

Educator's Guide

Jewish Priorities

After viewing the seven videos about different Jewish priorities, use the following programming activities, discussion questions, and reflection questions to further engage your students or participants.

[Link to videos](#)

PROGRAMMING ACTIVITIES

1. TACHLIS - What are your Jewish priorities?

In small groups, give your students the following list of seven Jewish priorities:

- Tikkun Olam
- Arts and Culture
- Community
- Holidays/Rituals/Shabbat
- Learning and Education
- Identity
- Safety and Security

Tell your students to read through the list of values and explain why each one is important. Then, ask them to rank them in order of importance. Once they have ranked them in order of importance, ask them to cut down the list by eliminating four values and maintaining what they believe are the three most important Jewish priorities. Each decision needs to be backed up with rationale. Finally, ask the groups to choose their number one priority from the list. Once each group has chosen their priority, ask them to share with the rest of the group what they chose and why. Finally, as a group, ask all of your students to vote (preferably anonymously so you can get genuine answers) for their top Jewish priority. If there is time, lead a discussion to debrief the activity.

2. 'Build your own Jewish community' activity – click [HERE](#)

3. Barometer – Taking a Stance

In your programming space, place a “strongly agree” sign on one wall and a “strongly disagree” sign on the opposite wall. Make clear rules about respecting diversity of opinions and call for students to display honesty while being kind to each other.

Next, read the following statements to your students and then ask them to stand along the line that represents their opinion. They can stand anywhere between the two extremes depending on how they feel about the statement. Once your students have chosen where to place themselves, ask them to explain why they chose to stand where they are standing.

Encourage students to keep an open mind and remind them that they are allowed to move along the barometer at any time, depending on the arguments they hear and their own thought process. After hearing a handful of opinions from different students, move on to your next statement and start the process over.

Statements:

- Judaism is a religion and not a nation.
- Antisemitism is the biggest challenge facing the Jewish community.
- Jews should be defined solely by Halakha (Jewish mother or conversion.)
- The best way to strengthen and preserve Judaism is by keeping the mitzvot/commandments.
- Tikkun Olam is the best expression of Judaism.
- My Jewish identity is my primary identity.
- There is nothing that all Jews have in common.
- It is a priority for my descendants to have a Jewish education, regardless of cost.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Of the following seven Jewish pillars, which do you think should be Judaism’s number one priority? Explain.
 - Tikkun Olam

- Arts and Culture
- Community
- Holidays/Rituals/Shabbat
- Learning and Education
- Identity
- Safety and Security

2. In 1970, the State of Israel extended its immigration rights to anyone with a single Jewish grandparent (based on antisemitic Nazi era laws) so that anyone who fled the Nazis would have a place of refuge. Some critics asked, “are we letting Hitler define our definition of who is Jewish?” Do you agree with this decision by the State of Israel? Why or why not?

3. The Talmud says:

“These are the things for which you now enjoy the benefit of (in this world), and the principle remains for you (in the world to come), namely: honoring parents, doing acts of lovingkindness, going to pray night and day, welcoming guests, visiting the sick, celebrating with a bride, burying the dead, studying prayer, peacemaking between people including husband and wife; and the study of Torah is “k’neged kulam” (equal to all of them).”

Some interpret the phrase “k’neged kulam” to mean that the study of Torah is equal to all of the righteous deeds listed such as welcoming guests, burying the dead and making peace between people combined. Alternatively, others argue that “k’neged kulam” means that the study of Torah should lead to each of these good deeds and always be in mind when performing them. How do you interpret “k’neged kulam”? Is the study of Torah equal to all of these good deeds combined or do they go hand in hand?

4. In the Torah, there are two different ways of framing Shabbat within the Ten Commandments. Shemot (Exodus) focuses on the idea of “zachor” (remember it, be mindful of it and actively commemorate it). Dvarim (Deuteronomy) on the hand presents the idea of “shamor” (to guard) the Shabbat. Shamor has more of an emphasis on the ritual observance of Shabbat. With these various

perspectives of Shabbat in mind, explain which one resonates more with you and consider how you can incorporate either or both aspects into your life.

REFLECTION QUESTIONS

1. Rank your various identities in order of importance to you (ie. gender, nationality, political views, family, sports, religion). Determine where your Jewish identity ranks on the list and explain why.
2. What was your most meaningful Jewish educational experience? Describe it and explain why you think it was so impactful.
3. What are the three most important Jewish rituals in your life? What role do these rituals play for you?
4. The thought of Tikkun Olam, or repairing the world, can be overwhelming. If you had to choose one issue that is important to you that you wanted to fix or improve, which one would it be and why?
5. Have you ever experienced antisemitism in your own life? Please share your experience and how it impacted you.
6. Community is ultimately about a feeling of belonging. Where do you feel the most belonging?
7. [Static and Ben El](#) are popular Israeli artists. [Drake](#) (inappropriate language) is a popular Canadian Jewish hip hop artist. Listen to both artists and answer the following question: What makes music or art Jewish? Is it the artist, the content or something else? When listening to Static and Ben El and Drake, does one feel more Jewish than the other?