



The Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium of Greater Philadelphia

Presents

Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) Lesson Plans



Jewish Learning Venture innovates programs that help people live connected Jewish lives.

261 Old York Road, Suite 720 / Jenkintown, PA 19046 / 215.320.0360 / jewishlearningventure.org

Partners with Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia

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 or call me at 215-320-0376.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer,

Chief Program Officer

JDAIM Lesson Plan: Grades 1 – 3

Created by Suzanne Gold, Inclusion Coordinator, Ohev Shalom of Bucks County

Book: It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr

Synopses of story: *It's Okay to Be Different* cleverly delivers the important messages of acceptance, understanding, and confidence in an accessible, child-friendly format. The book includes child-friendly, colorful drawings and limited text on each page to appeal to young children.

Objectives:

- Students will become familiar with the Jewish value of *B'tzelem Elohim*.
- Students will understand how everyone is different. There are lots of ways that we are different and these differences make us special and unique.
- Students will understand that when we put all our differences together, we create a very beautiful world.

Jewish Value: *B'tzelem Eloheim* (in G-d's image) At the end of the lesson(s), students will recognize that we all face different challenges and have different families, friends and ideas. Every human being faces different challenges and has different families, friends and ideas.

Materials:

- At least one copy of *It's Okay to Be Different* by Todd Parr.
- Blackboard or chart paper with picture frame drawn upon it.
- Each child receives a large puzzle piece to decorate.
- Markers/crayons and any additional materials of your choice to use for decorating the puzzle piece
- Bulletin board and tacks to display puzzle pieces.

Introduction (5 minutes)

"Today we are going to be thinking about a Jewish value called *b'tzelem elohim*. When we say *B'tzelem elohim*, we mean that every person is "made in G-d's image."

1. What does it mean to be made in G-d's image? What do you think this is saying about you and your friends? (We were all created in goodness. We are all good just the way we are.)
2. Is everybody the same? No, everybody is different and unique. Those things that make us different and unique also make us special and interesting.

Read the book (10 minutes)

- **SAY:** *Now we are going to read a book called It's Okay to Be Different. Together we will see all kinds of ways that we can be special and unique. Let's see if any of the people in the book remind you of you or anybody you know.*
- Feel free to invite the class to read along with you!
- As a class, read It's Okay to Be Different by Todd Parr.

Jewish Learning Venture innovates programs that help people live connected Jewish lives.

261 Old York Road, Suite 720 / Jenkintown, PA 19046 / jewishlearningventure.org

Partners with Jewish Federation of Greater Philadelphia



- You can also watch this video as a class (a link to the book being read aloud):
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=shYf3prwXJU>

Follow-Up (5 minutes)

- **ASK:** *Did anything stand out to you in the book? Do you have anything more to say about being made in G-d's image after reading the book together? What's the title of the book? All the ways to be different listed in the book (and even more that weren't listed) are all okay! We should appreciate all the differences in the world. Our differences make the world an interesting place to live!*

Picture Frame Activity (10-15 minutes)

SAY: *Everybody in this class has things about them that are very special and that make them unique. Now is our chance to show appreciation for the things that make our friends unique.*

- Draw a picture frame on a blackboard or chart paper. Allow each child to stand in front of the picture frame. Have each child in the class say something nice about the child.

(ie: he is tall and can reach high shelves for me, she is really smart and helps me understand in class, she is fast and I like when she is on my team, he is quiet and I always feel like he is listening when I speak)

Puzzle Piece Activity (20 minutes)

SAY: *Now we have heard what other people think make us unique. Now is our chance to think about ourselves and what makes us special. On your puzzle piece, draw yourself. Be sure to include the things that make you unique!*

1. Distribute one puzzle piece to each student.
2. The students are to draw themselves on their puzzle piece and decorate the puzzle with lots of color and detail. Perhaps have yarn available for students to attach hair or cleaners for students that wear glasses. Also, have material available for students to attach a kippa if they wear them in shul. Refer to the pictures in the book to assist the children with ideas.
3. Attach the complete puzzle pieces as a bulletin board. The title of the board can be: "It's Okay to be Different" or "B'tzeloheim Eloheim."

ASK: *What do you guys think about this class of awesome, unique people!? What do you notice? Like the puzzle pieces, each of you is one-of a-kind! When all your differences get put together, you turn into a beautiful, interesting masterpiece.*

WRAP-UP

SAY: *When we talk about b'tzelem elohim, being made in G-d's image, we are remembering that we are all important and we all deserve love. Our differences make us special and when we come together, all our differences make the world a beautiful place.*



Additional Activities: These activities are meant to add an additional layer to *b'tzelem elohim*. They are meant to help the students identify and empathize with some of the challenges that come with being different.

Activity #1

Materials:

- Sunglasses smeared with Vaseline making it difficult for the child to see properly.
- An area on the floor, with colorful tape for the child to walk along.

Instructions:

Children take turns wearing the sunglasses that are covered with Vaseline. Wearing the sunglasses, each child walks around the designated area following the line.

Purpose: the child experiences the difficulty of seeing with impaired vision.

Activity #2

Materials:

- Headphones to demonstrate difficulty hearing directions.

Instructions:

Teacher/adult whispers directions to the group. Child is instructed to wear the headphones while the directions are given.

Purpose: the child experiences the difficulty of understanding with hearing loss.

Activity #3

Instructions:

Divide class into two groups to play a game (i.e. tic tac toe or a race). The game must have one clear winning team. After the game, ask the teams to express their feelings about losing and winning. Did they feel like the results were fair?