than American values.
- The categories of *middot bayn adam l'atzmi*, *l'chavero*, and *l'makom* can help Jewish families understand *middot* in their context of their lived experiences.
- Our personal journeys towards virtuous lives can be windy and rocky.

### UNIT EQs:

- Why categorize *middot* into different groups?
- What is my relationship with *middot*?
- How are *middot* different from American values?

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate that all *middot* affect our relationships with ourselves, others, and God.
- Introduce the 3 categories of this curriculum: *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom*.
- Guide learners to understand that their personal paths towards developing *middot* will be windy and rocky because perfection is impossible.
- Show learners that *middot* differ from American values because they stem from Jewish texts and serve to elevate one's soul.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Create an artifact that demonstrates the current prioritization of values in their families.
- Categorize *middot* in the categories of *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom* and explain their thought processes.
- Analyze their current positions on *middot* continua.
- Analyze texts that differentiate between Jewish values and American values.
- Apply their values learning to create a Community *Brit*.

### AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENTS:

1. Lesson 1: My Journey Begins

### LESSONS:

1. Introduction to *Middot*
2. Me, You, God, and *Middot*

## Lesson 1:1: What are *Middot*?

### GOALS:

- Show learners that *middot* differ from American values.
- Guide learners to understand that their personal paths towards developing *middot* will be windy and rocky because perfection is impossible

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What are *middot*?
- How are *middot* different from American values?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Create an artifact that demonstrates the current prioritization of values in their families.
- Explain what *middot* are and analyze how *middot* play into their everyday lives.
- Differentiate between American values and Jewish values.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Create an artifact that demonstrates the current prioritization of values in their families.
- Analyze a text about *middot* and apply it to their own lives.
- Differentiate between American values and Jewish values.

### MATERIALS:

- “Constructing Our Family Values”
  - 15-20 posters that display value words, including English translations of all *middot* in this curriculum guide. (See Appendix 1:1A for value words)
  - Popsicle sticks with the same value words written on them (1 of each value popsicle stick/family)
  - Blank popsicle sticks
  - Glue
  - Markers
  - Artistic decorations such as gemstones, puffy paint, etc.
- Rulers (1/every few 5<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Paper and pencils (1/every few 5<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Visual aid, such as whiteboard or posterboard
- Printouts of Appendix 1:1B (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendix 1:1C (1/family, multiple paged document)
- Highlighters (1/family)
- Pens (1/family)
- Printouts of appendix 1:1D (1/learner)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Constructing our Family Values.
2. Same-Age Learning
3. Activity: Jewish or American Values Hunt

#### 4. Educational Closure: *Shalom Rav & Siyum*

### Family Learning

**Setup:** In a large space, arrange tables with tablecloths in a U shape to accommodate your learners. Hang the posters of value words around the space, and place the corresponding popsicle sticks in a basket below. For instance, below the poster that says “Responsibility” will be a basket full of popsicle sticks that say “Responsibility.” Place blank popsicle sticks and art materials on the tables.

#### SET INDUCTION: CONSTRUCTING OUR FAMILY VALUES

Welcome the families and invite them to sit at the tables. Invite them to look around the room to see all of the words displayed on posters and their corresponding popsicle sticks and ask a volunteer to tell you what all these words have in common. In all likelihood, an adult will be able to notice that these are values words. Affirm this answer and explain that every family has values that help them build their family and create their home. This curriculum is about *middot*, Jewish values, and this activity will help them start to think about which *middot* currently make up their family lives.

Their task is to go “*middot* shopping” at the various stations and decide which *middot* from the available options are most important to them. Then, they will go back to the tables and use the blank popsicle sticks to write more *middot* that their family thinks are important but were not featured in the choices available. Lastly, using the popsicle sticks they acquired and created, they are to build a house structure. When everyone is finished, they will get the opportunity to share their homes with the group and explain why these values help them keep their family and home “upright” (like the structures they built!).

*Note to teacher:* This is a great opportunity for everyone in the class to get to know each other for the first time. Perhaps you can ask each person in the family to introduce themselves and say something about themselves before they share their values.

### Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### ACTIVITY: WHAT ARE *MIDDOT*?

Divide learners into small groups and give each group a ruler. Ask each group to make a list of the ruler’s purpose. Answers might include: To measure things, to see how something has grown or shrunk, to see how to fit items together.

Explain that Jewish values are often called *middot*, the Hebrew word for “measures.” Write the word “*middot*” and the word “measures” on a visual aid. Ask: Why do you think that Jewish values are called “measures”?

If learners don’t get there naturally, explain that one reason Jewish values are called *middot* (one value is a *middah*) is because every person has every measure of every trait within them. Like rulers, *middot* can help us see how we “measure up” in certain traits. *Middot* help us grow as Jews and as people.

Every *middah* contains a range of measures that helps us determine how much or how little of that trait we possess. This range can be called a “continuum.” Use the example of patience to help learners understand the concept of a continuum. Write “Patience” on the board and ask learners to help you “measure” the degrees of patience. For instance, what is it called when someone has absolutely NO patience? What is it called when someone has TOO MUCH patience? What is in between? Create a continuum on the board. It might look like this, but with different words:

Anger → Impatience → patience → Not caring

Ask volunteers to share where they were on the continuum of patience today before coming to synagogue. You might need to break the ice by sharing your own perspective or by asking a madrich(a) to share. After a few shares, thank the students for sharing something personal with the group.

Try it again with another value: Kindness. What is it called when someone is not kind? What is it called when someone is overly kind? What is in between? Create a continuum on the board. It might look like this, but with different words:

Selfishness → Kindness → Loving-kindness → Extravagance

Ask volunteers to share where they were on the continuum of kindness this morning before coming to synagogue. You might need to break the ice by sharing your own perspective or by asking a madrich(a) to share. After a few shares, thank the students for sharing something personal with the group.

Engage in a group discussion with these questions:

1. Review: What are *middot*? Why do we call Jewish values *middot*?
2. Do you think you’ll have the same levels of the *middot* of patience and kindness tonight and tomorrow as you did this morning? Why or why not?
3. Should every person aim for a specific measure of each *middah*? For instance, is there a perfect amount of patience or kindness we need to have all the time? Why or why not?

Reinforce the idea that we all have every trait in us, we just might have a different measure of it. We are not in competition to see who has the most of every trait. In fact, for most traits, it’s best to be somewhere in the middle of the continuum, like with the patience continuum we just did. The only people we are up against in the battle to develop our personal *middot* are ourselves. It is our job, as Jewish people, to become the best version of ourselves. Some of us may find this easier/harder for one *middah* (kindness) and some may find this easier/harder for another *middah* (patience). We can do this by figuring out how much or how little we have of each trait, and by working to get to our ideal place on the continuum. By doing this hard work, we can increase our holiness.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: WHAT ARE MIDDOT?

Learners will divide into *chevrotot*, study partners, to engage in the text study in Appendix 1:1B, including the discussion questions found below the text.

When learners finish, engage them in a discussion about question 2 from the discussion questions: From this passage, what can you infer about *middot* that makes them Jewish values, as opposed to American values? If it does not come up naturally, guide learners towards the idea that *middot* emerge from

Jewish tradition. Our texts guide us to prioritize these values. Furthermore, *middot* are Jewish because they are meant to help us find holiness and wholeness in our souls—if seen only as American values, the “soul-piece” may lack.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: JEWISH OR AMERICAN VALUES HUNT

Bring learners back together and explain that, now that we understand what *middot* are, the big question to answer is: What makes *middot* **Jewish** values instead of American values? If you want, pose that question to the group and take a few shares. The parents have already explored this during their same-age learning in order to help move this activity forward with knowledge. Then explain that the families will have a chance to delve into some sources to discover what else makes *middot* Jewish, and American values American!

Each family will receive a copy of Appendix 1:1C, which includes text from the Bill of Rights and text from *Parashat Kedoshim* (the Torah portion that contains many Jewish laws). Their task, as indicated on the worksheet, is to read both texts and hunt for values in the text. They should use the highlighter to mark any parts of the text that point to a values word, and use a pen to write that value word in the margin. For instance, Amendment 1 points to the value of Freedom, so they will write “freedom” in the margin and highlight the portions of amendment 1 that demonstrate this value of freedom.

Come back together to discuss the following questions:

1. Before we speak about the values you found in the American Bill of Rights and *Parashat Kedoshim*, one of our weekly Torah portions, let’s talk about the names of the two texts.
  - a. What does the title “Bill of Rights” tell us about this document? Why did our founding fathers create it? What does it contain?
  - b. What does the name *Kedoshim*, which means “Holy ones,” tell us about the document? What is its purpose? What does it contain?
2. What are some values you found in the Bill of Rights? What do they tell us about the founding fathers’ values when they created the United States?
3. What are some values you found in *Kedoshim*? What do they tell us about values that were important to our Biblical ancestors?
4. Based on these two texts, do you see *middot* and American values as different or similar? Why?
5. Look back to the first verse of *Kedoshim*, “You should be holy because I, your God, am holy.” What does this opening verse tell us about the purpose of *middot*, Jewish values?

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: SHALOM RAV & SIYUM

*Note to teacher:* This educational closure will occur routinely at the end of every lesson in this curriculum. For this first *siyum*, I recommend writing the words of *Hashkeveinu* on a visual aid. Depending on your learners’ familiarity with the words, you might use this visual aid for the next unit also.

Wrap up the day’s learning by introducing the words of *Shalom Rav* (see Appendix 1:1D). Ask: How can *middot* help us bring *shalom rav*, abundant peace, to our lives? Take a few shares from the group.

Explain that when we live lives of value, we can be our best selves and feel peace in our own souls. When our souls feel peace, we can have more peace in our relationships with other people and with God. Sing *Shalom Rav* with the melody of your choice and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

**Value Words**

Humility

Listening

Gratitude

Patience

Trust

Wellness

Loving-Kindness

Justice

Faith

Repentance

Honor

Responsibility

Truth

Compassion



### **Middot Text Study**

In Hebrew, the collective word for all the traits of the *nefesh*-soul [the aspect of the soul that has familiar human traits like anger and love, trust and worry, generosity and stinginess, pride and humility, responsibility and laziness, loving-kindness and judgment, and so on] is *middot*. While that plural term is almost always translated into the useful English notion of “traits of character,” the Hebrew word (singular *middah*) literally means measures. We can find in this root a Mussar [Jewish path of spiritual development] insight. The message is that each of us is endowed at birth with every one of the full range of the human traits, and that what sets one person apart from another is not whether we have certain traits while someone else has different ones, but rather the degree, or measure, of the traits that live in each of our souls. The angriest person, for example, has an excess of the anger trait, but Mussar insists that there must be at least some degree of calm within that raging soul. So must there also be a touch of anger in even the calmest individual. The stingiest person still has at least grain of generosity, and so on with all the traits. It’s not whether we have the traits—all of us have them all—but rather what gives us our distinctive way of being in the world is where our traits are measures on the continuum. Nor should we aspire to rid ourselves of certain traits. Each has its role, though certain traits will exist in us in too high or too low a measure. That’s what sets our spiritual curriculum for us.

Fulfilling the Torah’s injunction to become holy doesn’t mean running here or there to acquire this or that. Instead, what is needed is that you make an effort to uncover the holy purity that is innate within you. Through introspection and self-examination, you can identify the traits that are hindrances in your life, either because you have too much or too little of them. Awareness of your inner imbalances pinpoints the work you can do to transform those challenging inner qualities. (Alan Morinis, *Everyday Holiness*)

Questions for Discussion:

1. According to Morinis, what are *middot*?
2. From this passage, what can you infer about *middot* that makes them Jewish values, as opposed to universal values?
3. What is our “spiritual curriculum,” as Jews?
4. What is one aspect of your “spiritual curriculum,” based on what you already know about your personal *middot*?

## Jewish or American Values Hunt

The Bill of Rights is an essential American legal document, and *Kedoshim* (“Holy Ones”) is an essential Jewish legal document. Read both texts with your family and hunt for portions of the text that demonstrate the author’s values. Use the highlighter to mark any parts of the text that point to a value, and use a pen to write that values word in the margin.

### The Bill of Rights<sup>2</sup>

#### AMENDMENT 1

Congress can’t make any law that:

- Favors one religion over another religion, or no religion at all, or opposes any religion;
- Stops you from practicing your religion as you see fit;
- Keeps you from saying whatever you want, even if you are criticizing the President of the United States;
- Prevents newspapers, magazines, books, movies, radio, television or the internet from presenting any news, ideas, and opinions that they choose;
- Stops you from meeting peacefully for a demonstration or protest to ask the government to change something.

#### AMENDMENT 2

Congress can’t stop people from having and carrying weapons.

#### AMENDMENT 3

You don’t have to let soldiers live in your house, except if there is a war, and even then Congress needs to pass a law and set the rules.

#### AMENDMENT 4

Nobody can search your body, or your house, or your papers and things, unless they can prove to a judge that they have a good reason for the search.

#### AMENDMENT 5

Except during times of war or if you are in the military:

- You can’t be tried for any serious crime without a Grand Jury meeting first to decide whether there’s enough evidence against you for a trial;
- If at the end of a trial, the jury decides you are innocent, the government can’t try you again for the same crime with another jury;
- You cannot be forced to admit you are guilty of a crime and if you choose not to, you don’t have to say anything at your trial at all;
- You can’t be killed, or put in jail, or fined, unless you were convicted of a crime by a jury and all of the proper legal steps during your arrest and trial were followed; and
- The government can’t take your house or your farm or anything that is yours, unless the government pays for it at a fair price.

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<sup>2</sup> Bill of Rights in Simple Language from ACLU Delaware website: <https://aclu-de.org/resources/know-your-rights/bill-of-rights-in-simple-language/>

## AMENDMENT 6

If you are arrested and charged with a crime:

- You have a right to have your trial soon and in public, so everyone knows what is happening;
- The case has to be decided by a jury of ordinary people from where you are, if you wish;
- You have the right to know what you are accused of doing wrong and to see and hear and cross-examine the people who are witnesses against you;
- You have the right to a lawyer to help you. If you cannot afford to pay the lawyer, the government will.

## AMENDMENT 7

You also have the right to a jury when it is a civil case (a law case between two people rather than between you and the government).

## AMENDMENT 8

The government can't make you pay more than is reasonable in bail or in fines, and the government can't inflict cruel or unusual punishments (like torture) even if you are convicted of a crime.

## AMENDMENT 9

Just because these rights are listed in the Constitution doesn't mean that you don't have other rights too.

## AMENDMENT 10

Anything that the Constitution doesn't say that Congress can do, is left up to the states and to the people.

### First half of *Kedoshim* ("Holy Ones"), Leviticus 19:1-18<sup>3</sup>

1. And the Eternal One spoke to Moses, saying,
2. Speak to the entire congregation of the children of Israel, and say to them, You shall be holy, for I, the Eternal, your God, am holy
3. Every person shall honor their mother and his father, and you shall observe My Sabbaths. I am the Eternal am your God.
4. You shall not turn to idols, nor shall you make molten gods for yourselves. I am the Eternal, your God.
5. When you sacrifice a peace offering to the Eternal, you shall sacrifice it so that it may be accepted on your behalf.
6. It may be eaten on the day you slaughter it and on the next day, but anything left over until the third day, shall be burned in fire.
7. And if it would be eaten on the third day, it is an offensive thing; it shall not be accepted.
8. And whoever eats it shall bear the guilt for having profaned what is holy to the Eternal, and that person shall be cut off from people.
9. When you reap the harvest of your land, you shall not fully reap the corner of your field, nor shall you gather the gleanings of your harvest.
10. And you shall not glean your vineyard, nor shall you collect the [fallen] individual grapes of your vineyard; you shall leave them for the poor and the stranger. I am the Eternal, your God.

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<sup>3</sup> Adapted from English on Sefaria.com.

11. You shall not steal. You shall not deal deceitfully or falsely with another.
12. You shall not swear falsely by My Name, thereby profaning the Name of your God. I am the Eternal.
13. You shall not oppress your fellow. You shall not rob. The hired worker's wage shall not remain with you overnight until morning.
14. You shall not insult a deaf person. You shall not place a stumbling block before a blind person, and you shall fear your God. I am the Eternal.
15. You shall not make an unfair decision; you shall not favor a poor person or respect a great man; you shall judge your fellow fairly.
16. You shall not go around as a gossipmonger amidst your people. You shall not stand by [the shedding of] your fellow's blood. I am the Eternal.
17. You shall not hate your neighbor in your heart. You shall surely rebuke your fellow, but you shall not bear guilt on their account.
18. You shall neither take revenge from nor bear a grudge against the members of your people; you shall love your neighbor as yourself. I am the Eternal.

**Shalom Rav**

Shalom rav  
 al Yisrael am'cha tasim l'olam  
 ki atah hu Melech Adon l'chol ha-shalom  
 V'tov b'einecha l'vareich et am'cha Yisrael  
 b'chol et uv'chol sha'ah bish-lomecha.  
 Baruch atah adonai,  
 Hamevarech at amo yisrael bashalom.

שלום רב  
 על ישראל עמך תשים לעולם  
 כי אתה הוא מלך אדון  
 לכל השלום  
 וטוב בעיניך לברך  
 את עמך ישראל,  
 בכל עת ובכל שעה בשלומך.  
 ברוך אתה יי,  
 המברך את עמו ישראל בשלום.

Grant abundant peace unto Israel your people for ever;  
 For you are the sovereign of all peace;  
 and may it be good in your sight to bless your people Israel at all times and in every hour with your  
 peace.  
 Blessed are you, God, who blesses your people Israel with peace.

## Lesson 1:2: Me, You, God, and *Middot*

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate that all *middot* affect our relationships with ourselves, others, and God.
- Introduce the 3 categories of this curriculum: *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom*.
- Support learners as they create Community Agreements guided by *middot*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- Why categorize *middot* into different groups?
- What is my relationship with *middot*?
- How can *middot* inform our interactions this year?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Categorize *middot* in the categories of *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom* and explain their thought processes.
- Analyze their current positions and ideal positions on *middot* continuums.
- Create a Community Agreement guided by *middot*.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Categorize *middot* in the categories of *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom* and explain their thought processes.
- Analyze their current positions and ideal positions on *middot* continuums.
- Create a Community Agreement guided by *middot*.

### MATERIALS:

- Printouts of Appendix 1:2A (1/family)
- 4 posters with the phrases “Me with myself,” “Me and Other People,” “Me and God,” and “Unsure”
- Visual aid and appropriate writing utensils
- Printouts of Appendix 1:2B (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 1:2C(1/parent)
- Star stickers
- Pens
- Printouts of Appendix 1:2D (1/family)
- Printouts of Appendix 1:2E (1/learner)

## Family Learning

**Setup:** Put posters with the phrases “Me with myself,” “Me and Other People,” “Me and God,” and “Unsure” in 4 corners of the room.

## SET INDUCTION: *MIDDOT MASHUP*

Situate learners in family groups and hand them copies of Appendix 1:2A, *Middot Mashup*. Their task is to use the worksheet to review last week's learning about *middot*. Then, they will use that review to write a family song or rap about *middot* and perform it for the group.

*Note to teacher:* Feel free to shtick this up! You may like to dress up as a musician, write a song to introduce the activity, or play music in the background while learners enter the space. This is meant to be another way for families to have fun and get to know each other during their first couple weeks as a group.

## ACTIVITY: ME, YOU, GOD, AND *MIDDOT*

Now that you've reviewed *middot*, introduce learners to Maimonides' categories of *mitzvot*. Use a visual aid to write the English and Hebrew translations of the 3 categories:

1. *Bayn adam l'atzmo*: Between me and myself
2. *Bayn adam l'chavero*: Between me and other people
3. *Bayn adam l'makom*: Between me and God

Explain the Hebrew language for the 3 categories. These categories come from a book called the Mishneh Torah, a compilation of Jewish law written by a prolific Jewish medieval scholar named Maimonides. In the Mishneh Torah (3:35) Maimonides said that commandments can either be between one and one's fellow or between one and God. In later Jewish scholarship, this was expanded to include the category between one and oneself.

Ask learners to brainstorm what they think of when they hear these categories.

*Note to teacher:* There is no right answer to this question—the purpose is to get their minds to enter the framework of these categories. If the 5<sup>th</sup> graders are having difficulty, ask the parents to contribute. Talk this out until you think they're prepared to move onto the next activity, the 4 corners.

## ACTIVITY: *MIDDOT 4 CORNERS*

Now that learners have an introduction to the language of *middot*, this activity will help them decide how *middot* affect our relationships with ourselves, other people, and God.

Ask all learners to stand in the middle of the room. Explain that this is our opportunity to decide which *middot* affect our relationships with ourselves, other people, and God. The leader will say a *middah*, a value word, and the learner's task is to move to the corner that best describes the *middah's* purpose. For instance, if the leader says the word "loving-kindness," I may go to the corner labeled "Me and God" because I heard the word loving-kindness in prayers towards God. The movement may take some extended wait time, and that is okay! This means that the learners are considering their options. After each word and the learner's movement, ask one or two learners to share why they chose that corner.

After the activity, invite learners to take a seat. Discuss these questions:

1. How was this activity easy? How was it difficult?
2. What did this activity teach you about the *middot's* effect on our relationships?

### 3. Are there any other categories you would add to the 3 we used?

Explain that all of the *middot* belong to all of the categories—there were no wrong answers in this whole activity! However, for the purpose of this curriculum on *middot*, we will be dividing the *middot* among these 3 categorizations to help us understand how the *middot* play out in our own lives. Still, throughout the curriculum, we will know that each *middah* is relevant to each category. For example, the *middah* of *chesed*, loving-kindness, requires me to be loving and kind to myself, plays an important role in my relationships with other people whom I treat with *chesed*, and informs me that God is a God that shows *chesed* to all creatures by sustaining us. However, in this curriculum, we will put *chesed* in the category of *bayn adam l'chavero* in order to explore how it helps us create virtuous and gratifying relationships with other people. Now, in same-age groups, we will learn more about how we relate to the *middot* personally.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: MY MIDDOT JOURNEY BEGINS

As learners saw in last week's text study, *middot* literally translates to “measures.” From this translation, they can understand that every *middah* is a continuum from one extreme to another. Last week they created their own continuums of the *middot* patience and kindness. Ask learners to review what they learned last week during same-age learning with the question: What do we learn about *middot* from its English translation, “measures”?

Review the continuums they created the prior week by asking: What did our continuums of patience and kindness look like? One at a time, recreate the continuum of patience from the prior week and then recreate the continuum of kindness from the prior week. Then, review the continuum concept by creating a third *middah* continuum together. You might ask the students what *middah* they wish to use, or you can recommend one. As a reminder, some questions that will help them look like:

- What does it look like when someone doesn't have any of that value?
- What does it look like when someone has an excess (too much) of that value?
- What is in between?

Divide the learners into *chevrutot* and give them the discussion guide on Appendix 1:2B. Invite them to discuss the questions on the *daf*, the handout, which pertain to the 3 continuums displayed on the board (patience, kindness, and one other *middah* that you chose)

Come back together as a group and ask: Based on what you discussed with your partner, what is one action you can take this week to be your best self?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: MY MIDDOT JOURNEY BEGINS

As learners saw in last week's text study, *middot* literally translates to “measures.” From this translation, they can understand that every *middah* is a continuum from one extreme to another. For instance, here is the continuum of the *middah hakarat hatov*, gratitude:





Moderation is key to every Jewish virtue. In the case of *hakarat hatov*, gratitude, this image demonstrates the scale of the virtue—from ingratitude (being entirely ungrateful) to sycophancy (expressing gratitude to the point of “sucking up,” when it is no longer genuine)—and the necessity of striving for the middle ground.

Every person has every trait within them. We are tasked to assess where we are on the scale right now. Our current position on the scale may be our ideal position. More likely, we have work to do to get to our ideal position on the scale, while realizing that perfection is impossible. And sometimes, our ideal position on the scale will shift in different circumstances! Developing our *middot* can be like trying to hit a moving target. Nobody will always hit the mark every time. But, as our sages taught, “it is not our duty to finish the work, but neither are we free to desist from it.” (Pirke Avot 2:20-21). In other words, perfection is not our goal. Instead, our goal is to consistently examine our thoughts and actions and work to transform into the best versions of ourselves that we can be.

This activity is independent. Each learner will receive a copy of Appendix 1:2C, *My Middot Journey Begins*. They will look at each *middah* and the measures of that trait. They will put a sticker in the place on the continuum where they want to be. With a pen, they will put a check-mark where they think they are now, today.

When they are finished working independently, they will come back into a group to discuss these questions:

1. What are your present *middah* strengths?
2. In which *middot* would you like to improve?
3. What are some ways you could move to your ideal spot on the scale?
4. Which *middot* are the most consistent for you (aka you stay in the same general area most days)?
5. Which *middot* are the least consistent for you (you move along the continuum from day to day)?
6. What are some ways you can become more consistent with these *middot*?
7. Based on this activity, what is one thing that you can do this week to work on becoming your best self?

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: COMMUNITY *BRIT*

Bring families back together and explain that the previous exercises, and knowing where we are on our own *middot* journeys, will help us be better members of the community. This year, this learning community will spend a lot of time together. During that time, everyone will have opportunities to share information about their personal lives, express their thoughts and feelings, and have important and potentially difficult conversations about things that matter to them. *Middot* are, by their very nature, values that are parts of our core beliefs. Therefore, when setting out on a journey to learn about *middot*, it is crucial to create a safe space for everyone in the community to share parts of themselves.

In the Torah, when God asked Abraham to take a journey together, God and Abraham made a covenant, a pact, called a *brit* in Hebrew. In fact, God made many *britot* with our ancestors throughout the Hebrew Bible—in every case, both God and our ancestors promised to hold up their end of the agreement. These *britot* enabled God and the people to trust each other throughout their challenging journeys.

Like our ancestors did with God, this learning community will create a *brit*, a covenant, or promise, together so that we can be our best selves all year long. Our *brit* will spell out the expectations we have of our learning community. We will all sign this *brit* to promise that we will do our very best to uphold its standards.

Divide learners into family groups and invite them to brainstorm these questions from Appendix 1:2D. Invite them to write their expectations in positive language. Use “we will X” instead of “we will not X.”

- How do you expect our learning community to speak to each other?
- How do you expect our learning community to behave when you’re speaking?
- How do you expect yourself to behave when others are speaking?
- How do you expect our learning community to act towards each other?
- How do you expect our learning community to treat the learning space? And each other’s personal space?
- How do you expect our learning community to treat the information we share here?
- What other expectations do you have of our learning community that you haven’t yet written in the above questions?
- What *middot* are the most important for our learning community to create a meaningful journey together?

Come back together and explain that the group will work together to create a single document that expresses the learning community’s expectations. Use a visual aid to record key aspects of the discussion. Remind families that this is the first instance in which they can consider their expectations of the learning community and behave in a way that expresses their values.

Begin by asking families which *middot* they consider the most important for the learning community to create a meaningful journey together. From there, invite them to use specific expectations from the other questions to demonstrate how these *middot* will play out in their learning community. For instance, if a family says “respect” as a key *middah*, other families might say: “listen when others are speaking,” or “ask before touching another person.” Encourage question-asking during this process. Since everyone will sign the *brit*, it is important that they understand what is expected of them.

Go through this process until you have completed a *brit* that feels agreeable to the group. Then, invite every person to sign it. Their signature confirms that they understand the terms of the *brit* and promise to follow it to the very best of their ability.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *TEFILAT HADERECH & SIYUM*

Wrap up the day’s learning by introducing the words of Debbie Friedman’s *Tefilat HaDerech* (see Appendix 1:1E). Ask: As we begin our learning journey together, what is one blessing you wish for our learning community?

Sing *Tefilat HaDerech* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema* and *Hashkeveinu*.

### ***Middot* Mashup**

What's up, *mishpacha* (family)? I hear that you learned about *middot*, about Jewish values, last week. Awesome! Let's rehash what you learned. Jot some notes below these questions. Then, get moving to make a sweet song or rap all about *middot*. Be sure to get creative—we're performing these for our whole posse!

**What are *middot*? (Pssst. The Hebrew means "measures!")**

**What *middot* does your family dig?**

**What makes *middot* Jewish, instead of just American?**

### My *Middot* Journey Begins

Step 1: Look at the 3 *middot* continuums your class created.

Step 2: Draw all 3 of them on the bottom of this sheet of paper.

Step 3: Draw a star in the place on each continuum that you think is the **ideal**, the best, measure of that *middah*, that Jewish value.

(By the way, you could put more than one star if you want—just be sure to write an explanation about why you put more than one!)

Step 4: Discuss the questions below:

1. For which of these *middot* are you usually the **closest** to your ideal measure? (your *middot* “strength”). If you had more than one ideal spot, explain which ideal spot you’re closest to.
2. For which of these *middot* are you usually the **furthest** from your ideal measure? (your *middot* “weakness”). If you had more than one ideal spot, explain which ideal spot you’re furthest from.
  - Follow up question: What are some ways you could move to your ideal spot on the scale?

**My Middot Journey Begins**

### ***Brit Discussion Questions***

- How do you expect our learning community to speak to each other?
- How do you expect our learning community to behave when you're speaking?
- How do you expect yourself to behave when others are speaking?
- How do you expect our learning community to act towards each other?
- How do you expect our learning community to treat the learning space? And each other's personal space?
- How do you expect our learning community to treat the information we share here?
- What other expectations do you have of our learning community that you haven't yet written in the above questions?
- What *middot* are the most important for our learning community to create a meaningful journey together?

***Tefilat HaDerech***  
**By Debbie Friedman**

May we be blessed as we go on our way  
May we be guided in peace  
May we be blessed with health and joy  
May this our blessing, amen.

May we be sheltered by the wings of peace  
May we be kept in safety and in love  
May grace and compassion find their  
way to every soul  
May this be our blessing, amen.

Amen, may this be our blessing, amen.



## Unit 2: *Bayn Adam L'Atzmi* (Between One and Oneself)

### UNIT EUs:

- *Middot bayn adam l'atzmi* enhance our self-awareness and allow for continued self-development to become our best selves.
- We can only develop virtuous relationships with other people and God when we have developed virtuous relationships with ourselves.
- Integration of *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* into our lives enable us to make intentional and informed decisions every day.

### UNIT EQs:

- How can we understand Hebrew *middot* in concrete and relatable ways?
- How does Jewish tradition approach self-awareness and development?
- How can *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* inspire Jews to make intentional and informed decisions every day?

### GOALS:

- Create experiences that allow learners to understand the *middot* in concrete and relatable ways.
- Guide learners as they uncover Jewish texts about *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* and discover how Jewish tradition can inform their own self-awareness and continued self-development.
- Encourage learners to think critically about everyday decisions through the lens of Jewish values.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate working definitions of each *middah* in the unit
- Interpret Jewish texts that teach about *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* and explain how these texts relate to their own interpersonal relationships
- Apply *middot* to everyday situations in their own lives.
- As a family, create a story book that chronicles a fictional character's daily struggles to make intentional and informed decisions based on *middot bayn adam l'atzmi*.

### ASSESSMENTS:

- *Teshuvah* Brochures (lesson 2.5)
- Storybook, chapter *bayn adam l'atzmi* (lesson 2.6)

### LESSONS:

1. Introduction to *Middot Bayn Adam L'Atzmi*
2. *Anavah* (Humility)
3. *Hakarat HaTov* (Gratitude)
4. *Briyut* (Wellness of body, mind, and soul)
5. *Teshuvah* (Repentance)
6. Storybook Work Day

## Lesson 2:1: *Bayn Adam L'Atzmi* (Between One and Oneself)

### GOALS:

- Introduce the learners to the concept of *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* in approachable ways.
- Demonstrate that self-awareness and self-development are Jewish values.
- Guide the learners to appreciate the necessity of *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* in our process of becoming our best selves.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is the concept of *middot bayn adam l'atzmi*?
- What does Jewish tradition teach about self-awareness and self-development?
- How do self-awareness and development enhance my life?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Interpret a Jewish text about self-awareness and/or self-development and apply it to their lives.
- Describe a way that self-awareness and development enhance their lives.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Interpret a Jewish text about self-awareness and/or development and explain how it applies to themselves and their family lives.
- Describe a way that *middot bayn adam l'atzmi* can enhance their lives and their families.

### MATERIALS:

- Printouts of Appendix 2:1A (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Paper (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Pencils (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 2:1B (1/parent)
- Posters with self-awareness for pre-teens techniques
- Small post-it notes (7/parent)
- Pens (1/parent)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Mirrors
2. Same-Age Learning for 5<sup>th</sup> graders and parents
3. Family Learning: Values Question Starters
4. Educational Closure & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: MIRRORS

Each learner will have a handheld mirror. Create parent-kid *chevrutot* for this activity. Their task is to look into the mirror at their own faces and observe what they see without judgment, using only

descriptive language. For example, rather than saying “big nose” or “small nose,” they could say “nose is pointy/rounded on the tip.” Remind the *chevrutot* to help each other observe without judgment. This is a key part of the activity.

Step 1: Partner A will describe what they see in mirror.

Step 2: Partner B will describe partner A’s face in descriptive language.

Step 3: Partner B will describe what they see in mirror.

Step 4: Partner A will describe partner B’s face in descriptive language.

Questions for discussion (either in partners or group):

- Was it easy or difficult to describe your face without judgment?
- Was it easy or difficult to describe your partner’s face without judgment?
- What can’t the mirror show us about ourselves?
- How can we look at our insides (our traits and values) the way we look at our outside, without judgment?
- How could we become better people by looking at our traits and values in a non-judgmental way?

Re-introduce learners to the phrase *bayn adam l’atzmi*, “between one and oneself,” which they encountered in Unit 1, and explain that this is the framework for our first unit of *middot*. Throughout this lesson they will come to understand more about what this phrase means. Then, in the 4 subsequent lessons, they will learn about 4 *middot* that fall into this category. As they learned in the introductory units, all of the *middot* can be expressed through the lens of every category (*Bayn adam l’atzmi*, *l’chavero*, and *l’makom*), and this curriculum guide has placed them into distinct categories for the sake of structure and clarity.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: IF I AM NOT FOR MYSELF

Introduce learners to *Pirke Avot* and its prominence in Jewish tradition. Invite learners to study the text on Appendix 2:1A:

Hillel says, “If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?” (*Pirke Avot*, 1:14)

In *chevrutot*, discuss the questions:

- Read Hillel’s first question. What does he mean by the words “for myself”?
- What does the first question teach us?
- What does the second question teach us about being only for ourselves?
- How do the first and second questions relate to each other?
- Do you think that the order of the questions matters? Why or why not?

Come back together as a class and ask comprehension questions to ensure that the students understood the *pshat* (basic) meaning of the text.

Ask them to share their answers to discussion questions 4: “how do the first and second questions relate to each other?”

Re-Introduce learners to the category of *bayn adam l'atzmi* and the idea that one way to see this category is through the tasks of self-awareness and self-development. In order to be people and Jews who contribute to the world, we first have to know ourselves and work to become the best version of us. Like Hillel says, “if I am not for myself, who will be for me?” It is our task to work on ourselves. However, self-awareness and development are not meant to be selfish. If we get to know ourselves in order to be ONLY for ourselves, we are not people who contribute to the world. The reason we become our best selves is to be better people, privately and in public.

### ACTIVITY: KNOWING OURSELVES

In the mirror activity, we discovered what we know about ourselves on the outside. This activity helps us think about what we know about ourselves on the inside. Just like the mirror activity, this is not meant for judgment. We are meant to be the best versions of our unique selves. Share the story of Rabbi Zusya:

Before his death, Rabbi Zusya said: “In the coming world, they will not ask me: ‘Why were you not Moses?’ They will ask me: ‘Why were you not Zusya?’”

Ask: What does this story teach us about Judaism’s perspective on human’s uniqueness?

Invite learners to spend 2 minutes of quiet free-write time to address the question: What unique traits do I have? Remind students that these are not meant to be good or bad. They are meant to be observations.

Using the “speed dating” discussion method, with one partner for each question, invite learners to address the following questions:

- What are unique traits that I have?  
Choose one of those traits for the remainder of the questions.
- What are some challenges of this trait?
- How does knowing this about myself help me learn to be my best self?
- How does knowing this about myself help me contribute to the world?

Come back together as a class and ask each learner to share in one sentence their answer to the second to last question: How does knowing this about myself help me learn to be my best self?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Re-Introduce learners to the category *bayn adam l'atzmi*. One way to see this category is through the tasks of self-awareness and self-development. In order to be people and Jews who contribute to the world, we first have to know ourselves and work to become the best version of us.

Learners will create *chevrutot* to study the text on Appendix 2:1B, which asserts a Jewish perspective on self-knowledge from Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe (1914-2005), a German-born and Israeli-bred Ultra-Orthodox rabbi who wrote many works about *mussar*, the study of Jewish ethical development and spiritual growth.

After the *chevrutah* study, join together as a class to continue the discussion about Rabbi Wolbe's text as it relates to their families.

- How are your children beginning to develop self-knowledge?
- In what ways is their self-knowledge helping them embark on a trail of self-improvement?
- How can you model the path from self-knowledge to self-improvement for your children?

### ACTIVITY: TECHNIQUES AROUND THE ROOM

This activity allows parents to consider tangible techniques for helping their pre-teens foster self-awareness and self-improvement.

Hang posters around the room with the following techniques for pre-teen self-awareness:

1. Time and space for self-reflection (ex. Independent reading, taking a walk, listening to music)
2. Journaling
3. Mindfulness techniques (ex. Breathing strategies, meditation)
4. Emotional literacy (ex. Building a feelings vocabulary, exploring nuances of situations, using I language)
5. Feedback protocol (ex. Strengths and weaknesses exercise)
6. Mind-Body Connections (ex. Yoga, dance)
7. Goal-setting exercises

Invite learners to spend time independently thinking about the techniques displayed around the room. They will write their thoughts about each of these techniques on post-it notes (one post-it per idea). These can include: ways in which the technique would benefit their child, tangible ways to carry out the technique, questions they have about it. When they have finished writing, they can post their notes on the corresponding technique posters. Everyone will spend time quietly circling the room to read their peers' thoughts. Then, ask the learners to move to the poster that they want to discuss more. They will form small groups to further discuss that specific technique with the intention to bounce ideas off of each other and answer any questions they have.

### ACTIVITY: INTRODUCE ETHICAL WILLS

Introduce Parents to the concept of Ethical Wills. They will be creating Ethical Wills over the course of the curriculum, journaling about the day's *middah* for 5 minutes at the end of each same-age learning block. They will present these wills to their children during the concluding unit, in Lesson 5:1. You can learn more information about Ethical Wills on My Jewish Learning, at <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/writing-and-reading-ethical-wills/>. For a detailed look into Ethical Wills, read Jack Reimer's book *Ethical Wills*.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: VALUES QUESTION STARTERS

This activity intends to make the connection between personal traits, which the learners discussed in their previous sessions, to personal values. This builds on the values clarification exercises in Unit 1.

Those exercises focus on the question “what do I value and why?” and this focuses on the question “what do I value and how does knowing this about myself affect my life?”

Families will come into family groups and use these question starters to have a conversation. You might like to distribute a list of values (see Appendix 2:1C) to remind families of the values discussed in Unit 1. Encourage the learners to exercise humility and allow each person to share equally.

An important value in my life is...

Because I have this value, I care about...

Caring about (previous answer) makes me well-suited for...

Having this value is a challenge when...

Knowing about my strengths and challenges helps me to be my best self by...

Example:

An important value in my life is *chesed* (loving kindness).

Having this value makes me care about other people’s well-being.

Caring about other people’s happiness makes me well-suited to be in the *chesed* committee at shul/a career as a social worker/caring club at school.

Having this value is a challenge for my work and school life when my compassion for my clients overwhelms my ability to exercise authority/when I put helping a friend with homework over doing my own homework.

Having this value is a challenge for my home life when my kids/parents get in a fight and I want to help but know I can’t.

Knowing about my strengths and challenges helps me to be my best self by knowing that, sometimes, I need to think about my own well-being and responsibilities before tending to someone else.

Come back together as a group and ask some people to share their answers to the final question starter: “knowing about my strengths and challenges helps me to be my best self by...”

*Note to teacher:* This question is the most important idea of this lesson. In whatever way best fits your teaching style, emphasis this point.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *IM EIN ANI LI & SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the Hebrew and English words of song *Im Ein Ani Li* by Debbie Friedman (appendix 2:1D) and invite them to discuss the question, based on the song’s English lyrics in verse 1: What does it mean to be true to yourself?

Wrap up the day’s learning with closing remarks. Sing *Im Ein Ani Li* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### **If I am not for Myself**

Hillel says, "If I am not for myself, who will be for me? But if I am only for myself, who am I? If not now, when?" *Pirke Avot*, 1:14

- Read Hillel's first question. What is he trying to teach us?
- Read all 3 questions in a row. How do the 3 questions relate to each other?
- Do you think that the order of the questions matters? Why or why not?

## A Jewish Perspective

**Rabbi Shlomo Wolbe, Alei Shur I, p. 141**

<p>Self-knowledge is the prerequisite for any self-improvement. One who does not know himself – for him the gates of self-improvement are shut tight. He will live his spiritual life in peace, he will fail as many fail, and will perform good deeds like every man of Israel – and God does not deny the reward of each individual. But a person of self-growth and truth he will not be.</p> <p>Someone who reaches self-knowledge is forced by it to embark on a trail of fruitful labor and profound change, in behavior and in disposition.</p>	<p>בתחילת כל עבודה עצמית עומדת ההכרה העצמית. מי שלא זכה לה מעודו – שער העבודה הפרטית סגור בפניו. הוא יחיה בשלוה את חייו הרוחניים, ייכשל כאשר רבים נכשלים, יעשה מעשים טובים ככל אדם מישראל – ואין הקב"ה מקפח שכר כל בריה. בן-עליה ואיש אמת לא יהיה.</p> <p>מי שזכה להכרת-עצמו, מוכרח על-ידה לבא לידי עבודה פוריה ולידי שינויים מעמיקים, בהנהגה ובמדות.</p>
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### Questions for study:

- According to Rabbi Wolbe, what are the differences between someone who knows him or herself versus someone who does not?
- What do you think his versions of “self-knowledge” and “self-improvement” entail?
- What do you think he means by the phrase “is forced by it” (paragraph 2)?
- Think of a time you reached self-knowledge and were “forced...to embark on a trail of fruitful labor and profound change, in behavior and in disposition.”
  - How was this experience straightforward or challenging, or a combination of both?
  - Did you find the experience to be fruitful and profound? If so, how? If not, why not?
  - Was your disposition and behavior changed by this experience? If so, how? If not, why not?
  - In what ways could you continue your trail towards fruitful labor and profound change in this area of your life?



**Values List**

Humility

Health

Gratitude

Repentance

Responsibility

Patience

Justice

Attentive Listening

Loving-Kindness

Respect

Truth

Faith

Trust

*Im Ain Ani Li*

Music by Debbie Friedman, Lyrics by Debbie Friedman, based on Pirkei Avot 1:14

Chorus:

Im ein a-ni li mi li? If I am not for myself, who will be for me? Uch-she-a-ni l'atz-mi mah a-ni? If I am only for myself, what am I? V'im lo ach-shav ei-ma-tai? And (if not now), (2x) when?

Hillel was a Rabbi and he taught us what to do. The first part of his lesson said you must be true to you. You have to love yourself if you expect that others should. Having self-respect is something special, something good.

(Chorus)

My self is very special, it's the place I have to start. But Hillel said we must make room for others in our heart. Yes, love yourself but care and share – don't lock the others out. Caring for yourself and others is what life is all about.

(Chorus)

Life is short, the time flies by and just before you know. Today becomes last week and then a long, long time ago. Hillel said do what you must – act now, today, don't wait. Decide what is important – do it now, it's not too late.

(Chorus)

## Lesson 2:2: *Anavah* (Humility)

### GOALS:

- Create opportunities for learners to understand the concept of *anavah* in concrete and meaningful ways.
- Support learners as they discover their own development of *anavah*.
- Guide learners to uncover Judaism's approach to and emphasis of *anavah*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *anavah*?
- What does Jewish tradition teach about *anavah*?
- How can I develop *anavah*?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a working definition of *anavah*.
- Identify their own character strengths and weaknesses.
- Explain how their strengths and weaknesses work within their family system.
- Explain how Biblical characters model *anavah*.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a working definition of *anavah*.
- Identify their own character strengths and weaknesses.
- Explain how their strengths and weaknesses work within their family system.
- Theorize ways in which their self-esteem affects their parenting, and how they could develop a healthier sense of self and, as a result, further develop their parenting style.

### MATERIALS:

- Copies of Set Induction discussion questions, if necessary
- Copies of Strengths and Weaknesses in our Family discussion questions, if necessary
- Paper or index cards (1/learner)
- Pencils (1/learner)
- Tanach Scavenger Hunt sheets, if necessary (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendices 2:2A, 2:2B, and 2:2C (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendix 2:2D (1/learner)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Blind Count Off
2. Same-Age Learning
3. Strengths and Weaknesses & Our Family
4. *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: BLIND COUNT OFF

This activity is meant to demonstrate the idea that *anavah* teaches us how to take up a reasonable amount of “space”—physically, verbally, emotionally. People who have *anavah* do not act with arrogance, dominating conversations and spaces, nor do they retract and act as if they are unworthy. The Blind Count requires everyone to step up and step back at the appropriate times.

Arrange 10 group members in a circle facing outside the circle, creating as many groups necessary to include all your participants. The group’s task is to count as high as they possibly can (aloud) with only one person saying a number at a time. There can be no planning and everyone must speak once before someone can say another number. If two people say the same number at the same time or a number is said twice, the group must start over again.

Discussion questions:

- How did your group figure out how to accomplish the goal?
- How did you know when to step up or step back?
- Do you think you stepped up and stepped back in a way that was best suited to the group’s task? How might you act differently when playing this game in the future?
- What emotions did this game bring up? What do those emotions tell you about yourself?

After the discussion, introduce the learners to the concept of *anavah*, humility, and how this activity helped us experience *anavah* in action.

## Same-Age Learning Activities: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: ANAVAH ROLE MODELS

Our Tanach is filled with *Anavah* role models. Based on the Hebrew calendar and when you are doing this lesson, you might be interested in choosing a timely role model, or multiple role models, for this activity. For instance, Esther during Purim, Moses during Pesach, or God during the High Holy Days. Of course, Moses, whom the Torah describes as “humble above all the men that were on the face of the earth” (Numbers 12:3), is a meaningful role model to study. The book of Deuteronomy also has much to say about Kingly modesty, commanding that kings should study Torah daily so as to maintain humility (Deuteronomy 17). The prophets, too, display humility, always responding to God’s requests for prophecy with humble protests.

Whoever you choose to focus on, find excerpts in the Tanach that demonstrate key moments in that character’s story (designated by chapter and verse) and engage your learners in a Tanach hunt. You will likely need to demonstrate the fundamentals of navigating a Tanach before the activity begins in order for them to be able to look up the passages you specify. This activity can be done in *chevrutah*.

For each set of verses that you specify, the learners will answer these questions:

- What is happening in this scene?
- What are this character’s strength and weaknesses?

Come together to have a discussion about what lessons the Biblical character's story teaches us about *anavah* and how these lessons apply to the learners' lives. Questions might include:

- Does this character demonstrate *anavah*?
- If so, how does their *anavah* help or hinder their goal?
- Do you have any traits in common with this character?
- What lessons does (character's) story teach us about *anavah*?
- If you were to rewrite their story, would you have them act differently in any way?
- Think of a time when you were in a situation that required *anavah*.
- Think of a person you know who demonstrates *anavah*. What do they do that demonstrates *anavah*? How do you feel about them?
- How can you develop your own *anavah*?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: ANAVAH AND PARENTING

Introduce parents to the article "Your Child's Self-Esteem Starts With You" by Lisa Firestone, PhD (Appendix 2:2A). Divide them into *chevrutot* with people who are not their life partners, in order for them to get a different perspective than usual on their parenting style. Invite them to read the article and answer the discussion questions in Appendix 2:2B.

Come back as a group and lead a discussion based on the question:

- What are some tangible ways that you can demonstrate *anavah* in your home? These can be based on Firestone's article or your own experience.

### ACTIVITY: ANAVAH IN ACTION

This activity is designed for the adult learners to gain some tangible steps forward in developing their *Anavah*. Introduce the quote from *Tanna de Be Eliyahu* (Appendix 2:2C), a midrash that chronicles humankind's journey from creation to the flood. This midrash focuses on qualities and virtues of human beings.

Divide into *chevrutot* and invite each pair to work through the text. Give each person a pen and paper. Their task is to create an "action item" for each clause in the quote. For instance, their paper might look like this:

Be humble in Torah: Listen attentively to my learning partner and think about their idea before asserting my own

and good works: Volunteer with my family without posting a picture of it on social media

humble with their parents: Ask mom her schedule before assuming that she can watch the kids

Etc.

Invite sharing with the group after the activity. You may choose to have a group conversation, as well, so that the learners can get more ideas about how they can enact *anavah*.

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES & OUR FAMILY

One crucial aspect of *anavah* is knowing one's strengths and weaknesses. Humility does not mean humiliation, though the words sound similar. *Anavah* is having health-esteem, demonstrating neither arrogance nor shame. As tradition teaches: Rabbi Simcha Bunem carried two slips of paper, one in each pocket. On one he wrote "The whole world was created for me" and on the other he wrote "I am but dust and ashes." Like Rabbi Bunem, our task is to balance our self-promotion and self-abasement.

Each learner will receive a paper and pencil to brainstorm their strengths and weaknesses. Based on time, choose how many of each they should write. Perhaps 3 or 4 of each. They will then get into family groups to discuss the following questions:

- How do our strengths contribute to our families in a positive way?
- How can our families help balance our weaknesses?
- How did it feel to speak about your strengths and weaknesses with your family?
- What do your feelings in this situation tell you about the task of developing *anavah*?

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *BISHVILI NIVRAH HAOLAM & SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the Hebrew and English words of song *Bishvili Nivrah HaOlam* by Julie Geller (appendix 2:2C) and invite them to discuss the question: How can you act on both of these mottos at the same time throughout your life?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing *Bishvili Nivrah HaOlam* with the melody of your choice and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

## Your Child's Self Esteem Starts With You:

### Improving our children's self-esteem means better understanding ourselves

By Lisa Firestone, PhD.<sup>4</sup>

Every new parent experiences that first terrifying moment: your baby is screaming, not crying, screaming. You try to feed him. You check his diaper. You try to make him warmer, cooler, calmer, more comfortable, but to no avail. The complete mystery of this precious 8 pound, non-speaking creature rises to your consciousness, and, all at once, you're struck by the realization that you have absolutely no idea what this tiny person wants or what to do to make him feel better.

How you react to this situation is important. How you react to your children's emotions will always be important. Should you feel stressed or agitated, your child is likely to have trouble relaxing. Should you feel calm and sure of yourself, your baby is likely to feel secure and trusting. Our children depend on us for survival and, therefore, are highly attuned to our emotions. The more calm and compassionate we are in reacting to our children, the more resilient they become in handling their own emotions. Yet, as parents, we will always have moments when we fumble, tense up, say the wrong thing, and offer the wrong remedy.

Perfectly attuned parents do not exist. In his research Dr. Ed Tronick, a child development expert and Associate Professor of Pediatrics at Harvard University, found that even the "best" parents are only attuned to their children 30 percent of the time. This lack of ability for continuous attunement leaves parents likely to respond inappropriately or insufficiently to a child's needs the other 70 percent of the time. So while we can't expect to be perfectly in sync with our children at every moment, what we can do is recognize that no matter how oblivious we are to them, our children are almost always extremely attuned to us. Every reaction we express (consciously and unconsciously) is absorbed by them, helping them shape their view of the world and of themselves.

Therefore, really improving our parenting means gaining a better understanding of ourselves. All parents both love and hate themselves, and they extend both of these reactions to their children. Because our kids come from us, we often confuse our own self-perceptions and experiences with theirs. The love we feel for ourselves is extended to our children as "Parental Nurture." This form of relating positively influences their self-perception, and helps them to develop what my father, psychologist Robert Firestone, and I have defined as the "Self-System."

The Self System describes the unique make-up of the individual that exists inherently, which is then informed by a harmonious identification with and incorporation of a parent's positive attitudes and traits. When parents feel good about themselves, they are much better able to extend this positive sense of self to their children. They can engage in activities, relate to, and offer their children support from a place of confidence and ease. Plus, with fewer distractions, such as second-guessing and excessive worry, parents are better able to give their child their full attention and respond unselfishly to their children's needs.

On the opposite side of the spectrum, when parents feel negatively toward themselves, it is equally easy for them to extend these feelings to their children. The negative thoughts parents harbor toward themselves can lead to parental rejection, neglect, or hostility. Not only are parents more likely to be critical of their offspring in ways that are similar to the ways they are disapproving of themselves, but their negative self-esteem also serves as an example for their children. When we hear our kids comment on their weight or call themselves stupid, we may wonder where they got such ideas about

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.psychologytoday.com/blog/compassion-matters/201106/your-child-s-self-esteem-starts-you>

themselves. We may never call our kids the things they call themselves, but we can certainly recall the many times we've criticized ourselves for being fat or stupid in front of them.

As kids grow up, they often take on their parents' negative self-perceptions and the critical point of view directed toward them. For example, if a parent regards their child as a burden, that attitude will be woven into the child's self-esteem. This negative programming, from parents and other influential persons in the child's development, combined with other influences such as accidents, illness, and death anxiety lead to the formation of the "Anti-Self System" and the "Critical Inner Voice" that accompanies it.

The Anti-Self System represents a variety of destructive and critical attitudes children adopt toward themselves and the world at large. The Critical Inner Voice operates as an internalized parent, reminding people of their flaws, warning them against certain actions, and instructing them about how to perceive the world. Hurtful parental attitudes, projections, and unreasonable expectations expressed toward children are the basis of these self-attacks. For example, kids who are told, "Why are you so lazy? Can't you get anything right? You're driving me crazy! Why aren't you doing better in school? Can't you just make friends?" incorporate these negative attitudes into their self-perception. They develop critical inner voices that attack them: *You're stupid; You're a bother; You're not good enough; You're a failure; No one could like you.*

There are parents who offer false praise to their children in an effort to compensate for an absence of parental nurturance. This build up is actually harmful to a child's sense of self, because it does not represent the truth and is not proportional to the child's real actions or abilities. Verbally building up a child with statements like, "Look how big and strong you are. You are the smartest kid in the whole world," may actually make a child feel insecure. It can lead to children having aggrandizing thoughts about themselves or to feeling pressure to live up to the build up; both of which hurt them in the future.

For example, a friend of mine's daughter was often praised for her early love of healthy food. Always having preferred a bowl of blueberries to a bowl of ice cream, she was often built up for her eating habits (and naturally stick-like figure). As a teenager, however, she became highly self-conscious about what she ate; not wanting to let anyone down by eating something unhealthy. She even began to be preoccupied with her weight and critical of herself for feeling hungry. In this instance, her family's seemingly innocent remarks about how cute and thin she was were engrained in her as pressure to be a perfect eater.

It is important to be aware of the example we set for our children. What we say to them, about them, and about ourselves will have a profound influence on how they view themselves. The more attuned we are to ourselves, the better able we are to react sensitively to our children. The healthier we are emotionally, the less likely we are to project our own negative experiences and self-critical thoughts onto our kids.

We are also better able to recognize when we are mis-attuned to our children and when we are on auto-pilot, automatically reacting to them as we were reacted to as children. Or when, without thought, we are criticizing them in ways that we criticize ourselves. We can also be alert to what makes us "lose it" with our child. In all of these situations we can identify the attacks we are having on our children and ourselves, while simultaneously sourcing where these reactions are coming from. Do we get upset at similar qualities in our children that our own parents attacked in us? Are we compensating for a part of our past that we felt was mishandled by an influential figure in our early lives?

Perfection is impossible. But reflection helps us do better as parents. When we do slip up, we can use our self-understanding to repair ruptures in our relationships with our children. We can apologize for our mistakes, empathize with their pain, and explain to them how we really feel. The more honest, open, and mindful we make the environment we share with our children, the more we enable our children to be resilient and to move confidently and independently into the world.



**Discussion Questions:**

- Which part of this article surprised you? Which part reinforced something you already knew?
- What does Firestone teach about creating a healthy self-image?
- How does having a healthy self-image relate to *anavah*, humility?
- In what ways have you developed your own *anavah*? What are your *anavah* “growing edges”?
- What tools can you use to continue developing your *anavah*?

### **A Jewish Perspective**

“Ever let a person be humble in Torah and good works, humble with their parents, teacher, and spouse, with their children, with their household, with their kinsfolk near and far, even with the heathen in the street, so that they become beloved on high and desired on earth.” (*Tanna de Be Eliyahu*, p. 197)

***Bishvili Nivrah HaOlam***  
**By Julie Geller**

בשבילי נברא העולם  
ואנוכי עפר ואפר

*Bishvili nivra ha-olam*  
*V'anokhi afar v'efer*

For my sake the world was created.  
I am but dust and ashes.

## Lesson 2:3 *Hakarot HaTov* (Gratitude)

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate that gratitude is an essential element of Judaism that begins in our hearts, minds, and souls.
- Guide learners to uncover the blessings in their lives.
- Help students understand how to cultivate an attitude of gratitude.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What does Judaism teach about gratitude?
- For what am I grateful?
- How can I cultivate an attitude of gratitude?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text that teaches the importance of gratitude and apply it to their own lives.
- Describe things for which they are grateful in their own lives.
- Propose ways to cultivate attitudes of gratitude in themselves and in their families.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text that teaches the importance of gratitude and apply it to their own lives.
- Describe things for which they are grateful in their own lives.
- Propose ways to cultivate attitudes of gratitude in themselves and in their families.

### MATERIALS:

- Costumes for Rabbi Meir and Yehuda
- Paper (1/every 5 learners)
- Pencil (1/every 5 learners)
- Mason Jars (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Various decorating supplies
- Stack of post-it notes (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Blank paper (1/parent)
- Colored writing utensils

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: 100 Blessings a Day
2. Blessings Countdown
3. Same-Age Learning
4. *T'fillah*
5. Educational Closure & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: 100 BLESSINGS A DAY

A charismatic faculty member dressed as Rabbi Meir will visit the group and tell this story from the Talmud in the 1<sup>st</sup> person.

“Rabbi Meir said, ‘A person is obligated to bless 100 blessing every day, as the Torah says: ‘Now Israel, what does God ask from you? Only to fear Adonai your God, to go in all of God’s ways, and to love God, and to serve Adonai your God with all of your heart and with all of your soul. To guard the commands of God and God’s statutes which I command you today, for your good.’” (Deuteronomy 10:12,13 from Menachot 43b)

From where does Rabbi Meir derive the commandment to say 100 blessings a day? The Rabbis explain, that the word “what” (“mah” in Hebrew) is to be read not “mah”, but “meah” (meaning 100). So instead of the verse above reading “what does God ask of you?” it should read, “100 does God ask of you.” In other words, God asks 100 blessings of us.

It is our duty to foster *hakarat hatov*, gratitude, within ourselves. When we can cultivate gratitude in our own hearts, minds, and souls, it can radiate outward to other people and then to God.

After Rabbi Meir explains his role, another charismatic faculty member dressed as Yehuda will visit the group and express excitement at Rabbi Meir’s idea. After all, his name is all about giving thanks and saying blessings! Yehuda was Leah’s 4<sup>th</sup> child with Jacob. Leah named him Yehuda, which means “I am grateful”—from the root of the verb “l’hodot” / להודות, “to be grateful” or “to praise”— because she was so thankful for his birth. The word “Jew” in Hebrew is “Yehuda.” Thus, linguistically speaking, to be a Jew means to be grateful.

### ACTIVITY: BLESSINGS COUNTDOWN

Rabbi Meir and Yehuda will explain and facilitate the following activity. Split the learners into groups around 5 people each (you can choose whether to use family groups or not) and give each group a paper and pencil. In honor of Rabbi Meir’s story about saying 100 blessings a day, the learners will have 10 minutes to come up with as many things for which they are grateful as possible. After 10 minutes of writing, the countdown begins. One at a time, the teams will share a blessing. They cannot share a blessing that has already been said. Throughout the game, they should cross off blessings from their list if another group says them, in order not to repeat any blessings. Teams continue to share new blessings until they run out of blessings. All teams win because gratitude makes every person a winner!

## Same-Age Learning Activities: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Write this text on a whiteboard or visual aid: *Who is rich? Those who rejoice in their own portion.* (Pirke Avot 4:1)

Invite the students to discuss the following questions with a *chevrutah* (also see appendix 2:3A):

- What does this text mean when it uses the word “rich”?

- What does it mean to “rejoice in your own portion”?
- Where does “rejoicing in your own portion” begin? In your heart, mind, or soul? (can be all!)
- Is gratitude easy or difficult for you? Why?
- Do you think gratitude is a state of mind, a type of behavior, or both? Explain your view.
- Is it possible to be grateful all of the time? Why or why not?
- How can we find gratitude during difficult times?

Invite students to share their answer from one question (of your choice) with the group.

### ACTIVITY: GRATITUDE JARS

Give each child a mason jar and a stack of post-it notes. This will be their personal Gratitude Jar. Gather a variety of art supplies and invite each learner to decorate their Gratitude Jar in a way that represents the blessings in their lives. Explain that their task is to write on a post-it note one blessing for which they are grateful every day and put it in the Jar until the end of the school year. Gratitude is something that starts in our own hearts, minds, and souls, and then radiates outward to other people and to God. By keeping a Gratitude Jar, we can help cultivate an attitude of gratitude. At the end of the school year, they can empty the jar and read through all of the year’s highlights.

Discussion Questions:

- How does your jar decoration reflect your blessings?
- Do you expect this task to be easy or difficult? Why?
- In addition to the Gratitude Jar, what other ways can we develop attitudes of gratitude?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: MODEH ANI

Study Modeh Ani using appendix 2:3B. Explain that Modeh Ani is traditionally said every morning first thing while still lying in bed. After Modeh Ani is recited, the individual could arise and recite the remainder of the morning prayers while standing. Today, Jews go about reciting Modeh Ani upon waking up in different ways. If you personally say Modeh Ani each morning, share your own practice. For instance, my alarm wakes me to a setting of Modeh Ani by Israel musician Omer Adam. Discuss the following questions in *chevrutot*:

- For what does Modeh Ani express gratitude?
- What do you think the text means when it says *raba emunatecha*, “your faithfulness is great”?
- Why do you think that the rabbis created this part of the morning prayer ritual? What does this tell you about their priorities?
- For what would you like to express gratitude each morning?

Hand out paper and colored writing utensils and invite parents to rewrite Modeh Ani with words that reflect their own priorities of gratitude in the morning. This is a creative exercise—encourage self-expression. Though it may seem juvenile, adults also need reminders to practice gratitude and say blessings. A decorative blessing on the nightstand may be just what we need!

## ACTIVITY: HOW GRATEFUL?

Alan Morinis's book *Everyday Holiness* discusses *middot*, Jewish virtues, in terms of its Hebrew meaning. *Middot* translates literally to *measures* and describes the measured state with which we must approach each *middah*. Moderation is key to every Jewish virtue. In the case of *hakarat hatov*, gratitude, this image demonstrates the scale of the virtue and the necessity of striving for the middle ground. They saw this graphic before in Unit 1.



Discuss this graphic as a group:

- How does this graphic differentiate between levels of gratitude?
- Think of times you and your family were at various points on the scale. What could you have done in those moments to find more balance in your expression of gratitude?
- How can we maintain gratitude during difficult times? On the other hand, how can we maintain humility, *anavah* that we discussed in last week's session, when our blessings overflow?

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: T'FILLAH

Join parents and kids together for *t'fillah*. Explain that Jewish worship, and especially the morning service's *birkot hashachar*, the morning blessings, centers around gratitude towards God. Though gratitude can live within our hearts and souls, as we have discussed throughout this lesson, we know that it's important to show gratitude towards other people and also to God. Like all of our *middot* in the unit *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *hakarat hatov* transcends the category and relates to other people and to God. In this service, we will be feeling gratitude within ourselves, expressing it in a community, and verbally showing gratitude to God.

Choose a service order that corresponds to your synagogue's *minhag* (custom) and invite the *t'fillah*-leading faculty members, madrichim, or clergy members to create *iyyunim* (devotions) to share before blessings that highlight the theme of gratitude. You might also choose to include some new blessings and prayers that are not part of your synagogue's *minhag*. In addition to sharing *iyyunim*, you may invite learners to engage in "buzz groups" by giving them a question to briefly discuss with a neighbor before a specific prayer. For instance, during *nisim b'chol yom*, blessings for daily miracles, you might invite learners to share a blessing in their own lives. Or for *yotzer or*, you may ask learners to share one aspect of creation for which they are grateful. The goal of this *t'fillah* is to demonstrate that Jewish tradition, and especially prayer, is infused with *hakarat hatov*.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *MAH GADLU & SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the Hebrew and English words of song *Mah Gadlu* (appendix 2:3C) and invite them to discuss the question: Which of God's works do you think are great?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing *Mah Gadlu* with the melody of your choice and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.



### A Jewish Perspective

*Who is rich? Those who rejoice in their own portion.* (Pirke Avot 4:1)

- What does this text mean when it uses the word “rich”?
- What does it mean to “rejoice in your own portion”?
- Where does “rejoicing in your own portion” begin? In your heart, mind, or soul? (can be all!)
- Is gratitude easy or difficult for you? Why?
- Do you think gratitude is a state of mind, a type of behavior, or both? Explain your view.
- Is it possible to be grateful all of the time? Why or why not?
- How can we find gratitude during difficult times?

**Modeh Ani**

*מוֹדָה אֲנִי לְפָנֶיךָ מֶלֶךְ חַי וְקַיִם, שֶׁהִחְזַרְתָּ בִּי נִשְׁמָתִי בְּחֶמְלָה. רַבָּה אֱמוּנָתְךָ.*

Modeh anee lefanecha melech chai vekayam, she-he-chezarta bee nishmatee b'chemla, raba emunatecha.

I offer thanks to You, living and eternal sovereign, for You have mercifully restored my soul within me; Your faithfulness is great.

*Mah Gadlu*

מֵה-גְדֻלּוֹ מַעֲשֵׂיךָ יְהוָה מְאֹד עֲמֻקּוֹ מִחֻשְׁבֹּתֶיךָ

Hallelujah, hallelujah

Mah gadlu ma'asecha Yah, me'od amku machshevotcha!

How great are Your works, God; Your thoughts are very deep!

## Lesson 2:4: *Briyut* (Wellness)

### GOALS:

- Show that *briyut* is a value in Jewish tradition.
- Demonstrate that all three areas of wellness—body, mind, and soul—are crucial to our daily lives.
- Create space for families to try new wellness practices.
- Encourage faculty members to take pride in their wellness practices and share them with the learners.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *briyut*?
- How is *briyut* a Jewish value?
- How can Jews work towards *briyut* in their own lives?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Identify ways in which Judaism emphasizes *briyut*.
- Describe the 3 aspects of *briyut*, body, mind, and spirit, and how they differ.
- Practice new techniques for promoting physical, mental, and spiritual wellness.
- Propose one technique they will use in the coming week to foster their personal wellness.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify ways in which Judaism emphasizes *briyut*
- Analyze a Jewish text about *briyut* as it relates to their lives.
- Describe the 3 aspects of *briyut*, body, mind, and spirit, and how they differ.
- Experiment with new techniques for promoting physical, mental, and spiritual wellness.
- Propose one technique they will use in the coming week to foster their personal wellness.

### MATERIALS:

- Hot water thermoses
- A variety of tea
- Mugs or cups
- Butcher paper (1/every 3-4 5<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Markers
- *Nisim b'chol yom*, copied from your siddur and cut into individual blessings (1/every 3-4 5<sup>th</sup> graders)
- Printouts of appendix 2:4A (1/parent)
- Printouts of appendix 2:4B (1/learner)
- Materials for *briyut* practice stations, TBD according to your leaders' needs

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction
2. Same-Age Learning
3. *Briyut* Practices

4. *T'fillah* (Optional)
5. Educational Closure & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: TEA AND *BRIYUT*

As learners enter the space, create a “tea house” atmosphere with music and décor. Set up thermoses of hot water and stations with different kinds of tea. A faculty member will lead a brief “tea seminar” focusing on the medicinal and psychological benefits of the different kinds of tea. For instance, chamomile tea is calming. Peppermint tea is energizing and helps with digestion. Turmeric tea helps with joint pain.

Invite learners to select a tea based on their current physical and mental needs. Faculty members will help them brew the tea appropriately and they can enjoy the tea throughout the discussion that follows:

- Why did you choose that tea right now?
- How does this tea affect your:
  - Body?
  - Mind?
  - Soul?
- How might your tea selection differ later today, tomorrow, or next week? Why?
- What are other routines that help your body, mind, and soul feel healthy?

Introduce learners to the idea of *briyut*, wellness, and its 3 components: Body, mind, and soul.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

*Note to teacher:* Most unscripted lessons in this curriculum contain multiple activities for the same-age learning. This lesson only contains one activity for the same-age learning with the realization that the *Briyut Practices* stations and *t'fillah*, if you choose to include it, will take longer than other family activities, leaving less time for same-age learning.

### ACTIVITY: NISIM B'CHOL YOM

Briefly explain the *nisim b'chol yom*, the blessings for daily miracles. The learners may remember these blessings from lesson plan 2:3, *Hakarat Hatov* (gratitude). Divide learners into groups of 3-4 people. Each group will receive a large sheet with a human figure, cutouts of the *nisim b'chol yom*, and a glue stick. They will begin the activity by tracing the outline of a group member onto the butcher paper with a marker. Their task is to read each blessing and decide which body part that blessing best represents. For example, *sheasani yisrael* (who made me a Jew) may be related to the heart, the mind, the hands, etc. They will glue that blessing on the corresponding body part.

One goal of this exercise is for learners to see that many of these blessings of “daily miracles” relate to multiple parts of the body, including our “insides” (aka mind and soul).

When they are finished with the activity, guide a group discussion:

- Look all over the body. Put up the number of fingers of how many body parts were involved in *briyut*.
- What do the *nisim b'chol yom* teach us about the Jewish view of *briyut*? (possible answers: Judaism cares about our physical health because we say these prayers every morning, Judaism emphasizes blessings of the body, mind, AND spirit)
- In what other ways does Judaism emphasize *briyut*? (possible answers: kosher laws, praying 3 times a day, bringing us in community with people who support us, taking time to relax every Shabbat)
- Which of the blessings best expresses how you feel about your body/mind/spirit right now?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Introduce learners to a brief biography of Maimonides, otherwise known as the Rambam (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon) and his prominent place in the development of Jewish law. The excerpt they will study (appendix 2:4A) is taken from Maimonides' *Regimen of Health*, which was written in 1198 for the Egyptian sultan Afdal Nur al-Din Ali who hired Maimonides as his physician.

Divide learners into *chevrotot* to read the excerpt from *Regimen of Health* and answer the questions below on the *daf*. You may want to share with learners that the text uses the word “he” to describe all people because it was written in the medieval period.

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: BRIYUT PRACTICES

In this activity, learners will get an opportunity to explore different *briyut* practices with the intention that they might discover a practice to incorporate into their own lives. It is also an opportunity for synagogue staff and community members to share their own interests with the group.

For the sake of time, it is best to have 3 or 4 rotations. You can determine how much time learners will spend at each rotation based on the practices being offered. From my prior experience, 10-15 minutes per station is enough for a “taste.” You might like to ask faculty members, clergy members, or synagogue staff members to be rotation leaders. This is an opportunity to connect with community members—fitness instructors, meditation teachers, artists—who can be resources for your learners and partners for your synagogue.

Examples of *briyut* practices to incorporate include: Yoga, guided meditation, various forms of art, journaling, music, prayer, drumming, healthy eating seminar, etc. Ask rotation leaders to infuse their *briyut* practices with Jewish notes- literally and figuratively! For instance, guided meditation with Jewish imagery, Jewish music, etc.

### ACTIVITY: *T'FILAH* (OPTIONAL)

Prayer is one way that Jewish people can find *briyut* of mind and soul. Frame the prayer service through the lens of *briyut* and guide the group through a prayer experience. You might highlight specific prayers with which they are familiar now (*nisim b'chol yom*), prayers that speak about body and soul (*modeh ani, elohai n'shama*—but be careful to save *asher yatzar* for the educational closure!), and perhaps some prayers that you can tie into these topics (for instance, *mi chamocha* can be seen through the lens of freedom to make choices about our bodies or freedom of our minds to think for themselves).

*Note to Teacher:* Many of the lessons in this curriculum will include a *t'fillah* service or its components. Each time, the *t'fillah* will be framed to complement the *middah* of its lesson.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *ASHER YATZAR & SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the Hebrew and English words of song *Asher Yatzar* (appendix 2:4B) and invite every learner to share with the group one wellness practice that they will do in the coming week.

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing *Asher Yatzar* with the melody of your choice and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### A Jewish Perspective

It is known to our sovereign, may God prolong his days, that the passions of the soul greatly alter the body in ways obvious to any observer. Consider a man with a powerful build, booming voice, and radiant face. If he were suddenly to receive news which greatly saddened him, in that instant you would see his complexion become pale, the radiance of his face fade, his bearing slacken, and his voice drop. Even if he were to struggle to raise his voice, he would not be able to. His strength would wane, he might tremble because of weakness, his pulse would diminish, his eyes would become hollow, his lids would become too heavy to move, his skin would turn cold, and his appetite would subside. The cause of all of these effects would be the natural heat and the blood withdrawing deeper into the body. Conversely, consider an individual with a weak body, pale complexion, and feeble voice. If he were notified about something which greatly delighted him, you would see his body become strong, his voice rise, his face brighten, his movements quicken, his pulse increase, his skin warm up, and joy and delight become so apparent that he would not be able to conceal them. The cause of all of these effects would be the movement of the natural heat and the blood toward the surface of the body.

The characteristics of the fearful, anxious person and of the confident, relaxed person are known; similarly, the characteristics of the vanquished and of the victorious are obvious. Whoever is vanquished can hardly see anything because his visual spirit is diminished and dissipated. However, the vision of the victorious person increases in such a massive way that the light of the atmosphere appears to have increased and grown. This is so obvious that it is not necessary to dwell on it.

For this reason physicians have recommended constant concern for, and awareness about, the soul's movements, as well as concern for putting them into equilibrium at the time of health and sickness-giving no other treatment precedence in any way. The physician should desire that every sick person and every healthy person be constantly cheerful and relieved of the passions of the soul causing depression. In this way the health of the healthy will endure. This is foremost in curing every sick person, especially those whose sickness pertains to the soul-like those with hypochondria and morbid melancholia. Indeed, concern about the soul's movements ought to be strongest for these people, as well as for anyone overwhelmed by worry, obsessive thoughts, apprehension about things not such as to produce apprehension, or anyone who is only slightly cheerful about cheerful things. For all of these people, the skillful physician should place nothing ahead of improving the condition of their souls by removing these passions.

- From Regimen of Health, Maimonides

- What connections does Maimonides make between psychological and physical health?
- Which of his claims were relevant in Maimonides' Medieval society, but might not be in ours? Which claims still hold some truth?
- In what ways do you relate to Maimonides' assertion?
- How can you apply his lesson to your own *briyut*? How can you apply it to your children's *briyut*?



## Asher Yatzar

Shabbat Morning I

BARUCH ATAH, Adonai

Eloheinu, Melech haolam,

asher yatzar et haadam b'chochmah

uvara vo n'kavim n'kavim,

chalulim, chalulim.

Galui v'yadua lifnei chisei ch'vodecha

she-im y'patei-ach echad meihem

o yisateim echad meihem,

i efshar l'hitkayeim

v'laamod l'fanecha.

Baruch atah, Adonai,

rofei chol basar umafli laasot.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי  
 אֱלֹהֵינוּ, מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,  
 אֲשֶׁר יָצַר אֶת הָאָדָם בְּחָכְמָה  
 וַיְבָרָא בוּ נְקָבִים נְקָבִים,  
 חֲלוּלִים חֲלוּלִים.  
 גָּלוּי וְיָדוּעַ לִפְנֵי כִסֵּא כְבוֹדְךָ  
 שֶׁאִם יִפְתַּח אֶחָד מֵהֶם  
 אוּ יִסְתֵּם אֶחָד מֵהֶם,  
 אֵי אֶפְשָׁר לְהִתְקַיֵּם  
 וְלַעֲמֹד לִפְנֵיךָ.  
 בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי,  
 רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

בְּרוּכִים הַפְּאִים  
 מוֹדָה / מוֹדָה אָנִי  
 שִׁירֵי שִׁפְתַי  
 צִיּוֹת  
 מוֹדֵקוֹ  
 אֲשֶׁר יָצַר  
 אֱלֹהֵי הַשָּׁמַיִם  
 נִשְׂיָם בְּכֹל יוֹם  
 לְעִסּוֹק  
 וְחֲשִׁבָהּ  
 אֵילוּ דְבָרִים  
 קוֹדֵשׁ דְּרַבָּנָא

PRAISE TO YOU, Adonai our God,

Sovereign of the universe,

who formed the human body with skill,

creating the body's many pathways and openings.

It is well known before Your throne of glory

that if one of them be wrongly opened or closed,

it would be impossible to endure and stand before You.

Blessed are You, Adonai, who heals all flesh, working wondrously.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה, יי, רוֹפֵא כָּל בָּשָׂר וּמַפְלִיא לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Baruch atah, Adonai, rofei chol basar umafli laasot.

## Lesson 2:5: *Teshuvah* (Repentance)

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate the value of *teshuvah* in Jewish tradition and in the learners' lives.
- Guide learners as they comprehend *teshuvah* as a process in which they can participate.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *teshuvah*?
- Why is *teshuvah* valuable for my own life?
- How can I engage in my own process of *teshuvah*?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a working definition of *teshuvah*.
- Analyze the 5 steps of *teshuvah* with a realistic scenario.
- Create a *teshuvah* brochure for the following Yom Kippur.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a working definition of *teshuvah* that highlights its Hebrew-English nuances.
- Analyze the 5 steps of *teshuvah* with a realistic scenario.
- Create a *teshuvah* brochure for the following Yom Kippur.

### MATERIALS:

- Dartboards and darts (1/every few families)
- Visual aid and appropriate writing utensils
- 5 Steps of *Teshuvah* signs
- Printouts of Appendix 2:5A (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 2:5B (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendix 2:5C (1/parent)
- Pens or pencils (1/learner)
- High quality paper and art supplies OR technology with brochure-making capabilities

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction:
2. Same-Age Learning
3. Authentic Assessment: *Teshuvah* Brochure
4. Educational Closure & *Siyum*

*Note to teacher:* In advance of this lesson you would benefit from studying Maimonides' Laws of Repentance or a summary of them, so that you're aware of the nuances of these 5 steps. Read more about *teshuvah* here: <http://www.js.emory.edu/BLUMENTHAL/Repentance.html>

## Family Learning

## SET INDUCTION: SECOND CHANCES

Set up dartboards around the room, one per every few families. Tell each person that they have one chance to throw a dart and get a bullseye. Let every person try only once!

Invite learners to sit in a group with the visual aid in front. Ask learners how many people got a bullseye on the first try. It is likely that only one or two, if any, will raise their hand. Ask learners who would like a second chance? It is likely that many will raise their hand. Explain that Judaism favors second chances.

Write the words *teshuvah*/תשובה and *chait*/חַיַּית in Hebrew and English on the visual aid. Ask learners to identify the Hebrew letters of *chait* and explain that, while many people translate *chait* as “sin,” or as doing something bad, it actually means “missing the mark” (like on our dartboards) or “making a mistake.” Now ask learners to identify the root letters of the word *teshuvah* and point out the root of the word: *Shuv*/שׁוּב. Explain that the root *shuv* means to turn, or to act again. *Teshuvah* is often called “repentance” in English. Repentance means correcting behavior when you have made a mistake, when you have “missed the mark,” or made a *chait*, like in our game of darts.

Ask: Why do you think the Hebrew word for repentance, correcting our behavior when we “miss the mark,” is *Teshuvah*, from the root “to turn/to act again”? Answers might include: Because when we correct our mistakes we can turn a situation around, *teshuvah* helps us turn our hearts towards goodness, repairing our wrongs requires us to act again in a new way.

Affirm learners’ answers and explain that, when we make mistakes, Judaism gives us the opportunity to do *teshuvah*, to have a second chance to do better next time. In the Torah we learn that “*a man or woman who commits one of the sins of humanity, transgressing against God, the soul bears guilt; they must confess the sin they committed.*” (Numbers 5:6-7): Our ancient rabbis said that doing *teshuvah* involves many steps both in our own hearts and with the people we hurt. Like the Torah says, the process starts within us, *bayn adam l’atzmo*, between one and oneself, and then moves outward. In their same-age groups, learners will delve deeper into the many parts of doing *teshuvah*.

Because *teshuvah* gives us second chances to do better, invite learners to return to the dartboards to try another time before splitting into same-age groups.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: 5 STEPS OF *TESHUVAH*

On 5 pieces of paper write the 5 steps of the *Teshuvah* process according to Maimonides. Do not number the papers—your learners will need to uncover the order themselves. They are:

1. Recognizing one’s wrongdoing
2. Feeling regret
3. Stopping the wrongful behavior
4. Repairing the damage with the other person
5. Confession to God

Introduce the learners to Maimonides' biography and his role in the Jewish legal process. Invite 5 volunteers to take one paper each. Their task is to arrange themselves and their *teshuvah* steps in the way they deem appropriate. They can receive help from their classmates.

When they have come to a conclusion, give them the worksheet in Appendix 2:5A. Here they will find Maimonides' 5 steps of *teshuvah* in order. Discuss:

- Do any of the steps of Maimonides' process surprise you? Which ones, and why?
- How did your arrangement of the process differ from Maimonides'?
- In what part of a person's body does the *teshuvah* process begin, according to Maimonides? (head, heart)
- After someone feels *teshuvah* in their head and heart, to whom should the person turn?
- Why do you think that Maimonides' process begins within a person and only then includes other people?
- What are the benefits of your arrangement? What are the benefits of his arrangements?
- Are there any steps you would reframe?

As a group, discuss the 5 steps and their meanings. It is likely that your learners will be able to decipher the meanings with their shared knowledge. Learners can take notes on the worksheet in the column titled "What does this mean?" They will need these notes for the next activity.

### ACTIVITY: BEN'S STORY

Tell your learners Ben's story:

Ben is a 5<sup>th</sup> grader who loves to play soccer. He recently tried out for a competitive soccer team in town and was surprised to see Todd, a friend from school, at try-outs. He didn't think that Todd was very athletic. The next day at school, Ben was telling another friend that Todd was at try-outs said: "Todd probably won't make the team. He can't even run the mile in P.E." At that very moment, Todd walked past and heard what Ben said. For the rest of the week, Ben avoided Todd and Todd avoided Ben, but everyone in their class knew what had happened.

Invite learners to form *chevrotot* and fill in the column of the chart labeled "Ben's Story" with ideas about how Ben could go through the 5 steps of *teshuvah*. They should be as concrete as possible with the words Ben should use and the actions Ben should take. For instance, instead of saying "Ben apologizes to Todd," they could write "Ben takes Todd aside at recess and says to him: I'm really sorry that I said that you wouldn't make the team. It was wrong of me to talk about you behind your back and I shouldn't have judged your soccer skills by one day in P.E. I hope you can forgive me."

After all groups have completed the worksheet, invite them to share with the class. Possible discussion questions include:

- How did you decide what Ben would do and say?
- If you were Ben, which step would be easiest? Which step would be most difficult?
- Which step do you think is most important? Why?
- If you were Ben, would you do any of the steps in a different order? Which ones, and why?
- If you were Ben, would you add any of the steps people mentioned in our earlier conversation? Which ones, and why?
- Have you ever done something wrong and done *teshuvah* through one of these steps? Which step did you do? How did that feel?

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: 5 STEPS OF *TESHUVAH*

On 5 pieces of paper write the 5 steps of the *Teshuvah* process according to Maimonides. Do not number the papers—your learners will need to discover the order themselves. They are:

1. Recognizing one's wrongdoing
2. Feeling regret
3. Stopping the wrongful behavior
4. Repairing the damage with the other person
5. Confession to God

Introduce the learners to Maimonides' biography and his role in the Jewish legal process. Invite 5 volunteers to take one paper each. Their task is to arrange themselves and their *teshuvah* steps in the way they deem appropriate. They can receive help from their classmates.

When they have come to a conclusion, write on a visual aid the actual order of the 5 steps. Discussion questions can include:

- Do any of Maimonides' steps surprise you? If so, which ones, and why? If not, why not?
- How did your arrangement of the process differ from Maimonides'?
- In what part of a person's body does the *teshuvah* process begin? (head, heart, actions)
- After someone feels *teshuvah* in their head and heart, to whom should the person turn?
- Why do you think that the process begins within a person and only then includes other people?
- What are the benefits of your arrangement? What are the benefits of his arrangements?
- Which step do you think is most important?
- Are there any steps you would add?
- Are there any steps you could subtract and still adequately do *teshuvah*?

The traditional answer to the last question is yes. Jewish tradition accounts for this question. Hand out Appendix 2:5B and split into *chevrotot* to discuss the 3 types of *teshuvah* described: *teshuvah mi'yirah*, *teshuvah me-ahava*, and *teshuvah gemura*, and answer the discussion questions on the sheet.

### ACTIVITY: *TESHUVAH* IN MY LIFE

This activity can be done individually or in *chevrotot*. Invite each learner to think of a situation in which they sinned, in which they "missed the mark." Using the chart in Appendix 2:5C, they can analyze the scenario according to the 5 steps of *teshuvah*. What could they do to fulfill each of the 5 steps?

### DISCUSSION: MODELING *TESHUVAH*

One way in which parents can impart Jewish values to their children is through modeling the behavior themselves. As a group, discuss the questions:

- How can you model the 5 step *teshuvah* process for your children?
- What other methods can you use to teach your children the value of *teshuvah*?

- Do you view *teshuvah* as a value your family should prioritize? If so, how can prioritizing *teshuvah* as a family enhance your home life? If not, what other values would you deem more important?

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT: *TESHUVAH* BROCHURE

Families come back together to create a *teshuvah* informational brochure for the upcoming Yom Kippur, with the intention that the synagogue will display these in a public place for the entire community, adults and kids alike, during the High Holy Days for congregants to access. They will be seen by many people and should therefore be created to look professional. You may have learners use a form of technology with brochure-making capabilities, or you can provide high quality paper and art supplies.

The brochure should answer the following questions:

- What is *teshuvah*?
- Why is *teshuvah* valuable for one's life?
- How can someone engage in a process of *teshuvah*?

Other than answering those 3 questions, the families are able to create the brochure in any way they see fit. Encourage creativity!

After everyone has finished, families can share their work with each other.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: "RETURN AGAIN" & *SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the English words of song "Return Again" by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach (appendix 2:5D) and ask the group: What does this song teach us about *teshuvah*?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing "Return Again" and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### 5 Steps of *Teshuvah*

<b>Steps of <i>Teshuvah</i></b>	<b>What does this mean?</b>	<b>Ben's Story</b>
<b>Recognition</b>		
<b>Regret</b>		
<b>Stop</b>		
<b>Repair</b>		
<b>Confess</b>		

### 3 Types of *Teshuvah*

*Teshuvah mi'yirah* "Repentance from fear": *Teshuvah* that occurs because one fears God or human consequence or punishment. Though this may not be the highest form of *teshuvah*, as long as it eliminates the behavior then it is considered "kosher."

- When was a time you did *teshuvah mi'yirah*? How did it make you feel? When a similar situation occurs, what types of thoughts come to mind?

*Teshuvah me-ahava* "Repentance from love": *Teshuva* that includes all of the steps, but does not transform the person's character.

- When was a time you did *teshuvah me'ahava*? Why do you believe that your character wasn't transformed? How could you reach that final peak, to ensure that you won't miss the mark in the same way again?

*Teshuvah gemura* "Complete repentance": Completes the process of *teshuva* throughout one's life and requires full consciousness and action such that, given the same situation, one would refrain from the sin for which one had repented.

- When was a time you did *teshuva gemura*? When the same situation occurred, how were you able to refrain from the sin for which you repented?



*Teshuvah in my Life*

<b>Steps of <i>Teshuvah</i></b>	<b><i>Teshuvah</i> in my Life</b>
<b>Recognition</b>	
<b>Regret</b>	
<b>Stop</b>	
<b>Repair</b>	
<b>Confess</b>	

**Return Again**

by Rabbi Shlomo Carlebach

Return again, return again  
Return to the land of your soul  
Return to who you are  
Return to what you are  
Return to where you are  
Born and reborn again

## Lesson 2:6: Storybook Work Day

The Authentic Assessment for this Curriculum Guide is a Family Storybook that captures their learning from each of the three units. Every family will create a *Middot* book that follows a character of their creation through a *middot* journey. The book will consist of 3 chapters mirroring the 3 central units of the curriculum guide. In the curriculum's final unit, unit 5, the 5<sup>th</sup> grade families will have a Milk, Cookies, and *Middot* Day with the Kindergarten families. Together, they will enjoy milk and cookies and the 5<sup>th</sup> grade families will present their story books to the kindergarten families. The books will be artfully crafted and nicely bound in order to be family keepsakes for generations to come.

*Note to teacher:* Remember, all Storybooks will need to be bound, printed, or completed in whatever way necessary for the families' technology at the end of unit 4.

This lesson and the last lessons in units 3 and 4 will be working days, during which the families will focus entirely on writing and illustrating their story books using their choice of traditional art supplies or a form of technology.

**Their task** in this lesson is to create a protagonist for their storybook. Then, they will write the first chapter of the book, chronicling the adventures of the character as they encounter the 4 *middot* from unit 2: *Anavah*, *Hakarat HaTov*, *Briyut*, and *Teshuvah*. Using what they have learned throughout the unit, the families will incorporate Jewish wisdom about these 4 *middot* to help their character overcome life's everyday challenges. The character does not have to succeed in every circumstance—but, if they do not succeed, they should describe how they can use Jewish values to succeed next time.

Project requirements:

- Address all 4 *middot bayn adam l'atzmo* from this unit: *Anavah*, *Hakarat HaTov*, *Briyut*, and *Teshuvah*. Their character might experience these all in the same day, or in the course of a week or month as they go about their life.
- Incorporate Jewish wisdom
- Create a story that is appropriate for a Kindergarten audience
  - Create a clear storyline
  - Use simply vocabulary
  - When you add details to your story, consider the things with which a kindergartener is familiar
  - Imagine a character that is relatable to 5-6-year-olds

**Prior to this lesson:** You might communicate with families to describe this project and invite them to bring a technology of their choice, or you can use the supplies provided.

### SET-UP AND MATERIALS:

Acquire high-quality supplies for those families who choose to forego technology for traditional supplies. These may include:

- Paper and pencils for drafting the story
- Heavy paper for the final product
- Fine-tipped felt pens for writing the story
- Rulers for drawing straight lines

- High-quality colored pencils, markers, and other illustration tools
- A book-binding machine for the end of the project in unit 4. Alternatively, you could have the books professionally bound, depending on your congregation's resources.

Set up the room in a comfortable and professional way, with a large table and chairs for each family to work. You might have a materials station where they can come for supplies. If you are able to do so, providing refreshments would enhance the atmosphere. Just ascertain that families enjoy the refreshments during the drafting portion of the day and not when they're working on their final product.

### STRUCTURE OF THE DAY:

There are many ways that this day can be structured, and the leader can decide how to structure the work based on their families' interests and needs. Here is a straightforward suggestion that highlights the benefits of group work and feedback processes.

Step 1: Describe the project and day's schedule in greater detail and answer learners' questions.

Step 2: Invite families to spend a considerable amount of time creating their character and writing a draft of their first chapter, using the scratch paper and pencils provided.

Step 3: Each family will form a feedback group with one other family. They can read each other's chapters and give feedback with the following Critical Friends Feedback sentence starters:

- I appreciate: What about your partner's work contributes towards the goal of the project? (example: I appreciate that you create a unique situation for each of the *middot*! OR...I appreciate that you integrated the *middot* into one situation)
- I notice: What can you observe about your partner's work in a non-judgmental way, and to simply bring it up for noticing? (example: I notice that Tevye the Turtle has a brother in his *anavah* scene and a sister in his *teshuvah* scene)
- I wonder: What questions come to your mind about your partner's work? This is a "wondering" rather than a suggestion. (example: I wonder if Tevye the Turtle has two siblings, a brother and a sister, or if this discrepancy was unintentional?)

Step 4: Invite families to revise their drafts, taking into consideration their feedback from step 3.

Step 5: Write story and draw illustrations on final product materials or using technology. **Note:** Educators may keep the final versions of chapter 1 in a safe space, instead of sending them home with families, to ensure that they stay in pristine condition.

## Unit 3 (Scripted): *Bayn Adam L'Chavero* (Between People)

### UNIT EUs:

- Jewish values foster Jews' ability to build virtuous and gratifying interpersonal relationships.
- Jewish texts teach lessons about interpersonal relationships that endure and hold significance for Jews' lives today.
- *Middot bayn adam l'chavero* inspire Jews to examine their daily actions through a Jewish lens and make intentional and informed decisions.

### UNIT EQs:

- How can we understand Hebrew *middot* in concrete and relatable ways?
- How does Jewish tradition approach interpersonal relationships?
- In what ways are traditional Jewish approaches to interpersonal relationships relevant to our lives today?
- In what ways do *middot bayn adam l'chavero* enhance our interpersonal relationships?
- How can *middot bayn adam l'chavero* inspire Jews to make intentional and informed decisions every day?

### GOALS:

- Create experiences that allow learners to understand the *middot* in concrete and relatable ways.
- Guide learners as they uncover Jewish texts about *middot bayn adam l'chavero* and discover how Jewish tradition can inform their own interpersonal relationships.
- Encourage learners to think critically about everyday decisions through the lens of Jewish values.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate working definitions of each *middah* in the unit.
- Identify Jewish texts that teach about *middot bayn adam l'chavero* and explain how these texts relate to their own interpersonal relationships.
- Apply *middot* to everyday situations in their own lives and analyze their decisions through the lens of Jewish values.
- As a family, create a story book that chronicles a fictional character's daily struggles to make intentional and informed decisions based on *middot bayn adam l'chavero*.

### ASSESSMENTS:

- *Tzedek* Initiatives (lesson 3.5)
- Storybook, chapter *bayn adam l'chavero* (lesson 3.7)

### LESSONS:

1. Introduction to *Middot Bayn Adam L'Chavero*
2. *Chesed* (Loving Kindness)
3. *Achrayut* (Responsibility)
4. *Savlanut* (Patience)
5. *Tzedek* (Justice)

6. *Shmiat Ha'Ozen* (Attentive Listening)
7. Storybook Work Day

## Lesson 3:1: *Bayn Adam L'Chavero* (Between People)

### GOALS:

- Introduce learners more thoroughly to the 2<sup>nd</sup> framework of the Curriculum Guide, *Bayn Adam L'Chavero*.
- Enable learners to see the importance of interpersonal relationships to Jewish living.
- Demonstrate that Jewish texts focus largely on our treatment of other people.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What fits into the category *bayn adam l'chavero*?
- What does Jewish tradition teach about interpersonal relationships?
- How are Jewish values enacted through relationships?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze Jewish texts about interpersonal relationships.
- Categorize *mitzvot* by the degree to which they enhance relationships.
- Theorize which values are crucial for the category of *bayn adam l'chavero*.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze Jewish texts about interpersonal relationships.
- Categorize *mitzvot* in groups of their own creation, as well as by the degree to which they enhance relationships.
- Identify which interpersonal Jewish values they most prioritize, and which Jewish values they most want their children to develop.

### MATERIALS:

- *V'ahavta l're'acha kamocho* posters
- Post-it notes (4 per learner)
- Writing utensils
- Envelopes
- *Kedoshim Mitzvot* from appendix 3:1A, cut into strips
- Copies of Appendices
- Hillel Tweet Poster
- Paper and writing utensils- 1 set per learner, per station for tweets

### TIMELINE:

*Note to teacher:* Lessons throughout this scripted unit will include detailed timelines instead of a Sequence of Activities. This is meant to support you as you follow the lesson plans.

00:00-00:10	Values Improvisation Game
00:10-00:20	Values Improvisation Game Debrief
00:20-00:40	<i>V'ahavta L're'acha Kamocho</i>
00:40-1:40	Same-Age Learning
1:40-1:50	Introduction to the Unit <i>Middot</i>

1:50-2:15	Tweeting <i>bayn adam l'chavero</i>
2:15-2:30	Closing Song and <i>Siyum</i>

## Family Learning

### 00:00-00:10 SET INDUCTION: VALUES IMPROVISATION GAME

Welcome families into the learning space and invite them to sit in rows of chairs or on the floor.

Ask for 3-4 volunteers to participate in an improvisation game in front of the group. Invite the group of volunteers to act out the following scenarios:

Scenarios:

- Comforting a friend who has just experienced the death of a family member
- Feeding people who are hungry
- Attending Shabbat services and oneg Shabbat
- Praying the Mourner's *Kaddish*
- Giving clothes to people who need them
- Helping a friend with their homework
- Participating in a *Passover seder*
- Celebrating with a bride and groom

### 00:10-00:20 IMPROV GAME DEBRIEF

Questions for the group:

- What did all of these scenes have in common?
  - Possible answers: Doing Jewish things, fulfilling *mitzvot*, gathering together. Continue until they name that all scenarios involved a sense of community.
- What Jewish values did these scenes demonstrate?
- What lesson does this activity teach us about *middot*, about Jewish values?

Explain: Today we begin our second unit, which is called *middot bayn adam l'chavero*. This means "Jewish values between people." As we learned about in our opening sessions, this year's learning is divided into 3 categories of *middot*, of Jewish values. Ask: What unit did we finish last week? (Answer: *Bayn adam l'atzmo*- between you and yourself). Yes, we spent many sessions speaking about *middot* that can contribute to our own self-improvement. Ask: Who can share some of the *middot* we explored in the last unit? (Ex. Moderation, wellness, humility). Now we will move from exploring our own self and how we can develop Jewish values internally to exploring how Jewish values can impact our relationships with others. As you just experienced in the improvisation game and our discussion, interpersonal relationships, relationships between people, are incredibly important to Judaism. It would be very difficult for us to live Jewish lives alone because so many of our values relate to our connections with other people.

### 00:20-00:40 V'AHAVTA L'RE'ACHA KAMOCHA



Explain: There is a phrase that repeats many times throughout the Torah: *V'ahavta l're'acha kamocho*. This means “love your neighbor as yourself.” This phrase is one of the most influential phrases in Judaism. In fact, all of the religions that came after Judaism, and many that came before it, developed similar rules because they recognized that creating a great society is nearly impossible without positive relationships between people. Our ancestors understood that interpersonal relationships are a fundamental part of living a Jewish life guided by *middot*. However, this phrase *v'ahavta l're'acha kamocho* isn't so straightforward as it might seem. Many Jewish scholars from the middle ages until now have commented on what this phrase means because, even though it seems simple, it's actually pretty complicated. For instance, a rabbi named Hillel who you might have heard of believed that it's too difficult to command someone to love, and that it's nearly impossible to love another person in the same way you love yourself. He said that the phrase is better stated in the negative: “What is hateful to you do not to your neighbor.” Since we are also Torah scholars, this is our chance to comment on this important verse.

There will be 4 posters around the room with the following questions written in large print on the top of the poster:

- What does it mean to love yourself?
- What is the definition of your “neighbor”?
- What does it mean to love your neighbor?
- What actions can you take to follow this commandment?

Each learner will receive 4 post-it notes and a writing utensil. They will answer the 4 questions from the posters, writing 1 answer on each post-it note. When they are finished writing answers to the questions on their post-it notes, they will stick their answer on its corresponding poster.

Spend 5 minutes doing a “gallery walk,” in which everyone has the chance to visit all of the poster boards to read their classmates' answers. Invite them to pay special attention to perspectives that they hadn't considered before, ways they can use the responses to enhance their interpersonal relationships, and questions that another person's answer raises.

Follow the gallery walk with a group discussion:

- What perspectives did you read that you hadn't considered before?
- How can you use these responses to enhance your interpersonal relationships?
- What questions does this activity raise?

## 00:40-1:40 Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### 00:40-1:00 MITZVOT FROM KEDOSHIM

Explain: As many of you know, our Torah is divided into portions, *parshiot*. Each *parasha* has its own name that's based off the very first word or line in the *parasha*. Every week we read a new *parasha* so that we can read through the entire Torah every year. When you come to Shabbat services on Saturdays you hear this Torah reading and you see all of the excitement that accompanies the Torah reading. One of the Torah portions we read every year is called *Kedoshim*. It's from the book of Leviticus and falls almost right in the middle of the whole Torah. *Kedoshim* means “holy ones,” and the *parasha* tells us many of the laws of living holy Jewish lives. In fact, of the 613 commandments in the Torah, *Kedoshim* contains 51 of them. That means it contains about 1/12<sup>th</sup> of all the laws in the Torah, even though the

portion is only 1/54<sup>th</sup> of the whole Torah! We're going to use a selection of those 51 commandments, *mitzvot*, during our next activity. Many people consider this one of the most important *parshiot* because of all these laws and we're going to see why.

Divide learners into *chevrotot* and give each an envelope filled with *Kedoshim mitzvot*, cut into strips. Give each learner the chart in Appendix 3:1B. Their task is to place the *Kedoshim mitzvot* in the column they think best describes the *mitzvah*. Is the *mitzvah bayn adam l'chavero*, between people, or not?

*Note to teacher:* Some of the words in the *mitzvot* list may be new to your learners. You can review the difficult words prior to the activity, or you can invite the learners to raise their hands and ask for meaning when they get to words they do not know.

### 1:00-1:20 DISCUSSION

As a class, discuss the categorization activity:

- How did you decide whether or not the *mitzvot* was *bayn adam l'chavero* or not *bayn adam l'chavero*?
- What did you learn from categorizing the *mitzvot*?

Explain: As you can see, a huge portion of our Torah's commandments are interpersonal. So many of them revolve around interpersonal relationships!

Ask:

- Why do you think that Judaism place so much emphasis on interpersonal relationships?
- Do you think having interpersonal commandments helps our relationships? Why or why not?
- What does Judaism's emphasis on relationships tell us about Judaism as a religion?

### 1:20-1:40 WHICH MIDDOT REIGN SUPREME?

Though the *middot* for this unit are predetermined, it is beneficial for the learners to begin thinking about which *middot* in the category of *bayn adam l'chavero* they find most important. In the last activity, they discussed why Judaism places emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Some may have agreed that these interpersonal commandments help our relationships, and some may have said that they don't. This exercise gives them the opportunity to decide which *middot* are the most helpful for relationships and how *middot* can be translated into action in a way that is authentic to their lives.

Divide learners into *chevrotot*. Their task is to choose a *middah* that is the most important for interpersonal relationships. You might provide them a list of *middot* in Appendix 3:1C. With their partner, they should create 3 commandments of actions that would help people live by the *middah* that they chose.

Example: *Chesed*

1. You shall visit any close family member who gets sick
2. You shall share your lunch with a friend who forgets theirs
3. You shall hug your parents at least once per day

After 10 minutes of work time, they should share their *middot* and one commandment that they created. When sharing, each learner should explain how these commandments help people fulfill the *middah*.

## 00:40-1:40 Same-Age Learning: Parents

### 00:40-1:00 MITZVOT FROM KEDOSHIM

Explain: As many of you know, our Torah is divided into portions, *parshiot*. Each *parasha* has its own name that's based off the very first word or line in the *parasha*. Every week we read a new *parasha* so that we can read through the entire Torah every year. When you come to Shabbat services on Saturdays you hear this Torah reading and you see all of the excitement that accompanies the Torah reading. One of the Torah portions we read every year is called *Kedoshim*. It's from the book of Leviticus and falls almost right in the middle of the whole Torah. *Kedoshim* means "holy ones," and the *parasha* tells us many of the laws of living holy Jewish lives. In fact, of the 613 commandments in the Torah, *Kedoshim* contains 51 of them. That means it contains about 1/12<sup>th</sup> of all the laws in the Torah, even though the portion is only 1/54<sup>th</sup> of the whole Torah. In the next exercise, we're going to work with a selection of these 51 *mitzvot*. Many people consider this one of the most important *parshiot* because of all these laws and we're going to see why.

Divide learners into *chevrutot* and give each an envelope filled with *Kedoshim mitzvot*, cut into strips. Their first task is to read through the *mitzvot* and create categories that can help elucidate similarities and differences between the *mitzvot*. The categories are not pre-determined. They can create whatever categories they see. Encourage creativity!

### 1:00-1:10 PAIR AND SHARE

Each *chevrutah* can team up with another *chevrutah* to share their categories. They should discuss the following questions, displayed on a visual aid (white board, poster, etc.):

- What led you to create these categories?
- What can your categories teach us about our tradition's priorities?

### 1:10-1:20 RECATEGORIZING ACCORDING TO *BAYN ADAM L'CHAVERO*

The learners will stay in their new groups of 4. Give each learner the chart in Appendix 3:1B. Their new task is to place the *Kedoshim mitzvot* in the column they think best describes the *mitzvah*. Is the *mitzvah bayn adam l'chavero*, between people, or not?

After categorizing the *mitzvot*, discuss:

- What do you notice about the balance between *mitzvot bayn adam l'chavero* and *mitzvot* that are not *bayn adam l'chavero*? What does this tell us about Judaism as a religion?
- How did your groupings from the prior activity relate to the categorization from this activity?
- How might your previous categorization inform how we view *mitzvot bayn adam l'chevero*?

## 1:20- 1:40 MIDDOT FOR US AND OUR CHILDREN

Explain: It's clear from this activity that Judaism places an enormous emphasis on interpersonal relationships. Though some of these may seem obvious to us—don't cheat on your spouse, don't lie about your wages—the Biblical authors felt it necessary to specify how Jews should go about dealing with other Jews, and with non-Jews, in order to create an ideal society. Naming particular societal standards and laws was their way of driving home their most important values. As those of you who have ever worked in a company or organization know, the best way to know an organization's values is to take a look at their policies and budget. Where does the money go? According to the Biblical authors, some of it should go to the poor, and that tells us a great deal about what values they prioritized. As active members of society and as parents, it's our obligation to consider which values we prioritize for ourselves and our children. We're now going to do a similar exercise as our kids are doing to think about our own value priorities. It may seem a little kitschy, but we could all use a little kitsch in our lives!

As described in the same-age learning for 5<sup>th</sup> graders, this exercise gives the parents an opportunity to decide which *middot* are the most helpful for their own interpersonal relationships, and for their children's interpersonal relationships, and how *middot* can be translated into action in a way that is authentic to their lives

Divide learners into *chevrutot*. Their task is to choose one *middah* that is the most important for your interpersonal relationships, and one that you believe is most important for your children's interpersonal relationships. You might provide learners with a list of *middot* in Appendix 3:1C. For their *middah*, and for their children's *middah*, they are to think of 3 action "commandments" that would help them and their children live by those *middot*.

Example: *Chesed*

1. You shall visit any close family member who gets sick
2. You shall share your lunch with a friend who forgets theirs
3. You shall hug your parents at least once per day

After 10 minutes of work time, they should share their *middot* and commandments. When sharing, each learner should explain why they chose this *middah* and why those action "commandments" are so vital to developing that *middah*.

## Family Learning

### 1:40-1:50 INTRODUCTION TO THE UNIT *MIDDOT*

Explain: In your same-age learning, you reviewed *mitzvot*, commandments, from *parashat Kedoshim* and thought about what makes a *mitzvah* fall into the category of *bayn adam l'chavero*, and you thought about why Judaism puts such a strong emphasis on these interpersonal *mitzvot*.

Ask: Who from the 5<sup>th</sup> grade class can share what their group spoke about in relation to this question, why does Judaism put such a strong emphasis on interpersonal relationship? Who from the adults can share what you spoke about in your session?

After you categorized *mitzvot* and saw what values they demonstrate, you thought about which *middot bayn adam l'chavero* are most important to you. You created specific action commandments that could help a person develop that *middah*.

Over the next 6 weeks we will learn about *middot bayn adam l'chavero*, Jewish values about interpersonal relationships. This unit includes 5 *middot bayn adam l'chavero*. In this next activity, you'll get a chance to meet and "tweet" these 5 *middot* at stations around the room. Over the next 5 weeks we'll have plenty of time to understand these *middot* on a deeper level. Today, you'll just get a taste.

At each station, in 2 sentences or less, you'll say the aspect of that *middah* that you think is most important, as of today. At the end of this unit, we'll get to read all of today's tweets to see what we've learned and how our perspectives have changed!

Each station will feature one of the 5 *middot* of this unit:

1. *Chesed*: Loving Kindness
2. *Achrayut*: Responsibility
3. *Savlanut*: Patience
4. *Tzedek*: Justice
5. *Shmiat ha'ozen*: Attentive listening

## 1:50-2:15 TWEETING BAYN ADAM L'CHAVERO STATIONS

Create 5 stations around the room. At each station, hang a decorative poster with the *middah* name in Hebrew and in English. A staff member should be stationed there and have a 1-minute "blurb" about their *middah* to read to the learners (See Appendix 3:1D). Each station should have a small piece of paper or index card for every learner, and a writing utensil for the number of learners who will be at the station at any given time (~20%).

Learners will spend 5 minutes at each station. They will hear a brief description of the *middah* from the staff member, and then will have 4 minutes to write a "tweet" in 2 sentences or less highlighting what they believe to be the most important aspect of the *middah*, based on what they already know and what they learned at the station. Be sure they write their name on their tweet!

Ring a bell every 5 minutes to signal that it is time for learners to rotate to the next station.

Save the tweets after this activity. You will be able to give the tweets back to them at the end of the unit so they can compare what they thought about each *middah* at the beginning of the unit and what they know about the *middot* at the end of the unit.

## 2:15-2:30 EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: V'AHAVTA L'REACHA KAMOCHA AND SIYUM

Explain: Today we learned about the category of *middot* called *bayn adam l'chavero*, Jewish values between people. One phrase from the Torah summarizes all of the commandments about how to treat other people ethically: *V'ahavta l're'acha kamocho*, "love your neighbor as yourself." As we know, a rabbi named Hillel came along and questioned this saying. Love your neighbor as yourself? But what does it mean to love yourself? And who is your neighbor? And how can you command someone to love

another person? Today, you asked and answered those very same questions. In fact, a person who was converting to Judaism came to him one day and asked the great rabbi to teach him the entire Torah while he stood on one leg! Hillel knew how to do this easily by rephrasing the verse *va'ahavta l'reacha kamocha*, the commandment to love your neighbor as yourself. Hillel thought, stood on one leg, and said: "What is hateful to you do not do to your neighbor. This is the whole Torah, the rest is commentary. Go forth and study!" In this story, Rabbi Hillel claimed that the entire Torah is based on how we treat other people. Interpersonal relationships are the top priority and everything else in the Torah is meant to express this value. Over the next 5 weeks, we're going to learn more about what it means to develop Jewish values *bayn adam l'chavero*, between ourselves and other people. We'll learn about *chesed*- loving kindness, *achrayut*- responsibility, *savlanut*- patience, *tzedek*- justice, and *shmiat ha'ozen*- attentive listening. Through these values, we can develop into the friends, family members, and citizens of this world that Judaism encourages us to be.

Invite learners to turn to a partner or two and answer these questions:

- Based on what you learned today, what is one interpersonal value you want to focus on this week?
- How will you bring that value to life?

Bring families back together in intimate formation (perhaps seated in a circle or gathered on a rug) and pass out *dapim* of Appendix 3:1D.

Introduce the Mah Tovv song. In the lyrics, they speak about this verse *v'ahavta l'reacha kamocha* and reference Hillel's famous teaching on one leg: this is Torah, the rest is commentary!

Invite the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member teach the melody of Mah Tovv's *V'ahavta L'reacha Kamocha* and sing the song as a group. After you sing "*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*," transition to singing *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

***Mitzvot from Kedoshim***

Honor your father and mother.

Do not make an idol.

Do not put a stumbling block before a blind person or give harmful advice.

A judge must not be biased toward the poor man at the trial.

A judge must not be biased toward the rich man at the trial.

Do not speak badly of others.

Do not stand by and do nothing if someone's life is in danger.

Do not remind someone that they sinned in the past.

Do not embarrass others.

Do not take revenge.

Do not crossbreed animals.

Do not eat fruit of a tree during its first 3 years.

Do not be superstitious.

Honor those who teach and know Torah.

Do not commit injustice with weights and measures (measuring something incorrectly before you sell it).

**Categorizing *Mitzvot***

<b><i>Bayn Adam L'Chavero</i></b>	<b>Unsure</b>	<b>NOT <i>Bayn Adam L'Chavero</i></b>



**List of Middot for Bayn adam I'chavero**

- *Chesed*: Loving Kindness
- *Rachamim*: Compassion
- *Slichah*: Forgiveness
- *Chaverut*: Friendship
- *Nedivut*: Generosity
- *Emet*: Truth
- *Kavod*: Honor/ Respect
- *Shmiat Ha'ozen*: Attentive listening
- *Hachnasat Orchim*: Hospitality
- *Tzedek*: Justice
- *Lashon Hara*: Not gossiping
- *Shalom Bayit*: Peace in the home
- *Savlanut*: Patience
- *Achrayut*: Responsibility

***V'ahavta L'reyacha Kamocha***

By Mah Tov

V'ahavta l'reyacha kamocha  
V'ahavta l'reyacha kamocha  
Zeh k'lal gadol baTorah, baTorah  
Zeh k'lal gadol baTorah, baTorah

Love your neighbor, love your neighbor as yourself  
Love your neighbor, love your neighbor as yourself  
This is the teaching of our Torah  
This is the teaching of our Torah

V'ahavta l'reyacha kamocha

## Lesson 3:2: Chesed (Loving-Kindness)

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate how Jewish texts teach us how to show *chesed*.
- Help students learn how to explain a Hebrew term in accessible English.
- Engage students in thoughtful dialogue about *chesed*'s role in their lives.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *chesed*?
- How does Jewish tradition approach *chesed*?
- What role does *chesed* play in my life?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADER OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a working English definition of *chesed*.
- Identify an example of *chesed* in Jewish tradition and describe the qualities of that act of *chesed*.
- Propose a way that they can demonstrate *chesed* in their own lives in the coming week.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate facets of *chesed* through examples of Jewish obligations.
- Identify how *chesed* is practiced by all members of their families.
- Discuss how they can continue to develop *chesed* in themselves and their families.

### MATERIALS:

- Copies of appendices 3:2A, 3:2B, 3:2C, 3:2D, and 3:2E
- Scenery
  - Tent & tree
- Props
  - a basin with water
  - a pretend calf
  - Bread, Cakes, Cheese, milk
- Biblical costumes
- Portable writing display- Whiteboard, poster board, etc.- and appropriate writing utensil
- Poster board and marker for venn diagram
- Paper and pencils
- Onesie Materials
  - Pre-washed onesies
  - Fabric markers
  - Cardboard inserts
- Card Materials
  - Good quality paper
  - Markers
  - Other art supplies of your choice (stickers, rhinestones, glitter pens, etc.)
- Treat Materials
  - Ingredients to make the treat of your choice

## TIMELINE:

00:00-00:10	Abraham and Sarah's Tent
00:10-00:20	Debrief Abraham and Sarah's Tent
00:20-00:35	What do Abraham and Sarah teach us about <i>chesed</i> ?
00:35-1:35	Same-age Learning
1:35-2:15	<i>Chesed</i> Action Stations
2:15-2:30	<i>Olam Chesed Yibaneh &amp; Siyum</i>

### Set Up:

- Set up a comfortable space as the “theatre” with a stage and rows of seats in order for families to sit comfortably as they watch the opening skit.

## Family Learning

### 00:00- 00:10 SET INDUCTION: ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S TENT

Families will enter the “theatre” and will be directed to sit in preparation for the show. This skit, like all skits in the curriculum guide, will be rehearsed in advance and be equipped with engaging costumes and props. This skit necessitates Biblical costumes and many props, indicated in the materials section, and 5 actors.

Teachers and madrichim will perform the play based on Genesis 18 (see Appendix 3:2A)

### 00:10- 00:20 DEBRIEF ABRAHAM AND SARAH'S TENT

Each teacher and/or madrich(a) will create an informal “buzz group” of 5-7 people sitting nearby. These groups can include family units but do not need to. The teacher and/or madrich(a) will lead their group in a discussion using Appendix 3:2B. During the discussion, the facilitator will encourage all members of the buzz group to contribute to the conversation.

1. What did you notice about the way Abraham and Sarah treated their guests?
2. What did Abraham and Sarah get in return from the guests?
3. Why do you think Abraham and Sarah welcomed the guests so nicely?

### 00:20-00:35 WHAT DO ABRAHAM AND SARAH TEACH US ABOUT *CHESED*?

Facilitator will ask families to break from their buzz groups and return to their seats in the theatre. Using a portable writing display, now positioned where the stage was, the facilitator will lead the collective group in a conversation to clarify what Abraham and Sarah can teach us about *chesed*.

Explain: In our theatre about ten minutes ago, you met Abraham and Sarah in their tent. You spoke a bit more about Abraham and Sarah's behavior in your discussion groups. Many Biblical commentators, people who think about the Bible and comment on its meaning, believe that Abraham and Sarah are great examples of a *middah* called *chesed*. Say *chesed* with me. (*Chesed!*) In the Talmud, the big book of explanations about Jewish laws and traditions, Rabbi Yehudah said that the *chesed* that Abraham and Sarah showed to their guests was as wonderful as if they spoke right to God. Two things we already

know about this *middah* called *chesed* are that Abraham and Sarah mastered it, and that it is an exceptionally good thing to do.

Ask: Based on what you saw Abraham and Sarah do in the play, and based on your discussions about the play, what are key aspects of *chesed*?

As learners give answers, facilitator will write them on the board in order for everyone to see. Answers may include: Giving generously, treating people kindly, doing something nice without getting any rewards.

Ask: Do you know of any other characters from the Tanach, the Hebrew Bible, that show *chesed*? How did that character show *chesed*?

As learners give examples, facilitator can also write these examples on the board. If a learner gives an example of a character but is unsure about how that character showed *chesed*, the facilitator can connect the character's actions to a feature of *chesed*.

Explain: Today we will continue to learn about the *middah chesed*. Thanks to your insight, so far we know that *chesed* involves: (read the items on board that describe *chesed*), and that many Biblical characters displayed *chesed*, such as (read character names on boards) who did (read acts of *chesed* that learners described). By the end of today, you will know a lot more about *chesed*. You will have a definition of *chesed* and know what a difference it can make in your life.

Invite learners to divide into same-age learning groups.

## 00:35-1:35 Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### 00:35-00:50 CONTINUING TO UNDERSTAND *CHESED*

This activity will give students more frameworks by which to understand *chesed* in order that they will be able to continue constructing a schema for what *chesed* means.

On a posterboard, create a 3-pronged Venn diagram. The three headings of the Venn diagram are

1. *Bikkur Cholim*- Visiting the Sick
2. *Malbish Arumim*- Clothing the Naked
3. *L'vayat HaMet*- Burying the Dead

On the other side of the poster board, make 3 columns. The 3 actions listed above will be the 3 column headers.

Explain: Jewish tradition says that these three acts are acts of true *chesed*, and we're going to think about them in order to continue clarifying what *chesed* is!

If possible, gather students in circle around poster board on the floor with the column side up and appoint a scribe to record students' ideas. First, ask students to think about each of the 3 actions distinctly. Ask: What are characteristic of *bikkur cholim*? What are characteristics of *malbish arumim*? What are characteristics of *l'vayat hamet*? Scribe will record their answers in the appropriate columns.

After you have completed the 3 columns, ask students: What do all of these acts of *chesed* have in common? The scribe will fill in the middle of the Venn diagram.

Items in the middle may include: Actions anyone can do, no reward, done out of love, helps another person be more peaceful, provides a service.

When Venn diagram is filled in, ask: Which items in the middle also apply to Abraham and Sarah's story? Place check marks next to those items.

Explain: Now we have discussed multiple examples of acts of *chesed*: Abraham and Sarah's welcoming guests, other Biblical characters, *bikkur cholim*, *malbish arumim*, and *l'vayat hamet*. With all of these examples in mind, you are prepared to write a definition of *chesed*.

### 00:50- 1:05      DEFINING *CHESED*

The learners will have 15 minutes to work in pairs to craft a definition of *chesed*. Their definition should be 2-3 sentences and contain:

- A translation of the word *chesed* in English
- Characteristics of *chesed*

### 1:05-1:15 PAIR AND SHARE & COLLABORATE

Each pair will combine with another pair to share their definitions. Teacher should put the following questions for thought on the board and ask students to consider them as they work together.

- In what ways did your definitions differ?
- Which aspects of the other pair's definition do you appreciate?
- What questions do you have about the other pair's definition?

### 1:15-1:20 DEFINITION GALLERY

All definitions will be places around room, either on walls or on desks. Students will walk around room to read all of the definitions of *chesed*, with the questions from the Pair and Share in mind.

### 1:20-1:32 *CHESED* IN MY LIFE

Students can return to the 4-person groups they were in during the Pair and Share & Collaborate. This structured conversation will use "question starters" to prompt students' discussion (see Appendix 3:2C). Preface the conversation by explaining: The most important part of learning about *middot* is deciding how we will incorporate them into our lives. You will now get the opportunity to discuss how *chesed* plays a role in your life, using the question starters on the *daf*. Please make sure that each person in your group has the chance to complete each question starter.

Question Starters:

A time when someone showed me *chesed* is...

I showed another person *chesed* when...

I will show *chesed* at school this week by...

I will show *chesed* at home this week by...

I will show *chesed* in my community (synagogue, extracurricular group, our town) by...

### 1:32-1:35 LIGHTNING ROUND

The class will come back together. In a “lightning round,” each learner will share their answer to one of the last 3 questions on the Question Starter sheet (I will show *chesed* at X this week by...).

## 00:35-1:35 Same-Age Learning: Parents

### 00:35-00:50 CONTINUING TO UNDERSTAND *CHESED*

Explain: The purpose of this activity is to continue defining *chesed* according to Jewish tradition. The text you’re about to receive comes from the Mishnah, the earliest collection of Jewish law after the Bible itself. This text—or something very similar to it—is about 2,000 years old. Chances are likely that you’ve heard this text being sung during Shabbat morning services here at the synagogue. We sing it like this (sing a bit of the melody your synagogue uses). You’ll discover that this text outlines a number of acts that exemplify *chesed* according to Jewish tradition, and the text remarks on the outcome of doing these acts. Take 15 minutes with a *chevrutah*, a study partner, to read this text and consider the Questions for Thought and Discussion below. Try to pair with someone who is not your life partner so that you are able to hear new perspectives.

Each student will receive a *daf* with the text of *Eilu D’varim* and discussion questions (Appendix 3:2D).

### 00:50-1:00 DEFINING *CHESED*

Come back together as a group to share what they learned about *chesed* from studying *Eilu D’varim*.

Ask: What is the author of *Eilu D’varim* trying to teach us about *chesed*?

Explain: We’ve now studied multiple ways of showing *chesed*—Abraham and Sarah’s hospitality in their tent and the many acts described in *Eilu D’varim*. *Eilu D’varim* also taught us the Jewish reasons for doing *chesed*.

Ask: Based on what we have learned so far today, what are some key components of *chesed*?

Ask a “scribe” to record all answers on the white board, ideally in a vertical column in the center of the board (for next activity).

Answers may include: Actions anyone can do, no reward, done out of love, helps another person be more peaceful, provides a service.

### 1:00-1:15 *CHESED* IN OUR HOMES

On one side of the vertical column that was just written, write a header with the word “parents.” On the other side, write a header with the word “kids.”

Explain: One of the most uplifting aspects of all *middot*, all Jewish values, is that they're not confined to a particular age group. Anybody of any age can develop *middot* in themselves. *Chesed* is no exception. (If someone noted that *chesed* is not age-specific during the prior activity, reference their comment now). For us, as parents, it can feel like we're constantly showing *chesed* to our children. And many of us do, every moment of every day. Our children likely also feel like they do acts of *chesed* in their everyday lives. We know from our Jewish texts that *chesed* is not just a feeling or a thought, but it's shown through actions. Let's concretize the notion of *chesed* that we've been exploring this morning by thinking of how we show *chesed* and how our children show *chesed* in their everyday lives. For each quality of *chesed* that we listed, let's think of one concrete way that we or our children demonstrate this quality through action.

With the group, brainstorm ways that parents and children show *chesed* to complete the chart on the board. For instance, one of the "Qualities of *chesed*" listed in the middle column might be "provides a service." On one side, in the "parent" column, someone may add the action "caring for my sick child." On the other side, in the "children" column, someone may add the action "helped another student with homework." In both cases, the parents and children are providing a service to someone else through an act of *chesed*.

### 1:15-1:30 CONTINUING TO DEVELOP *CHESED*

The previous activity was a tangible way to see all of the *chesed* that our families are doing. Where do we go from here? As we know, *middot* are never stagnant. In every moment we can continue to develop our connection to and expression of Jewish values. *Middot* are a lifelong journey. We can enhance our journey through dialogue about life's important topics. Here, in our family education program, we have the opportunity to engage in thoughtful and honest dialogue with people we have grown to trust. The following discussion will be done in "speed dating" format. The learners will divide in half to make two concentric circles. The inner circle will face out, and the outer circle will face in, so that pairs of learners (one from each circle) will face each other. The pairs will discuss the first question. After the first question's discussion time is over, the middle circle will rotate and each person will have a new partner with which to discuss the second question. The middle circle will rotate again before question three and question four. For each question, the learners will have a new partner.

Ask the following questions, giving learners 4 minutes to discuss each question with their partner. Remind the learners about their time frame, and that each partner should have the opportunity to share. If you would like to do so, ring a bell at the 2-minute mark to indicate that the next partner should speak if they have not yet done so.

1. After the previous activities, how are you feeling about your personal development of *chesed*?
2. In what ways will you continue developing your own *chesed* practice?
3. After the previous activities, how are you feeling about your children's development of *chesed*?
4. In what ways will you help your children develop their *chesed* practices?

### 1:30-1:35 ETHICAL WILL

Parents will have 5 minutes to write notes about *chesed* in their Ethical Wills.

### 1:35-1:40 TRANSITION TIME TO FAMILY LEARNING



## Family Learning

### 1:40-2:15 *CHESED* ACTION STATIONS

Explain: Today the 5<sup>th</sup> graders and the parents spoke more about what qualities make something an act of *chesed*.

Ask: Who can share what characteristics make an action an act of *chesed*? Take a few shares from the group.

Explain: We also learned acts of *chesed* are not just thoughts or feelings. They are actions that we can do every day. Jewish tradition tells us about some specific Jewish obligations that show *chesed* genuinely.

Ask: Who can tell us about one of those Jewish obligations? Take a few shares from the group. Ideally, they will name items from the Venn Diagram and *Eilu D'varim* activities.

Explain: Judaism helps us be the best people we can be by instructions us to do these obligations, these important tasks of *chesed*, like clothing the naked, visiting the sick, and welcoming guests. We're going to spend the next 30 minutes doing acts of *chesed* together, as a learning community.

Introduce families to the 3 *Chesed* Action Stations:

1. *Bikkur Cholim* Cards: At this station, families will get the opportunity to write Get Well cards for someone they know who is unwell, with the intention of bringing that card to the person on a *bikkur cholim* visit. Prepare the station with good quality paper, markers and pens, and decorating materials to allow families the opportunity to write nice cards for their loved ones. If someone does not know a person who is unwell, they can write a card for someone in the synagogue community who is unwell. Have a list of ill synagogue members prepared so that you can provide families with a person's name.
2. *Malbish Arumim* Onesies: At this station, families will decorate onesies for newborn infants through the organization Baby 2 Baby, which provides low-income children with basic necessities. This is an activity that demonstrates our ability to do *chesed* for people we do not personally know. Prepare the station with prewashed onesies, fabric markers, cardboard for families to place as inserts between the layers of fabric.
3. *Hachnasat Orchim*: At this station, families will help make a treat of your choice for the congregational "proneg," the oneg that is set out before Shabbat services begin to make members and guests feel welcome in the synagogue.

*Note to teacher:* If this program takes place on a weekend after Shabbat services, you might consider having your guests make cookie dough and freezing it for baking later for the following Shabbat. You could also make chocolate bark or truffles. Alternatively, you could fold paper flowers to place in vases on tables for a Shabbat meal. You may also think of another appropriate project that would be more useful for your community and would enhance the community's welcoming experience.

*Note to teacher:* Use your discretion to decide how to structure this activity. Some may want families to rotate through each station together for 10 minutes each, while others may let individuals choose rotate through the stations at will, or some other combination of these ideas. Think about your learners and what would help them get the richest experience. I recommend placing a staff member at each station to help the learners understand that particular act of *chesed* and how it is to be completed.

## 2:15-2:30 EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *OLAM CHESED YIBANEH & SIYUM*

Bring families back together in intimate formation (perhaps seated in a circle or gathered on a rug) and pass out *dapim* of Appendix 3:2E.

Introduce Rabbi Menachem Creditor's song. In the lyrics, he translates the Hebrew word *chesed* to "love" and says that each of us must build the word with *chesed* in order for God to build this world with *chesed*.

Ask: What do you think Rabbi Creditor is trying to tell us with these lyrics? Do you agree with his claim?

After a few people share their thoughts and you respond to them, ask the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member teach the melody of "*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*" and sing the song as a group. Transition from singing "*Olam Chesed Yibaneh*" to *Siyum*, singing *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### Genesis 18 Script

[ Abraham sits at the entrance of the tent. He lounges and fans himself from the hot day. In the distance, three guests approach the tent. Abraham doesn't see them until they're at the entrance. When he sees them, Abraham quickly gets up and greets them by bowing low]

Abraham: Hello there!

Guest #1: Hello.

Abraham: Welcome to our home in Mamre. You look awfully tired.

Guest #2: We sure are.

Abraham: My lords, please don't keep walking! Stay awhile!

Guest #3: Thank you, we would love to.

Abraham: I'll get you some water. Here, you can wash your feet to cool them off [brings water basin to them] and you can catch some shade under this tree [points to tree].

[Guests sit under tree and look relaxed]

Guest #1: This shade is wonderful.

Abraham: I'll go grab you some bread...you must be starving! You can continue your journey after you've relaxed a bit.

Guest #2: That would be great.

Abraham: [runs to tent] Sarah! Quick- we have guests and they're hungry.

Sarah: Wonderful! Who are they?

Abraham: Not sure, but they look famished. Can you whip up some cakes?

Sarah: I'm on it!

Abraham: They'll need something a little heartier to go with those cakes. [Runs to the herd, takes a calf] Ah, my best calf for our guests. I'll go give this to the cook.

Sarah: How about some dairy? A little cheese plate always makes people feel good. [Gets cheese board. Sets it in front of the guests]

Guests #3: This is a magnificent welcome you've given us, and we've only just met.

Sarah: We're glad to have met you.

Guest #1: How can we possibly repay you?

Abraham: We expect no reward. It's a pleasure to have you.

Guest #2: Cheers to our wonderful hosts!

**Skit Debrief and Introduction to *Chesed***

1. What did you notice about the way Abraham and Sarah treated their guests?
2. What did Abraham and Sarah get in return from the guests?
3. Why do you think Abraham and Sarah welcomed the guests so nicely?

**Question Starters**

A time when someone showed me *chesed* is...

I showed another person *chesed* when...

I will show *chesed* at school this week by...

I will show *chesed* at home this week by...

I will show *chesed* in my community (synagogue, extracurricular group, our town) by...

## Eilu D'varim

Shabbat Morning I

<p><b>EILU</b> d'varim she-ein lahem shiur, she-adam ocheil peiroteihem baolam hazeh v'hakeren kayemet lo laolam haba. V'eilu hein: kibud av va-eim, ug'milut chasadim, v'hashkamat beit hamidrash shacharit v'arvit, v'hachnasat orchim, uvikur cholim, v'hachnasat kalah, ul'vayat hameit, v'iyun t'filah, vahavaat shalom bein adam lachaveiro. V'talmud Torah k'neged kulam.</p>	<p><b>אֵלוֹ דְּבָרִים שֶׁאֵין לָהֶם שְׁעוֹר,</b> <b>שֶׁאָדָם אוֹכֵל פְּרוֹתֵיהֶם</b> <b>בְּעוֹלָם הַזֶּה</b> <b>וְהַקֵּרֵן קַיֵּמֶת לוֹ לְעוֹלָם הַבָּא.</b> <b>וְאֵלוֹ הֵינּוּ:</b> <b>כְּבוֹד אָב וָאֵם,</b> <b>וּגְמִילוּת חֲסָדִים,</b> <b>וְהַשְׁכַּמַּת בֵּית הַמִּדְרָשׁ</b> <b>שַׁחֲרִית וְעֶרְבִית,</b> <b>וְהַכְּנַסַּת אוֹרְחִים,</b> <b>וּבִקּוּר חוֹלִים,</b> <b>וְהַכְּנַסַּת כַּלָּה,</b> <b>וּלְנֵיחַת הַמֵּית,</b> <b>וְעִיּוֹן תְּפִלָּה,</b> <b>וְהַבְּאֵת שְׁלוֹם בֵּין אָדָם לַחֲבֵרוֹ.</b> <b>וְתַלְמוּד תּוֹרָה כְּנֶגֶד כּוֹלָם.</b></p>	<p>ברוכים הבאים מונחה / מונחה אני שיניי שבת ציצת מהלבו אשר נר אלהי נשמה נשים בקל יום לצטוק והאנבניא אלו דברים קדיש דרננו</p>
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**THESE ARE THINGS** that are limitless,  
of which a person enjoys the fruit of the world,  
while the principal remains in the world to come.  
They are: honoring one's father and mother,  
engaging in deeds of compassion,  
arriving early for study, morning and evening,  
dealing graciously with guests, visiting the sick,  
providing for the wedding couple,  
accompanying the dead for burial,  
being devoted in prayer,  
and making peace among people.  
But the study of Torah encompasses them all.

**Questions for Thought and Discussion:**

- Underline the acts of *chesed* listed in this text. What qualities do they have in common?
- The first 3 lines of the English interpretation (first 4 of the Hebrew text) remark on the acts that you just underlined and discussed.
  - What does the text mean when it says they are "limitless?"
  - What is the difference between a person's reward for doing these acts now and in the future, according to lines 2 and 3?
- Visit the final line. What is the text's author trying to teach us about *chesed*?

***Olam Chesed Yibaneh***

Olam chesed yibaneh                      עולם חסד יבנה

I will build this world from love  
And you must build this world from love  
And if we build this world from love  
Then God will build this world from love

Written by Rabbi Menachem Creditor  
Produced by Josh Nelson

## Lesson 3:3 *Achrayut* (Responsibility)

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate that responsibility involves two components: Responsibility for our actions and their consequences, and responsibility for the other.
- Help learners reflect on how they prioritize their own responsibilities.
- Encourage learners to consider new ways to view their responsibilities as ethical humans and as Jews who live Jewish values.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *achrayut*, responsibility, according to Jewish tradition?
- For what and whom are we responsible?
- How do we, as individuals and families, prioritize our responsibilities?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADER OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate a minimum of one secular and one Jewish task for which they feel responsible, and why they feel responsible for these tasks.
- Explain one reason why they feel responsible for other people, and one way they can express this through their everyday actions.
- Reflect on what they currently prioritize, and how their priorities might change over time.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Explain the Hebrew origins of *achar* and *acher* as they derive from *achrayut*.
- Discuss how both concepts manifest in Jewish tradition.
- Identify how they apply both concepts to their lives now, and consider how they can apply both concepts to their lives in the future.
- Evaluate how they teach both concepts to their children now, and describe how they can teach both concepts to their children in the future.

### MATERIALS NEEDED:

- Printouts of Appendices 3:3A, 3:3B, and 3:3C
- Board Game
  - Board game boards printed large and in color
  - Game pieces
  - Question cards, colored green, yellow, blue
  - Dice
  - Family discussion sheets
- Arrival Stations
  - Big Questions posters
  - Markers



## TIMELINE:

0:00-0:10	Arrival Stations
0:10-0:35	Spectrum & Buzz Groups
0:35-1:35	Same-Age Learning
1:35-2:05	<i>Achrayut</i> Board Game
2:05-2:15	Board Game Discussion
2:15-2:30	Wrap-Up and Siyum

## Family Learning

### 0:00-0:10 SET INDUCTION: BIG QUESTIONS

Three BIG Question posters will be situated in the arrival area. As everyone gets their nametags and settles in, faculty and madrichim will invite each person to visit all three posters and jot down their responses to each question.

- BIG question #1 (on poster board with pens): To WHOM do you feel most responsible?
- BIG question #2: WHY do you feel responsible for that person?
- BIG question #3: For what JEWISH obligation are you responsible, as a Jewish person?

### 0:10-0:35 FOR WHAT AM I RESPONSIBLE?

Explain: This activity is designed to help you think more deeply about your own sense of responsibility in various arenas of life. Every person prioritizes responsibilities differently, and the way we prioritize responsibilities can teach us about ourselves. Occasionally, many people in our group may prioritize a responsibility in a similar way, and this can teach us about what priorities our community holds in common. In this activity, I will ask a series of questions in the format “I feel responsible for...” For each statement, you should position themselves on our physical spectrum from 1-5 (point to the end of the room that is 1, and the end of the room that is 5), 1 indicating that you feel the least amount of responsibility for this particular item, and 5 indicating that you feel the most responsibility for it.

Statements:

- I feel responsible for cleaning my room.
- I feel responsible for going to school or work.
- I feel responsible for preparing dinner every evening.
- I feel responsible for donating my time and money to people who have less than me.
- I feel responsible for learning Torah and Judaism.
- I feel responsible for respecting my family members’ personal space.
- I feel responsible for showing kindness to my friends through my words and actions.
- I feel responsible for attending Shabbat services regularly.

After the group has finished the entire spectrum activity, following the last statement and their movement on the spectrum, invite participants to create a “buzz group” of 2 people who are currently somewhere else in the spectrum. For instance, someone who’s at 2 should find someone who’s at 4 or 5, and someone at 3 can find someone at 1. Leader will allocate 2 minutes for each buzz group question, ringing a bell halfway through to notify participants to switch speakers if they haven’t yet. Announce

each subsequent question in its designed time slot, as opposed to giving out sheets or saying the questions all at once.

Buzz group questions:

- For which statements was it easy to rank your feelings of responsibility? How does this reflect your own priorities?
- For which statements was it difficult to rank your feelings of responsibility? How does this reflect your own priorities?
- Think about the statement for which you stood on the low end of the spectrum (1-3). Imagine that you stood on the opposite end of the spectrum for that statement. Why might you consider that responsibility important? (example, if I currently don't feel very responsible for going to school, I would imagine that I DID feel very responsible for going to school and think of why I might consider that responsibility important.)
- Think about another responsibility, either Jewish or secular, that's very important to you and wasn't mentioned during the activity. How does this reflect your priorities?

## 0:35-1:35 Same Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Graders

### 0:35-0:45 INTRODUCTION TO *ACHAR* & *ACHER*

Write the word *Achrayut*/אחריות on the board in Hebrew and in English transliteration. Invite students to name the first three Hebrew letters of the word. Write those three letters in larger Hebrew print twice, on opposite ends of the board. Under one of those, write the vowels for the word *achar* אָחַר and for the other, write the vowels for the word *acher* אַחֵר.

Explain: Every Hebrew word has a root, composed of 3 letters. Those first 3 letters of *achrayut* that you named, alef, chet, and resh, are its root letters. I rewrote these letters twice on the board with different vowels. The different vowels make those 3 letters into entirely different words!

Ask: Who can read these two words for the class?

The root of the word *achrayut*, responsibility, has two separate meanings. The word *achar* means "after," when one event comes after another. The word *acher* means "another," as in another person. Write these meanings on the board in large, clear letters.

Ask: What can we learn about *achrayut*, responsibility, from its root *achar*, which means something that occurs "after" another? What can we learn about *achrayut*, responsibility, from its root *acher*, which means "another person"?

According to Jewish scholars, *achrayut* has two components: *achar* and *acher*. The root *achar* tells us that we are responsible for our actions and their consequences. Our behavior can affect ourselves, other people, and the world around us, and we have to be responsible for our actions. The root word *acher* tells us that we are responsible for other people. We are responsible for thinking about other people and taking care of them, even if we don't know them personally. Being part of the human race means being responsible for other humans, and being Jewish means being responsible for other Jews.

### 0:45-0:55 CATEGORIZING *ACHAR* & *ACHER*

Pass out Appendix 3:3A, the *achar* & *acher* map and quotes. In *chevrutah* pairs, students will attempt to place the quotes into the categories *achar* & *acher*. If necessary, a quote can go in both categories.

### 0:55-1:10 DISCUSSION

Learners will come back together as a class to discuss the categorization activity.

- How did you decide which category was right for each quote?
- Why do you think that Jewish tradition emphasizes both of these aspects of responsibility?
- Which of the quotes taught you something new about responsibility? What did you learn from it?

### 1:10-1:25 MY OWN *ACHAR* AND *ACHER*- THINK, PAIR, AND SHARE

Learners will clear the quotes from their *achar* & *acher* chart and take 10 minutes of silent reflection time to fill in the chart with specific actions they can take to be responsible *achar*, for their own actions and their consequences (both Jewish and not Jewish), and specific actions they can take to be responsible for *acher*, for other people in their lives. Not every box needs to be filled- it is more important that they think about realistic, meaningful actions that they can do in their everyday lives. They will take special care to fill in the space at the bottom of the chart that says “Why?” with the reasons why they are responsible for their actions and consequences, and why they are responsible for others.

After the 10 minutes of silent time are complete, learners will pair up with a *chevrutah* for 5 minutes to share their ideas and the reasons why they feel responsible.

### 1:30-1:35 WHAT QUESTIONS REMAIN?

Though we do our best to give learners all the information they might need, we also hope that they will continue to question the material throughout their lives. This same-age learning conclusion gives learners the opportunity to keep thinking about *achrayut*. End the lesson by having each student ask one question about *achrayut*, about responsibility. This could be about the two forms of the root letters, about the quotes, about their own responsibilities, or anything related.

## 0:35-1:35 Same Age Learning: Parents

### 0:35-0:45 INTRODUCTION TO *ACHAR* & *ACHER*

Write the word *Achrayut*/אחריות on the board in Hebrew and in English transliteration. Invite students to name the first three Hebrew letters of the word. Write those three letters in larger Hebrew print twice, on opposite ends of the board. Under one of those, write the vowels for the word *achar* אָחַר and for the other, write the vowels for the word *acher* אָחֵר.

Explain: Every Hebrew word has a root, composed of 3 letters. Those first 3 letters of *achrayut* that you named, alef, chet, and resh, are its root letters. I rewrote these letters twice on the board with different vowels. The different vowels make those 3 letters into entirely different words!

Ask: Who can read these two words for the class?

The root of the word *achrayut*, responsibility, has two separate meanings. The word *achar* means “after,” when one event comes after another. The word *acher* means “another,” as in another person. Write these meanings on the board in large, clear letters.

Ask: What can we learn about *achrayut*, responsibility, from its root *achar*, which means something that occurs “after” another? What can we learn about *achrayut*, responsibility, from its root *acher*, which means “another person”?

According to Jewish scholars, *achrayut* has two components: *achar* and *acher*. The root *achar* tells us that we are responsible for our actions and their consequences. Our behavior can affect ourselves, other people, and the world around us, and we have to be responsible for our actions. The root word *acher* tells us that we are responsible for other people. We are responsible for thinking about other people and taking care of them, even if we don’t know them personally. Being part of the human race means being responsible for other humans, and being Jewish means being responsible for other Jews.

### 0:45-0:55 CATEGORIZING ACHAR & ACHER

Pass out Appendix 3:3A, the *achar* & *acher* map and quotes. In *chevrutah* pairs, students will attempt to place the quotes into the categories *achar* & *acher*. If necessary, a quote can go in both categories.

### 0:55-1:10 DISCUSSION

Learners will come back together as a class to discuss the categorization activity.

- How did you decide how to categorize the quotes?
- Which of the quotes best reflects your current approach to responsibility? Explain.
- Which of the quotes reflects an approach you have not yet internalized, but would like to explore? Explain.

### 1:10-1:30 ACHAR & ACHER IN OUR LIVES- THINK, PAIR, AND SHARE

Each person will receive 2 human body outlines (Appendix 3:3B) and 4 colored pens. Each of the 4 pens will reflect a category:

1. *Achar*- me
2. *Acher*- me
3. *Achar*- my child(ren)
4. *Acher*- my child(ren)

*One of the human body outlines will be for “What I do now” and one will be for “What I can do in the future”*

With the 4 pens and human body outline called “What I do now”, each learner will spend 10 minutes indicating how they, with the assistance of various parts of their body, currently show responsibility for their actions and for others, and how they teach their children responsibility for their actions and for others.

With the 4 pens and human body outline called “What I can do,” each learner will spend 10 minutes indicating how they, with the assistance of various parts of their body, can show responsibility for their actions and for others, and how they can teach their children responsibility for their actions and for others.

Example: On the “What I do now” chart, someone could use color #1 to write next to the stomach “I eat nutritious food.” With color #2 they could write next to the eyes “When I take my kids to the playground, I also keep an eye out for other children.”

After 10 minutes working on this alone, learners can pair and share with a *chevrutah*. Consider these questions, written on the board for ease of reference:

- How did this exercise make you feel about your efforts to develop *achrayut*?
- How does your *chevrutah*’s “What I can do” figure inspire you to continue developing your own *achrayut*?
- What new strategies did you learn for teaching your child(ren) *achrayut*?

### 1:30-1:35 ETHICAL WILL

Parents will have 5 minutes to write notes about *achrayut* in their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### 1:35-1:40 BOARD GAME INTRODUCTION

Explain: Today we’re going to play a board game with our families all about responsibility. We will have fun and learn how we, as individual people and families, decide what is most important to us. Here’s how the game will work. Your family will team up with one other family. You’ll have a board game like this (show board). Each person will choose a board game piece (show piece). When it’s your turn, roll the dice, move the number of spaces it says, and see what space you land on. If the space is yellow, you’ll draw a yellow card. If the space is blue, you’ll draw a blue card, and if the space is green, you’ll draw a green card. If the space has two colors, you can choose whichever of the two color cards you want! You take the card and read the card aloud to your group. The card will have a situation described. Your job is to decide what YOU would do if you were in this situation, and tell everyone WHY you made that choice. There are no right answers in this game! This is a game to help you and your family what responsibilities are most important to all of you. It’s also to help you decide what’s most important to you in your life. Now, some of the spaces will not have a color, but they’ll say something else. On those spaces, read the instructions and follow them. If you get to the end of the game, feel free to start again! When 25 minutes are up, we’ll have time for a family discussion. The faculty and madrichim are going to walk around to play with you and answer any of your questions. HAVE FUN!

## 1:40-2:05 PLAY ON!

Find board game and question cards in Appendix 3:3C

## 2:05-2:20 GAME DEBRIEF

After the Game Play, discuss the questions on Appendix 3:3D.

1. Which Responsibility Card scenarios were easiest for you to reach a decision? Which were most difficult for you to reach a decision?
2. What do your answers from question 1 teach you about your priorities?
3. Which responsibilities did your whole family prioritize?
4. Imagine that you're playing this game in five years from today. How might your responsibility priorities be different?

## 2:20-2:30 EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *LO ALECHA & SIYUM*

Explain: This conversation about *achrayut* may seem overwhelming to some of us. There is so much that we are responsible for, and our lives can feel busy already with everyday tasks. Jewish tradition offers us a *nechemta*, a source of consolation or comfort, from this stress and anxiety. In Pirke Avot, the collection of wise sayings from ancient rabbis, a Rabbi named Tarfon said: "It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but neither are you free to desist from it." The 5<sup>th</sup> graders have already studied this verse today.

Hand out sound sheets (Appendix 3:3E)

Discussion questions for the group:

- What does the first line mean: "It is not your responsibility to finish the work?"
- What does the word "desist" mean?
- With this meaning in mind, how does the second line "but neither are you free to desist from it," change the meaning of the first line?
- What do you think of Rabbi Tarfon's claim?

Ask the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member teach the melody of "*Lo Alecha*" and sing the song as a group. Transition from singing "*Lo Alecha*" to *Siyum, Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

*Achar & Acher*

<b>Achar</b>	<b>Acher</b>
<b>Why?</b>	<b>Why?</b>

## Quotes

Rabbi Tarfon said: It is not your responsibility to finish the work, but you are not free to abandon it.

*Kol Yisrael arevim zeh b'zeh*- All Jews are responsible for each other. (Talmud Bavli, Shavuot 39a)

This world is like erev Shabbat (Friday night) and the World to Come is like Shabbat. One who prepares on erev Shabbat will have food to eat on Shabbat. (Tamid 7)

Am I my brother's keeper? (Genesis 4:9)

He [Rabbi Hillel] used to say: If I am not for myself, who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, who am I? And if not now, then when? (Pirke Avot 1:14)

With great power comes great responsibility. (Spiderman's Uncle Ben)

Share your food with the hungry and give shelter to the homeless. Give clothes to those who need them and do not hide from relatives who need your help. (Isaiah 58:7)

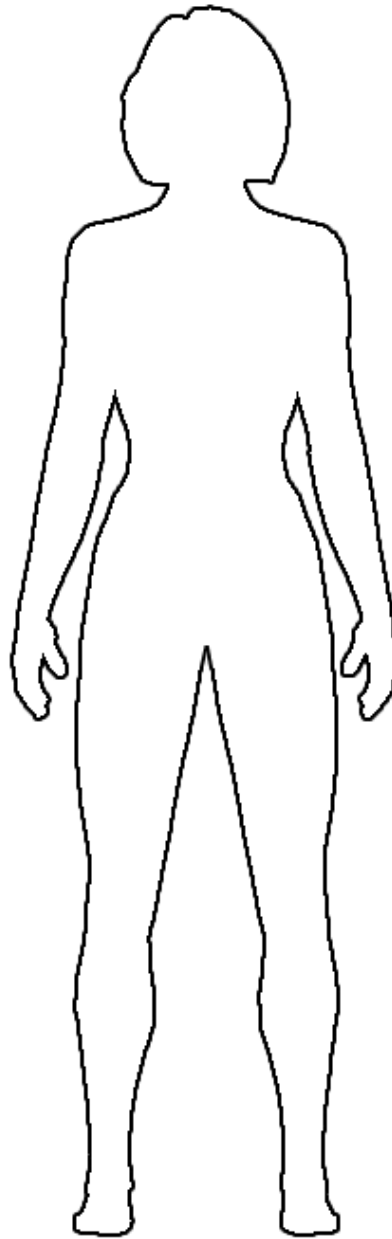
Man must cease attributing his problems to his environment, and learn again to exercise his will – his personal responsibility. (Albert Einstein)

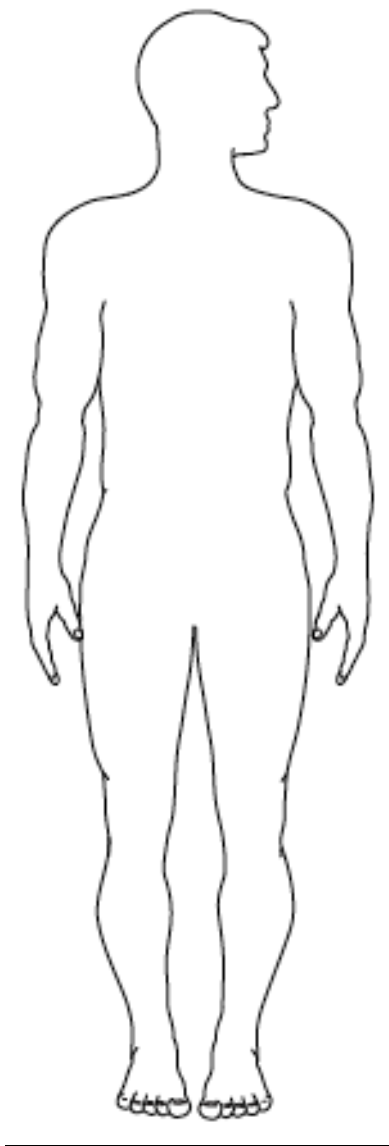
The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for good men to do nothing. (Edmund Burke)

When you think everything is someone else's fault, you will suffer a lot. When you realize that everything springs only from yourself, you will learn both peace and joy. (Dalai Lamah)



***Achrayut*** in our Lives

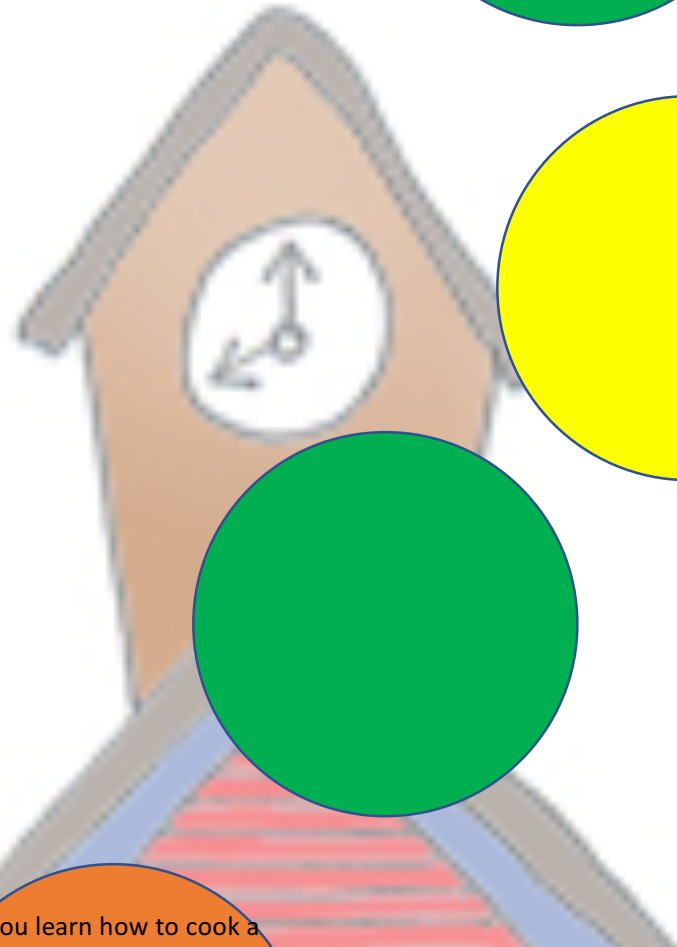
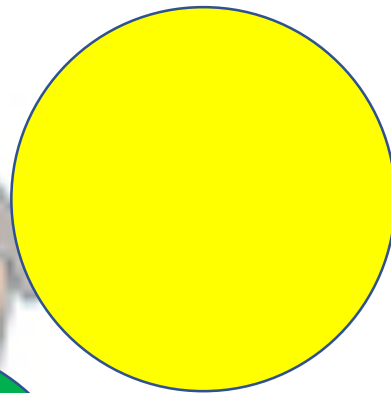
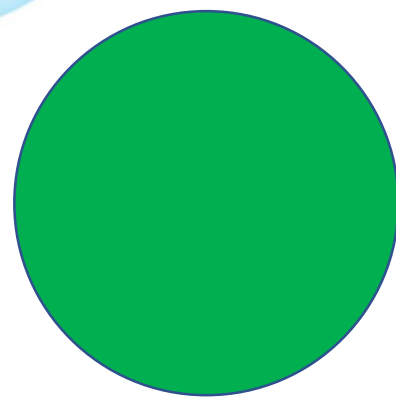
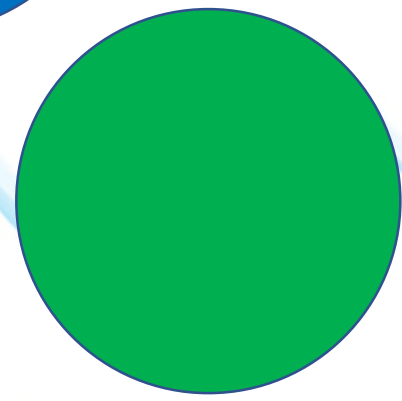




<p>It's a school night and you just finished eating dinner with your family. Your parents ask you to help wash the dishes. You have a big school project due tomorrow that you haven't started. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell your parents that you're sorry you cannot help with the dishes, and then get to work.</li> <li>Help your parents with the dishes, and then get to work.</li> <li>Help your parents with the dishes, and go text your friends.</li> <li>Other</li> </ol>	<p>You are playing with your sister's video games and accidentally break the controller. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Say nothing and hope she doesn't find out</li> <li>Tell your sister you broke the controller and say that you're sorry</li> <li>Tell your sister you broke the controller, say that you're sorry, and buy her a new controller</li> </ol> <p>(Jewish law has a lot to say about property damage!)</p>
<p>Your dog needs to go out 3 times a day. How does your family divide the chore?</p>	<p>Your plumber comes to fix your sink. When do you pay him or her? (you're paying in cash)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Before he or she fixes the sink</li> <li>The day of the work</li> <li>The day after the work</li> </ol> <p>(Jewish law has a lot to say about paying workers!)</p>
<p>It's your turn to clean the family room, but you'd rather watch TV. What do you do?</p>	<p>The dishwasher finishes running. Who empties it?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Mom. Every time.</li> <li>Whomever hears it finish first.</li> <li>Everyone in the family takes turns emptying the dishwasher.</li> <li>Kids empty the items that go in lower cabinets and parents empty the items that go in high cabinets.</li> <li>Elijah the prophet</li> </ol>

<p>You are eating lunch in the cafeteria with friends. A new student or employee who you've never met asks to sit at your table. Your friends look at each other and don't respond to the new person. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Continue looking at your friends until someone answers.</li> <li>Say "no" to the new student because your friends don't seem to like him or her.</li> <li>Say "yes" to the new student and make room at the table for him or her to sit.</li> </ol>	<p>Your teacher or boss gives a huge assignment that's due in one month. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Start working on it immediately</li> <li>Start working on it in 2 weeks</li> <li>Start working on it in 4 weeks</li> </ol>
<p>Your friend asks you to go to a movie, but you haven't finished an assignment. What do you do?</p>	<p>You receive your very first paycheck/allowance from a new job/chore! What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spend it.</li> <li>Save it.</li> <li>Donate it.</li> <li>Some combination of a, b, and c. (Specify what combination)</li> </ol>
<p>You see someone at work/school being spoken to in a mean way. What do you do?</p>	<p>You accidentally open your car door into the car next to you. It makes a small scratch. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Find out whose car you scratched and let them know you scratched it. Tell them that you will pay for the damages.</li> <li>Walk away and hope that nobody finds out.</li> <li>Leave a note on the car with an apology, your name, and your phone number.</li> <li>Other</li> </ol>

<p>You hear that a friend from synagogue had a death in the family. You cannot attend the funeral. What do you do? (You can choose more than one option)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attend the <i>shiva</i></li> <li>Order a tray of cookies and a nice note to be sent to their house</li> <li>Write an email to the family with your condolences</li> <li>Post a nice note on their facebook wall</li> <li>Bring a home-cooked meal to their home and talk to them in person</li> </ol>	<p>There is an earthquake in your town. Some of your belongings were damaged. You are safe and your home is still standing. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Thank God that you are safe</li> <li>Get mad at yourself for not protecting your property better in case of an earthquake</li> <li>Open your home to friends whose houses were damaged</li> </ol>
<p>Your parent signed up to help at the Purim carnival, but he or she is feeling sick. What do you do?</p>	<p>You are at the farmer's market and you see a \$20 bill on the ground. You don't know who dropped it. What do you do?</p>
<p>You and a friend go to the grocery store. When your friend thinks that you're not paying attention, she slides a pack of gum into her backpack without paying. What do you do?</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Tell her you saw what she did and ask why she did it.</li> <li>Pretend you didn't see her take the pack of gum.</li> <li>Don't say anything to your friend, but tell your family when you get home.</li> <li>Take the gum out of her backpack and put it back on the shelf.</li> </ol>	<p>There's a natural disaster in another country. What do you do? (choose all that apply)</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Post a status on Facebook to show your support for people who are hurt.</li> <li>Donate to an organization that will help the people.</li> <li>Send boxes of food to the country.</li> <li>Send your thoughts and prayers to the people who are hurt.</li> </ol>



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**Achrayut Board Game Family Discussion Questions**

1. Which Responsibility Card scenarios were easiest for you to reach a decision? Which were most difficult for you to reach a decision?
2. What do your answers from question 1 teach you about your priorities?
3. Which responsibilities did your whole family prioritize?
4. Imagine that you're playing this game in five years from today. How might your responsibility priorities be different?

***Lo Alecha***  
**From *Pirke Avot* 2:21**

Lo alecha ham'lacha ligmor  
Lo alecha ligmor

V'lo atah ben chorin libatel mimena  
V'lo atah ben chorin

You are not obligated to finish the work  
But neither are you free to desist from it



## Lesson 3:4: *Savlanut* (Patience)

### GOALS:

- Demonstrate that *savlanut* is a Jewish value that has deep roots in our tradition
- Provide time and space for learners to create a *savlanut* “toolbox” that can help them develop *savlanut*
- Help learners discover that *savlanut* is a virtue that will enhance their relationships with others

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What are examples of *savlanut* in Jewish tradition?
- How can a person develop *savlanut*?
- How will *savlanut* enhance my life?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADER OBJECTIVES:

- Describe a Biblical story in which *savlanut* is helpful for a Biblical character or deters a Biblical character
- Identify feelings that arise when they are impatient and when others are impatient towards them
- Create a *savlanut* “toolbox” that can help them develop patience in times when it is difficult
- Consider a situation in which *savlanut* is not beneficial

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Describe one example of *savlanut*, or lack thereof, in Jewish tradition, and explain how this story relates to their lives
- Evaluate how *savlanut* plays a role in their parenting style, identifying areas of strength and growing edges
- Propose methods for enhancing their personal *savlanut*
- Propose methods for helping their children develop *savlanut*

### MATERIALS:

- Jenga games (1 for every family)
- 2 Moses costumes
- 2 Esther costumes
- Printouts of all appendices
- Pencils (1 per learner)
- Stress balls (1 per 5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- White board or large poster

### TIMELINE:

00:00-00:15	Set Induction: Jenga Game
00:15-00:25	Jenga Discussion
00:25-00:30	Transition to <i>Savlanut</i> Stories
00:30-00:55	<i>Savlanut</i> Stories
00:55-1:00	Transition to Same-Age Learning

1:00-2:00	Same-Age Learning
2:00-2:15	<i>Savlanut</i> Meditation
2:15-2:30	Educational Closure: “Turn, Turn, Turn” and <i>Siyum</i>

## Family Learning

**Set up:** Before families arrive, set up multiple Jenga games around a large room with plenty of space between them.

### 00:00- 00:15 SET INDUCTION: JENGA GAME

Greet families at the entrance to your primary gathering space. As they arrive, invite them to choose a Jenga game somewhere in the room and begin building their tower. Let them know that they should rotate between every member of their family when building the tower and when playing the game, one piece per family member in sequential order. Tell them that this is a silent activity. If they finish the game, they should start over and play again.

### 0:15-0:25 JENGA DISCUSSION

Hand out a Jenga Debrief Guide (Appendix 3:4A) to each family. Invite them to use the guide to discuss their experience playing Jenga.

1. What feelings did you experience while other people were taking their turns?
2. Some people might feel impatient when they're waiting for their turn during a game. What other activities make you feel impatient?
3. How do you feel when someone acts impatiently towards you? On the other hand, how do you feel when someone is patient for you?
4. How do you think other people feel when you act impatiently? How do you think other people feel when you act patiently?

### 0:25-0:30 TRANSITION TO SAVLANUT STORIES

Explain: This Jenga game and discussion helped us begin thinking about the *middah*, the value, that we're studying today: *Savlanut*, patience. Say that with me. *Savlanut* (Savlanut!). *Savlanut* is a *middah* that is important for our own mental and physical health, and it is also important for our relationships with other people. In your family discussions, you discussed how being patient makes other people feel, and how being impatient makes other people. You also thought about how **you** feel when people act patiently and impatiently towards you. Our Biblical ancestors have a lot to teach us about the effects of patience and the effects of impatience. You're going to meet a couple of our Biblical ancestors now to hear all about their experiences with *savlanut* and without *savlanut*.

Divide families into 4 groups for the 4 *Savlanut* Stories stations.

### 0:30-0:55 SAVLANUT STORIES

Families will rotate through the 4 stations for 5 minutes per station. This time slot allows for 1 minute of transition time between stations. Every 5 minutes, ring a bell and invite families to move to the next

station. At each station, the families will meet Moses or Esther and hear their story of *savlanut* or a lack of *savlanut*.

*Note to teacher:* Choose animated and creative staff members to play these characters. The more they are able to engage with the learners' ideas while remaining in character, the more meaningful the lessons will be.

#### Story 1: Impatient Moses and the Rock

A staff member will creatively transform into the character of Moses. Moses will tell the learners his story described in Genesis 20:2-13, focusing on his impatience. When he has finished telling his story, he will ask the learners: How do you think I felt in that situation? How do you think my actions made the Israelites feel?

#### Story 2: Patient Moses and his Journey Through the Wilderness

A staff member will creatively transform into the character of Moses. Moses will tell the learners about his 40-year journey through the wilderness, emphasizing his patience towards the Israelites and his desire to continue the journey despite his inability to enter Canaan (see the Biblical books of Bamidbar and D'varim for more details). When he has finished telling his story, he will ask the learners: How do you think I managed to be so patient? How do you think my actions made the Israelites feel?

#### Story 3: Impatient Esther and her Need to Act

A staff member will creatively transform into the character of Esther. Esther will summarize her story in Megillat Esther, emphasizing her need to act in the face of injustice in order to save the Jewish people. In this situation, she was impatient because it was a life or death situation. When she has finished telling her story, she will ask the learners: What do you think about my impatience in this situation? Are there any other times when it would be best for the community to act without *savlanut*?

#### Story 4: Patient Esther and the Banquets

A staff member will creatively transform into the character of Esther. Esther will briefly summarize her story in Megillat Esther. She will describe how she decided to throw not one, but two banquets for King Achashveros (Megillat Esther chapters 4-7). She strategically and patiently didn't tell him about Haman's evil actions until the second banquet, in order that he would be more inclined to trust and listen to her. Esther will describe the King's reaction to her news and the rest of the story that followed her revelation. When she has finished telling her story, she will ask the learners: What do you think about my *savlanut* in this situation? How do you think *savlanut* helped me and my community?

### 0:55-1:00 TRANSITION TO SAME-AGE LEARNING

Explain: Now that we have learned about Biblical characters' experiences with and without *savlanut*, we are going to divide into our same-age learning groups to explore how to apply their lessons to our own lives.

### 1:00-2:00 Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

#### 1:00- 1:15 SAVLANUT FREE-WRITE

Hand out Appendix 3:4B to each learner and give 15 minutes for a silent free-write.

### 1:15- 1:40 CIRCLE OF VOICES

*Note to teacher:* This timing is approximate. In this activity, every learner should receive the same amount of time to speak, somewhere between 2-4 minutes. Use your discretion to decide how many minutes to allot per learner, taking into consideration how many learners are in your community and how much time you will need for the following activity.

Each learner will have X minutes to share their answer from one of the free-write question sets.

Ask learners to physically demonstrate techniques of active listening for when they are not the active sharer: Sitting in an engaged position, making eye contact, thinking about questions you might have for the sharer, dismissing your own opinions of the story. Explain that being a good active listener is a sign of great *savlanut*.

### 1:40-1:55 SAVLANUT STRESS BALL

As this Curriculum Guide stresses repeatedly, one goal of *middot* education is to enable learners to understand that developing *middot* is a lifelong journey, and help them discover tools to guide them on that journey. This activity zooms in on the question from the free-write: “How could you have acted with more *savlanut*?” In *chevrutot*, learners will create a *savlanut* stress ball. Each learner will receive a stress ball. On it, learners will write five methods they can use to help them develop more *savlanut*. The intention is for them to keep this ball in one of their most used spaces (perhaps a bedroom or desk) for them to reference and to squeeze when they feel impatient.

### 1:55-2:00 STRESS BALL SHARING

Gather again into circle formation. Using “lightning round” format (each learner giving a brief answer), every learner will share one tool they think will best help them develop *savlanut*.

## 1:00-2:00 Same-Age Learning: Parents

### 1:00-1:25 CIRCE OF VOICES

*Note to teacher:* This timing is approximate. In this activity, every learner should receive the same amount of time to speak, somewhere between 2-4 minutes. Use your discretion to decide how many minutes to allot per learner, taking into consideration how many learners are in your community and how much time you will need for the following activity.

Each learner will have X minutes to answer the questions: Which Biblical *savlanut* story best represents your strengths when it comes to *savlanut* in the home? Which best represents your growing edges? You can remind the learners that being an active listener to their peers is one way to show *savlanut* in their learning environment.

### 1:25-1:40 EXPANDING OUR TOOLBOXES- GROUP BRAINSTORM

Though adult learners may think that they have all the tools necessary to develop their own virtues, developing *middot* is a lifelong journey. Even adults benefit from regularly assessing their development and sharing techniques for development with trusted peers. This activity will help the adult learners continue to expand their toolboxes for developing *savlanut*.

Invite one learner to be the scribe and record all answers on a white board or large poster. Together, the group will brainstorm answers to the following question: What methods can you use to develop more *savlanut*?

### 1:40-1:55 OUR CHILDREN'S TOOLBOXES

Parenting adds an additional dimension to *savlanut*. While parents must develop *middot* in themselves, they are also responsible for helping guide their children in their *middot* development. This article addresses the topic of teaching children patience.

Learners will divide into *chevrutot* to read the article in Appendix 3:4C. While reading, they should annotate the article with their thoughts, questions, and any ideas that are new to them.

At the bottom of the article, learners will answer the question: Which technique will I practice this week?

### 1:55-2:00 ETHICAL WILL

Parents will have 5 minutes to write notes about *savlanut* in their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### 2:00-2:15 SAVLANUT MEDITATION

Explain: You just spent time in your same-age groups learning more about *savlanut*. The kids and adults all spoke about new ways to develop your *savlanut* practice.

Ask: What are some techniques that you thought about? Take a few shares from the group.

Explain: Now we're going to experiment with a method of developing *savlanut*. Many mental health and wellness experts agree: Regular mindfulness meditation is an effective technique for developing a practice of patience. The more space we are able to create in our minds and bodies with our breath during mindfulness meditation, the more likely we are to breathe through stressful situations instead of being impatient and reactive. Though some of you may have experience with mindfulness meditation, it is likely that many of you will be new to the practice. It may feel strange to you at first, and that's okay. I ask that you do your best to participate fully. If you're unable to do that, remain silent so that your classmates and parents can participate fully and without interruption.

*Note to teacher:* There are many resources online and in libraries about leading mindfulness meditation. You may feel comfortable leading this activity yourself with the help of those resources. If you do not feel comfortable leading this activity, you might have a staff member or parent who is experienced with

meditation and would be able to lead the activity. Alternatively, this could be an opportunity for you to connect with a yoga or meditation teacher in your community and invite them to guide your learners through this activity.

Lead a 5-minute mindfulness meditation.

Afterwards, discuss the following questions with the group:

- How do you feel after doing the mindfulness meditation?
- How could you incorporate this practice into your life?

## 2:15-2:30 EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: TURN, TURN, TURN & SIYUM

Explain: One of the central teachings of mindfulness meditation is that everything is impermanent. Nothing, not any breath, or any single thought, or any feeling in our body, lasts forever. One of the books in our *Tanach*, our Hebrew Bible, also teaches us that everything in life is temporary. This book is called Ecclesiastes in Latin and *Kohelet* in Hebrew. It tells about the adventures of a character called *Kohelet* who constantly tries to find the meaning of life. At every turn, he learns that all of life is like vapor, like smoke that dissipates. *Kohelet* tells us that it's important to be patient instead of arrogant. He understands that when we are not patient, we're probably thinking about ourselves and our needs a little bit too much, instead of thinking about other people. Being patient is a sign of humility and is more likely to help you form positive relationships than impatience would. On the other hand, *Kohelet* also tells us that everything in life is temporary, including situations that require our patience! People must be patient, but you will never have to be patient at every moment of every day. There's a very famous passage in *Kohelet* that a band called the Byrds made into a song. You may have heard it before, and we're going to look at it together. Take a moment to read the lyrics to yourself.

Hand out *dapim* of Appendix 3:4D.

Ask: Which line of the song connects to your lesson about *savlanut* today? Take a few shares.

After a few people share their thoughts and you respond to them, ask the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member teach the melody of "Turn, Turn, Turn" and sing the song as a group. Transition from singing "Turn, Turn, Turn" to *Siyum, Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### Jenga Discussion Guide

1. What feelings did you experience while other people were taking their turns?
2. Some people might feel impatient when they're waiting for their turn during a game. What other activities make you feel impatient?
3. How do you feel when someone acts impatiently towards you? On the other hand, how do you feel when someone is patient for you?
4. How do you think other people feel when you act impatiently? How do you think other people feel when you act patiently?

***Savlanut* Free-Write**

Which Biblical character do you identify with the most? Why? (patient Moses, impatient Moses, patient Esther, or impatient Esther)

When was a time you acted with *savlanut* towards another person? How did it affect your relationship with them?

When was a time you acted without *savlanut* towards another person? How did it affect your relationship with them? How could you have acted with more *savlanut*?

Write about a time when it would benefit you or someone else not to act with *savlanut*. When do you think that you or someone else would benefit from a lack of *savlanut*?



## Our Children's Toolboxes

### PARENTS

02/21/2013 02:49 pm ET Updated Dec 06, 2017

#### Kids And Patience: Pamela Druckerman's Tips For Teaching Kids To Wait A Minute

Visualize a French mother sitting on a bench in a beautiful park in Paris. Ignore the fact that she looks like a supermodel or that her scarf is tied perfectly (because that's just annoying) and focus instead on what she's doing: peacefully reading a novel as her children enjoy the playground behind her.

Her 5-year-old son comes up to her, and says quietly, "Ecoute-moi, Maman." He waits patiently until she finishes reading the paragraph and looks up at him.

"Oui?" she says.

He tells her he's hungry.

She reminds him that he only gets one snack a day, and that will be an hour from now.

The boy nods and goes back to the play set. No tantrum. No frantic search for a miniature bag of Goldfish in her purse.

No drama.

According to best-selling author Pamela Druckerman, who is our leader for this first workshop, there is nothing unusual about this scene. It is not a fantasy. She told us over lunch at HuffPost that when she moved to Paris she was the only mother carrying screaming kids away from the park. Everyone else was calm — kids, moms, dads, everyone.

If you've been that parent on the playground facing down a child who refuses to go home (and really, how many of us have not?), you know how stressful those meltdowns are. That's why we've chosen patience as this week's theme — specifically, how to teach your kids to "wait a minute." Pamela says a big reason why French family life feels calm is that parents work to instill this mentality in their children from an early age. Here, she offers three ways to get started.

As you read through this week's keys to French parenting, think about how you can practice them with your kids over the next few days. Then, at the bottom of the page, Pamela offers up our first workshop challenge — a fun way to put this week's lesson into practice.

### 3 KEYS TO PATIENCE

#### 1. Give Kids Lots of Chances to Practice Waiting

The secret to patience isn't expecting a child to be a stoic who freezes and silently waits. Scientists have found that kids become good at waiting once they learn how to distract themselves — by inventing a little song or burping at themselves in the mirror, for instance. This makes the waiting bearable. French parents have discovered this too. They know that they don't even have to teach a child how to distract himself. If they simply say "wait" a lot (attend in French) and make a child practice waiting on a daily basis, she'll figure out how to distract herself. But if they drop everything

the instant she complains that she's bored, or if they get off the phone when she interrupts, the child isn't going to get good at waiting. She's going to get good at whining.

## **2. Treat Kids as if They Can Control Themselves**

Play to the top of a child's intelligence. Expect her not to grab things, and to be able to put all her Legos back in their box. Get down on the floor and gently tell a toddler who's pulling books off the shelf that she should stop, and show her how to put them back. When she tosses grapes on the floor, show her how to keep them on her plate. Do this patiently and face-to-face. A child needs to learn the limits, but she also needs love. "It takes both love and frustration for the child to construct himself," one expert explains. If you give the child just love without limits, she'll soon become a little tyrant (the French call this an *enfant roi* — a child king).

## **3. Slow Down Your Response Times**

Embrace a French pace of life. When you're busy scrambling eggs and your daughter asks you to inspect her tower of toilet paper rolls, explain nicely that you'll be there in a few minutes. At dinner, don't leap up to grab a napkin the moment she demands it (or, better yet, put the napkins on a low shelf so she can get one herself). When you're busy, politely point out to your child what you're doing, and ask her to take it in. This doesn't just make life calmer. It's also what the French call an obligatory passage for the child, when she learns that she's not the center of the universe. Parents believe that a child who doesn't realize this — and who feels she's entitled to anything she wants — won't see any reason to grow up. The French have reasonable expectations. They wouldn't ask a young child to sit through Shakespeare (or Molière). They just want her to be able to wait a few seconds, or a few minutes. Slowing things down even this little bit will make her better at coping with boredom, and take the panicky edge off things. Patience is a muscle. The more a child plays on her own, the better she gets at it.

— Excerpted from *Bringing Up Bébé: One American Mother Discovers the Wisdom of French Parenting* by Pamela Druckerman. Reprinted by Parents with arrangement with The Penguin Press, a member of Penguin Group (USA), Inc. Copyright Pamela Druckerman, 2012.

***Turn, Turn, Turn Lyrics***

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
 There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
 And a time to every purpose under heaven

A time to be born, a time to die  
 A time to plant, a time to reap  
 A time to kill, a time to heal  
 A time to laugh, a time to weep

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
 There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
 And a time to every purpose under heaven

A time to build up, a time to break down  
 A time to dance, a time to mourn  
 A time to cast away stones  
 A time to gather stones together

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
 There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
 And a time to every purpose under heaven

A time of love, a time of hate  
 A time of war, a time of peace  
 A time you may embrace  
 A time to refrain from embracing

To everything - turn, turn, turn  
 There is a season - turn, turn, turn  
 And a time to every purpose under heaven

A time to gain, a time to lose  
 A time to rend, a time to sew  
 A time for love, a time for hate  
 A time for peace, I swear it's not too late!

## Lesson 3:5: *Tzedek* (Justice)

### GOALS:

- Guide learners to differentiate between justice and equality.
- Show learners the centrality of *tzedek* to Jewish tradition.
- Empower learners to see themselves as agents of *tzedek* in their communities and in the world.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- Why does Judaism strive for *tzedek* instead of equality?
- How does giving *tzedakah* bring more *tzedek* to the world?
- How can Jewish tradition about *tzedek* relate to my life today?
- How can I take tangible steps towards creating *tzedek* in my community and world?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate the difference between justice and equality.
- Explain the relationship between *tzedek* and *tzedakah*.
- Apply Maimonides's ladder of *tzedakah* to authentic scenarios.
- Analyze social justice initiatives and evaluate their effectiveness.
- Create *tzedek* initiative plans for their own community with their families.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate the difference between justice and equality, *chesed* and *tzedek*.
- Discuss the relationship between *tzedek* and *tzedakah*.
- Analyze the traditional concept of tithing and evaluate its application to contemporary Jewish life.
- Propose ways to consistently highlight the value of *tzedek* in their families.
- Create *tzedek* initiative plans for their own community with their families.

### MATERIALS:

- Injury Cards
- Band-aids (1/learner for half the cohort)
- A variety of medical supplies that correlate with the injury cards
- Multicolored Paper Strips (8 per family)
- Markers
- Rope
- Hole punches
- Visual Aid (white board, poster board, etc.) and appropriate writing materials (white board pens, markers, etc.)
- Maimonides' Ladder of *Tzedakah* Steps- 1 step per page, enlarged
- Copies of Appendices
- *It's Our World, Too!: Young People Who Are Making a Difference* by Phillip Hoose and Pete Seeger

### TIMELINE:

00:00-00:10	Set Induction: Equality
00:10-00:20	Set Induction: Justice
00:20-00:25	Equality vs. Justice
00:25-00:35	<i>Tzedek and Tzedakah</i>
00:35-00:55	Maimonides' Ladder of <i>Tzedakah</i> : Ranking <sup>5</sup>
00:55-1:15	Maimonides' Ladder of <i>Tzedakah</i> : Creating
1:15-1:55	Same-Age learning
1:55-2:15	Family Learning: <i>Tzedek</i> Initiatives
2:15-2:30	<i>Pitchu Li and Siyum</i>

## Family Learning

**Set Up:** Create the injury cards. There should be enough injury cards for every learner to have their own. On each index card, write one injury. Injuries might include: broken wrist, sprained ankle, paper cut, hurt knee, etc. Some of the cards can repeat the same injuries.

### 00:00- 00:10 SET INDUCTION: EQUALITY

Invite learners to sit in a circle in your learning space. Give one injury card to each of the learners in half the cohort. The other half of the cohort will observe now and participate in the next activity. Ask students to tell the group their injury one at a time. After each person's sharing, give them a band-aid. If anyone remarks that this is unfair, simply tell them that you're in favor of equality.

After everyone has received a band-aid, ask:

- How did this activity make you feel? Why did you feel this way?
- Did the band-aid suit your needs?

### 00:10-00:20 SET INDUCTION: JUSTICE

Give one injury card to each of the learners in the other half of the cohort, the half that did not participate in the prior activity. The half that already participate will observe now. Ask students to tell the group their injury one at a time. After each person's sharing, give them a medical supply that suits their injury card. For instance, if the person's injury is a broken wrist, give them a wrist splint.

After everyone has their appropriate medical supplies, ask:

- How did this activity make you feel? Why did you feel this way?
- Did the medical supply suit your needs? Would your medical supply have suited someone else's needs?

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<sup>5</sup> Created with inspiration from <https://rac.org/program-bank-lesson-plan-maimonides-ladder-tzedakah>

## 00:20-00:25      EQUALITY VS. JUSTICE

On a visual aid (white board, poster board, etc.) create two columns. Title these columns “Equality” and “Justice (sometimes called Equity).”

Explain: The two activities we just did teach us about two important words, Equality and Justice, and how they impact people’s lives.

Ask: For those of you who participated in the first activity, can you tell our group what you know about the meaning of Equality? Write responses in the Equality column. For those of you who participated in the second activity, can you tell our group what you know about the meaning of the word justice? Write responses in the Justice column.

Based on responses from group, further explain the difference between equality and justice.

**Equality:** When everyone gets the same thing or is treated the same way, no matter what. Assumes that everyone starts from the same place.

**Justice:** When everyone gets the resources they need to get to be successful, depending on their individual circumstances. Assumes that everyone starts from a different place.

## 00:25-00:35      TZEDEK AND TZEDAKAH

This activity is intended to demonstrate the connection between *tzedek* and *tzedakah*. When Jews fulfill our obligation to give *tzedakah*, to give resources to those who need them, our society comes closer to achieving *tzedek*, achieving a state justice.

Explain: Jewish tradition places a large emphasis on justice, rather than equality. Judaism recognized that each person is unique—every person has different circumstances, and we each need something different to be successful. The Hebrew word for justice is *tzedek*. Say that with me. *Tzedek. (tzedek!)*. Write Hebrew word on board.

Ask: Who can name these 3 Hebrew letters? (tzadi, dalet, koof). Do you know any other Hebrew words with these 3 Hebrew letters? Write all accurate responses on board. One participant will likely say *tzedakah*. Circle this response on the board.

Explain: The word *tzedakah* is another word we’re going to focus on today.

Ask: When you hear the word *tzedakah*, what do you think of? Answers may include: The *tzedakah* box in the synagogue, collecting coins, donating money. Confirm that *tzedakah* refers to money that is donated to people who need it.

Invite learners to create buzz groups, finding 1 or 2 people nearby to speak with briefly. Learners will spend 2 minutes addressing this question:

- Why do you think that *tzedek*, justice, and *tzedakah*, donated money, come from the same Hebrew root? What do they have in common, and how are they different?

After the 2-minute buzz groups, bring the group back together. Invite 1-3 groups to share how their buzz groups answered the question. If they are unable to make the connection between the two words, guide them to discover the relationship between *tzedek* and *tzedakah*.

## 00:35-00:55      MAIMONIDES' LADDER OF TZEDAKAH: RANKING <sup>6</sup>

Maimonides, also known by the acronym RaMBaM (Rabbi Moses ben Maimon) was one of the most prominent medieval Jewish philosophers. He created a Ladder of *Tzedakah*, an 8-step hierarchy of charitable giving, that ranks the ways in which a person can do *tzedakah* by how ethical they are.

Introduce the concept of Maimonides' Ladder of *Tzedakah* and the benefit we derive from his ideas. As Jews, we are obligated to give *tzedakah* and Maimonides' list helps us understand how to give as ethically as possible.

*Note to teacher:* Do **not** tell them the order of the ladder yet. They will discover this soon.

This activity will allow the learners to think about the rungs on Maimonides' ladder and what they think the correct hierarchy of *tzedakah* might be. Invite 8 volunteers to come to the front of the room. Give each volunteer one step of the ladder, printed in large font on a piece of paper in order for all learners to see the text.

Together, with the help of the learners who are not holding pieces of paper, the 8 volunteers will arrange themselves (continuing to hold their papers) in the order they think best mirrors Maimonides' hierarchy.

When they have come to a final arrangement, invite the 8 volunteers to read their rungs, in order from lowest to highest. Ask: Why did you arrange yourselves in this order? Take a few shares. After a few people have shared their reasons for why they arranged themselves in this way, give Maimonides' Ladder of *Tzedakah* to another volunteer and ask that volunteer to rearrange the 8 volunteers in the order that Maimonides created. Invite the 8 volunteers to reread their rungs in the new order. Here is Maimonides' Ladder of *Tzedakah*, with 1 being the most effective and ethical way to give and 8 being the least:

8. One gives *tzedakah* grudgingly.
7. One gives less than they should, but does it cheerfully.
6. One gives directly to the person in need when they are asked.
5. One gives directly to the person in need without being asked.
4. The recipient knows who the donor is, but the donor doesn't know who the recipient is.
3. The donor knows who the recipient is, but the recipient doesn't know who the donor is.
2. The donor and recipient are unknown to each other, like in the case of a community fund.
1. Giving a loan or helping someone learn a trade before they become needy.

Discussion questions for the whole group:

- What are some priorities that Maimonides has about *tzedakah*?
- How do Maimonides' priorities compare to your priorities?
- Can you think of any other ways in which we might give that are not included here?
- What does this ladder teach us about *tzedakah*?

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<sup>6</sup> Created with inspiration from <https://rac.org/program-bank-lesson-plan-maimonides-ladder-tzedakah>

## 00:55-1:15 MAIMONIDES' LADDER OF TZEDAKAH: CREATING

Now that the families understand Maimonides' ladder of *tzedakah*, they will have the opportunity to create their own Ladder of *tzedakah* using the rope, the colorful strips of paper, and the markers. These ladders can be placed in a visible spot in their home so that they can refer to them regularly.

Each family will receive 1 envelope filled with 8 colorful paper strips- collect all envelopes from the opening activity and distribute the filled envelopes appropriately. They will use the markers to write each of Maimonides' types of *tzedakah* on one side of a strip of paper. On the other side of that strip, they will write one way that they do **or** could achieve this level of the ladder. For instance, for rung #8, they might write: When we donate to the school fundraiser because it's expected of us. For rung #6 they might write: Giving money to the man who holds a cup outside of the grocery store. They will punch a hole in both ends of each strip of paper (this can also be done in advance). String the strips of paper together with rope in the appropriate order in order to form a ladder.

## 1:15-1:55 Same-Age learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### 1:15-1:55 MODIFIED JIGSAW: TZEDEK STORIES

Note to teacher: This activity is based on the book *It's Our World, Too!: Young People Who Are Making a Difference* by Phillip Hoose. Acquiring this book for yourself, or asking your organization to acquire this book, is recommended, not just for this activity but also as an educational resource for your community. Though it is outdated, it is filled with inspiring stories and useful resources. Also, be aware that this is not a complete jigsaw activity, but rather a modified jigsaw because it does not end in direct assessment. The family activity "Tzedek initiatives" that comes after the same-age learning takes the place of a formal assessment. If you'd like more information on creating a full jigsaw experience for your learners, visit [www.jigsaw.org](http://www.jigsaw.org).

Explain: Maimonides' Ladder shows us how to give *tzedakah* in the best way we can. Some people believe that a person needs to have money to build more *tzedek* in this world. What those people may not realize is that, in order to make this world a fairer place, someone needs to recognize the injustices, the lack of justice, and think of ways to make these injustices more just. This book, *It's Our World, Too!: Young People Who Are Making a Difference* by Phillip Hoose and Pete Seeger, tells about many people around your age who noticed injustice in society and decided to do something about it. Today, we're going to learn their stories in a unique way called a jigsaw. (Explain jigsaw activity)

Here are the steps of this modified jigsaw activity:

1. Divide learners into "home groups" of 4 students each.
2. In advance of the class, choose 4 stories from *It's Our World, Too!* that you would like your learners to focus on. It is best to choose stories that are dissimilar to each other. Assign a learner from each group to learn 1 of the 4 stories. When you are done assigning, each home group should have each of the 4 stories represented by a member of their group.
3. Form "expert groups" by having the learners from each home group join other students assigned to the same story. For example, all of the learners learning "Sarah's story" will create an expert group, all of the learners learning "Dwaina's Story" will create another expert group,



etc. Give the learners handouts of their assigned story, along with a copy of Appendix 3:5A, the *Tzedek* Stories Graphic Organizer. The learners will have 20 minutes (approximately 1:20-1:40) to read their story and complete their section of the graphic organizer as a team.

4. Learners will return to their home groups. For 15 minutes (approximately 1:40-1:55), the learners will present their *Tzedek* Stories to the group, and everyone will complete their graphic organizer.
5. When learners are finished in their home groups, explain that they will be using their newfound knowledge for a family project in the next activity.

## 1:15-1:55 Same-Age learning: Parents

### 1:15-1:35 TZEDAKAH VS. CHESED

Explain: Our first session of this curricular unit, 3 weeks ago, focused on the *middah* of *chesed*. During that lesson, we met Abraham and Sarah in their tent, we studied a few key Jewish obligations of *chesed* like visiting the sick and clothing the naked, and we did some *chesed* action stations with our children. Let's take a moment to think of our primary takeaways from that session. (Take a few responses). Many people have difficulty differentiating between *chesed* and *tzedakah*, and the medieval rabbis had the same struggle. Of course, our Talmud is a corpus of all of their insights, struggles, and debates, and it's our luck that we're able to understand how they differentiated between *chesed* and *tzedakah*.

Ask: Before we examine their perspectives, how do you predict that they might differentiate between *chesed* and *tzedakah*? Take a few shares. Write predictions on the board.

Divide learners into *chevrotot* to study the text and discuss the discussion questions in Appendix 3:5B for 10 minutes.

Come back together and invite learners to share their evaluations from Question 3.

### 1:35-1:50 TZEDEK AS A MITZVAH

Explain: Over and over again in our sacred texts, we are commanded to pursue *tzedek* and give *tzedakah*. We are told to leave the corners of our fields for the poor, give loans to those in need, and pay our servants fair wages. In fact, we're even commanded to give an entire 10% of our income to those in need. This is called tithing, and though we might not all do this, it's still a practice in many observant communities. All of these obligations are *mitzvot*, commandments. They are not suggestions. In this way, Jewish *tzedakah* is very different from Christian charity. While the word *tzedakah* comes from *tzedek*, the obligation to pursue justice through financial means, charity comes from the root of "love" or "affection." The word charity implies that giving money to those in need is an act of love from the heart, but our word *tzedakah* is an obligation entirely. Even giving *tzedakah* begrudgingly, Maimonides' lowest rung, is still an act of *tzedakah*. It's still on the ladder! In recent years, some Jews have rekindled the concept of tithing 10% of their income and consider it the ideal standard for doing *tzedakah*.

Invite learners to share their thoughts about tithing. What are the pros and cons of a tithing system of *tzedakah*? Is this a system in which you would consider participating?

Explain: As we study each *middah*, it's our obligation as parents to consider how we can help our children develop these *middot* in themselves. During your Ethical Will free-write, be sure to jot down a couple ideas about how you can consistently highlight the value of *tzedek* in your families.

### 1:50-1:55 ETHICAL WILL

Parents will have 5 minutes to write notes about *tzedek* in their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### 1:55-2:15 TZEDEK INITIATIVES

Explain: During our same-age learning, our 5<sup>th</sup> grade learners became experts about multiple *tzedek* stories of kids their own age creating social justice initiatives. Now, with your families, you will create your own initiative. The first step of creating an initiative is to think of a problem in our community that you care about. What can we do, as members of the community and people who know about *tzedek*, to help fix that problem and make our community more just?

Divide learners into family teams. Each family will work on the handout in Appendix 3:5C for 15 minutes.

Each family will spend 5 minutes pairing with another family team and sharing their initiatives. Encourage learners to ask the other family questions about their initiative.

### 2:15-2:30 PITCHU LI AND SIYUM

Bring families back together in intimate formation (perhaps seated in a circle or gathered on a rug) and pass out *dapim* of Appendix 3:5D.

Introduce *Pitchu Li*. The words of *pitchu li*, which come from Psalm 118:19, ask God to open the *sha'arei tzedek*, the gates of righteousness or justice, for us so that we can enter into them.

Ask: What are these gates of righteousness or justice? How might God open them for us? How can we enter them?

After a few people share their thoughts and you respond to them, ask the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member teach the melody of "*Pitchu Li*" (musical setting of your choice- I recommend Julie Silver's melody) and sing the song as a group. Transition from singing "*Pitchu Li*" to *Siyum, Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

When *Siyum* concludes, say goodbye to each family and ensure that they have a Sunday Night Sicha *daf* (Appendix 3:5E)

**Tzedek Stories Graphic Organizer**

	_____’s Story	_____’s Story	_____’s Story	_____’s Story
What problem did they notice?				
What solutions did they consider? What solution did they decide to work towards?				
What resources did they need?				
Who helped them?				
How did they measure success?				
What are some positive and negative aspects of their initiative?				
Which rung of Maimonides’ Ladder of <i>Tzedakah</i> does this fit?				

### ***Tzedakah vs. Chesed***

ת"ר בשלשה דברים גדולה גמילות חסדים יותר מן הצדקה צדקה בממונו גמילות חסדים בין בגופו בין בממונו צדקה לעניים  
גמילות חסדים בין לעניים בין לעשירים צדקה לחיים גמילות חסדים בין לחיים בין למתים

**The Sages taught that acts of *chesed* are superior to *tzedakah* in three respects: *Tzedakah* can be performed only **with one's money**, while *chesed* can be performed **both with one's person and with one's money**. *Tzedakah* is given **to the poor**, while acts of *chesed* are performed **both for the poor and for the rich**. *Tzedakah* is given to the **living**, while acts of *chesed* are performed **both for the living and for the dead**. (Babylonian Talmud, Sukkot 49b)**

1. What differences between *chesed* and *tzedakah* do the sages describe?
2. Can you think of a time when *tzedakah* involved *chesed*, or when *chesed* involved *tzedakah*?
3. Do you agree with the Sages? Why or why not?

***Tzedek Initiatives***

What injustice do you notice and want to make more just?	
What possible solutions can you think of? Which is the most effective solution?	
What resources do you need to create this solution?	
Whose help will you need?	
How will you measure success?	
Which rung of Maimonides' Ladder of <i>Tzedakah</i> does this fit?	

***Pitchu Li***  
**From Psalm 118:19**

Pitchu li sha'arei tzedek  
 Avo vam  
 odeh Yah

פְּתַחוּ-לִי שַׁעַרֵי-צֶדֶק  
 אֲבֹ-אֲבָם, אֹדְהָ יְהוָה

Open the gates of justice for me,  
 I will enter them and I will give thanks to God.

## Lesson 3:6: *Shmiat Ha'ozen* (Attentive Listening)

### GOALS:

- Show learners how *shmiat ha'ozen* enhances interpersonal relationships.
- Demonstrate that attentive listening has a prominent role in Jewish tradition.
- Engage learners in authentic exercises to help them practice *shmiat ha'ozen*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How is attentive listening a Jewish value in addition to a universal one?
- How does one develop the *middah* of *shmiat ha'ozen* in oneself?
- How can developing this virtue enhance one's relationships with other people?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Identify attentive listening techniques and apply them in practice.
- Illustrate the relevance of Jewish texts about *shmiat ha'ozen* to their lives.
- Explain how *shmiat ha'ozen* has, in the past, and can, in the future, enhance their relationships with other people.
- Experience a Jewish prayer experience in a new way through the lens of *shmiat ha'ozen*.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Identify attentive listening techniques and apply them in practice.
- Explain how Jewish texts approach the value of *shmiat ha'ozen*.
- Explain how *shmiat ha'ozen* has, in the past, and can, in the future, enhance their relationships with other people.
- Create techniques for helping their children develop *shmiat ha'ozen*.

### MATERIALS:

- Chairs (1 per learner)
- Calming music and a music-playing device
- Visual aid and writing utensils
- Paper and pencils (1 per learner)
- *Tanachim*
- Printouts of Appendix 3:6A (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 3:6B (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendix 3:6C (1/learner)

### TIMELINE:

00:00-00:05	Set induction: Welcoming
00:05-00:20	<i>Shmiat ha'ozen chevrotot</i>
00:20-00:30	Circle of voices debrief
00:30-00:40	<i>Shmiat ha'ozen</i>
00:40- 00:55	<i>Shmiat ha'ozen chevrotot</i> , take 2
00:55-1:05	Circle of voices, take 2
1:05-1:55	Same-age Learning

1:55-2:30 *T'fillah & Siyum*

**Set up:** Before learners arrive, set up pairs of chairs that face each other throughout your learning space. There should be enough chairs for each learner. Set them up in a way that no pair will be too close to another pair.

## 00:00- 1:05 Family Learning

### 00:00-00:05 SET INDUCTION: WELCOMING

Play calming music in the learning space. As learners enter, divide them into same-age *chevrutot* and ask each *chevrutah* to take a seat in chairs that face each other. Ask them to remain silent and listen to the music.

### 00:05-00:20 SHMIAT HA'OZEN CHEVRUTOT

**Explain:** For the next fifteen minutes, we will be doing an exercise that involves 3 main activities: speaking, listening, and thinking. Each partner will have 4 minutes to speak and answer the question: What is your ideal day? After the first partner spends 4 minutes speaking, the second partner will have 2 minutes to summarize what the first speaker said. Then, the second partner will have 4 minutes to speak, and the first partner will have 2 minutes to summarize what the second speaker said. When your partner is speaking, it is your responsibility to remain completely silent.

Begin the activity. When the first 4 minutes are complete, ring a bell and invite the second partner to summarize. After the 2 minutes of summary time, ring the bell and invite the second partner to spend 4 minutes answering the question. After those 4 minutes, ring the bell and invite the first partner to summarize.

### 00:20-00:30 CIRCLE OF VOICES DEBRIEF

A key aspect of Circle of Voices is that people are mindful of sharing the air and leaving space for others. Encourage the learners to practice *savlanut*, patience, and wait until another person has finished their thought entirely before speaking. It is ideal to have each learner speak no more than once. The Circle of Voices is yet another way to practice *shmiat ha'ozen*. Describe this intention to the learners before posing the question.

Gather all of the learners into a circle in a convenient way (perhaps on the floor, since their chairs will need to remain in pairs for the second round of *chevrutot*).

Pose the questions: How did it feel to be the speaker? How did it feel to be the listener?

### 00:30-00:40 SHMIAT HA'OZEN

**Explain:** The *middah* that we are focusing on today is *shmiat ha'ozen*, attentive listening. *Shmiat* comes from the same Hebrew root as *shema*, our Jewish declaration of faith, and means listening. *Ozen* are our ears. The phrase *shmiat ha'ozen* literally means "listening of the ear," and is a phrase found in our Jewish texts called *Pirke Avot*, the sayings of our ancestors, which tell us how to be good people. The



ancient sages said that being a good listener is a key aspect of being a good person. Later, we will learn more about what Judaism says about this value. For now, let's focus on the basics of performing *shmiat ha'ozen*.

Ask: How do you know when someone is truly listening to you? What do they do? Take shares from the group and write them on a visual aid. Answers may include: Making eye contact, leaning forward, nodding their head, summarizing what you said, etc.

Explain: We are going to move back to our *chevrutot* to try *shmiat ha'ozen* again. Think about all of the examples we just gave of ways that people show that they're listening. Do your best to incorporate the techniques for attentive listening into your *chevrutah*. You will have the same amount of time to speak and respond. 4 minutes to speak, 2 minutes to summarize, and the same for the second partner. This time, your prompt is: Tell about a role model in your life.

### 00:40-00:55 SHMIAT HA'OZEN CHEVRUTOT, TAKE 2

Facilitate the *chevrutah* activity in the same way you facilitated it last time, using the bell to mark time.

### 00:55-1:05 CIRCLE OF VOICES, TAKE 2

Gather the learners together in the same way you did for the previous Circle of Voices.

Pose the questions: How did this *chevrutah* experience feel different from the first one? How did the lens of *shmiat ha'ozen* effect your relationship with your partner? How did this exercise make you think differently about listening?

## 1:05-1:55 Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### 1:05- 1:15 SHMIAT HA'OZEN ROLE MODELS

Pass out blank paper and pencils to the learners. Invite them to think of a person who is a great listener. On one half of your paper, they will sketch a depiction of that great listener listening. Label different parts of their body with adjectives to describe their best character traits. For example, one might write "caring" next to the heart. After 5 minutes, invite them to think of a person to whom they enjoy listening attentively. On the other half of the paper, sketch a depiction of that great speaker. Label different parts of their body with adjectives to describe their best character traits. For example, one might write "funny" next to the mouth.

### 1:15-1:30 WHAT MAKES A GREAT LISTENER? WHAT MAKES A GREAT SPEAKER?

Create *chevrutot*. In *chevrutot*, the learners' task is to discover what their great listeners and their great speakers have in common. Together, they will think of 3 commonalities that their great listeners have and jot those down below their sketches. They will then think of 3 commonalities that their great speakers have and jot those down below their sketches.

Come back together as a group and discuss the question:

- What kind of great listeners are we most likely to share our stories with?
  - Answers may include: Close friends, family members, teachers, synagogue professionals.
- What kind of great speakers are we most likely to listen to attentively?
  - Answers may include: Public figures, rabbis, actors, comedians.

Write their answers on the board for reference.

### 1:30-1:45 A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Explain: We will now read an ancient Jewish perspective about listening. This text was written by the medieval rabbis to This text begins with a scenario that you might find challenging. Use the discussion questions to look into it further. Then, read the second half of the text and discuss the questions below. Throughout the activity, think about what the rabbis are trying to teach us about listening.

Return to *chevrotot* to read the text in Appendix 3:6A and discuss the questions below the text.

### 1:45-1:55 SHMIAT HA'OZEN GOALS

Explain: *Shmiat ha'ozen* can be a difficult *middah* to bring into our lives because it requires us to think differently about something we do every minute of every day. Over the last 10 or 11 years of your life, you have created many habits. You have ways that you tend to behave and the more you behave in a certain way, the harder it is to change a habit. The way you've been listening your whole life is the way you're likely to continue listening in the future. *Shmiat ha'ozen* says to us: Wait a minute! Are you being the best listener you can be? How can you be a better listener, and by being a better listener, a better child and sibling and friend? How can you change your listening habits to be a Jew who really hears, instead of just taking in sounds passively? Now is the best time in your life to create new habits because you're at an age when you can think about these important topics, and you're not yet set in your ways. I want you to feel empowered to become like the great listeners who you sketched on your papers. Ultimately, people who are great listeners are the best friends and family members.

Invite learners to spend 5 minutes of free-write time on the backs of the paper they used for their sketches. They should answer these questions (written on the board for reference, or printed on one side of their sketch papers):

- Who will I listen to more attentively this week? What techniques will I use to listen to them better? How will listening to them benefit our relationship?

## 1:05-1:55 Same-Age Learning: Parents

### 1:05-1:45 A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

This activity is based off of the text in Appendix 3:6B.

#### 1:05-1:10

Explain: This text is taken from a source called *Yilkit Shimoni* which is an anthology of Midrash from 13<sup>th</sup> century Frankfurt. It is attributed to a man named Simeon ha-Darshan, about whom we have little information. Midrash is a genre of Jewish literature that is more creative than the Jewish law codes in

the Talmud. Midrashim were written by the ancient rabbis in order to fill in gaps in the Torah or comment on particular questions that were relevant to their lives. In this text, the editor seems to be perplexed by the topic of listening. He (we can assume it was a he and not a she given the time period) seems to be asking the question: Based on the experiences of our Biblical ancestors, what can we learn about listening with discretion? In the style of midrash, the editor refers to Biblical texts for proof of his theses. In each paragraph, you'll find two Biblical citations. The first is used as proof for the "listening or not listening," the first part of the thesis. The second citation is used as proof for the "losing or gaining," the second part of each thesis. (5 minutes for this explanation- expand as you see fit. You may also give an introduction to using the *Tanach*, depending on the Jewish literacy of your learners)

### 1:10-1:25

Divide the learners into four groups. Invite each group of learners to become experts on one paragraph of the excerpt. Their task is to research the proof texts cited, either using a print or electronic Tanach. Research will include: Finding the proof text and reading around it—before and after—to understand how the text is being used as proof of listening or not listening, and as proof of gaining or losing. It is crucial that they get a good understanding of their paragraph, as they will be teaching it to other learners in the next part of this activity. If you have adult learners with more Jewish literacy, divide them equally between the four groups. Tanach work may be new for many of your adult learners. (15 minutes).

### 1:25-1:40

One learner from each expert group will join together to create a new group representing all 4 paragraphs of the text. Each expert will have 3 minutes to explain their paragraph to the other learners in their new group. By the end of this group sharing, every learner in the group should understand all 4 paragraphs of the text. (15 minutes)

### 1:40-1:50

Come back together as a whole group and discuss the following questions (10 minutes):

- How can this text's messages translate to our contemporary society?
- In the paragraphs about gaining, what else might the protagonist have gained in their relationships with other people, in addition to what the text explicitly tells us?
- What aspects of this text's lessons would you like to impart to your children?

### 1:50-1:55 ETHICAL WILL

Parents will have 5 minutes to write notes about *shmiat ha'ozen* in their Ethical Wills.

## 1:55- 2:30 Family Learning

### 1:55-2:30 T'FILLAH & SIYUM

Create an intimate prayer space for the learners to join together in *t'fillah*, highlighting the prayers described here.

*Note to teacher:* Much of this *t'fillah* is up to your discretion. The prayers outlined below have explicit connections to *shmiat ha'ozen* and should be included. These prayers do not make a complete service. Consider the *minhagim* (customs) of your congregation, and the meaning of the other prayers in the service, when creating a worship experience to scaffold these components.

Opening song: *Hinei mah tov*

- This text highlights the beauty of joining together with our friends. It says: “How good and how pleasant it is to *shevet* together with our brothers and sisters.” The word *shevet* has many meanings—you may recognize it as the same root as *Shabbat*, our day of rest—and one of these meanings is “to sit.” When we sit together, we have the opportunity to engage in meaningful conversations with our friends and family using our skills of *shmiat ha'ozen*, of attentive listening. When we can truly hear each other, we create spaces of love and peace.

*Shema:* “Listen” composition by Doug Cotler (Appendix 3:6C)

*Amidah:*

- The *Amidah* is the central portion of the prayer service. The first 3 prayers are traditionally recited together by the congregation, and the remaining 15 benedictions are included in the “silent prayer” portion of the service. In a service that is filled with noise and words, the *Amidah* teaches us the power of silence. We all know that some thoughts and feelings cannot be expressed perfectly with words. And during prayer, the silent meditations of your innermost thoughts and feelings are encouraged. This silent prayer, which will be longer than it may typically be, is an opportunity to listen to your own *neshama*, your own soul. What is your *neshama* grateful for? For whom does it want to pray? For what does it yearn today?

*Yih'yu L'ratzon:*

- After we finish the *Amidah*, we sing the words of *yih'yu l'ratzon*: May the words of my mouth and the meditations of my heart be acceptable to you, God, my rock and my redeemer. We hope that God has listened to all that we've offered.

After *t'fillah*, invite the families to create a large circle with arms around each other in preparation for *siyum*. Have a musically capable staff member lead *Siyum, Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### A Jewish Perspective<sup>7</sup>

*Rabbi Judah ben Shalom said: If a poor person comes, and pleads before another, that other does not listen to the poor one. If someone who is rich comes, the person listens to and receives the rich person immediately...*

- What kind of situation do you think the text is describing?
- Do you think that the person in power (the person called “another”) is acting ethically? Why or why not?

*...but God does not act this way. All are equal before God—women, slaves, rich, and poor.*

- What’s the difference between the human listener and God, according to the rabbis who wrote this?
- When’s a time you were biased in your listening? Why did you listen to one person more than you listened to another?
- What are some ways you can be more like God, as God is described in this passage?

*Passage from Exodus Rabba 21:4*

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<sup>7</sup> Activity adapted from Susan Freeman’s *Teaching Jewish Virtues*.

### A Jewish Perspective<sup>8</sup>

There are four types of listening: Listening and losing, listening and gaining, not listening and losing, and not listening and gaining.

Listening and losing: as in the case of Adam, about whom it is written: And to Adam God said: “Because you listened to the voice of your wife...” (Genesis 3:17). And what did he lose? “Because you are dust and to dust will you return.” (Genesis 3:19)

Listening and gaining: as in the case of our father Abraham, who was told: “All that Sarah tells you, listen to her voice” (Genesis 21:12). And what did he gain? “For in Isaac shall you seed be called to you” (*ibid.*)

Not listening and gaining: as in the case of Joseph, concerning whom it is written: “And he did not listen to [Potiphar’s wife], to lie by her, to be with her” (Genesis 39:10). And what did he gain? “And Joseph was the ruler over the land.” (Genesis 42:6)

Not listening and losing—as in the case of the Jews, concerning whom it was written: “And they did not listen to Me, and they did not incline their ears” (Jeremiah 7:26). And what did they lose? “Such as are for death, to death; and such as are for the sword, to the sword” (Jeremiah 15:2).

(*Yalkut Shimoni*, Genesis 32, quoted in *Orchot Tzaddikim*, p. 255)

- Why is the first verse in the paragraph cited as proof of listening or not listening?
- Why is the second verse in the paragraph cited as proof of losing or gaining?
- What is this paragraph’s primary message about listening?

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<sup>8</sup> Activity adapted from Susan Freeman’s *Teaching Jewish Virtues*.

**“Listen”**

English Lyrics by Cantor Doug Cotler

If you're lost, you feel afraid  
 And you don't know what to say  
 Then listen, listen to our God.  
 Is there a question on your mind?  
 Is the answer hard to find?  
 Then listen, listen to our God.

Listen with all your heart and soul  
 And with all of your might.  
 Write them and learn them  
 And teach them well.  
 Every morning and night.  
 Close your eyes and listen.

Quiet yourself – there's nothing to say  
 Stop all the chatter that gets in the way  
 And listen, listen to our God.  
 When the wind and the thunder finally disappear  
 There's still a voice that you can hear  
 If you listen, listen to our God.

You can hear it from the top of the highest hill  
 Or from the valley below.  
 It can come from the edge of the universe.  
 It can come from within your soul.  
 Close your eyes and listen.

Shema Yisrael Adonai Eloheinu, Adonai Echad  
 Baruch Shem K'vod,  
 Shem k'vod mal'chuto l'olam vaed.

Listen, listen to our God.  
 Listen, listen to our God.

## Lesson 3:7: Storybook Work Day

This lesson is a continuation of the Authentic Assessment, the Storybook.

**Their task** in this lesson is to write the second chapter of the book, chronicling the adventures of the character as they encounter the 5 *middot* from unit 3: *Chesed*, *Achrayut*, *Savlanut*, *Tzedek*, and *Shmiat HaOzen*. Using what they have learned throughout the unit, the families will incorporate Jewish wisdom about these 5 *middot* to help their character overcome life's everyday challenges. The character does not have to succeed in every circumstance—but, if they do not succeed, they should describe how they can use Jewish values to succeed next time.

Project requirements:

- Address all 5 *middot bayn adam l'chavero* from this unit: *Chesed*, *Achrayut*, *Savlanut*, *Tzedek*, and *Shmiat HaOzen*.
- Incorporate Jewish wisdom
- Create a story that is appropriate for a Kindergarten audience
  - Create a clear storyline.
  - Use simply vocabulary.
  - When you add details to your story, consider the things with which a kindergartener is familiar.
  - Imagine a character that is relatable to 5-6-year-olds.

**Prior to this lesson:** You might benefit from reminding families to bring the technology they used for the last workday, if applicable.

### SET-UP AND MATERIALS:

Acquire high-quality supplies for those families who choose to forego technology for traditional supplies. These may include:

- Paper and pencils for drafting the story
- Heavy paper for the final product
- Fine-tipped felt pens for writing the story
- Rulers for drawing straight lines
- High-quality colored pencils, markers, and other illustration tools
- A book-binding machine for the end of the project in unit 4. Alternatively, you could have the books professionally bound, depending on your congregation's resources.

Set up the room in a comfortable and professional way, with a large table and chairs for each family to work. You might have a materials station where they can come for supplies. If you are able to do so, providing refreshments would enhance the atmosphere. Just ascertain that families enjoy the refreshments during the drafting portion of the day and not when they're working on their final product.

### STRUCTURE OF THE DAY:

There are many ways that this day can be structured, and the leader can decide how to structure the work based on their families' interests and needs. Here is a straightforward suggestion that highlights the benefits of group work and feedback processes.



Step 1: Describe the project and day's schedule in greater detail and answer learners' questions.

Step 2: Redistribute the "tweets" that families wrote in lesson 3:1. Ask them to consider what they thought about the *middot bayn adam l'chavero* at the beginning of the unit, and how their perspectives on the *middot* have grown throughout their in-depth learning. They could use this time to write an additional tweet or two about each *middah* to help brainstorm before beginning their second chapter's draft.

Step 3: Invite families to spend a considerable amount of time writing a draft of their second chapter, using the scratch paper and pencils provided.

Step 4: Each family will form a feedback group with one other family. They can read each other's chapters and give feedback with the following Critical Friends Feedback sentence starters:

- I appreciate: What about your partner's work contributes towards the goal of the project? (example: I appreciate that you create a unique situation for each of the *middot*! OR...I appreciate that you integrated the *middot* into one situation)
- I notice: What can you observe about your partner's work in a non-judgmental way, and to simply bring it up for noticing? (example: I notice that Tevye the Turtle has a brother in his *anavah* scene and a sister in his *teshuvah* scene)
- I wonder: What questions come to your mind about your partner's work? This is a "wondering" rather than a suggestion. (example: I wonder if Tevye the Turtle has two siblings, a brother and a sister, or if this discrepancy was unintentional?)

Step 5: Invite families to revise their drafts, taking into consideration their feedback from step 3.

Step 6: Write story and draw illustrations on final product materials or using technology. **Note:** Educators may keep the final versions of chapter 2 in a safe space, instead of sending them home with families, to ensure that they stay in pristine condition.

## Unit 4: *Bayn Adam L'Makom* (Between One and God)

### UNIT EUs:

- *Middot bayn adam l'makom* enhance our spiritual journeys as we create and develop our connections with God.
- Our connections with God can inform how we treat ourselves and others.
- Integrating *middot bayn adam l'makom* into our lives enables us to make intentional and informed decisions every day.

### UNIT EQs:

- How can we understand Hebrew *middot* in concrete and relatable ways?
- How does Jewish tradition approach self-awareness and development?
- In what ways are traditional Jewish approaches to self-awareness relevant to our lives today?
- In what ways do *middot bayn adam l'makom* enhance our lives?
- How can *middot bayn adam l'makom* inspire Jews to make intentional and informed decisions every day?

### GOALS:

- Create experiences that allow learners to understand the *middot* in concrete and relatable ways.
- Guide learners as they uncover Jewish texts about *middot bayn adam l'makom* and discover how Jewish tradition can inform their own spiritual journeys.
- Encourage learners to think critically about everyday decisions through the lens of Jewish values.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate working definitions of each *middah* in the unit.
- Analyze Jewish texts that teach about *middot bayn adam l'makom* and apply these texts to their own theologies.
- Apply *middot* to everyday situations in their own lives and analyze their decisions through the lens of Jewish values.
- As a family, create a story book that chronicles a fictional character's daily struggles to make intentional and informed decisions based on *middot bayn adam l'makom*.

### ASSESSMENTS:

- Storybook, chapter *bayn adam l'makom* (lesson 4.6)

### MEMORABLE MOMENT:

- Lesson 4:5: *Bitachon* (Trust)  
*Note to Teacher:* This lesson and its Memorable Moment is best served by bringing your learners to a camp-like space outside of the synagogue. If you are within close proximity to a Jewish camp, we highly recommend renting out their ropes course for the day. You may also be able to find ropes course facilities at a non-Jewish camp, a gym, a college, or a professional team-building facility. Be aware that finding a place to hold this lesson will take advance planning. Your families will benefit from your efforts!

**LESSONS:**

1. Introduction to *Middot Bayn Adam L'Makom*, Between One and God
2. *Emunah* (Faith/belief)
3. *Kavod* (Honor/Respect)
4. *Emet* (Truth)
5. *Bitachon* (Trust)
6. Storybook Work Day

## Lesson 4:1: *Bayn Adam L'Makom* (Between One and God)

### GOALS:

- Introduce learners to God language, including *makom*, in order that they can understand the phrase *Bayn Adam L'Makom*.
- Guide learners to see the connection between this category, *middot bayn adam l'makom*, and the other categories they have studied, *middot bayn adam l'atzmo* and *middot bayn adam l'chavero*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- From where does the *makom* in *bayn adam l'makom* come?
- How does *bayn adam l'makom* connect to the previous categories we've studied?
- What other language do Jews use to describe God?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text that synonymizes God and *makom*.
- Create a visual aid that demonstrates the connections between the 3 categories (*bayn adam l'atzmo*, *l'chavero*, and *l'makom*).
- Explain the meaning of a Jewish name for God, choose one name that “works” for them, and explain why they feel connected to this name.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text that synonymizes God and *makom*.
- Complete a graphic organizer that demonstrates the connections between the 3 categories (*bayn adam l'atzmo*, *l'chavero*, and *l'makom*).
- Explain the meaning of a Jewish name for God, choose one name that “works” for them, and explain why they feel connected to this name.

### MATERIALS:

- Soothing music
- Printouts of Appendix 4:1A (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:1B (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendices 4:1C & D (1/family)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:1E (1/learner)
- *Tanachim*
- Art supplies of your choice (see lesson plan for more information)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Happy Place Guided Meditation
2. Same-Age Learning
3. Activity: God's Other Names
4. Educational Closure: Always There & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: HAPPY PLACE GUIDED MEDITATION

Welcome learners into the space with calming music and guide them through a meditation that transports them to their “happy place.” There are many examples of this available online. You might visit [www.yourzenlife.com](http://www.yourzenlife.com), the Smiling Mind App, the Calm app, or [www.movewith.com](http://www.movewith.com) for inspiration. You might also use this as an opportunity to connect with a meditation practitioner in your community and invite them to lead this set induction.

After the guided meditation, come back together for a group discussion:

- What specific emotions does this place make you feel in your heart? Why does this place bring you these emotions?
- What does this place make you feel in your soul? Why do you feel spiritual—content in your soul—in this place?
- What are some other places that make you feel spiritual, that bring contentment to your soul? What about them brings you to that spiritual state?

Introduce learners to the phrase *bayn adam l'makom* by identifying *makom* as the Hebrew word for “place” and also a name for God. Ask: Why do you think that we call God *makom*? They will delve into this question more in their same-age groups.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: MAKOM

Explain that one of the places we learn about God’s name *makom* is a story in the Torah about Jacob. Divide learners into *chevrutot* to study Genesis 28:10-22 from *Tanachim*. Their task is to read the verses answer the questions in Appendix 4:1A:

- What’s happening in this scene?
- How many times does the word “place” appear?
- What are the different meanings of the word “place” in the story?
- Re-read verse 17 and substitute the word “God” where you read “place.” Does this change the meaning? How?

After answering these questions, the learners can read the commentary below the questions and proceed to discuss that. When everyone has finished, come back together and ask learners to share their responses to the final question concerning their relationship to the commentary.

*Note to teacher:* This exercise intends to continue student’s growing competence using *Tanachim*. You may wish to give a brief review about how to navigate them before beginning. For instance, they may need to know which way the *Tanach* opens, how to find chapters and verses, how to understand which English and Hebrew correlate. It is also imperative that you choose a *Tanach* with accessible language so that they can understand the story.

### ACTIVITY: CATEGORIES CONNECTED

Based on the question you just discussed, re-introduce the phrase *bayn adam l'makom*, the name of this unit, and connect the language to the categories of the previous two units, *l'atzmo* and *l'chavero*. Write these phrases and their translations on a visual aid so that learners can see them clearly.

Invite learners to close their eyes and ask them to paint a picture in their mind's eye as an answer to the following question: How do you envision the relationship between *middot bayn adam l'makom*, *middot bayn adam l'atzmo*, and *middot bayn adam l'chavero*, values between you and God, you and yourself, and you and other people? Give wait time after you ask the question to allow learners time to process the question.

Give learners art materials and invite them to create a visual representation of the relationship between the 3 categories. It can be simple or complex, abstract or geometric. Encourage creativity! For instance, a learner might draw an infinity sign with the 3 categories swirling around within the loops to express an intertwining and cyclical nature of the 3 categories. Another might draw a road with the 3 categories in a linear pattern from one to the next. After the learners create their projects, invite them to share their representations.

*Note to teacher:* The visual representation can be created with the media of your choice. Make this judgment based on what your learners enjoy using, what resources you have available, and what you think best fits the activity. I recommend veering away from typical paper and markers, which can feel mundane and aren't likely to be kept.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: MAKOM

Explain that one of the places we learn about God's name *makom* a story in the Torah about Jacob. Divide learners into *chevrutot* to study Genesis 28:10-22 from *Tanachim*. Their task is to read the verses answer the questions on Appendix 4:1B.

After answering these questions, the learners can read the commentary below the questions and proceed to discuss that. When everyone has finished, come back together and ask learners to share their responses to the final question concerning their relationship to the commentary.

*Note to teacher:* This exercise intends to continue student's growing competence using *Tanachim*. You may wish to give a brief review about how to navigate them before beginning.

### ACTIVITY: CATEGORIES CONNECTED

Based on the question you just discussed, re-introduce the phrase *bayn adam l'makom*, the name of this unit, and connect the language to the categories of the previous two units, *l'atzmo* and *l'chavero*. Create a 3-part Venn diagram on the board with the 3 categories.

Ask: What is the relationship between *middot bayn adam l'makom*, values between people and God, to *middot bayn adam l'atzmo* and *middot bayn adam l'chavero*, values between a person and themselves,

and values between people? These relationships can include how the categories affect each other, which *middot* overlap the categories, questions they may have about the relationships between them, etc.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: GOD'S OTHER NAMES

Bring the families back together and explain that God has many names besides God and *makom*. In fact, God has 72 names in the *Tanach*! In this activity, each family will receive an information sheet (see Appendix 4:1C) with one of God's names. There are 6 names for God included in this guide—feel free to create more that resonate with you, or ask multiple families to do each name. Their task is to create an infomercial with the following information:

- Their name for God
- Why this is a meaningful name for God
- Why they should use this name for God

After they have spent time creating their infomercials, invite each family to present theirs to the group. When they are finished presenting their infomercials, divide into family groups with a faculty member or madrich(a) attached to each group and use the discussion guide in Appendix 4:1D to debrief the exercise.

- Which name(s) for God best represents the way that you view God, today?
- Why do you feel connected to that name/those names?
- If you could create another name for God that wasn't mentioned, what would it be?

Bring the group back together and explain that you will continue to explore your own connection to God next week when you study the *middah* of *emunah*.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: ALWAYS THERE & SIYUM

Introduce learners to the English words of Dan Nichols and Eighteen's *Always There* (appendix 4:1E) and ask the group: How do these lyrics connect to the idea of God as *makom*?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing *Always There* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### **Makom for 5<sup>th</sup> Graders**

Genesis 28:10-22

- What's happening in this scene?
- How many times does the word "place" appear?
- What are the different meanings of the word "place" in the story?
- Re-read verse 17 and substitute the word "God" where you read "place." Does this change the meaning? How?

Read this commentary on the story:<sup>9</sup>

The word *makom*, which repeats over and over both in the Akedah scene (Genesis 22) and in this portion about Jacob, appears earlier in the Torah. And while it is often just a general description of place, this same word is often used in an even more specific sense than it is here, referring to God:

"And he [Jacob] arrived at **the place**:" Why is God called *Makom*? Because God is the place of the world and the world is not God's place. (Yalkut Shimoni Vayetze *remez* 117)

- What does Yalkut Shimoni mean when he says that "God is the place of the world"?
- What does Yalkut Shimoni mean when he says that "the world is not God's place"?
- Put together, what does it mean that "God is the place of the world," but "the world is not God's place"?
- If God is "the place of the world," how does that affect us?

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<sup>9</sup> Language adapted to better serve a 5<sup>th</sup> grade reading level.



### Makom for Parents

Genesis 28:10-22

- Summarize the events of the scene.
- Note where the word “place” (*makom*, מקום) appears. How does *makom* function differently in each instance?
- Reread verses 16 and 17. Note the 2 instances of *makom*. What meaning undergirds Jacob’s explanations?

Read this commentary on the story:

“The word *makom* which recurs over and over both in the Akedah scene (Genesis 22) and in our present portion, appears earlier in the Torah. And while it is often no more than a general description of place, this same word is often used in an even more specific sense than in our present case, referring to God Godself:

"And he [Jacob] arrived at **the place**:" Why is God called *Makom*? Because God is the place of the world and the world is not God’s place. (Yalkut Shimoni Vayetze *remez* 117)

- What does Yalkut Shimoni mean when he says that “God is the place of the world and the world is not God’s place”?
- If Yalkut Shimoni’s interpretation is true, what repercussions does God’s immanence, God’s presence in all of creation, have on us?

**Informercial Discussion Questions**

- Which name(s) for God best represents the way that you view God, today?
  - Why do you feel connected to that name/those names?
- If you could create another name for God that wasn't mentioned, what would it be?

## Names for God<sup>10</sup>

**Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey (Combination of Hebrew Letters):** The most important of God's Names is the four-letter Name represented by the Hebrew letters Yud-Hey-Vav-Hey (YHVH). It is often referred to as the Ineffable Name, the Unutterable Name or the Distinctive Name. Linguistically, it is related to the Hebrew root Hey-Yud-Hey (to be), and reflects the fact that God's existence is eternal. In the *tanach*, this Name is used when discussing God's relation with human beings, and when emphasizing God's qualities of lovingkindness and mercy. It is frequently shortened to "Yah" (Yud-Hey), Yahu or Yeho (Yud-Hey-Vav), especially when used in combination with names or phrases, as in Yehoshua (Joshua, meaning "God is my Salvation"), Eliyahu (Elijah, meaning "my God is the God"), and Halleluyah ("praise God").

**Elohim:** The first Name used for God in the *tanach* is Elohim. The same word (or, according to Maimonides, a homonym of it) is used to refer to princes, judges, other gods, and other powerful beings. This Name is used in scripture when emphasizing God's might, God's creative power, and God's attributes of justice and rulership. Variations on this name include El, Eloha, Elohai (my God) and Elohaynu (our God).

**Ein Sof (No End):** This rare, mystical usage testifies to God's constancy, unchanging nature, eternal presence and separation from temporal history. Ein-Sof is a favorite term of kabbalists, mystical Jews, who often invoke it in their prayers.

**Shechinah (Divine Presence):** It emphasises the closeness of God and is sometimes claimed as the female essence of God, especially by Jewish feminists. Shechinah was said to belong with the Ark of the Covenant.

**Av Harachamim (Merciful Parent):** A related term is Rofeh Olam – Healer of the world. This usage implies that God actively participates in worldly affairs and strives to improve our lives.

**El:** The Canaanite word for god was El. This is not used often in the Bible except when it is coupled with another title. God is sometimes called El Elyon, literally God Most High. So the Psalmist declares, "I will give thanks to the Lord with my whole heart...I will sing praises to Thy name O Most High" (Psalm 9:1-2) and "Let them know that Thou alone whose name is yud-hey-vav-hey [Hebrew letters] art the Most High over all the world" (Psalm 83:18). Like the term Elohim, this title was taken over from the Canaanites who traditionally described El Elyon as the lord of all the gods. When the Jews took possession of the Promised Land, it was natural enough for them also to adopt this title for their One God.

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<sup>10</sup> Descriptions adapted from Jewish Virtual Library's article "The Name of God," The New South Wales Board of Jewish Education article called "Names of God," My Jewish Learning article called "The Names of God."

**Always There**  
**Dan Nichols & Eighteen**

If I turned away, would you wait for me?  
If I sometimes strayed, would you set me free?  
If I were to doubt you, would you still believe in me?  
If I saw the truth, would you somehow help me see?

My heart's filled with questions that my head can't answer,  
Still with my reservations I find you're always there.  
When I'm tiptoeing backward like a faithless dancer,  
Without hesitation I find you're always there.

Oh... Oh... Oh... Oh...

If I spoke to you, would you try to hear,  
The secrets lost inside of me, all my deepest fears.  
My doubt, your love, cold hands, warm touch,  
Closed mind, open heart, last chance, new start.

CHORUS: 2X

If I were to doubt you...

## Lesson 4:2: *Emunah* (Faith)

### GOALS:

- Create an atmosphere that supports the mental, emotional, and spiritual challenges of speaking about *emunah*.
- Facilitate conversations about learner's experiences with Godliness and how this can translate to their conceptions of God.
- Help learners discover their own conceptions of God, knowing that these conceptions may not be the conceptions of traditional Judaism, American society, or their families, and that they may change over time.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is the difference between faith in God and knowledge of God?
- How can we have faith in a God that we cannot see?
- What are awe-some experiences in my life that evoked Godliness?
- How do I conceive of God?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate the difference between faith in God and knowledge of God.
- Recall an awe-some experience they have had and explain what about it felt spiritual.
- Create a "Personal Theology for Now" that expresses their own approach to God by selecting descriptions that speak to them.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate the difference between faith in God and knowledge of God.
- Recall an awe-some experience they have had and analyze it through the lens of their conversation about *emunah* versus knowledge.
- Describe their personal challenges to *emunah* and propose ways in which to overcome these challenges.
- Create a "Personal Theology for Now" that expresses their own approach to God by selecting descriptions that speak to them.

### MATERIALS:

- Index cards (1/learner)
- Pens or pencils (1/learner)
- Visual aid & writing implements
- Printouts of Appendices 4:4A & B (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:4C (1/parent)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:4D, cut into individual quotes (1/learner)
- Colorful 11x17 Construction paper (1/learner)
- Various art supplies

## SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Amen!
2. Activity: אמן
3. Same-Age Learning
4. Activity: Personal Theology for Now
5. Educational Closure: Amen & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: AMEN!

Welcome learners into a calming learning space by giving each person an index card and pen and inviting them to find a personal space within the room. When everyone has arrived, invite them to spend 3-5 minutes writing a blessing that expresses their hopes for this learning community's experience today. This could include hopes such as "may we find new ways to understand other perspective," or "may we have fun learning together," or "I hope that we can all create a project together." The possibilities are wide. Encourage them to use the entire time for their blessing and to stay quiet when they are finished.

When the time has concluded, invite learners to gather in a large circle and tell them that each person will be invited to share their blessing with the group. (This could take place in 2 or 3 circles, depending on the size of your group). If they agree with the group member's blessing, they should say "Amen!" when the blessing concludes. You may also note that, if they choose, they can "pass" on saying their blessing aloud when their turn comes and can still participate in the "Amens" for other people's blessings.

### ACTIVITY: אמן

Gather all learners together in an area with access to a visual aid. Write the Hebrew letters aleph, mem, and nun on the board and ask learners to identify these letters. Ask: What do these words spell? (Answer: Amen!)

Explain that these root letters aleph, mem, and nun, also spell another Hebrew word, *emunah*. In English *emunah* means faith in God. Some people also translate it to belief or knowledge, but in Jewish thought "faith" seems a more accurate translation. Ask: What's the connection between *amen*, which we said to each other's blessings, and *emunah*, faith?

Explain that today's lesson will focus on the idea of *emunah*, faith in God, and will require everyone to think deeply about their own spiritual experiences and share these with each other. A safe space is necessary to create this accepting community. If someone wrote a blessing about the learning community today being open-minded or inclusive, you can reference that during this discussion about safe space.

*Note to teacher:* This may be good time to review your community agreements, or you might save that for the beginning of the same-age learning block. Use your discretion to decide which is more beneficial for your learners

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: KNOWLEDGE VS. FAITH VENN DIAGRAM

Create a venn diagram on the board with one side labeled “knowledge” and the other labeled “faith.” Give learners the *daf* in appendix 4:4A and invite them to read the definitions silently. When everyone has finished, ask them to help you fill in the diagram. What is knowledge, according to the passage? What is faith, according to the passage? What associations are unique to them? What do they have in common?

Explain that Reform Judaism emphasizes faith in God instead of knowledge of God. Ask: How does Reform Judaism’s emphasis on faith, instead of knowledge, affect us, as Jewish people? If they do not come to the idea right away, guide them to a discussion that reflects our ability, as Jewish people, to have faith in a higher power that we cannot see or touch, and that we may not know that much about. Some Jews may have deep faith that’s based on knowledge—maybe they have experienced God in a way that made them confident in God’s existence—while other Jews may only have felt moments of awe without knowing for sure that it was God’s presence, and still others may be unsure if they have ever experienced God’s presence in their lives, but have faith in other people or in their own processes.

### ACTIVITY: AWE-SOME WHOA-MENTS

Explain that sometimes, people associate *emunah*, faith in God, with the word *yirah*, awe. Write “awe” on the board. Ask: When have you heard the word “awe”? (Someone will likely answer: in the word awesome!). The word “awesome” comes from the word “awe,” *yirah* in Hebrew, which is found all throughout the Hebrew Bible. The moments we see the word *yirah* are often the same times we would say “whoa!” to show amazement or wonder. Ask: In what types of awe-inspiring situations would you say “whoa”? If we say “whoa” in moments of awe, what can we infer about the meaning of “awe”? After learners have explored this question, invite them to turn over their *daf* (appendix 4:4A) to find a definition of “awe” and ask them to read it. Ask: What should we add to our definition of awe based on this definition?

Find the quote below the definition of awe. Ask learners to read it and turn to a neighbor to discuss: What do you think Heschel means when he says that awe comes before faith?

### ACTIVITY: OUR AWE-SOME WHOA-MENTS

Explain that we may not yet know what God is, but we can experience whoa-ments that help us develop *emunah* in a higher power, whether we call that power God or something else. Divide learners into pairs and invite them to use the question starters in appendix 4:4B to have a discussion about their awe-some experiences. You might give a few examples of your own awe-some experiences to ease their transition.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: KNOWLEDGE VS. FAITH VENN DIAGRAM

Create a venn diagram on the board with one side labeled “knowledge” and the other labeled “faith.” Invite learners into a conversation about knowledge vs. faith using the venn diagram as a visual aid to record the conversation.

Explain that Reform Judaism emphasizes faith in God instead of knowledge of God. Ask: How does Reform Judaism’s emphasis on faith, instead of knowledge, affect us, as Jewish people? If they do not come to the idea right away, guide them to a discussion that reflects our ability, as Jewish people, to have faith in a higher power that we cannot see or touch, and that we may not know that much about. Some Jews may have deep faith that’s based on knowledge—maybe they have experienced God in a way that made them confident in God’s existence—while other Jews may only have felt moments of awe without knowing for sure that it was God’s presence, and still others may be unsure if they have ever experienced God’s presence in their lives.

### ACTIVITY: AWE-SOME!

Write this quote from Heschel on the board:

“Awe precedes [comes before] faith; it is the root of faith. We must be guided by awe to be worthy of faith.”

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who is Man?* (1965)

Invite learners to divide into *chevrotot* to discuss the quote’s meaning and their opinion of the quote’s truth.

### ACTIVITY: OUR AWE-SOME MOMENTS

Explain that sometimes, people associate *emunah*, faith in God, with the word *yirah*, awe. Awe-inspiring moments can help us develop *emunah* in a higher power, whether we call that power God or something else. Divide learners into pairs and invite them to use the discussion questions in appendix 4:4C, Our Awe-some Moments, to have a discussion about their awe-some experiences.

When was a time that you felt awe?

Why was that moment spiritual for you?

How did this moment reinforce your knowledge of God, your *emunah* in God, or neither of the two?

What other moments reinforced this relationship, or lack thereof, to your higher power?

What successes have you had with developing personal *emunah*? What challenges have you faced?

In what ways could you overcome your challenges with *emunah*?



## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: PERSONAL THEOLOGY FOR NOW

**Set Up:** Place baskets around the room for the various theological quotes. Fill each basket with many copies of a quote from Appendix 4:4D. Gather large sheets of construction paper (11x17) and a variety of art supplies.

After exploring the concept of *emunah* in God, learners will have a chance to develop a “Personal Theology for Now,” with the idea that our conceptions of God are constantly developing and that this theology will reflect what they feel now, today. It is key for learners to know that there is no right way to do this project, just as there is no right way to have *emunah*.

Invite learners to explore the quotes around the room and use the art supplies to create their “Personal Theology for Now.”

*Note to teacher:* On a personal note, I feel that this project can be incredibly meaningful for the families and can be a keepsake in their lives. I created a Personal Theology board when I was in 7<sup>th</sup> grade and it remained on my bedroom wall until my family’s home was sold in college! Encourage families to put effort into their artistry. In addition, this project will come into play during next week’s lesson on *Bitachon*.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: AMEN & SIYUM

Introduce learners to the English words of Noam Katz’s *Amen* (appendix 4:4E) and ask the group: To which of the lines in this song can you confidently say *amen*? (choose 1)

Wrap up the day’s learning with closing remarks. Sing *Amen* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

## Knowledge Vs. Faith<sup>11</sup>

### Faith

Noun

1. confidence or trust in a person or thing: faith in another's ability.
2. belief that is not based on proof:  
Ex. He had faith that the hypothesis would be substantiated by fact.
3. belief in God or in the doctrines or teachings of religion:  
Ex. the firm faith of the Pilgrims.
4. belief in anything, as a code of ethics, standards of merit, etc.:  
Ex. to be of the same faith with someone concerning honesty.
5. a system of religious belief:  
Ex. the Christian faith; the Jewish faith.
6. the obligation of loyalty or fidelity to a person, promise, engagement, etc.:  
Ex. Failure to appear would be breaking faith.
7. the observance of this obligation; fidelity to one's promise, oath, allegiance, etc.:  
Ex. He was the only one who proved his faith during our recent troubles.

### Knowledge

Noun

1. acquaintance with facts, truths, or principles, as from study or investigation; general erudition:  
Ex. knowledge of many things.
2. familiarity or conversance, as with a particular subject or branch of learning:  
Ex. A knowledge of accounting was necessary for the job.
3. acquaintance or familiarity gained by sight, experience, or report:  
Ex. a knowledge of human nature.
4. the fact or state of knowing; the perception of fact or truth; clear and certain mental apprehension.
5. awareness, as of a fact or circumstance:  
Ex. He had knowledge of her good fortune.
6. something that is or may be known; information:  
Ex. He sought knowledge of her activities.
7. the body of truths or facts accumulated in the course of time.

### Awe

Noun

1. an overwhelming feeling of wonder, admiration, fear, etc., produced by that which is grand,
  - inspiring, extremely powerful, or unbelievable.

“Awe precedes [comes before] faith; it is the root of faith. We must be guided by awe to be worthy of faith.”

- Abraham Joshua Heschel, *Who is Man?* (1965)

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<sup>11</sup> Definitions adapted from Dictionary.com and merriam-webster.com.

**Our Awe-some WHOA-ments**

A time I felt awe and thought “whoa!” is...

This moment felt spiritual because...

In this moment, I felt connected to...

Thinking about this moment makes me feel...

Another moment that gives me the same feelings is...

In this moment, I wondered...

Now when I think about that moment, I wonder...

I can recreate the experience of that moment by...

### **Our Awe-some Moments**

When was a time that you felt awe?

Why was that moment spiritual for you?

How did this moment reinforce your knowledge of God, your *emunah* in God, or neither of the two?

What other moments reinforced this relationship, or lack thereof, to your higher power?

What successes have you had with developing personal *emunah*? What challenges have you faced?

In what ways could you overcome your challenges with *emunah*?

### Quotes for a Personal Theology for Now

It is a person's duty to love and to fear God, even without hope of reward or fear of punishment. (Maimonides, 1135-1204)

God is that aspect of reality which elicits from us the best that is in us and enables us to bear the worst that can befall us. (Mordechai Kaplan, 1881-1983)

I cannot believe in a God who wants to be praised all the time. (Friedrich Nietzsche, 1844-1900)

Service of God consists in what we do to our neighbor. (Leo Baeck, 1873-1956)

God creates order; it is people who create chaos. (Rabbi Jonathan Sacks, 1948-present)

When two people relate to each other authentically and humanly, God is the electricity that surges between them. (Martin Buber, 1878-1965)

Awe rather than faith is the cardinal [most important] attitude of the religious Jew. (Abraham Joshua Heschel, 1907-1972)

To one who has faith, no explanation is necessary. To one without faith, no explanation is possible. (Thomas Aquinas, 1224-1274)

Morality is of the highest importance—but for us, not for God (Albert Einstein, 1879-1955)

Even now, there are still days so beautiful, I *almost* believe in God. (Ann Hood, *Comfort: A Journey Through Grief*, 1956-present)

I don't want to believe. I want to know. (Carl Sagan, 1934-1996)

The best remedy for those who are afraid, lonely or unhappy is to go outside, somewhere where they can be quiet, alone with the heavens, nature and God. Because only then does one feel that all is as it should be. (Anne Frank, 1929-1945)

Pray as though everything depended on God. Work as though everything depended on you. (Saint Augustine, 354-430)

If it turns out that there is a God...the worst that you can say about him is that basically he's an underachiever. (Woody Allen, 1935-present)

It is this belief in a power larger than myself and other than myself which allows me to venture into the unknown and even the unknowable. (Maya Angelou, 1928-2014)

Sometimes it's easy to lose faith in people. And sometimes one act of kindness is all it takes to give you hope again. (Randa Abdel-Fattah, 1979- present)

**Amen**  
**By Noam Katz**

When we look to God above...Amen  
 When we search for truth and love...Amen  
 When we all just get along  
 Then we let ourselves be strong  
 When we can unite in song...Amen, Amen (A-men)

Chorus: Amen, Amen (6x)

When we change the world to come...Amen  
 When we dance with harp and drum...Amen  
 When we share a precious word  
 Then we let our voices be heard  
 When we mend our shattered world...Amen, Amen (Chorus)

Bridge: When we bless each other in word and deed  
 When we lift the fallen and those in need  
 When we answer, "If not now, then when?"  
 We heal the world—TIKKUN OLAM—and shout it out again...Amen  
 (Chorus)

Break:

When we look to God above (when we look to God above)  
 When we fill our hearts with love (when we fill our hearts with love)  
 When we put an end to war (when we put an end to war)  
 When we choose to fight no more (when we choose to fight no more)  
 When we sing our victory song (when we sing our victory song)  
 When we feel like we belong (when we feel like we belong)  
 When we work for peace again (when we work for peace again)

Then we can finally say, "Amen!" ...Amen...(Chorus - 2x)  
 Ending: Amen, Amen, AMEN!

## Lesson 4:3: *Kavod* (Honor)

### GOALS:

- To demonstrate that every person deserves *kavod* because every person is God's handiwork and is holy.
- To help learners develop concrete ways in which they can show *kavod* to God, others, and themselves.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *kavod*?
- How can *kavod* to God inspire *kavod* to others and ourselves?
- How can we show *kavod* to God in our everyday lives?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text about *kavod* and apply it to their lives.
- Hypothesize tangible ways in which they can show *kavod* to God, others, and themselves.
- Identify the ways in which they show *kavod* in their everyday lives and propose new methods of cultivating *kavod* in their families.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text about *kavod* and apply it to their lives.
- Develop concrete ways in which they can show *kavod* to God, others, and themselves.
- Propose ways they can be *kavod* role models for their children.
- Identify the ways in which they show *kavod* in their everyday lives and propose new methods of cultivating *kavod* in their families.

### MATERIALS:

- Siddurim
- Printouts of Appendix 4:3A (1/learner)
- Collage materials
  - Blank construction paper
  - Newspapers
  - Magazines
  - Catalogues
- Large visual aid
- Printouts of Appendix 4:3B (1/family)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: *T'fillah* Choreography
2. Same-Age Learning
3. *Kavod* in our Home
4. Educational Closure & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: T'FILLAH CHOREOGRAPHY

As learners enter space, create a prayerful atmosphere. Engage learners in a short *t'fillah* that intentionally includes prayers with frequent choreography such as: *Barchu*, *Shema*, *Avot V'Imahot*, *G'vurot*, *Kedusha*, *Aleinu*. The intention of this activity is to show learners that prayer choreography is one way that Jewish people show *kavod*, respect, to God through our Jewish actions.

After the *t'fillah*, engage the learners in a discussion:

- In what ways did you use your body during this *t'fillah*?
- Why do you think that our Jewish ancestors created movements to go along with the *t'fillah*? (Ideally a learner will allude to the idea of respect. If not, guide them there by asking a follow up question: What do bowing and standing before God reflect about our relationship with God?)
- Is respect/honor an important part of the prayer experience? If so, why? If not, what other parts of your life allow you to honor God and/or the Jewish people?

Introduce the idea of *kavod* as the Hebrew word for “honor” or “respect.” The Hebrew word *kavod* comes from the root word *kaved*, which means “heavy,” In English and in Hebrew, the word heavy can signify that something is important and has worth (consider how heavy gold is!). Likewise, when we show *kavod*, we are recognizing that God and God’s creations are important and have worth, have something to contribute to this world. *Kavod* is referred to throughout Jewish tradition as a descriptor for action rather than feeling. Throughout the day’s lesson, the learners will have the opportunity to uncover what *kavod* in action looks like.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Re-introduce learners to the figure of Maimonides and invite learners to engage with the text in Appendix 4:2A, the Blessing about Differences, in *chevrutot*.

Come together as a group and share answers to the second question: What lesson do you think this text is trying to teach us about God? And what could it teach us about God’s creations?

Pose a final question: What can this text and the idea of *kavod* teach us about the relationship between ourselves and God?

### ACTIVITY: KAVOD COLLAGES

In *Everyday Holiness*, Alan Morinis teaches that one way to enact *kavod* is to approach our world with an *ayin tov*, an eye towards goodness. This means seeing God’s creations (nature, people, ourselves) as the holy handiwork of God that they are. In the text study before this, your students spoke about this text’s lessons about God and God’s creations. Their final question likely spurred answers that relate directly to the idea of *ayin tov*. If they didn’t, this is a good opportunity to introduce the concept. Now, this activity will make the leap from theories of *kavod* and *ayin tov* to visual representation, helping students discover tangible ways to show *kavod* to God, others, and themselves.



Provide students with plenty of magazines, newspapers, and catalogs for their collages. Their prompt for the collage is: How to you show *kavod* to God, others, and yourselves by using your *ayin tov*, your eye towards goodness? Remind students that they will be sharing their intentions and work with the group. There is no correct collage. Encourage creativity!

When finished, invite students to present their work to the group and share why they chose the images that they chose.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: A JEWISH PERSPECTIVE

Re-introduce learners to the figure of Maimonides and invite learners to engage with the text in Appendix 4:2A, the Blessing about Differences, in *chevrotot*.

Come together as a group and share answers to the second question: What lesson do you think this text is trying to teach us about God? And what could it teach us about God's creations?

Pose a final question: What can this text and the idea of *kavod* teach us about the relationship between ourselves and God?

### ACTIVITY: SHOWING & MODELING KAVOD

The question now becomes how to take the theory of *kavod* to practice. On a visual aid draw 3 columns titled "Makom (God)," "Chaver (others)," and "Atzmi (yourself)." Invite learners to brainstorm this question using the 3 columns: How can you show *kavod* to God, others, and yourself?

When they are finished brainstorming, bring learners into new *chevrotot* with their life partners. Those who are independent can pair up together. Move to a space with a significant width or length that takes 1-2 minutes to stroll across and back. The educator will pose a question and the first member of the *chevrotah* will answer the question while strolling to the other side of the space. When they reach the other side, the second member of the *chevrotah* will answer the question while strolling back to the starting points. They are meant to speak without interruption during the entire length of their stroll. This will happen 4 times with the following 4 questions. The intention is to allow learners to move while discussing a weighty issue because often it becomes easier to speak about such issues while side by side, rather than face to face.

- In what ways do you think you have been a successful role model of *kavod* for your children?
- In what ways do you think you have missed the mark for being a successful role model of *kavod* for your children?
- Imagine that you have time traveled 10 years into the future. How do you hope that your children show *kavod*?
- What traits within yourself must you develop in order to be a good role model of *kavod* for your children, so that they can become their best selves in the future? How will these traits help you be a better role model?

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: *KAVOD* IN OUR HOME

This activity allows learners to take what they've learned about *kavod* and bring it into their everyday home lives. Using the chart in Appendix 4:3B learners will gather into family groups to discuss how to infuse their everyday actions with *kavod* and create tangible steps for doing this.

When families are done working independently, have each family share with the group one everyday task and how they will infuse it with *kavod* to God and *kavod* to other people.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: & *SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the English words of song "You Shall be Holy" by Mah Tovv. Ask the group: What is one way you will be holy by showing *kavod* this week?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing "You Shall be Holy" and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### **Kavod: A Blessing about Differences**

*One who sees...people with disfigured faces or limbs, recites the blessing, 'Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who makes people different.'*

*One who sees a person who is blind or lame, or who is covered with sores and white pustules (or similar ailment), recites the blessing, 'Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who is a righteous judge.'*

*But if they were born that way (with the disability), one says, 'Blessed are you, Adonai our God, Ruler of the Universe, who makes people different.'*

From Mishneh Torah, Hilchot B'rachot 10:12, based on B'rachot 58b

Questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think Maimonides created this blessing?
2. What lesson do you think this text is trying to teach us about God? And what could it teach us about God's creations?
3. Do you agree with the text's lessons? Why or why not?
4. What is one way in which you are differently abled than other kids your age?
5. Imagine that you had to tell your class about your different ability. How do you hope that they'll show you *kavod* in this moment and in the future?

**Kavod In Our Home**

<b>What's something you do daily or weekly in your home?</b>	<b>How do you currently show <i>kavod</i> during this activity?</b>	<b>How can you infuse that activity with greater <i>kavod</i> to God?</b>	<b>How can you infuse that activity with greater <i>kavod</i> to other people?</b>	<b>How could infusing this with greater <i>kavod</i> benefit your family?</b>
<b>Example:</b> Eat meals	Sit at the table as a family and put away cell phones	Say blessings before and after meals	Put more effort into our active listening skills; let every person share something meaningful	We could create even stronger bonds with each other; we could feel more grateful for our food

**You Shall be Holy**  
**By Mah Tovu**

Hebrew text from Leviticus 19:2

God said to Moses, tell the people  
 God said to Moses, tell the world  
 The right way to act, the kind way to give  
 The right way to think about how to live

CHORUS: And you shall be Holy, for I am holy  
 And you shall be Holy, I am your God  
 It's not for a reward, it's not the price of heaven  
 I created you to be like me, to make a better world

CHORUS

K'doshim, T'hiyu, Ki Kadosh, Ani Adonai Eloheychem

CHORUS

And you shall love your neighbor as yourself  
 Love your neighbor as yourself  
 Life has a meaning, God is in this place  
 The commandment to be holy  
 Can be found in your neighbor's face

CHORUS (2x)

## Lesson 4:4: *Emet* (Truthfulness)

### GOALS:

- Help learners navigate Jewish texts about *emet*.
- Support learners as they discover their own truth by considering their relationship with God
- Give opportunities for learners to use critical thinking and problem-solving skills in relation to case studies of *emet*.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What does Jewish tradition teach about *emet*?
- What is the relationship between *emet* and our connections to God?
- How can the *middah* of *emet* help us make intentional and informed decisions in our everyday lives?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text about *emet*.
- Explore through artistic means the relationship between *emet* and connection with God.
- Assess situations in which *emet* poses a challenge and recommend ways to resolve the challenge.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Analyze a Jewish text about *emet* through the lens of their own lives and their children's lives.
- Articulate the emotional and spiritual underpinnings of *emet* and lack of *emet*.
- Assess situations in which *emet* poses a challenge and recommend ways to resolve the challenge.

### MATERIALS:

- Printouts of Appendix 4:4A (1/every 5 learners)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:4B (1/learner)
- Printouts of Appendix 4:4C (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Blank paper (3/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Pens/pencils (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Two Truths and a Lie
2. Same-Age Learning
3. *Emet* Freeze Frame
4. Educational Closure: *Truth & Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: TWO TRUTHS AND A LIE

Gather learners in diverse-age groups (not family groups) of 5 people and teach them how to play Two Truths and a Lie. Include at least one teacher or madrich(a) with each group. Each person in the group will introduce themselves by stating two truths and one lie about themselves. The rest of the participants have to guess which statement is a lie.

For example, a participant might say three statements: I was born in Hawaii (truth), I have 3 siblings (lie-only 2!), and I won a gymnastics tournament last week (truth). The other participants must guess which is the lie. If they guess the second statement, "I have 3 siblings," they would be correct. If they guess one of the others, they would be incorrect.

After the activity, have teachers and madrichim lead a discussion with the following questions (also in Appendix 4:4A):

- Was it easier for you to think of truths or a lie? Why?
- How could you tell when somebody was lying versus when they were telling the truth? (notice body language, vocal tone, the quality of the statement, etc.)
- How did you feel in your body, heart, and mind when you were lying?
  - Follow up question if they don't say anything notable about the difference between lying and telling the truth: When you lie in real life, how do you feel in your body, heart, and mind?
- How do these feelings in your body, heart, and mind teach you about the value of truthfulness?

Introduce families to the idea of *emet*, truthfulness.

*Note to teacher:* As most people know, *emet* is both incredibly important to our everyday lives as virtuous people, and quite sticky because even truth, which many feel to be black and white, is not always clear. This lesson will focus mostly on the quality of *emet* and the way in which we, as Jews, can discover our own truth through our relationship with God. In this explanation, you may also want to bring up the idea of our consciences, the "still small voices" that help us understand our own truth. Some people believe this "voice" is the manifestation of Godliness. Many of the feelings about which they might have vocalized during the previous discussion can be perceived as their consciences in action. Feeling embarrassed, ashamed, or becoming red-faced may alert us to the fact that we have been untruthful to God, others, and ourselves.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

Divide the learners into *chevrutot* to work on the text study in Appendix 4:4B. Half of the *chevrutot* can study the first text and half can study the second text. Learners will read commentaries on their assigned verse to better understand its meaning. When they are finished, invite each group to share what they learned about *emet* from this verse now that they understand it better.

Share a third verse with the class, on the bottom of their *dapim*: "One who deals deceitfully shall not live in my house; one who speaks untruth shall not stand before my eyes." Then ask these questions:

- Who is the speaker in this verse? (God)
- What does the speaker mean by “my house” and “my eyes”? Are these literal houses and eyes?
- What is the speaker saying about someone who doesn’t tell the truth?
- What does this verse add to our conversation about *emet*?

### ACTIVITY: FREE-WRITE <sup>12</sup>

Introduce learners to the idea of tension. Everyone experiences times of dissonance between what is in their hearts and what they say aloud. This happens often when people lie—what is in their heart does not necessarily come out. These experiences can be challenging, and can also help us learn about ourselves and our personal ethics. It is crucial to reflect on the experiences to use them as a learning opportunity.

Give learners each a copy of Appendix 4:4C and a few extra pieces of paper. They will have time to do a free-write about the experiences. The prompt is:

Write about a time when there was a dissonance between what was in your heart and what you said. Why did you speak untruthfully? How did you feel about it afterwards? How did this situation affect your relationship with God in that moment? How does it affect your relationship with God now?

If you feel that your learners are mature enough to discuss these with each other, you can do so. If you choose to hold a discussion, it would be an ideal time to review your community *brit*, focusing specifically on the agreement that what is said in the room stays in the room.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: JEWISH PERSPECTIVES

Divide the learners into *chevrutot* to work on the text study in Appendix 4:4B. Half of the *chevrutot* can study the first text and half can study the second text. Learners will read commentaries on their assigned verse to better understand its meaning. When they are finished, invite each group to share what they learned about *emet* from this verse now that they understand it better.

Share a third verse with the class, on the bottom of their *dapim*: “One who deals deceitfully shall not live in my house; one who speaks untruth shall not stand before my eyes.” (Psalms 101:7) Then ask these questions:

- Who is the speaker in this verse? (God)
- What is the speaker saying about someone who doesn’t tell the truth?
- What does this verse add to our conversation about *emet*?

### ACTIVITY: GROUP DISCUSSION

Before holding this discussion, remind your learners of the Community *Brit* you created at the beginning of the curriculum, emphasizing the agreement that whatever is said in the space stays in the space. This

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<sup>12</sup> Adapted from Susan Freeman’s *Teaching Jewish Virtues*, page 78



conversation riffs off of the idea from the Psalms verse that one who speaks untruth takes themselves away from the presence of God, finding themselves in a negative space. Use the verse as a transition to this discussion.

Questions for discussion:

- Think about a time you spoke untruthfully with awareness. What motivated you to lie?
- What emotions lurk underneath our urge to lie?
- If we tell the truth, what consequences might we face? If we lie, what consequences might we face?
- How does truth, or lack thereof, affect your relationship with God?
- In what ways can you align your behavior with your perception of Godliness?
- In what ways do you hope that your children continue to develop their sense of *emet*? How can you help them in this development?

Give parents time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### ACTIVITY: *EMET FREEZE FRAME*

In this game, volunteers will act out the scenes in Appendix 4:4D. If someone in the “audience” believes that they should be taking a different course of action, they can yell “Freeze!” and tap someone out of the scene, taking their place. They resume the scene with a new course of action.

After each scene, ask the person who jumped in: Why did you jump in? Why did you choose to change the scene that way?

After the activity, ask the whole group:

- Was this game easy or difficult? Why?
- How did you decide when to yell freeze? How did you decide how to alter the scene?
- What does this game teach us about *emet*?

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *TRUTH & SIYUM*

Introduce learners to the English words of Dan Nichols’s *Truth* (appendix 4:4E) and ask the group: What do you think the songwriters mean when they say “to be wise enough to know what we don’t know”? How can this help us discover *emet*?

Wrap up the day’s learning with closing remarks. Sing *Truth* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.

### Two Truths and a Lie Discussion Questions

- Was it easier for you to think of truths or a lie? Why?
- How could you tell when somebody was lying versus when they were telling the truth? (notice body language, vocal tone, the quality of the statement, etc.)
- How did you feel in your body, heart, and mind when you were lying?
  - Follow up question if they don't say anything notable about the difference between lying and telling the truth: When you lie in real life, how do you feel in your body, heart, and mind?
- How do these feelings in your body, heart, and mind teach you about the value of truthfulness?

## Jewish Perspectives

### Text #1

**You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor. (Exodus 20:13)**

Sforno comments:

This includes spreading gossip about people behind their backs, something generally known as “defaming someone, ruining their reputation.” The main meaning in our verse is telling a lie when testifying against another person.<sup>13</sup>

- What does it mean to “bear false witness,” according to Sforno?
- Some people also translate this verse as “do not lie to your neighbor.” Do you think this definition or Sforno’s definition is more helpful for us, as readers? Why?

### Text #2

**Rabbi Shimon the son of Gamliel would say: By three things is the world sustained: law, truth and peace. As is stated (Zachariah 8:16), "Truth, and a judgement of peace, you should administer at your [city] gates." (Pirke Avot 1:18)**

Rabbenu Yonah comments:

"On truth": A person should walk in the paths of repentance - as God is true and God’s Torah is true - and walk in the ways of the Holy One, blessed be God, of truth. And a person should also go in that path, as it is stated in Deuteronomy, "and you shall go in God’s ways." And the ancient rabbis, may their memory be blessed, said that even in the recounting of everyday words a person should not lie [...] because a person who trains his tongue to speak lies about a matter that is not very important will not be able to speak the truth when important issues come up; as it is his mouth that will speak and his mouth is being ruled by old habits.<sup>14</sup>

- What does Rabbenu Yonah tell us about truth? Why should we be devoted to the truth? (There are multiple right answers for this!)
- Do you agree with Rabbenu Yonah? Why or why not?

### Text #3

**One who deals deceitfully [dishonestly] shall not live in my house; one who speaks untruth shall not stand before my eyes. (Psalms 101:7)**

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<sup>13</sup> Commentary adapted from English on Sefaria.com.

<sup>14</sup> Commentary adapted from English on Sefaria.com

**Free-Write**

Write about a time when there was a dissonance between what was in your heart and what you said. Why did you speak untruthfully? How did you feel about it afterwards? How did this situation affect your relationship with God in that moment? How does it affect your relationship with God now?

### **Emet Freeze Frame Scenes**

Scene #1: 1 kid actor and 2 adult actors

Your best friend Miri usually comes home from school right away, at 3:00pm. One day, it's already 4:00pm and she hasn't come home, and her parents are worried. They call you with the hope that you'll know where Miri is. You know that Miri is hanging out with the person she has a crush on at the park, but you don't want Miri to get in trouble.

In this moment, Miri's parents are calling you to tell you the situation and ask for your help.

Scene #2: 1 kid actor and 1 adult actor

You have an essay to write for school and you used some information from a website. You kind of remember your teacher saying something about citing online sources in your essays, but you don't remember how to do it, so you just copy and paste the website information and move on.

Two days after the essay is due, the teacher pulls you aside and says you have done something called plagiarism, which is when you copy someone else's work without giving them credit. She reminds you about the lesson on plagiarism in class.

In this moment, you're sitting at her desk together and she asks why you plagiarized.

Scene #3: 2 kid actors

Your brother has a big presentation at school today and he's nervous about it. Dad bought him a new shirt for the occasion and he's seeing it for the first time. You saw it yesterday and think it will look terrible on him, but you don't want to make him feel more nervous.

In this moment, he comes out of his room and says "how do I look?" As expected, the shirt is unflattering.

Scene #4: 4 kid actors

You have a close group of 4 friends, but lately one of the friends, Anna, has been driving everyone crazy. One day, you and the others decide to hang out at the mall without Anna. Right when you and the others arrive at the mall, Anna texts to ask if you're free today and want to do something.

In this moment, you and the 3 others are looking at Anna's text and deciding what to do.

Scene #5: 2 adult actors

You're at a dinner party and a friend asks about your beautiful new bracelet. This friend is wealthy and is always concerned with money. He wants to know how much your new bracelet costs so that he can buy one for his partner. You know it did not cost very much, but you feel self-conscious about your own finances and you want to impress your wealthy friend.

In this moment, your friend says "Wow, that's a gorgeous new bracelet! My partner would love that. How much did it cost?"

Scene #6: 3 kid or adult actors

You're hanging out with friends and everyone is telling hilarious stories about their pets. You want to join in on the fun, so you tell a partially-true story about your dog eating a whole challah from the counter. In reality, the dog only ate a bite of the challah, but you think that telling the story about a *whole* challah is much funnier. Suddenly a friend who was at your Shabbat dinner during the "incident of the dog eating challah" comes over and hears you fibbing.

In this moment, you're finishing up the story about the dog eating the whole challah. The friend who was there walks up and says, "what are you talking about? The dog only took a bite of the challah!"

**Truth**

Dan Nichols and Mason Cooper, 1996

The spirit of wisdom and understanding, to be wise enough to know what we don't know,  
The spirit of insight and knowledge, to have the sparking curiosity to find out

May our days and our years increase. May we find what we're looking for.  
May our days and our years increase. May we find what we're looking for.  
May we find what we're looking for.

The spirit of knowledge and reverence, to respect ourselves and the ones we love,  
May we overcome trouble, pain, and sorrow

Baruch atah Adonai makor ha-emet. Blessed Adonai, our God, Source of truth.

## Lesson 4:5: *Bitachon* (Trust)

**Note to Teacher:** This lesson and its Memorable Moment is best served by bringing your learners to a camp-like space outside of the synagogue. If you are within close proximity to a Jewish camp, we highly recommend renting out their ropes course for the day. You may also be able to find ropes course facilities at a non-Jewish camp, a gym, a college, or a professional team-building facility. **Be aware that finding a place to hold this lesson will take advance planning.** Your families will benefit from your efforts!

### GOALS:

- Concretize the idea of *bitachon*, trust in God, for the learners by connecting it to accessible ideas.
- Help learners discover how *bitachon* can fit into their conceptions of God.
- Help learners uncover the other virtues that *bitachon* can generate.
- Support learner's exploration of the balance between *bitachon* and their own efforts.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- What is *bitachon*?
- How can *bitachon* fit into my conception of Godliness?
- How can *bitachon* enhance my life?
- How can I balance *bitachon* and prioritizing my own efforts?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate what *bitachon* is and how it fits into their own conceptions of God.
- Analyze the role of trust in their interpersonal relationships.
- Identify other virtues that *bitachon* can bring into their lives and analyze how these could help or not help them.
- Analyze situations in which they have to balance trust in others and make their own efforts to succeed.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Articulate what *bitachon* is and how it fits into their own conceptions of God.
- Identify other virtues that *bitachon* can bring into their lives and analyze how these could help or not help them.
- Explain ways in which *bitachon* can be challenging to achieve.
- Analyze situations in which they have to balance trust in others and make their own efforts to succeed.

### MATERIALS:

- Printouts of Appendix 4:5A (1 copy)
- Paper & Drawing supplies for 5<sup>th</sup> graders
- Paper & Pens for adults
- Printouts of Appendix 4:5B
- Any ropes course materials you need

## SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: *Bitachon b'Ivrit*
2. Same-age Learning
3. Memorable Moment: *Bitachon* on the Course
4. Educational Closure: *B'yado & Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: BITACHON B'IVRIT

**Setup:** Place the pictures from appendix 4:5A around the learning space.

Invite learners into the learning space and explain that today they will be learning about a concept called *bitachon*. *Bitachon* is a work used often in Israel today and the way Israelis use it can teach us about its foundational meaning. Ask them to spend 5 minutes looking at the pictures around the room, which represent various items in Israel that call themselves *bitachon* or one of its derivative words. Their task is to see what the pictures represent, what these things have in common, and to use the pictures to develop an idea of what *bitachon* might mean.

When they are finished, gather everyone together and ask:

- What institutions or items are on the pictures?
- What do these items have in common (other than their names all being based on *bitachon*!)?
- What might these various items teach us about the word *bitachon* and its meaning?

Expanding on any answers that head in a meaningful direction, explain the word *bitachon* and what it means in traditional Judaism, focusing on the idea of trust in God and the process of life.

Invite learners to come into informal buzz groups of 2-4 people who are near them and discuss the question:

- What role does trust play in your conception of God?

Explain that the concept of trust is complex, especially when we do not all have clearly defined conceptions of God or Godliness at this point in our lives (nor may we ever!). The learners will continue to explore the nuances of *bitachon* in our same-age groups.

*Note to teacher:* The same-age learning that follows will be shorter than usual in order to allot more time to the Memorable Moment, the *Bitachon* on the Course activities.

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: TRUST IN OUR LIVES

This activity is meant to help students draw a connection between people they trust, and what other virtues this trust generates, and the notion of *bitachon* and the virtues it can generate in their lives.



Invite learners to work independently on this activity. Their task is to draw a picture of a person or people they trust. In the drawing, they should creatively incorporate other emotions that this person makes them feel. They may write them, represent them through symbols, or another creative expression of these emotions.

For instance, I might draw a picture of my dad. Being able to trust him makes me feel secure in our relationship, feel love towards him, and feel confident that he'll help me when I'm in challenging situations.

Come back together as a group and ask each person to share their drawing. They should explain who they chose to draw and what emotions this person makes them feel.

### ACTIVITY: *BITACHON* FOR THE JEWS, *BITACHON* FOR ME

Explain that, just as trusting people in our lives can bring us other virtues, other beneficial qualities, developing *bitachon* can bring virtues into our lives. The Jewish people have understood this throughout our history. Though life has been difficult for the Jewish people, many Jews have kept their *emunah*, their faith in God, and their *bitachon*, their trust in God and God's process.

As a class, discuss the questions:

- When have the Jewish people shown *bitachon*? How did it help or not help them?
- When have the Jewish people not shown *bitachon*? How did it help or not help them?
- When have you felt or shown *bitachon*? How did it help or not help you?
- When have you not felt or shown *bitachon*? How did it help or not help you?
- Based on these questions and on your other life experiences, is *bitachon* always helpful? Why or why not?

*Note to teacher:* Depending on the prior Judaic knowledge of your learners, the first two discussion questions of this sequence may be difficult for them. If you know of specific topics taught in prior grades, like Torah stories or holidays, you can guide your learners in specific directions. For example, how did the Jewish people show *bitachon* during the story of Passover? Or, how did the Jewish people not show *bitachon* during the story of the golden calf?

During this discussion, do your best to translate learner's answers to virtues-based language. For instance, if they say that the Jewish people showed *bitachon* when they were slaves in Egypt because they counted on God to free them, and this made it easier for them to become free, you might emphasize that trust in God helped the Jewish people attain the virtue of freedom. This discussion is intentionally happening as a class because it is a complex topic and they will need you to unpack their answers on a higher level.

## Same-Age Learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: *BITACHON* IN OUR LIVES FREE-WRITE

Invite learners to consider a time when they felt *bitachon* (or something resembling it) and free-write about it with these guiding questions:

- Consider a time when you trusted someone, something, or some process. Describe this experience of *bitachon*.

- What facilitated the emergence of your *bitachon*?
- What affect did the feeling of *bitachon* have on you mentally, physically, and/or spiritually?
- Do you feel that the *bitachon* benefitted you or hindered you in this situation?
- 

In *chevrutot*, learners will get an opportunity to share their stories (as much or as little as they please).

### ACTIVITY: CHALLENGES OF BITACHON

Bring everyone back together and ask if anyone wants to share about their experience. Let learners share. Then pose the question:

- What challenges your *bitachon*?

*Note to teacher:* There is a distinct possibility that this conversation will develop in the direction of theodicy, the question of how a good and trustworthy God can permit evil to happen in this world. In preparation for such a conversation I recommend familiarizing yourself with some key works of progressive Jewish thought on the topic, including Rabbi Harold Kushner's *Why Bad Things Happen to Good People*, commentaries on the book of Job, and the rabbinic notion of eschatology. It may also head in the direction of *bitachon* vs. human efforts. This will be addressed in the next family activity. If you prefer not to turn this question into a broader group conversation, you may choose to gather resources that speak to this question and let learners have small-group conversations based on the texts you provide. Either way, this conversation has the potential to create deep and enduring connections between your learners, as it requires openness and vulnerability.

Give learners time to work on their Ethical Wills.

## Family Learning

### MEMORABLE MOMENT: BITACHON ON THE COURSE

This is where your camp setting comes into play. Work with the ropes course staff to plan a number of activities that rely on trust. These might include an obstacle course, a climbing tower with rappelling support, low course initiatives, etc. This is designed to be a Memorable Moment, engaging all of the learners in activities that promote bonding, are out of the ordinary from their normal learning, and enhance their understanding of trust by feeling it with their whole selves.

After the activities, reconvene the group for a discussion:

- How did trust in other people play a role in these activities?
- How did your own abilities play a role in these activities?
- Which did you rely on more, trust of your teammates or confidence in your own abilities?
- In life, do you tend to rely more on other people or on your own abilities? How does this benefit you? How does this hinder more?
- How can you find a balance between trust and reliance on your own efforts?

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: B'YADO & SIYUM

Introduce learners to the English words of Craig Taubman's *B'yado* (appendix 4:5B) and ask the group: How does the songwriter Craig Taubman conceive of *bitachon* in this song?

Wrap up the day's learning with closing remarks. Sing *B'yado* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.













**B'yado**  
**Craig Taubman**

B'yado afkid ruchi  
 B'eit ishan ve'a'i'rah

Ve'im ruchi gevati  
 Adonai li v'lo irah

Ve'im ruchi gevati  
 Adonai li v'lo irah

My soul I give to you  
 My spirit in your care

Draw me near  
 I shall not fear  
 Hold me in your hands

Draw me near  
 I shall not fear  
 Safely in your hand

My soul I give to you / B'yado afkid ruchi  
 My spirit in your care / B'eit ishan ve'a'i'rah

Draw me near / Ve'im ruchi  
 I shall not fear / Gevati

Adonai li v'lo irah / Hold me in your hands  
 Ve'im ruchi gevati / I shall not fear  
 Adonai li v'lo irah / Safely in your hand

## Lesson 4:6: Storybook Work Day

This lesson is a continuation of the Authentic Assessment, the Storybook.

*Note to teacher:* At the end of this lesson, all Storybooks will need to be finalized so that you can get them bound, printed, or completed in whatever way necessary in preparation for Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day.

**The learners' task** in this lesson is to write the third chapter of the book, chronicling the adventures of the character as they encounter the 4 *middot* from unit 4: *Emunah*, *Kavod*, *Emet*, and *Bitachon*. Using what they have learned throughout the unit, the families will incorporate Jewish wisdom about these 4 *middot* to help their character overcome life's everyday challenges. The character does not have to succeed in every circumstance—but, if they do not succeed, they should describe how they can use Jewish values to succeed next time.

Project requirements:

- Address all 4 *middot bayn adam l'makom* from this unit: *Emunah*, *Kavod*, *Emet*, and *Bitachon*.
- Incorporate Jewish wisdom.
- Create a story that is appropriate for a Kindergarten audience.
  - Create a clear storyline.
  - Use simple vocabulary.
  - When you add details to your story, consider the things with which a kindergartener is familiar.
  - Imagine a character that is relatable to 5-6-year-olds.

**Prior to this lesson:** You might benefit from reminding families to bring the technology they used for the last workday, if applicable.

### SET-UP AND MATERIALS:

Acquire high-quality supplies for those families who choose to forego technology for traditional supplies. These may include:

- Paper and pencils for drafting the story
- Heavy paper for the final product
- Fine-tipped felt pens for writing the story
- Rulers for drawing straight lines
- High-quality colored pencils, markers, and other illustration tools
- A book-binding machine for the end of the project in unit 4. Alternatively, you could have the books professionally bound, depending on your congregation's resources.

Set up the room in a comfortable and professional way, with a large table and chairs for each family to work. You might have a materials station where they can come for supplies. If you are able to do so, providing refreshments would enhance the atmosphere. Just ascertain that families enjoy the refreshments during the drafting portion of the day and not when they're working on their final product.

### STRUCTURE OF THE DAY:

There are many ways that this day can be structured, and the leader can decide how to structure the work based on their families' interests and needs. Here is a straightforward suggestion that highlights the benefits of group work and feedback processes.

Step 1: Describe the project and day's schedule in greater detail and answer learners' questions.

Step 2: Invite families to spend a considerable amount of time writing a draft of their third chapter, using the scratch paper and pencils provided.

Step 3: Each family will form a feedback group with one other family. They can read each other's chapters and give feedback with the following Critical Friends Feedback sentence starters:

- I appreciate: What about your partner's work contributes towards the goal of the project? (example: I appreciate that you create a unique situation for each of the *middot*! OR...I appreciate that you integrated the *middot* into one situation)
- I notice: What can you observe about your partner's work in a non-judgmental way, and to simply bring it up for noticing? (example: I notice that Tevye the Turtle has a brother in his *anavah* scene and a sister in his *teshuvah* scene)
- I wonder: What questions come to your mind about your partner's work? This is a "wondering" rather than a suggestion. (example: I wonder if Tevye the Turtle has two siblings, a brother and a sister, or if this discrepancy was unintentional?)

Step 4: Invite families to revise their drafts, taking into consideration their feedback from step 3.

Step 5: Write story and draw illustrations on final product materials or using technology. **Note:** Educators may keep the final versions of chapter 3 in a safe space, instead of sending them home with families, to ensure that they stay in pristine condition.

## Unit 5: My Journey Continues

### UNIT EUs:

- Our personal journeys to build virtuous lives can be windy and rocky.
- A Jew's journey towards building a virtuous life never ends.
- Teaching others is an effective way to learn.

### UNIT EQs:

- How does my journey continue from here?
- For parents: What wisdom about *middot* will I pass on to my children?
- How can I share the work I've done throughout this curriculum?

### GOALS:

- Help learners understand that their *middot* journey has only just begun, that it will be a lifelong process, and that they will face challenges on the way.
- Create a meaningful space in which parents can present their Ethical Wills to their children.
- Create a rich learning environment and facilitate memorable teaching moments for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Kindergarten families as learners present their Authentic Assessments.

### OBJECTIVES:

- Summarize the growth they have experienced during the course of this curriculum.
- Propose ways in which they will continue on their *middot* journeys.
- Present their Ethical Wills.
- Teach Kindergarten Families about *middot* using their Storybooks.

### AUTHENTIC ASSESSMENT:

- Lesson 5:1: Preparing for Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day, Presentation of Ethical Wills
- Lesson 5:2: Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day

### MEMORABLE MOMENT:

1. Lesson 5:1: Presentation of Ethical Wills

### LESSONS:

1. Where do I go from here?
2. Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day

## Lesson 5:1: Where do I go from here?

### GOALS:

- Help learners understand that their *middot* journey has only just begun, that it will be a lifelong process, and that they will face challenges on the way.
- Create a meaningful space in which parents can present their Ethical Wills to their children.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How does my journey continue from here?
- What wisdom about *middot* will I pass on to my children?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Re-prioritize their family values based on what they have learned about *middot*.
- Summarize the growth they have experienced during the course of this curriculum.
- Propose ways in which they will continue on their *middot* journeys.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Re-prioritize their family values based on what they have learned about *middot*
- Summarize the growth they have experienced during the course of this curriculum.
- Propose ways in which they will continue on their *middot* journeys.
- Present their Ethical Wills.

### MATERIALS:

- Blank puzzles (1 puzzle/family)
- Quality markers for puzzle creation
- Photo-taking device (iPhone, iPad, digital camera, polaroid, etc.) (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Pens and paper (1/5<sup>th</sup> grader)
- Printouts of Appendix 5:1A (1/parent)
- Notebook paper (3/parent)
- Pens (1/parent)

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Re-Constructing our Family Values
2. Same-Age Learning
3. Memorable Moment: Presentation of Ethical Wills
4. Educational Closure: *Tefilat HaDerech* & *Siyum*

## Family Learning

### SET INDUCTION: RE-CONSTRUCTING OUR FAMILY VALUES

At the beginning of this curriculum, each family built a popsicle stick house out of values they chose. Now that families have learned in-depth about *middot*, they have the chance to re-construct their family values.

Just as a puzzle is incomplete without all of its pieces, our families are incomplete without all of the values our families hold dear.

Each family will receive a blank puzzle. Their task is to visually represent their family's dearest values on the puzzle. They may choose to write a value on each piece, represent the values through pictures, or some other creative visualization.

After all families have created their puzzles, give them time to present their creations. Presentation questions include:

- Which values did you choose to include?
- How did you decide which to include and which to leave aside?
- What can your family do to ensure that these values remain a part of your family's everyday life?

## Same-Age Learning: 5<sup>th</sup> Grade

### ACTIVITY: INSTAGRAM YOUR *MIDDOT* JOURNEY<sup>15</sup>

The questions that learners will answer in this activity are: Where have I been on this *middot* journey? Where do I go from here in my *middot* development?

Using photo-taking devices (such as iPhones, iPads, digital cameras, or polaroid cameras), the learners' task is to take photos that answer the above questions. This is a creative endeavor and is best done in an area that has a richness of aesthetics, such as a sanctuary or an outdoor space. Give learners at least 5 minutes to explore and take their photos. Come back together and tell students to choose the two pictures that best answer the questions. One photo should answer the question "Where have I been on this *middot* journey?" and one photo should answer the question "Where do I go from here in my *middot* development?"

Invite learners to write a one-paragraph Artist's Statement for each of their photos. The Statement should describe the photo they took and how it serves as a representation of their answer to the above question.

Each learner will have the opportunity to present their photos to the class and explain what they wrote in their artist's statement.

### ACTIVITY: PREPARING FOR MILK, COOKIES, & *MIDDOT* DAY

Remind the learners that they will be presenting their Storybooks to the Kindergarten families for the final session of the curriculum. In order for the Kindergarten families to understand what the Storybooks are all about, they need an introduction to *middot* at the beginning of the lesson. It is the 5<sup>th</sup> graders' task to find an engaging way to introduce the kindergarten families to the concept of *middot* before presenting their Storybooks.

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<sup>15</sup> To learn more about "Instagram your Jewish Identity," a program created by Sabrina Weisz, read this article: <http://jeducationworld.com/2016/06/instagram-your-jewish-identity/>.

During this time, invite the learners to work together to plan a creative way to introduce *middot* the following week. This could be a skit, a song, a visual aid, or whatever other medium they want to use. Their presentation should answer these questions:

- What does the word *middot* mean?
- What are *middot*?
- Why are *middot* important for Jews?

## Same-age learning: Parents

### ACTIVITY: VALUES TENSIONS

As learners have seen throughout this curriculum and their Ethical Will free-writes, some of these values they've studied are in tension with each other. For instance, parents may want to show great *savlanut* (patience) to their children when they are not completing a chore on time, while they also want their children to learn *achrayut* (responsibility) in doing their chores in a timely manner.

Give learners time to read back through their Ethical Will free-writes.

Divide learners into *chevrotot* to complete these question starters (found in Appendix 5:1A) about what they have written in their Ethical Wills. They can repeat the question starters multiple times with different values.

- In my free-writes, I see that there exists tension between the value...and the value...
- This tension would be prominent in a situation such as...
- Between these two values, I tend to prioritize...
- I prioritize...because...
- This prioritization manifests when I...
- I could elevate the other value by...

### ACTIVITY: FINALIZING ETHICAL WILLS

Parents will use this time to compile their Ethical Wills, paying particular attention to the values tensions that they surfaced in the prior activity. When completed, an Ethical Will should be in letter format ("Dear [child's name]") and have 1-2 pages of text.

## Family Learning

**Set Up:** While learners are in same-age groups, set up space appropriately for the presentation of Ethical Wills. The presentations will be intimate moments between parents and children. Prepare the space to reflect this intimacy. You might create "nooks" of blankets and pillows or chairs, light candles around the space, or put on quiet music.

### MEMORABLE MOMENT: PRESENTATION OF ETHICAL WILLS

Invite parents and kids to find a private space for their family. Parents will explain the idea of the Ethical Will to their children, and will then read their Ethical Wills. This is meant to be a Memorable Moment for the family. Ideally it will elicit feelings of closeness from parents and children.

### EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *TEFILLAT HADERECH & SIYUM*

Wrap up the day's learning by re-introducing the words of Debbie Friedman's *Tefilat HaDerech*, which learners learned in lesson 1:1 (see Appendix 5:1B). Ask: How has your *middot* journey developed since we last sang this song in the beginning of the year?

Note that this is the last time this learning community will do *siyum* together this year. Invite a few learners to reflect on what *siyum* has meant for them throughout the curriculum. Sing *Tefilat HaDerech* and do *siyum*, which includes *Shema and Hashkeveinu*.



### Values Tensions Question Starters

- In my free-writes, I see that there exists tension between the value...and the value...
- This tension would be prominent in a situation such as...
- Between these two values, I tend to prioritize...
- I prioritize...because...
- This prioritization manifests when I...
- I could elevate the other value by...

***Tefilat HaDerech***  
**By Debbie Friedman**

May we be blessed as we go on our way  
May we be guided in peace  
May we be blessed with health and joy  
May this our blessing, amen.

May we be sheltered by the wings of peace  
May we be kept in safety and in love  
May grace and compassion find their  
way to every soul  
May this be our blessing, amen.

Amen, may this be our blessing, amen.

## Lesson 5:2: Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* Day

### GOALS:

- Create a rich learning environment and facilitate memorable moments for 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Kindergarten families.
- Support learners as they present their Authentic Assessments.

### ESSENTIAL QUESTIONS:

- How can I share the work I've done throughout this curriculum?
- How can *middot* be relevant for young learners?

### 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE OBJECTIVES:

- Teach Kindergarten Families about *middot* using multiple modalities.

### PARENT OBJECTIVES:

- Teach Kindergarten Families about *middot* using their Storybooks.

### MATERIALS:

- Any materials necessary for 5<sup>th</sup> graders' set induction
- Milk, including non-dairy options for those who are lactose intolerant
- Cookies, including gluten-free, vegan, and nut-free options for those with dietary restrictions
- Completed Storybooks
- Festive décor for the room
- Comfortable seating for the room
- Copies of Appendix 5:2A (1/Kindergarten family)
- Posters with the words of *Shema* and *Hashkeveinu*

### SEQUENCE OF ACTIVITIES:

1. Set Induction: Introduction to *Middot*, presented by 5<sup>th</sup> grade
2. Storybook Presentations
3. Educational Closure: *Siyum*

*Note to teacher:* Though the other lessons in this unit span 2.5 hours, this celebration will likely last between 1 and 1.5 hours in order to accommodate kindergarten attentions spans. If you choose, you can ask 5<sup>th</sup> grade families to stay after the Milk, Cookies, & *Middot* event to reflect on their experiences together.

*Note to teacher:* If you are doing this lesson with a group other than Kindergarten families, simply code-switch "Kindergarteners" to whatever grade you plan to include.

## Family Learning (Entire Lesson)

## SET INDUCTION: INTRODUCTION TO *MIDDOT*

The 5<sup>th</sup> graders will present the piece that they put together during last lesson's same-age learning block (see "Activity: Preparing for Milk, Cookies, & *Middot*" from lesson 5:1). This lesson will introduce Kindergarten families to *middot* prior to the Storybook presentations.

## STORYBOOK PRESENTATIONS

This lesson is a celebration of the learning and creating that the families have done throughout the year. It is also a way for them to impart their newfound wisdom to those eager to learn about Jewish values—the kindergarten families—through the Storybooks they have created.

All 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Kindergarten families should attend this celebration. You might like to invite synagogue clergy and staff to attend as well. To create a festive atmosphere, set up tables with milk and cookies throughout the room and decorate the tables colorfully. Decorating the tables would be an excellent task for the 5<sup>th</sup> graders prior to the day's celebration. Fill the space with comfortable seating areas, including rugs and pillows.

Distribute copies of Appendix 5:2A, the *Middot* Storybook Scavenger Hunt, to each Kindergarten family. The Kindergarten families' task is to fill in the Scavenger Hunt grid as they listen to the stories. Parents will do the writing for their families. This will help them listen actively to the storybooks and differentiate between each story they hear.

Each 5<sup>th</sup> grade family will find a space to sit in the room with their Storybooks. Invite the Kindergarten families, clergy, and staff to mill around the room and visit each 5<sup>th</sup> grade family to hear their story. If you would like to do this in a more structured way, you can create a set rotation. Given short kindergarten attention spans, it is best to give them the opportunity to move, stretch their legs, and get milk and cookies between periods of sitting and listening.

## EDUCATIONAL CLOSURE: *SIYUM*

Bring all of the 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Kindergarten families together in a large circle with their arms around each other. In advance of the lesson, help 5<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers prepare to lead this section of the day. The 5<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers will ask the Kindergarten families: What is the most important lesson you learned about Jewish values, *middot*, from our storybooks today?

Display the words of *Shema* and *Hashkeveinu* on posters. 5<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers can stand in the middle of the circle and hold up these posters so that every Kindergarten families can see the words to the prayers. 5<sup>th</sup> grade volunteers will explain that each session of their learning this year ended with *siyum*, closing circle. They will explain the significance of these 2 prayers to them and their learning community. With the help of a musically-skilled staff member, lead the whole group of 5<sup>th</sup> grade and Kindergarten families in *Shema* and *Hashkeveinu*.

## 5<sup>TH</sup> GRADE FAMILY WRAP-UP

You may like to ask the 5<sup>th</sup> grade families to stay for a reflection exercise after the Kindergarten families leave left. This is up to your discretion.

**Middot Storybook Scavenger Hunt**

<b>Whose book did you hear?</b>	<b>What did this story's main character learn about <i>middot</i> throughout their adventures?</b>	<b>What did YOU learn about <i>middot</i> from this story?</b>	<b>What questions do you still have about <i>middot</i>?</b>

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**A Living Library of Jewish Texts** ספרייה חיה של טקסטים יהודיים (n.d.). Accessed 2017 and 2018, from <https://www.sefaria.org/>.

Sefaria provides an enormous corpus of classical Jewish texts in Hebrew and English translation. These include all of Tanach and Talmud, a wide array of commentaries, and works spanning from medieval to contemporary periods. Many of the Biblical and Talmudic texts in this curriculum have been adapted from Sefaria's translations.

**Freeman, Susan. (1999). Teaching Jewish virtues: Sacred sources and arts activities. Denver, CO: A.R.E. Pub.**

Susan Freeman's curricular compilation was a key resource for this Curriculum Guide's text studies and learning activities. Her extensive guide expounds on one *middah* per chapter. Each chapter begins by describing how its *middah* influences a learner *bayn adam l'atzmo*, *bayn adam l'chavero*, and *bayn adam l'makom*. Her descriptions of these three categories heavily influenced my choice to organize this curriculum according to the categories, and impacted my approach to Unit 1. After describing each *middah*, she provides a wealth of relevant textual resources throughout history, from Tanach to Contemporary scholarship. She then describes possible learning activities with varied modalities, such as visual arts, dramatic arts, and creative writing. Freeman's guide inspired many of this curriculum's text studies and learning activities.

**Morinis, Alan. (2008). Everyday holiness: The Jewish spiritual path of Mussar. Boston, MA: Trumpeter.**

This book served as a foundational text for this Curriculum Guide. Alan Morinis presents an overview of the field of Mussar and its application to contemporary Jews. The majority of the chapters are devoted to exploring particular *middot*. Each *middah's* chapter expounds on its basic textual origins, Morinis's personal experience finding balance in the measure, and the challenges it presents for contemporary Jews. I chose to write lessons about many of the *middot* included in this book and adapted a number of Morinis's key texts for the curriculum's text studies. The language in this book makes it accessible for teenagers and adults. It is a key resource for anyone who wishes to learn about *middot* for personal or professional growth.

**Telushkin, Joseph. (2000). The book of Jewish values: A day-by-day guide to ethical living. New York: Bell Tower.**

Telushkin's book is a practical and fulfilling way to delve into the world of Jewish values. It was my first real foray into the field when I received the book as a gift. I proceeded to read one section per day—this took no more than a few minutes—and found that Telushkin's narrative lessons related deeply to my everyday life and affected the way I thought about seemingly-simple yet surprisingly complex questions of daily life. Through engaging personal stories, Jewish texts, and traditional values, he is able to show how each moment of our lives is an opportunity to consider Jewish values and make intentional choices based on what really matters to us.