

Lesson Plan – Science and Religion: The Great Partnership

The following lesson plan is a suggestion of how some of the resources contained in this unit could be incorporated into a 60-minute class period for a high-school age class. This will focus solely on the philosophy of ‘The Great Partnership’, Rabbi Sacks’ book title, and his overall approach, on how Religion and Science can co-exist. There are many other themes and teaching opportunities found in this unit of resources which would take more classroom-time to explore with your students.

Goal: To be introduced to the approach Rabbi Sacks takes to religion and science which can be summed up in the title of his book *The Great Partnership*.

1-10 minutes: Opening Activity

- Find two identical Lego sets (or you could create your own model from building blocks/removable pieces). Divide your students into two teams. Each has a different task, as follows:
 - Team A is given the model in a completed state, but without the instructions. Ask them to create instructions for children who might wish to build the model.
 - Team B is given the pieces of the model in a disassembled state, with the instructions, and told to assemble it. But they must add a final page to the instructions, entitled “What we can learn from building this model and how to play with it once it is complete”. They should come up with as many lessons learned from the process of building, and as many options for creating games with the completed model as possible.
- Bring the two teams back together to share their experiences.

11-20 minutes: The Great Partnership video

- Play the whiteboard video animation video
- Use the core questions to have a brief discussion to help the students analyse the video
- Ask your students to relate the video to their opening task (Team A was breaking something down to understand how it worked, while Team B was finding the meaning behind the toy).

21-35 minutes: Texts from the writings of Rabbi Sacks on the universal and the particular

Go to this section of the Religion and Science teaching resources page on RabbiSacks.org, and consider the core questions contained there. Bring your students together and have a class discussion on the texts and what they understand about Rabbi Sacks' approach to religion and science.

36-55 min: Class Debate

Class debate: "It is more important to learn Torah than secular wisdom"

Divide your students in to two teams. Have each prepare an argument for or against the motion. In their arguments they should consider a scenario where they can only learn either secular wisdom (this includes science and the social sciences) or Torah (there are obviously parents who make the choice to educate their children in educational frameworks like this and they must argue for or against them). Divide the time as follows:

- 5 min preparation of arguments
- 5 min presentation of arguments
- 5 min for responses to the arguments
- 5 minutes for free class discussion for your students to express their own opinions on this debate.

56-60 min: Summing Up

In the last few minutes of the class ensure your students have understood the following points:

- The Great partnership means that religion and science take completely different angles to understanding the world, and are fully complimentary. We should never have to choose between them. In fact, each will enhance our understanding of the other, and help us to apply the values of the Torah to our world, in order to give the universe meaning.
- End the class with the following quote:

Without Torah we cannot understand the Jewish story. But without *chochmah* we cannot understand the human story. As I put it above, there are three elements of Jewish faith: creation, revelation and redemption. Creation is God's relationship with the universe. Revelation is God's relationship with us. Redemption is what happens when we apply revelation to creation, when we apply God's word to God's world. ***We cannot apply Torah to the world unless we understand the world.*** Without an understanding of creation, we will fail to bring about redemption.

Future Tense p. 226