

**JCI CURRICULUM: UNIT 1: CHAPTER 5 – SELF & COMMUNITY**  
**LESSON 1: WHAT'S IN A NAME?**

**LESSON 1: WHAT'S IN A NAME? (45 mins – 1 hour)**

**Goals**

**For students to:**

- appreciate the different communities of which they are a part.
- analyze the meaning of community.
- consider the significance of naming
- evaluate the connection between names and relationships
- analyze the midrashic text and suggest diverse interpretations
- appreciate the import of the midrashic text for a deeper understanding of their own relationships between self and community
- gain an understanding of the underlying tensions in the relationship between self and community.

**Materials:**

- Poster board
- Markers
- Pens
- Paper / journals
- Text handouts

**Procedure**

**Framing exercise #1 (5 mins)**

a) Ask students, “What is community?”

Brainstorm – ask one student to write down all their answers on a large poster board.

b) Ask students, “What communities are you part of?”

Brainstorm – ask one student to write down all their answers on a large poster board.

*Tell students that there will be time to discuss their ideas later, for now they are simply brainstorming.*

**2) Framing exercise #2 (10 -15 mins)**

a) Write the following sentence on a poster board or hand it out to students:

“Managing the relationship between the self (that would be “me”) and community (that would be “you,” or perhaps “them,” depending on how I feel about “you”) is a complicated

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affair.”

- b) Ask students to answer the following in writing in their journals/ binders:
- i) **Do you agree that the relationship between self and community is complicated? Why/ Why not?**
  - ii) **Write one example of a situation in which you or someone you know has been where there were tensions between self and community.**
- c) Depending on time constraints and the character of the group:
- Have students share one thought about the relationship between self and community (for 45 min lessons or less).

**Or**

- Have students share their answers as a group and discuss all together.

**Or**

- Have students form pairs to share their answers and discuss. Proceed with a brief regrouping where each pair shares one thought about the relationship between self and community.

**Or – if you have a much longer lesson period!**

- Have students form pairs or small groups and prepare and then act out one of their situations for the rest of the group. Proceed with a regrouping to discuss their various answers and thoughts about the relationship between self and community.

**3) Text Study (15-20 mins)**

- a) Break students into *chavrutot*. Explain that *chavruta* study is learning in pairs or small groups. One student should read the text out loud. Together they will analyze the text and consider different possible interpretations. They will proceed by discussing the questions together. Explain that the text is a midrashic text from Midrash Tanhuma. Explain that midrash is rabbinic interpretation of the Torah, compiled between the second and tenth centuries BCE.
- b) Hand out the text and questions and allocate 10 minutes to read and discuss in *chavruta*.

“There are three names by which a person is called: one which his parents call him; one which people call him and one which he earns for himself. The last is the best one of all.”

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Midrash Tanhuma

**Chavruta Questions:**

- Explain the nature of the three names mentioned in the text above. What are the differences between them?
- How do you earn your name? What makes that name the best of all? When might it not be the best name of all?

Regroup (10-15 mins):

- c) As a class, have students share their thoughts about the text and the questions above.
- d) Ask students: “What is the connection between this text and the relationship between self and community?” Discuss

**4) Conclusion (10 mins)**

- a) Ask students to write their responses to the following questions in their journal/ binder:

**Journal Questions:**

- Using the concept “name” in the broadest sense, to reflect a person’s essence (perhaps in more than one word), what are your three names? Which names would you want? What would you want your children’s names to be?
- b) Regroup. Go around in a circle and ask each student to share the three names that reflect their essence.

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**Appendix:**

**“Managing the relationship between the self (that would be “me”) and community (that would be “you,” or perhaps “them,” depending on how I feel about “you”) is a complicated affair.”**

- i) Do you agree that the relationship between self and community is complicated? Why/Why not?
- ii) Write one example of a situation in which you or someone you know has been where there were tensions between self and community.

**“There are three names by which a person is called: one which his parents call him; one which people call him and one which he earns for himself. The last is the best one of all.”**  
Midrash Tanhuma

**Chavruta Questions:**

- Explain the nature of the three names mentioned in the text above. What are the differences between them?
- How do you earn your name? What makes that name the best of all? When might it not be the best name of all?

**Journal Questions:**

Using the concept “name” in the broadest sense, to reflect a person’s essence (perhaps in more than one word), what are your three names? Which names would you want? What would you want your children’s names to be?