

Lesson Plan – Antisemitism

The mutating virus

The following lesson plan is a suggestion of how some of the Leadership ideas and resources contained in this unit could be incorporated into a 60-minute class period for a high-school age class. This lesson plan focuses solely on one particular idea on the theme of antisemitism within the thought of Rabbi Sacks. There are many other themes found in this unit of resources which would take more classroom-time to explore with your students.

Goal: To explore how Rabbi Sacks understands the evolution of antisemitism and how we should respond.

1-10 minutes: Opening Activity

Ask your students to each search online in news outlets (for example using [Google News](#)) for the word “Antisemitism”.

Using the advanced function ask them to filter their search to:

- The past week
- The past 24 hours
- The past hour

Ask them to record how many articles there are for each of these time periods.

Have them select one article that catches their attention (such as a particularly troubling story, or one that is close to home).

Come together as a class to allow your students to share the stories they have chosen, and to consider some of the following questions:

- What article/story did you choose? Why?
- How prevalent is antisemitism in the world today?
- How toxic is antisemitism where you live?
- Have you ever directly experienced antisemitism? How did it make you feel?
- How long has antisemitism existed?
- What do you think is the root cause of antisemitism?
- How can we fight against this?
- Do you think antisemitism will ever be solved/removed from the world?
- How have your family relationships led to self-growth?

11-15 minutes: Research on the Four Mutations

Read the sources included in the ‘Texts’ section of the Antisemitism Teaching Resource entitled “A Mutating Virus” together as a group, and use the Core Questions to have a short classroom discussion on this theory of how antisemitism is like a mutating virus.

16-30 minutes: Team Research

Divide your students into 4 groups, and ask each group to study one of the four mutations of antisemitism found and to consider the Core Questions found underneath their source.

Then ask them then to find examples from history which they will share with the class (if you have more time, you can also ask them to create a museum exhibit on this, either in class or as an assignment for homework).

31-45 minutes: Team Presentations

Each group can now take a turn to read their text out and briefly share the examples from Jewish history of this mutation of antisemitism.

46-55 minutes: Discussion Time

Together as a class, read through the first text under the heading “The Jewish Response” (found at the end of the ‘Texts’ section of the Antisemitism Teaching Resource). Discuss with your students what the Jewish response should be to antisemitism, both generally and specifically in your community.

56-60 minutes: Summing Up

Help your students to summarise what they have learned as a class into key points, and then end on a practical note, asking them how they can take active steps to fight and respond to antisemitism. You may wish to consider the *Bet Nidrash* activity as a conclusion to your class.