



## Human Rights Shabbat Children's Program By Rabbi Rebecca Rosenthal

**Theme:** Everyone is created in the image of God

**Ages:** Children from 2<sup>nd</sup>-6<sup>th</sup> grade or combined parents and children

**Time:** 1 Hour

**Set Induction (10 minutes – 2 choices)**

### Choice #1 – The Mirror

- Have children line up across from one another
- Appoint one person the leader and the other person has to mirror what they do
- Switch
- If the students are into the activity, you can try it without having an appointed leader and see if they can work it out to follow each other
- When they are done playing, sit everyone down and ask – what was it like to be the leader? What was it like to be the follower?
- What do you have in common with your partner? How are you different?

### Choice #2 – Match the Photos

- Before the program, ask everyone to bring in a baby picture of themselves
- As a group, try to match the pictures to the child/adult they are today
- Ask the group – how did you know who was who?
- What did all the pictures have in common? How are they different?

**Text Study (2 choices – 20 minutes)**

#### First Choice: Text Study and Discussion

- Walk the group through the first text and ask – what does it mean to be created in the image of God?
- Walk the group through the second text and ask – why is being created in the image of God a double blessing? What responsibility does that give us in the world?

- Walk the group through the third text and ask – why is this question of human dignity connected to texts about being created in the image of God? Why do you think the rabbis held human dignity in such high regard?
- In your own life, how do you live by these principles? Can you think of an example from your life or from the newspaper where people honored being created in the image of God? What about when human dignity was violated? How can you work to ensure that human dignity and the image of God are respected in the world?

**Genesis 1:27-28**

God created the human in God's image. In the image of God, God created him, male and female he created them. And God blessed them.

בראשית א: כז-כח

וַיְבָרֵא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הָאָדָם בְּצַלְמוֹ בְּצֶלֶם אֱלֹהִים בָּרָא אֹתוֹ זָכָר וּנְקֵבָה בָּרָא אֹתָם: וַיְבָרֶךְ אֹתָם אֱלֹהִים

**Mishnah, Pirkei Avot 3:14**

Beloved is all humankind for they were made b'tzelem Elohim (in the image of God). Doubly beloved are they, for they were told that they were made in the image of God. As it says: "In the image of God was humanity made." (Genesis 9:6)

משנה מסכת אבות פרק ג: יד

הוא היה אומר חביב אדם שנברא בצלם חבה יתירה נודעת לו שנברא בצלם שנאמר (בראשית ט) בצלם אלהים עשה את האדם

**Babylonian Talmud, Brachot 19b**

Come and learn: Human dignity is so important that it supersedes even a biblical prohibition.

תלמוד בבלי, יט:

תא שמע: גדול כבוד הבריות שדוחה [את] לא תעשה שבתורה.

**Text Matching Game**

- Take the two sets of texts (one from the UDHR and one from Jewish sources)
- Divide into small groups and give each group the 2 sets of texts
- Groups have to figure out which Jewish texts belong with which UDHR texts
- After they figured it out, present to the group

- If there are disagreements, groups should argue for their side

### **Drama (20 minutes)**

#### **Universal Declaration of Human Rights Paper Bag Dramatics**

- Divide into groups of 4 or 5
- Give each group a bag of random supplies
- Then, each group has to pick one of the rights in the UDHR and create a skit using the things in their bag about the right that they chose
  
- Perform the skits for the group
- Returning to the central theme ± what does your right have to do with everyone being created in the image of God?

### **Wrap Up (10 Minutes)**

- Bring the group back together
- Think back to mirror activity ± what did you learn from that activity about b'tzelem Elohim (the image of God)?
- Think-Pair-Share (think first, then talk about it in pairs and then share with the group) ± How are you created in God's image? What can you do to ensure that you help everyone see that everyone is created in God's image?

### **Supplies**

- Baby photos (if you are doing choice 2 for the set induction)
- Text (if you are doing the text study)
- Text Matching Game (if you are doing this)
- 1 paper bag for each group, with a few random objects in it (i.e. toys, an apple, socks, a book, etc.)
- Copies of a few of the rights from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights



Universal Declaration of Human Rights  
A Jewish Texts Matching Game

Cut these in half and get people to match them up (cut matching pieces of different sizes so people can't just use size to match)

Whereas disregard and contempt for human rights have resulted in barbarous acts which have outraged the conscience of mankind, and the advent of a world in which human beings shall enjoy freedom of speech and belief and freedom from fear and want has been proclaimed as the highest aspiration of the common people,	<i>Isaiah 58:6-9</i> This is the fast that I desire: to unlock fetters of wickedness, and untie the cords of the yoke. To let the oppressed go free; to break off every yoke. It is to share your bread with the hungry, and to take the wretched poor into your homes; When you see the naked, to clothe him, and not to ignore your own kin. Then shall your light burst through like the dawn and your healing shall spring up quickly; Your Vindicator shall march before you, the presence of God shall be your rear guard. Then, when you call, God will answer. When you cry, God will say, "Here I am."
Whereas it is essential, if man is not to be compelled to have recourse, as a last resort, to rebellion against tyranny and oppression, that human rights should be protected by the rule of law,	Tanchuma Nitzavim 5 "The heads of your tribes, your elders, and your officers" (Deuteronomy 29:9). Even though I appointed over you heads, elders, and officers, all of you are equal before Me, for the verse concludes, "All are the people of Israel."
Whereas it is essential to promote the development of friendly relations between nations,	<i>Isaiah 2:4</i> Thus God will judge among the nations and arbitrate for the many peoples. And they shall beat their swords into plowshares and their swords into pruning hooks. Nation shall not take up sword against nation; They shall never again know war.

<p>Whereas the peoples of the United Nations have in the Charter reaffirmed their faith in fundamental human rights, in the dignity and worth of the human person and in the equal rights of men and women and have determined to promote social progress and better standards of life in larger freedom,</p>	<p>Elie Wiesel</p> <p>We must not see <i>any</i> person as an abstraction. Instead, we must see in every person a universe with its own secrets, with its own treasures, with its own sources of anguish, and with some measure of triumph.</p> <p>From <i>The Nazi Doctors and the Nuremberg Code</i></p>
<p>Whereas Member States have pledged themselves to achieve, in cooperation with the United Nations, the promotion of universal respect for and observance of human rights and fundamental freedoms,</p>	<p>Shabbat 21A</p> <p>On another occasion it happened that a certain non-Jew came before Shammai and said to him, "I will convert to Judaism, on condition that you teach me the whole Torah while I stand on one foot." Shammai chased him away with the builder's tool that was in his hand. He came before Hillel and said to him, "Convert me." Hillel said to him, "What is hateful to you, do not to your neighbor: that is the whole Torah; the rest is commentary; go and learn it."</p>
<p>Whereas a common understanding of these rights and freedoms is of the greatest importance for the full realization of this pledge,</p>	<p><i>Malachi 2:10</i></p> <p>Have we not all one Parent? Has not one God created us? Why should we be faithless to each other, profaning the covenant of our ancestors?</p>

<p>Now, therefore, The General Assembly, Proclaims this Universal Declaration of Human Rights as a common standard of achievement for all peoples and all nations, to the end that every individual and every organ of society, keeping this Declaration constantly in mind, shall strive by teaching and education to promote respect for these rights and freedoms and by progressive measures, national and international, to secure their universal and effective recognition and observance, both among the peoples of Member States themselves and among the peoples of territories under their jurisdiction.</p>	<p>Babylonian Talmud, Sanhedrin 68a</p> <p>R. Joshua b. Levi met Elijah standing by the entrance of R. Simeon b. Yohai's tomb. He asked him: "Have I a portion in the world to come?" He replied, "If this Master desires it." R. Joshua b. Levi said, "I saw two, but heard the voice of a third." He then asked him, "When will the Messiah come?" "Go and ask him himself," was his reply. "Where is he sitting?" "At the entrance." "And by what sign may I recognize him?" "He is sitting among the poor lepers: all of them untie [them] all at once, and re-bandage them together, whereas he unties and re-bandages each separately, [before treating the next], thinking, should I be wanted, [it being time for my appearance as the Messiah] I must not be delayed [through having to bandage a number of sores]." So he went to him and greeted him, saying, "Peace upon you Master and Teacher." "Peace upon you, O son of Levi," he replied. "When will you come, Master?" he asked. "Today," was his answer. On his returning to Elijah, the latter inquired, "What did he say to you?" "Peace upon you, O son of Levi," he answered. Thereupon he (Elijah) observed, "He thereby assured you and your father of (a portion in) the world to come." "He spoke falsely to me," he rejoined, "stating that he would come today, but has not." He (Elijah) answered him: "This is what he said to you. Today if you will hear his voice."</p>
<p><b>Article 1</b> All human beings are born free and equal in dignity and rights. They are endowed with reason and conscience and should act towards one another in a spirit of brotherhood.</p>	<p><i>Genesis Rabbah 24</i> Ben Azzai taught: "This is the line of Adam" (Genesis 5:1) is the most important concept in the Torah. Rabbi Akiva taught: "Love your neighbor as yourself" (Leviticus 19:18) is a greater concept, so that no one should say: "Because I have been dishonored, let my fellow person be dishonored." Rabbi Tanhuma taught, "If you do thus, know that the person you have dishonored was created in the image of God."</p>

<p><b>Article 2</b> Everyone is entitled to all the rights and freedoms set forth in this Declaration, without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status. Furthermore, no distinction shall be made on the basis of the political, jurisdictional or international status of the country or territory to which a person belongs, whether it be independent, trust, non-self-governing or under any other limitation of sovereignty.</p>	<p><i>Mishnah Sanhedrin 4:5</i> Therefore, Adam was created alone, to teach us that anyone who wastes one life in this world, the Torah treats them as though they had wasted a full world, and anyone who saves a life, the Torah treats them as though they had saved an entire world. And also for peace among creation, so that no person could say to another, "My ancestor was greater than yours," and to demonstrate God's greatness. When a person stamps coins, how many coins does he make from one mold and yet all are alike. And God stamps every person with the mold of the first person, and none are alike! Therefore, everyone is required to say, "For my sake the world was created."</p>
<p><b>Article 3</b> Everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of person.</p>	<p>Leviticus 19:33-34 When strangers sojourn with you in your land, you shall not do them wrong. The strangers who sojourn with you shall be to you as the natives among you, and you shall love them as yourself; for you were strangers in the land of Egypt."</p>
<p><b>Article 4</b> No one shall be held in slavery or servitude; slavery and the slave trade shall be prohibited in all their forms.</p>	<p><i>Rambam, Hilchot Avadim 9:8</i> It is appropriate for a person who is merciful and pursues justice, to not make their slaves carry a heavy yoke, nor cause them distress. One should allow them to partake of all food and drink one serves... Similarly it is forbidden to embarrass a slave with one's deeds or with words, for <b>the Torah prescribed that they perform a service and not that they be humiliated.</b> Nor should one shout or vent anger upon them. Instead, one should speak to them gently and listen to their claims.</p>
<p><b>Article 5</b> No one shall be subjected to torture or to cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment or punishment.</p>	<p>Mishna, Pirkei Avot 2:10 Rabbi Eliezer said, "Other people's dignity should be as precious to you as your own."</p>

<p><b>Article 6</b> Everyone has the right to recognition everywhere as a person before the law.</p>	<p><i>Deuteronomy 16:18-20</i> You shall appoint magistrates and officials for all your tribes, in all settlements that Adonai your God is giving you and they shall govern the people with due justice. You shall not judge unfairly: you shall show no partiality; you shall not take bribes, for bribes blind the eyes of the discerning and upset the plea of the just. Justice, justice shall you pursue, that you may thrive and occupy the land that Adonai your God is giving you.</p>
<p><b>Article 7</b> All are equal before the law and are entitled without any discrimination to equal protection of the law. All are entitled to equal protection against any discrimination in violation of this Declaration and against any incitement to such discrimination.</p>	<p><i>Deuteronomy 1:16-17</i> I charged your magistrates saying, "Hear out your fellow person, and decide justly between any person and a fellow Israelite or stranger. You shall not be partial in judgment: hear out high and low alike. Fear no person, for judgment is God's.</p>
<p><b>Article 8</b> Everyone has the right to an effective remedy by the competent national tribunals for acts violating the fundamental rights granted him by the constitution or by law.</p>	<p><i>Pirkei Avot 1: 8</i> Judah ben Tabbai said: Do not make yourself like those that present before judges. When parties to a Torah suit are standing before you they should be in your eyes as wicked men, but when they have departed from they should be in your eyes as innocent, if they have accepted the verdict</p>

<p><b>Article 9</b> No one shall be subjected to arbitrary arrest, detention or exile.</p>	<p>Baba Batra 8b</p> <p>Raba asked Raba b. Mari: Whence is derived the maxim of the Rabbis that pidyon shevuyim (redemption of captives) is a religious duty of great importance? He replied: from the verse (Jer.15:2) "<i>And it shall come to pass when they say unto thee, Whither shall we go forth, then thou shalt tell them, Thus saith the Lord, Such as are for death, to death, and such as are for the sword, to the sword, and such as are for famine, to the famine, and such as are for captivity, to captivity</i>": and (commenting on this) R. Johanan said: Each punishment mentioned in this verse is more severe than the one before. The sword is worse than death;... famine again is harder than the sword;... Captivity is harder than all, because it includes the sufferings of all.</p>
<p><b>Article 10</b> Everyone is entitled in full equality to a fair and public hearing by an independent and impartial tribunal, in the determination of his rights and obligations and of any criminal charge against him.</p>	<p>Rambam, Hilchot Sanhedrin 24:10</p> <p>Whatever [the judge] does should be for the sake of Heaven, and human dignity should not be light in his eyes, since it overrides a Rabbinic prohibition. This applies with even greater force to the honor of the children of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, who adhere to the true Law. He should be careful not to do anything to injure their dignity. His sole concern should be to enhance the glory of God, for whoever dishonors the Torah is himself dishonored by men, and whoever honors the Torah is himself honored by men.</p>

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