

צער בעלי חיים

Compassion towards animals

Examining an ancient Jewish value
through a modern real life question:
Should Zoos exist or not?

Curriculum Guide

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Curriculum Goals:

1. Students will practice critical thinking.
2. Students will use the term “צער בעלי חיים” as a Jewish Value.
3. Students will work independently.
4. Students will get involved and learn about their organizations in their community.
5. Students will discuss and argue about real life issues.
6. Students will learn various Jewish texts and find connections to modern issues.
7. Students will practice a range of different skills: Presenting skills (creating a presentation, standing in front of an audience, presenting in a clear and convincing manner), Giving and receiving Constructive criticism, Searching for information on-line and abstracting useful information from different types of text, Organizational skills and Interviewing skills.

Lesson Plans:

Note: There is no specified time or length for each lesson. They should be adjusted to reflect the needs of the students and teacher.

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Lesson 1: Introducing the topic

Prep before starting:

Hang different pictures of animals, that are usually found in the zoo and in natural habitats, in the hallways, with different questions like: Have you visited the zoo lately? Have you been to an African Safari? What's your favorite zoo animal? How fast does a cheetah run? How deep does a seal dive? What did you learn from visiting the zoo? The purpose of this is to create curiosity within the grade as to what these signs are related to and to welcome opinions and thoughts even before we dive into the topic.

Self reflection:

1. There will be signs on the wall - YES / NO. The group will be requested to go to one side of the room if they agree with the statement and to the other if they disagree.

The statements:

- I like animals.
 - I have a pet.
 - I have a pet that is not a cat or a dog.
 - I visited a zoo before.
 - I enjoy seeing animals at the zoo.
 - I think that the zoo takes good care of the animals in the zoo.
 - I think the animals at the zoo have enough living and feeding space.
 - I think that zoos help endangered animals.
 - I think that kids learn a lot from visiting the zoo.
 - I think that I might not know the names of some animals if I hadn't seen them in a zoo.
2. Ask the students to think about one experience they remember from being at a zoo or an aquarium. Divide the students into pairs. Each student will interview and be interviewed by their partner. The students will create a short video of this interview, describing their visit (using iMovie/weVideo). These are the questions students should include in their interviews: when were you at the zoo, who did you go with, what does the place look like when you walk in, what kind of animals do you see, where are the animals, what does the habitat look like, what are the animals doing, are the animals active, do they look like they are happy in their habitat, did you learn something new about an animal during your visit, did you enjoy your visit.

Reflection on the interviews:

1. The students will watch each other's filmed experiences at a zoo.
2. Based on the videos and on general knowledge, the students will be requested to write at least one good thing about zoos and at least one bad thing about zoos on each side of a piece of paper.
3. The teacher or a student will create a list of suggested good things about zoos and a list of suggested bad things about zoos on the board/in a slide show. The teacher will guide the students to some more issues.
4. Students will create a GoAnimate with zoo animals. The students should create a conversation between two animals talking about a day at the zoo from their perspective. Students can use the list they created for ideas about talking topics between the animals.

Extras:

If students find it challenging to come up with ideas for reasons for or against zoos you can show them the following videos to get them started:

- **Pro-**

Ted talk about the importance of zoos

-<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VGBzwnTW-O4>

Leads to learning about an endangered animal.

- **Against -**

Ted talk - 5th grader - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dgEc5eLsXiY>

Lesson 2: Introducing the project

What is the Jewish value and what is the plan?

1. Introduce the phrase “צער בעלי חיים” - compassion toward animals. Debate the meaning of this phrase with the students.
2. The students will be introduced to the project in general strokes: The students will work towards creating an argument that will support a side in the debate around the question - should zoos exist or not?
3. Students will be divided into two groups and draw a “side” out of a box.
4. Students will meet in their groups and talk about what their personal opinion is. Then students will suggest tactics on how to take a side that they don't necessarily believe in.

Interviewing a lawyer

A lawyer will come to speak with the students about building a case: describing their job, what they do on a daily basis, how they decide what their claim is going to be, how they collect evidence, what kind of evidences are there, the need to be organized, what a court trial looks like, tactics how to represent something you don't believe in, give examples from court, etc'.

1. Students will write comments, ideas or questions on notes.
2. Students will interview the lawyer.

Note: it works really well if the lawyer brings some pieces of evidence to show the students, has good examples to share and so on.

Lesson 3: Building a strong argument

Building claims #1

Begin the lesson by referring back to the list of “pros” and “cons” the students created a few lessons ago, students will group the “pros” and “cons” by categories (such as “quality of life”, “health”, etc., depending on the pros and cons the students have brought to the table).

Using these categories, the students will practice the skill of writing a claim and supporting it with evidence. This ties into 6th grade Reading and Writing workshops’ material, but if the students have not yet learned and experimented this skill, the teacher should use learning services or a Reading-Writing teacher for support.

Students will take one category that they created as an example of a claim and see how the items in that category could support it as evidence.

Students should understand that the examples will eventually need to be supported by “physical” evidence of sorts (pictures, articles, videos, interview parts and so on...) which they will need to collect in the future.

Building claims #2

1. Ask the students: What are different means of collecting evidence? What are the different ways the lawyer said? What ways can the students come up with on their own? Create a list of ways to collect evidence.
2. The students will decide on a number of claims they think are strong claims that have multiple examples of evidence that can support it.
3. Each student will get a claim to work on according to the group’s decision. That student should gather evidence that support the claim. These evidences can be obtained from online videos, interviews, magazine or newspaper articles and so on. All evidence should be recorded in an “Argument Document” (see attached), including links for future reference. This will be the base for their slide show.

Note: This is a good moment to review and practice online searching skills as well as how to search for needed information within a text. Some students are very independent and will be able to start this process with minimal support from the teacher. Others need some ideas to start with. See below a list of videos and articles that can be used as a starting point.

Incorporating Jewish text as evidence

1. Teacher will hang multiple Jewish texts around the classroom and start the lesson with a chalk talk protocol. Ask students to write what they think the

meaning of the text is and if they think it is a good piece of evidence for or against zoos. After this first round, students should go around again and respond to other students' comments. The text list includes: Bereshit 1:26; Proverbs 12:10; Ecclesiastes 3:19; Babli, Gitin 62 page A and more (see Jewish texts page).

2. Ask students to pick one of the texts and try to further understand it using common sense, the text's original context, commentators, different websites and so on. Students need to first understand the Pshat (the simple meaning) of the text and then see if the Drash (a person's interpretation of a text's meaning or lesson to be learned from it) is relevant or not as well.
3. Students will decide if the text they researched can support one of their claims.

Note: Students are encouraged to find other Jewish Texts that support their claim and add them to their argument.

Lesson 4: A visit to the zoo

As part of building their case, students will go on a field trip to Lincoln Park Zoo (or any local zoo). This gives the students the opportunity to interview and learn from an educational representative of the zoo, collect evidence that will support their claims, and come to the understanding that the topic we are discussing is directly related to their lives, to their own neighborhood and to their city.

Zoo visit prep

- Students should create a list of questions they would like to ask the zoo representative that will support their claims or help them understand better the way a zoo works.
- Also, they should look at a map of the zoo and identify certain areas students would like to collect evidence that would be beneficial.

Note: Previewing what the day at the zoo will look like and speaking about expectations during the visit will set the tone for the visit.

At the zoo

Students will interview a zoo educator and ask the representative questions from the list of questions. If possible, the zoo representative should be recorded so students don't need to focus on writing down the information. If students' writing and summarizing skills are strong then writing down the responses at the moment could be good practice of this.

Recording or videoing the rep isn't always allowed - advise with them in advance to be prepared. The teacher can keep track of answers if the students find this challenging. During the time at the zoo, the zoo rep/teacher can lead the students around the zoo and give them an opportunity to collect evidence.

Note: students don't always notice the "evidence" that is right in front of them and would benefit from some direction. Students should bring cameras and recording devices to collect evidence with.

Lesson 5: Getting ready for the court trial

Creating a slideshow presentation

Students should be exposed to several different ways of constructing a slideshow presentation and some of the options Google slides offers. Students will be presented with a list of mandatory items to be on the slide show, like: first slide - presents argument, with names of students presenting it, there should be a separate slide for each claim and so on...

Students can work on a shared Google slides together. There claims and evidences should be organized in the slideshow with links to videos or articles they would like to present. Note: it is advised that they know exactly what part of a video they would like to show in order to keep the presentation moving along smoothly.

Preparing for the court appearance

Students should take time to practice their presentations. This is a great opportunity to practice giving and receiving constructive criticism on how to improve our presentation and presenting skills. This should be taught directly or reviewed depending on the kids' knowledge on constructive criticism.

Students should spend time improving their presentation.

During the court appearance, after both sides have presented their cases, the court will go to recess. During this time, each side will be given 5 minutes to decide on another claim they would like to present to the court as a response to the other side's case. This will be followed by some concluding words from each side. Students should practice taking other people's perspective and try to figure out what the other group's claims might be. According to these assumptions, the group should create a response claim and concluding words. They might want to think about a couple of options they would pick from at the moment of the trial according to the claims the other group brought up. The judges will then leave the room to deliberate and come back with the decision.

Note: Prior to this day - Judges should be asked to join the court session. The head of school, the Director of Jewish Life and Learning, The associate head of school, teachers or anyone that would "play the role" in a fun way. The room should be set up like a courtroom with designated tables and chairs for lawyers of both sides and judges. When setting up or deciding on a room, keep in mind that students will be using a projector and screen to present their arguments.

You need to decide in advance who will be presenting first and prep the kids for this to reduce anxiousness.

Lesson 6: A day in court

Students will present their arguments in front of a judge panel that will eventually decide who was more convincing (See video for example).

Note: If this curriculum is intended for specific students in a grade, it creates a special feeling for them as compared to the rest of the grade.

An additional idea: If it is only a small group of students, they can, at the end, become leaders and advocates for their learning in different capacities. For example: the trial can be held in front of the whole grade instead of just a few judges. The whole grade can vote to the most appealing argument. This way, the Jewish Value will be brought to the whole grade.

Extras resources:

Against -

- Free whale/ Sea world - Article
https://www.thedodo.com/recently-spotted-103-year-old--547381307.html?xrs=R_ebelMouse_fb
- Petition against Orca show at Sea World -
<http://action.sumofus.org/a/seaworld-orcas-captivity-california-ban-blackfish/>
- Lawsuit against a zoo for keeping an elephant in poor environment -
<http://aldf.org/press-room/press-releases/lawsuit-filed-to-compel-san-antonio-zoo-to-release-elephant-to-a-sanctuary/>
- Cricket Hollow Zoo License Suspended -
<http://aldf.org/press-room/press-releases/cricket-hollow-zoo-license-suspended/>
- Numerous Violations at Cricket Hollow Zoo-
<http://aldf.org/blog/numerous-violations-at-cricket-hollow-zoo/>

Pro -

- Endangered animals reproduction in a zoo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=35ZrpqMI1oY>
- Man explaining about benefits of zoo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=XOrPmOXhxo0>
- Inmates and dogs - mutual effect <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8SEiZSVfiNU>
- Polar bear playing in snow at San Diego zoo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ut0yruwNdJM>
- Baby Panda examination at zoo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=k0LE3Dlxfmc>
- Baby Pandas playing with zoo keeper - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=imluwMOJ32I>

Pros and cons together -

- A lot of information presented by Julia, for D news - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RHBuAOp5upU>
(has additional links in “read more”)
- Mikaela Nilsson (youtuber) - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=McPuGh33HCw>
- Controversial - Kids having fun at the zoo - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PjjBJKmnVMU>