

JCI CURRICULUM: *UNIT 1: CHAPTER 2 – B'TZELEM ELOHIM*
LESSON 3: ART ALTERNATIVE LESSON

LESSON 3: Art Alternative Lesson

Time:

The length of this lesson varies widely. It can be as short as 45 minutes, or it can be extended over several class periods. If you wish to shorten the lesson, it is recommended to choose one art form (recommended: micrography, cubism, or handmade midrash) and to use the second option as a closing activity.

Goals:

Have students identify and list core values that define them
Have students understand the concept of “tzelem elohim.”

Materials:

Packets of the values matrix terms & definitions (1/pair)
Extra blank strips (1/person)
Art supplies (see below)

Preparation:

Copy the following texts on the board and cover with a poster or a screen.

“If a man strikes many coins from one mold, they all resemble one another, but the King of Kings, the Holy One, Blessed be He, made each man in the image of Adam, and yet not one of them resembles his fellow. Therefore every single person is obligated to say, “The world was created for my sake” (Mishna Sanhedrin 4:5).

ושלא יאמרו המינים, רשייות הרבה בשמיים. להגיד גדולתו של מלך מלכי המלכים, הקדוש ברוך הוא, שאדם טובע מאה מטבעות בחותם אחד, וכולן דומין זה לזה, מלך מלכי המלכים הקדוש ברוך הוא טובע את כל האדם בחותמו של אדם הראשון, ואין אחד מהם דומה לחברו. לפיכך לכל אחד ואחד לומר, בשבילי נברא העולם.

Rabbi Simcha Bunam used to say, “Every person should have two pockets. In one pocket there should be a note that says, ‘*Bishvili nivra ha’olam*,’ “for my sake was the world created.” And in the second pocket he should have a note which reads, “*Anochi afar va’efer*,” “I am dust and ashes.” Simcha Bunim goes on to explain, “When one is feeling down, he should take out the note that says, “For my sake was the world created.” And when one is feeling smug he should take out the note that says, “I am dust and ashes.” *Chasidic Tale*

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Tzelem Elohim: the creation of every human being in the image of G-d.

1) Framing exercise (15 mins):

- a) Students should be seated two to a table. Hand each pair a packet of the values listed in the values matrix.

(By this lesson they should have worked with the values in this list several times. If they haven't, you will need to give the students additional time to process the values.)

- a) In pairs, ask them to find the three values that most define themselves. They cannot share any values – so they will have to work out who gets which value if there are conflicts.
- b) Ask the students which values both individuals wanted. How did they decide? Are they less happy with their list as it stands then they would have been if they got any values they wanted?
- c) Now have each student select a fourth value. This time they can share, so give them extra blank strips of paper if needed. Before progressing make sure everyone is satisfied with their four values and is satisfied that they accurately reflect their own core values. Once they have chosen their four values, have them place them upside down in a pile in the corner of their desk.

2) Main Activity (30 mins – 1 hr):

Uncover the texts from the board. Have a student read each one out loud.

Ask a student to put the two pieces of paper from the first text into modern language.

Ask students to do a “think-pair-share” with the following questions:

- What do these two quotes tell us about our behavior toward ourselves and others?
- How does that message affect the values that I chose?

(To do a think-pair-share, have each student write down his answers to the questions. Then, after a few minutes, instruct the students to share their answers with another student. After a few more minutes, you can have a group discussion where pairs are able to share what they have learned together.)

You can now choose any one of the following art forms to do as a class or allow students to choose between all of them:

Just

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Micrography

Supplies needed: Art paper, pencils, and fine point markers.

Micrography is an art form which utilizes very small writing to create pictures. You can either use the text to form the outlines of shapes, or, by changing colors, the text can fill the page and show a picture. Ideally, bring in some samples of micrography for the students to see.

<http://www.jtsa.edu/library/exhib/microg/index.shtml> and <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Micrography> are good examples.

Although micrography is traditionally done in Hebrew, it works almost as well in English.

Ask the students to lightly sketch an image of how they see G-d reflected in the people they meet every day. They should feel free to be as creative as they'd like in this exercise.

Once they've sketched a base drawing, they can create their micrography using the values they chose for themselves. If they have other ideas for meaningful words to use, great!

Hand-made Midrash

Supplies needed: construction paper, a base paper on which to place the construction paper, and glue.

Hand-made Midrash uses small strips of hand-torn (not cut) construction paper to create pictures. This form is particularly well suited to those who do not think they are artistic.

Have each student choose one text or value and copy it onto the top of the paper. They can choose the one that speaks to them the most or the one that they think most embodies *tzelem elohim*.

Ask them to create an image that reflects both the text and the way that they see G-d reflected in the people around them..

Graphic Novel

Supplies needed: Base paper, pencils, and fine-tip markers.

Graphic novels are an advanced form of comic books. They tell longer stories and often have messages.

Have each student choose one text or value. They can choose the one that speaks to them the most or the one that they think most embodies *tzelem elohim*.

Ask them to create a story that represents that value being expressed between people. Remind them that the story can be as simple or as complicated as they would like.

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Illustrated Manuscript

Supplies needed: Base paper, pencils, and fine-tip markers.

Illustrated manuscripts are documents in which words, letters, or even phrases are either turned into art or surrounded by art. Fancy Passover Hagaddot are often illustrated manuscripts. You can see samples here, but feel free to use your imagination:

<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/bachbase/images/56.1.jpg>, http://www.jan-billington.com/christofellis/images/dove_02.gif, or <http://www.nypl.org/press/2005/iamtherose.cfm>.

Have each student choose one text or value. They can choose the one that speaks to them the most or the one that they think most embodies *tzelem elohim*.

Ask students to pick one word, letter, or phrase to use as the core for their art.

Ask them to also think about both the text and the way that they see G-d reflected in the people around them.

They should illustrate their text to reflect these ideas. If they choose to use a portion of the text as the artwork, be sure they write the remainder on the page.

Cubism

Have the students place their four values slips on a base paper in a square. Glue them to the page. (Alternatively, you can have the students copy the values onto the page in a square.

They now should complete the page in any form they desire (writing, sketching, comic-art, etc.) following these guidelines:

Inside the square are ideas or concepts that grow from the four values as they are related to the artist.

Outside the square are ideas or concepts that grow from the four values as they relate to *tzelem elohim* and other people.

At each corner of the square a connection between the values should be made.

3) Closing Activity (10 mins – 2hrs)

Option 1: Have the students pair up with different students (not the same as at the beginning of the lesson) and each take 2 minutes to explain their artwork. The listening student should not interrupt or ask any questions until the explanation is done. The describer should end the description by stating whether they are comfortable taking questions about their art.

Option 2: Have the students put on an internal art show. To prepare their artwork for the show, have them create a label – an index card with their name, the name of the artwork, and one or two sentences describing their art.

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(In situations where you have only had the students begin their artwork, the second option will work best.)