



# 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](http://jewishlearningventure.org)

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## 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.

Sincerely,

Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer,

Chief Program Officer

**JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 7th grade+ (Middle and High School)**

**Created By:** Rabbi Michelle Greenfield

**Objectives:**

- Students will identify Disability Rights a type of civil right, and will begin to examine the history of this movement.
- Through story, text, and art, students will connect Jewish values with this civil rights movement

**Jewish Value:**

Tzedek-Justice קדש

**Materials:**

- Story from [God's Mailbox \(Marc Gellman, 1996\)](#): "Gluing the Broken Commandments Back Together," pp 68-72
- Copies of the discussion guide
- Devices with videos OR copies of information for breakout groups
- Paper and drawing supplies

**Introduction:**

**SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community raises awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. There is a long history of people with disabilities fighting for their rights, sometimes with support from other advocates and allies.

**ASK:** Can you think of other people who have fought for their own civil and human rights?

Students will likely know about Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, and they may know that Rabbi AJ Heschel marched with him in Selma

**SAY:** Today we are going to share a Jewish story (a modern midrash) and learn about some moments in the Disability Rights movement in the United States. You will be encouraged to think about your roles in the struggle for equal rights for people with disabilities.

**Process (Include books/video/art activities):**

**SAY:** The Torah often tells stories without all of the details. For many years, Rabbis and other Jewish thinkers have been creating new stories to fill in the gaps in the stories. This story fills in a gap in a specific moment in the Torah. Moses broke the first set of tablets that he got on Mount Sinai, and we know that he will get a new set. The Torah tells us that the first broken set was kept in the ark with new ones. This story imagines how they got there!

**READ:** Read the story. Or invite kids to read the story or to act it out!

**ASK:**

- How would you describe Moses' role in connection to the 'go slow people?' Does it matter that Moses has power? (Introduce the words 'ally' and 'advocate'.)

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- How does Moses use his privilege and power?
- Who are the go slow people and go fast people in your life/family/community?
- Are there times when you have been a go-slow person?
- Are there times in your life when you have been asked to be an ally or an advocate?

Introduce the idea of disability rights:

- Sometimes the 'go slow people' who are ignored or left behind are people with physical, intellectual, developmental, or emotional disabilities
- What rights do people with disabilities have?
  - The same rights as everybody else!

**SAY:** Unfortunately, people with disabilities don't always have the same legal access to education, care, housing, and jobs that other people do.

Until about 30 years ago, some people with disabilities didn't have the legal right to education in the United States! Some people worked really hard to fight for they needed to help create the level of protection and equality that people with disabilities have now. There's still a long way to go, but a lot of work has been done. You're going to work in groups to learn about significant moments in the disability rights movement and to think about how a few Jewish quotes are connected to those moments.

Divide students into 2 or more groups, giving each group a moment or group within the Disability Rights Movement:

Group 1: Ed Roberts

- Give the students a device with this video about [Ed Roberts](#) or copies of the Ed Roberts sheet as well as copies of the discussion guide, paper, and drawing supplies.
- As students to watch or read together and then discuss.
- Following this part of the activity, use the discussion guide for a follow-up text/art activity.

Group 2: The Capital Crawl

- Give students a device with [this video of the Capitol Crawl](#) or copies of the Capitol Crawl sheet as well as copies of the discussion guide, paper, and drawing supplies.
- Ask students to watch or read together and then discuss.
- Following this part of the activity, use the discussion guide for a follow-up text/art activity.

**WRAP-UP (Closing activity):**

Invite groups to join back together and share their learning and their art.

### Capitol Crawl

In March of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was stuck. Congress was not paying attention to the bill, and the needs of people with disabilities were being ignored. The Americans with Disabilities Act was the first law giving many basic rights to people with disabilities and requiring accessibility in businesses, government buildings, schools, and other institutions. On March 12th, a large group of people with disabilities gathered at the bottom of the stone steps of the Capitol building.



More than 60 activists with physical disabilities left behind their wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility aids and began to climb the 83 steps to the Capitol. This attracted media coverage and forced congress to pay attention to the barriers that were in place. Jennifer Keelan was 8 years old and had Cerebral Palsy. She left her wheelchair and pulled herself up by her arms and legs saying, “I’ll take all night if I have to.”



The ADA became a law within 4th months.

### Ed Roberts

Ed Roberts was born in 1939. When he was 14, he became sick from Polio. He survived, but was almost entirely paralyzed from the neck down. He was the first student with significant physical disabilities to attend the University of California, Berkeley, and he had to fight for his place there. Because there were no rooms that could accommodate his medical equipment, he had to live in the campus hospital instead of a dorm. While he was there, he created a program for other students with physical disabilities. The students became known as the Rolling Quads. Deborah Kaplan, another member of the Rolling Quads explained that in addition to the physical barriers the students faced, they also had to deal with attitudes from others who thought that “having a disability is a fate worse than death. That we should be pitied. That if we do *anything* we are brave, and yet [we’re] really not real people.”



Ed Roberts and the Rolling Quads fought to make Berkeley a more accessible city and they also fought for the rights of people with disabilities to make their own decisions about their lives.





### Discussion Guide:

Hillel was a famous Jewish leader who lived almost 2,000 years ago. One of his famous quotes has three parts

If I am not for myself, who is for me?	<i>Im ein ani li mi li</i>	אם אין אני לי, מי לי?
And when I am only for myself, what am I?	<i>Uk'she'ani l'atzmi mah ani</i>	וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני?
And if not now, when?	<i>V'im lo achshav eimatai</i>	ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?

How does each of these parts apply to the moment in disability history that you learned about?

Who has to take responsibility for the rights of people with disabilities?

The image below is based on this quote and was created by artist Daniel Bennett Schwartz for PJ Library. Based on this discussion, create your own image for the quote.

