



# The Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium of Greater Philadelphia

Presents

## Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) Lesson Plans

February 2018



## INTRODUCTION

Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified national initiative during the month of February that aims to raise disability awareness and foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide. In the Philadelphia area, the Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium works to expand opportunities for families of students with disabilities. The Consortium is excited to share these comprehensive lesson plans with schools, youth groups, and early childhood centers in our area.

We appreciate you making time for teachers to use these lessons during February—or whenever it's convenient for you. For additional resources, please email me at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) or call me at 215-320-0376.

Thank you to our contributors Ellen Walters, Mimi Ferraro and to our Whole Community Inclusion Rabbinic Intern Mikey Hess Webber for her hard work on writing and editing this project.

These lesson plans culminate in various kinds of expressive art activities. [Please take photos of your students' work](#) and email them to me so that they can be part of our [online gallery](#). We are also collecting work to be part of an inclusion art gallery to be held at JFCS's Barbara and Harvey Brodsky Enrichment Center in April.

Sincerely,  
Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer,  
Director, Whole Community Inclusion

## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: Pre-K Whole Community Inclusion

Created by: Ellen Walters (adapted from the [PJ Library resource guide](#))

### Objectives:

1. Help children and their families develop an acceptance and respect for differences and unique abilities
2. Engage in Purim learning

### Materials:

- *Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale* by Barbara Diamond Goldin
- Pre-made sugar cookie dough (or play dough)
- Cookie Sprinkles (optional)
- If baking - a few parents or madrichim in the classroom to help with the project.

### INFORMATION FOR TEACHERS:

February is Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community works to raise awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. We're going to think about how we can see some kinds of disabilities and others we can't see. Today we are going to use the Purim story to help us remember that when we only look at people from the outside, we only see some of who they are. Today, we want to recognize how every human being is amazing and unique and how every human being also faces some kind of challenges. Let's learn about how to support each other's challenges and recognize what is special about each of us!

### Jewish Value:

- Being created in the image of God (B'tzelem Elohim)
- Each individual has unique abilities and challenges (Adam Yihidi Nivrah)

### INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):

**SAY:** *Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech Ha'olam mishneh et habriyot.*

**Blessed are you, Holy One our God, Majesty of the Universe, who makes people different.**

### ASK:

- What makes you different from everyone else in your family? What are you really good at?
- What can you say is special about ... (you, your mom, your friend, your teacher)
- What is special about your classmates who are in this room with you?

### READ OUTLOUD:

**SAY:** We are going to read a story about Hershel, a little boy who is different because he is blind (which means he can't see with his eyes). We will see that just because he can't see with his eyes doesn't mean he can't see at all, or that he can't do things.

**READ:** *Cakes and Miracles: A Purim Tale* by Barbara Diamond Goldin. \*Remember to pause wherever necessary.

### ASK:

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- When do you think this story is set? Is it now or long ago? Why?
- How does Hershel help his mom?
- Why does Hershel's mom think he can't help bake cookies?
- Does blindness limit Hershel?
- How does Hershel's imagination help him?
- How do you use your imagination?

**WRAP-UP (options):**

1. **Baking activities**

- a. Use packaged sugar cookie dough OR playdough if you do not have the resources to bake.
- b. Give each student a portion of dough equivalent to one cookie.
- c. Have children create cookies without using cookie cutters. The goal is for the students to use their imagination, like Hershel, to shape cookies - it could be a fish, a flower, a person, etc. CHALLENGE - try to form a cookie with your eyes closed.
- d. If applicable, sprinkle the cookies with candy sprinkle.
- e. Have the students share their cookie creations with the class.
- f. Bake according to the directions on the dough package.
- g. Take a picture of your students and their cookie creations and send it to Gabby Kaplan-Mayer at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) for use in our [JDAIM expressive art gallery](#).
- h. EAT!!

**Extra Resources:**

Here is a great Sesame Street Episode to teach students about blindness:  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uNpsaXrDKfw>

## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: K - 3rd Grade Whole Community Inclusion

Written by: Gabby Kaplan-Mayer and Mikey Hess Webber

### **Objectives:**

- Student will become familiar with the story of Purim through the lens of disability awareness and inclusion.
- Students will identify ways that disabilities can be both visible and invisible.
- Students will share about the ways that feel both seen and “unseen”.
- Students will name ways that they can treat friends and peers with kindness and dignity, whether they see that a person has a disability or not.

### **Materials:**

- Art materials: Markers, crayons, dot paints, stickers, sequins, yarn, etc.
- Scissors and glue
- [Mask template](#) or Paper Plates
- Laptop and projector to show [The Princess of Persia](#)
- Pictures of children with visible and invisible disabilities (attached)

### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- **SAY:** Today we’re going to think about how we can see some kinds of disabilities and others we can’t see.
  - What is a disability?
    - (EXPLAIN: a disability is a condition that limits a person in being able to see, hear, walk, or speak. Some people with disabilities may be blind, or deaf, or may use a wheelchair if they are unable to walk.)
  - Have you ever met a person with a disability?

### **INTRODUCTION TO PURIM (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** Today we are going to use the Purim story to help us remember that when we only look at people from the outside, we only see some of who they are. We want to recognize how every human being is amazing and unique and how every human being also faces some kind of challenges.

### **ASK:**

- Who can remember the characters in the Purim story? Let’s name them and list them on the board. (Be sure to include Esther, Vashti, King Ahashveros, Mordechai and Haman)
- Do you remember what makes Esther special? What does she do to be brave? (It is okay if they don’t have a lot of answers because they are going to watch a video about Esther’s bravery.)

### **Key points:**

- Esther is the Queen of Persia (wife of King Ahashveros)

- Esther is Jewish but doesn't share that she is Jewish at first because she is scared to show her true identity.
- When the Jewish people are in trouble because of evil Haman, Esther is brave and tells the King that she is Jewish and asks him to save the Jewish people.

**VIDEO AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** We are going to watch a short video together called The Princess of Persia to help us remember the story of Esther.

**SHOW:** Play the short video of [The Princess of Persia](#) for the students.

**LIST:** After you watch it, make two lists on your board. One should say "***Esther on the Outside***" and one should say "***Esther on the Inside.***"

**ASK:**

1. Think about what the King and all of the people of Persia saw when Esther became the Queen. What do you imagine she looked like on the outside? As the students share, list their adjectives and description under "***Esther on the Outside.***"
  - (They may share words like queen, royal, beautiful, cool)
2. Then, ask the kids to imagine what Esther felt like when learned about Haman's plan while she was living in the palace. As the students share, list their adjectives and descriptions under "***Esther on the Inside.***"
  - (They may share words like scared, nervous, afraid, anxious. You you can then explain that Esther also had courage inside of her that comes out when she faces her fears.)

**ASK:**

- Why do you think that Esther didn't share that she was Jewish with the King right away?
- What had to happen before she felt that she could be herself? Sometimes we are like Esther--we can be afraid to share about how we are feeling or a challenge we are facing.

**PICTURES AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The pictures of children with and without visible disabilities are found at the end of this lesson and can be downloaded and printed or viewed from a computer.

**SAY:** We are now going to look at some pictures of children and we are going to think about what we know and don't know from only looking at the outside of them.

**SHOW** each picture and ask the kids to describe what they see from looking at the outside of the person.

**EXPLAIN:** After you view them all, explain that some of the people have a disability that we can see. But until we get to know them as a friend, we don't know what they are like on the inside. We may have lots of things in common with them--even if they are different from us on the outside.

Some of the children in the picture might have had a disability--even if we couldn't tell that from the outside. Many people have disabilities related to their brain or body that don't make them look different.

Sometimes individuals with disabilities are not seen for who they are on the inside but rather are judged by appearances, often inaccurately. Today, we want to remember that it's very important not to assume that we know a person based on what we see on the outside. We also want people to see who we are on the inside.

### **MASK-MAKING (15 minutes)**

**EXPLAIN:** On Purim it's lots of fun to put on masks and costumes so we can pretend to be someone different from who we really are.

Today, we are going to make a unique kind of mask: a mask that we will use to teach each other something special about who we are--on the inside. Something that our friends might not be able to see about us right away.

**ASK:** What is a special talent or ability that you have? What is a way that you are kind and help others? And what is something that is hard or challenging for you to do? The "inside" of us is made up of many different things that make us unique!

**EXPLAIN:** The mask that you are going to create is going to express who YOU are--on the inside.

You can draw on it, make a collage, use words. Help to show your friends about the special person you are on the inside!

**GIVE** students a mask template or paper plate (you will have to help them cut out holes for eyes) and choice of materials.

1. **SHARE:** After children finish, invite everyone to share their mask and say something about what they created. It would be fun to take a group photo! Remember to take photos of the art and send them to Gabby Kaplan-Mayer at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) for use on use in our [JDAIM expressive art gallery](#).

**WRAP UP:** Purim helps to remind us that everyone needs to be seen for who they are on the inside, and everyone deserves to be included in our communities. It is important to remember that what we see on the surface is never the full story. Let's learn about how to support each other's challenges and recognize what is special about each of us! Chag Purim Sameach!

















## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 4<sup>th</sup>—6<sup>th</sup> Grade Whole Community Inclusion

Written by: Gabby Kaplan-Mayer

### **Objectives:**

- Student will become familiar with the story of Purim through the lens of disability awareness and inclusion.
- Students will identify ways that disabilities can be both visible and invisible.
- Students will share about the ways that feel both seen and “unseen”.
- Students will name ways that they can treat friends and peers with kindness and dignity, whether they see that a person has a disability or not.

### **Materials:**

- Art materials: Markers, crayons, dot paints, stickers, sequins, yarn, etc.
- Scissors and glue
- [Mask template](#) or Paper Plates
- Laptop and projector to show [The Princess of Persia](#)
- Pictures of children with visible and invisible disabilities (attached)

### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- **SAY:** Today we’re going to think about how we can see some kinds of disabilities while others we can’t see.
  - What is a disability?
    - (EXPLAIN: a disability is a condition that limits a person in being able to see, hear, walk, or speak. Some people with disabilities may be blind, or deaf, or may use a wheelchair if they are unable to walk.)
  - Have you ever met a person with a disability?

### **INTRODUCTION TO PURIM (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** Today we are going to use the Purim story to help us remember that when we only look at people from the outside, we only see some of who they are. We want to recognize how every human being is amazing and unique and how every human being also faces some kind of challenges.

### **ASK:**

- Who can list the characters in the Purim story? (As students name them, write them on the board. Be sure to include Esther, Vashti, King Ahashveros, Mordechai and Haman)
- Can you describe Esther? Why was she chosen to be Queen? What does Esther do to be brave? (It is okay if they don’t have a lot of answers because they are going to watch a video about Esther’s bravery.)

### **Key points:**

- Esther is the Queen of Persia (wife of King Ahashveros)
- Esther is Jewish but doesn’t share that she is Jewish at first because she is scared to show her true identity.

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- When the Jewish people are in trouble because of evil Haman, Esther is brave and tells the King that she is Jewish and asks him to save the Jewish people.

**VIDEO AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**SAY:** We are going to watch a short video together called The Princess of Persia to help us remember the story of Esther.

**SHOW:** Play the short video of [The Princess of Persia](#) for the students.

**LIST:** After you watch it, make two lists on your board. One should say “**Esther on the Outside**” and one should say “**Esther on the Inside.**”

**ASK:**

1. Think about what the King and all of the people of Persia saw when Esther became the Queen. What do you imagine she looked like on the outside? As the students share, list their adjectives and description under “**Esther on the Outside.**”
  - (They may share words like queen, royal, beautiful, cool)
2. Then, ask the kids to imagine what Esther felt like when learned about Haman’s plan while she was living in the palace. As the students share, list their adjectives and descriptions under “**Esther on the Inside.**”
  - (They may share words like scared, nervous, afraid, anxious. You you can then explain that Esther also had courage inside of her that comes out when she faces her fears.)

**ASK:**

- Why do you think that Esther didn’t share that she was Jewish with the King right away?
- What had to happen before she felt that she could be herself? Sometimes we are like Esther—can you think of a time when you were afraid to share something important about you?
- What makes you feel safe to share all parts of yourself?

**PICTURES AND DISCUSSION (10 minutes):**

**INSTRUCTIONS:** The pictures of children with and without visible disabilities are found at the end of this lesson and can be downloaded and printed or viewed from a computer.

**SAY:** We are now going to look at some pictures of children and we are going to think about what we know and don’t know from only looking at the outside of them.

**SHOW** each picture and ask the kids to describe what they see from looking at the outside of the person.

**EXPLAIN:** After you view them all, explain that some of the people have a disability that we can see. But until we get to know them as a friend, we don’t know what they are like on the inside. We may have lots of things in common with them--even if they are different from us on the outside.



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### **MASK-MAKING (15 minutes)**

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**ASK:** What is a special talent or ability that you have? What is a way that you are kind and help others? And what is something that is hard or challenging for you to do? The "inside" of us is made up of many different things that make us unique!

**EXPLAIN:** The mask that you are going to create is going to express who YOU are--on the inside.

You can draw on it, make a collage, use words. Help to show your friends about the special person you are on the inside!

**GIVE** students a mask template or paper plate (you will have to help them cut out holes for eyes) and choice of materials.

**SHARE:** After children finish, invite everyone to share their mask and say something about what they created. It would be fun to take a group photo! Remember to take photos of the art and send them to Gabby Kaplan-Mayer at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) for use on Whole Community Inclusion's [JDAIM expressive art gallery](#).

**WRAP UP:** Purim helps to remind us that everyone needs to be seen for who they are on the inside, and everyone deserves to be included in our communities. It is important to remember that what we see on the surface is never the full story. Let's learn about how to support each other's challenges and recognize what is special about each of us! Chag Purim Sameach!

















## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 7th Grade + Whole Community Inclusion

Written by: Mikey Hess Webber

### **Objectives:**

- Student will become familiar with the story of Purim through the lens of disability awareness and inclusion.
- Students will describe their preconceived ideas about peers with disabilities.
- Students will identify ways that they can reach out to people in their schools, synagogues and communities who have disabilities.

### **Materials:**

- Markers and other art materials
- Pens/pencils
- Print-outs of the role play scenarios
- Print-outs of the self-portrait sheet.
- Paper

### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- Introduce JDAIM
  - **SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community works to raise awareness about disabilities and to foster inclusion for people with special needs.
  - **ASK:** Does everyone know what I mean when I say “inclusion”?
  - **DEFINE:** Inclusion - Involvement and empowerment of all people. Their worth and dignity are recognized. An inclusive community promotes and sustains a sense of belonging; it values and respects the talents, beliefs, backgrounds, and ways of living of its members.
  - **SAY:** During February, teens all over Philly will be doing today’s lesson. We are trying to raise your awareness about how you all feel about people with disabilities. What are our preconceived ideas about disability and what are ways that we can feel better equipped to reach out to and befriend peers with disabilities.
- Set the space as safe:
  - **SAY:** Some personal things might come up in the lesson. Feel free to share as little or as much as feels comfortable for you. Please listen closely and respond with kavod/respect.

### **Self-Portraits (15 minutes):**

#### **INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Take a sheet of paper and fold it in half (long-ways).
- Illustrate yourself - half on one side and half on the other so that the crease in the paper divides your portrait in half.
- On the right side draw yourself as you think other people see you from the outside.
- On the left side draw yourself as you see yourself from the inside.
- Feel free to use words, symbols, and illustration too.
- You can also include props, actions or activities that you identify with.

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**REFLECTION:**

- Do you think people see you differently than you see yourself?
- Do you hide/choose not to reveal pieces of yourself to others? Why?
- Are there aspects of yourself that you cannot hide that make others treat you differently?
- Do you ever wish people saw you the way you saw yourself?
- Does the way people look at you affect how you see yourself?
- Are there people who see you as you see yourself?
- **SHARING IS GREAT BUT EMPHASIZE THAT IT IS VOLUNTARY!**

**SAY:** Disabilities can present in a lot of different ways. They can be cognitive, physical or emotional. For people with different ways of learning, communicating or getting around, in some cases their disability is easier to see and in some cases it is easier to hide.

**ASK:** Why might someone with a disability want to hide their disability? What might be gained and what might be lost? How do you imagine it feels when someone isn't able to hide something that makes them different from others? Think back to your self-portraits, do you feel like it is easier to be yourself or to hide parts of yourself?

**INTRODUCTION TO PURIM (10 minutes):**

Purim is the ultimate Jewish inclusion holiday: when we dress up on Purim we are hiding our "true" selves under masks and costumes, yet asking to be included in the celebration.

**ASK:** for a brief summary of Purim story

**Key points:** Esther is the Queen of Persia (wife of King Ahashveros) and is Jewish but hides her true identity. If needed, here is a fun video about Esther:  
<https://www.bimbam.com/purim-story/>

**ASK:** Why didn't Esther reveal her true identity until the end of the story? What had to happen before she felt she could be herself? Have you ever been in a situation in which you were afraid to reveal who you really are?

**SAY:** Individuals with special needs often are not seen for who they are on the inside but rather are judged by appearances, often inaccurately. Imagine wearing a mask 24/7 and no one recognizing who you really are on the inside. It is painful and difficult to constantly struggle for recognition and acceptance.

**ROLE PLAY (15 minutes):**

Let's brainstorm ways that we can help people with special needs feel seen and accepted for who they truly are.

**INSTRUCTIONS:**

- Divide into groups - each group will get a different Role Play Scenario Sheet.
- Take five minutes and brainstorm the scenario and how you might respond.
- Present your scenario to the class.

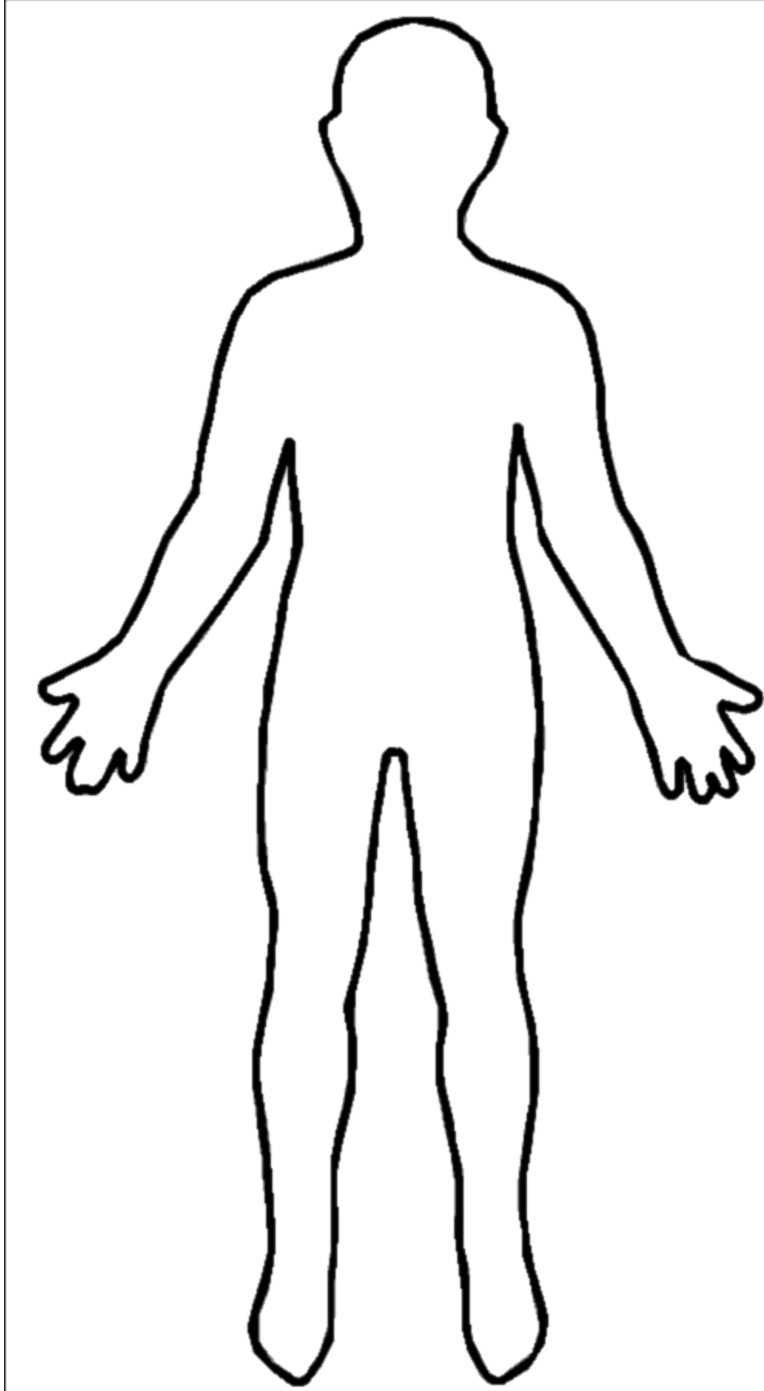
**REFLECTION: 6 Word Memoirs (20 minutes):**

- **For Teachers:** The exercise of writing a 6 Word Memoir is meant to be a way to get to the essence of a feeling or idea. The prompt is to use six words, no more and no less, to reflect on an experience.
- **SAY:** We are going to create Six Word Memoirs which will describe our takeaways from our time together. In six words, no more and no less, reflect on what you have learned today. Be thoughtful, be reflective and be yourself! Think about what it means to be seen and to be included. What does it feel like to hide parts of yourself or to have people assume things about you based on your exterior presentation?
- **EXAMPLES:**
  - Small things have a large impact.
  - Happiness, Netflix, and my introverted self.
  - Reach for the light, not darkness
- **INSTRUCTIONS: Spitfire** for 10 minutes - come up with as many as you can. Then choose your best and write it in your best writing on a piece of paper. Then **illustrate** the memoir. **Share** your memoir with the class.
- If you'd like, take a class picture with everyone holding their 6-Word Memoirs and send them to Gabby Kaplan-Mayer at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) for use on Whole Community Inclusion social media!

**WRAP UP:** Purim helps to remind us that everyone needs to be seen for who they are on the inside, and everyone deserves to be included in our communities. It is important to remember that what we see on the surface is never the full story. Let us move into the holiday with curiosity, reaching out to seek depth and friendship with those in our community. Chag Purim Sameach!

HOW I FEEL ON THE INSIDE:

HOW I SEEM ON THE OUTSIDE:



**Role Play: Scenario 1**

Jacob is in your grade in Hebrew School. In class, he can't sit still and clicks his pen a lot during class. This behavior frustrates a lot of kids because they can't concentrate with the commotion. Often, the teacher scolds him about his behavior. You notice he doesn't have a lot of friends and is often standing alone during breaks. How could you make Jacob feel more seen?

**Role Play: Scenario 2**

Rachel is in your class at Hebrew School. She uses a wheelchair to get around the building. You notice that often, it takes her a little longer to open doors and to get up to the bima. Many of your classmates run ahead of her and she is left in the halls alone when you switch classes. How could you make Rachel feel more seen?

**Role Play: Scenario 3**

Noah is deaf. He is in your class at Hebrew school and he has an interpreter who sits in class and translates for him. No one talks to Noah because they assume he won't understand them. Sometimes when he talks, he sounds different from your other classmates and some people giggle. How could you make Noah feel more seen and more included?

**Role Play: Scenario 4**

Its Purim! You are at a Purim assembly with your Hebrew school. Everytime Haman's name is said, the whole school makes a lot of noise with groggers. You notice that the kid sitting next to you, a new kid at your synagogue, is getting more and more upset. They are putting their hands over their ears and rocking back and forth. How could you make them feel more seen and more included?

### **Additional Resources:**

Jteach.org has wonderful lesson plans about the movie [Wonder](#)

Visit [www.jdaim.org](http://www.jdaim.org) for more ideas and resources

Learn about [Whole Community Inclusion](#) and the [Jewish Disability Inclusion/Special Needs Consortium of Greater Philadelphia](#)