Lesson Plan – Community

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. 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 consider the importance of community as a value in Judaism, using the ideas shared by Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks zt"l who communicates the power and meaning of community with great passion and clarity.

1-10 minutes: Opening Activity – Together or One by One? The Object Game

Create two teams from your students and give each team the same task: to transport one ball each from one side of the classroom to the other without touching the floor (you will need as many balls - or other objects - as you have students).

The twist is, there should be a key difference between the way you assign the task; Team A receives the instructions individually (each student receives a written instruction in the singular – “Transport your ball without touching the floor ...” etc.), and Team B receives one set of instructions written in the plural – “Your team’s task is to transport all the balls ...” etc.

At the end of the task, debrief on what happened. It is highly likely that Team B worked as a team and achieved the task far quicker and more efficiently. Discuss why.

11-15 minutes: Quickfire Discussion

Have a fast-paced discussion with your students (use the board to draw an ideas map) on which aspects of Judaism happen in a community, and either cannot happen without or are lesser in quality if they happen without community.

Examples could include:

- Public prayer
- Life-cycle celebrations
- Education
- Welfare (tzedakah)
- The building of religious institutions/infrastructure (such as mikveh, shechitah and other institutions of kashrut, paid rabbinic leadership, etc.)
- Security in general, and action during a crisis
Alternatively, you could ask your students the question, “what aspects of Judaism cannot take place if you are an individual stranded alone on a desert island?” What would your Jewish life look like if you lived there (or in any place in the world where there were no other Jews)?

**16-35 minutes: Sub-Groups in Conversation**

Divide your students into small *chaburot/sub*-groups and allocate each small group a text from the section in our Community Unit entitled “Texts from the writings of Rabbi Sacks on community.” Ask them to read through the text in their group, and then to discuss what ideas can be understood about the idea of community in Judaism from the text.

**36-55 min: Presentations**

Bring your students back together and ask each group to present what they learned from the text (and to read out a short excerpt that they found particularly powerful or enlightening).

**56-60 min: In Conclusion**

Summarise for your students what you have learned together, and why community is such a central value in Judaism.