

Freedom on Passover

Lesson Plan

Introduction

In this lesson, students will explore the meaning of freedom, and reflect on slavery and freedom in the lives of the Refuseniks and in their own lives.

Learning Objectives

Students will understand that there is more to freedom than the physical ability to determine ones comings and goings.

Materials

Attached freedom quotes, article, and excerpts from “Fear No Evil”

Background

Passover is the festival of freedom. We celebrate our liberation from the bondage of Egypt and our becoming an independent nation. But what does it mean to be free? Is serving God different from serving Pharaoh? This activity can be done at a family Passover Seder as well as in formal educational settings.

Procedure

1. Assign each participant an inanimate object and have them write a short monologue of what freedom would be, from the point of view of their object – without revealing what the object is. Have them read their monologues and have the other group members guess the identity of the object.
2. Hang freedom quotes around the room. Have participants walk around, read them, and stand by the quote that best fits with their vision of freedom. Discuss and have them defend their choices.



3. Hand out strips of paper in two colours to every participant (these can be hidden under the plate of each person if done at a Seder). Read out the following scenarios (or create your own) having the participants raise one colored strip if they think the person in the scenario is enslaved and the other if they think the person is free. At the end you can vote on who is the most enslaved/free.

- Scenario #1 – “Five years ago I was arrested by the KGB and put in a forced labor camp in Siberia. They tell me when to get up, when to work, and when to go to bed – even when I am allowed to shower. I can’t make any decisions for myself.
- Scenario #2 – I am ship-wrecked on a desert island. I can do whatever I want, but there’s nobody to talk to and nothing to do.
- Scenario #3 – I am a drug addict and live from high to high. Luckily, I married a millionaire and I can support this habit.
- Scenario #4 - my child was born with a severe physical disability. I quit my job as a high powered lawyer to care for him and now spend most of my days at home.
- Scenario #5 – I absolutely love fashion. I can’t go out of the house without making sure every part of my outfit matches perfectly. I sometimes even buy shoes that I know won’t be comfortable because they are exactly the color of an item of clothing that I own.
- Scenario #6 - I worked hard my entire life and became an extremely successful businessman. I was able to live lavishly and provide my family with all sorts of luxuries. Eventually a scandal was uncovered and I lost everything. Now I work 9-5 in a restaurant trying to make ends meet.

4. Natan Sharansky in his book “Fear No Evil” discusses freedom at length in the context of Passover and writes about his ability to maintain his inner, spiritual freedom while he was physically at the mercy of the KGB (who also wished to destroy him spiritually). Read together all or some of these excerpts from his book (below).

5. Have participants share personal stories of slavery and freedom – things they feel they are/were enslaved to and ways in which they were able to/can overcome them. The attached article about slavery to our electronic devices may resonate deeply with the students.