

**A photographic lens on being a Jewish girl:  
Mothers and daughters explore the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* online exhibit through photos and creative arts**

**Introduction**

This program is recommended for pre-teen girls and their moms. Start with Part 1 and then pick and choose from Parts 2, 3, and 4 to plan a series of workshops. (If you plan to do Part 2, make sure to leave enough time in your Part 1 session so that you get to Exercise 5.) Also note that Part 1 is long – you may want to make it more than one session.

The goal of this program is for daughters and moms to spend some fun and close time together, exploring issues related to girls and women and learning about Jewish women's history.

**Notes and suggestions on working with mother-daughter groups**

Mothers and daughters

Working with mothers and daughters can be richly rewarding. By facilitating these groups, you are providing mothers and daughters with a great opportunity to connect with each other in a supportive environment. Opportunities for mother and daughters to spend time together are often in short supply in people's busy lives.

As a facilitator, you can set a tone for a criticism-free zone. So many messages communicated in school, on TV, and through other media make young people and mothers feel they don't match up to what a mother or daughter is "supposed" to be like. This results in family members feeling bad about themselves and bad about each other. As a facilitator, you can gently remind people to treat each other well and remind them that everyone is doing ok. For example, complimenting a young girl will make her *and* her mother feel better—the whole group will benefit when the mother-daughter pairs feel good.

Also, it's good to remember that just as mothers want more closeness with their daughters, daughters also want to be close to their mothers. Pre-teens start to be pressured to act cool and pretend they don't care. No matter how much they act otherwise, they want time with their moms and they want their approval and respect.

Planning discussions and activities

We recommend that you be flexible in your planning of this program. You will find activities as well as discussions outlined here. You can make adjustments to help engage the girls and their mothers based on the age and maturity of the girls.

The younger the girls are, the more you will need to focus on activities rather than discussions—even teens sometimes have a hard time talking. Some structured group games or ice breakers can help young people warm up and feel more at home before you start a session. Having a few group games in your back pocket to pull out when young people seem restless will help.

You can try different strategies for getting girls to talk. Much will depend on their age, their connections with other girls in the group, their relationships with their moms, and on the particular girls who sign up for this program. If the girls are talkers and are already friends with one another, they will be more willing to spend time in discussion groups.

We have included many discussion questions in this workshop guide. You can pick and choose the questions that you think would be most appropriate for your group.

There are times when we ask you to break into small groups for discussions during these sessions. We recommend that you have two or three mother-daughter pairs in each group. Often young girls will be more willing to talk with their moms when their friends are talking, too. This works especially well when the girls already know each other. If you are the facilitator, you may need to visit different groups and help them to get going. Also, gently try to keep the moms from dominating the conversation.

Although one of the main goals of these workshops is to bring moms and daughters together, there may be times when you want to try having the daughters and moms meet in separate discussion groups for short periods of time. In separate groups, girls and moms can address one or two questions like, “What jumps into your mind when you say the word ‘feminism’?” or “Name ten things that are great about girls/women of my generation,” or “What’s great about being a girl/woman?” This may help girls start talking. Then the groups of moms and girls can come back together, and a group reporter can summarize what their group said, with others adding their thoughts. The daughters’ group may or may not need an adult helper to get the conversation going.

#### Advance preparation

Especially if you won’t have access to the internet during the program, you may want to suggest that participants browse the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* online exhibit at <http://www.jwa.org/feminism> sometime before the program. It will get them thinking about the topic and will also familiarize them with the exhibit.

You also may want to say the following to moms at the beginning of the program:

*This is a special opportunity to be with your daughter. Congratulations for making this happen. During this lesson we recommend you take a vacation from worrying about your child—you have permission to be pleased with your daughter and enjoy her, exactly how she is. You also get to be pleased with yourself as a parent!*

*We recommend that you try to follow your daughter's lead in the activities. We suggest you listen to her answer questions before you answer questions yourself. (If she doesn't want to talk, that's ok, too.) Avoid making statements that imply that your generation might be better than your daughter's generation.*

Daughters may be interested to hear this message given to their moms. You also have the option of sending a note to moms before the program starts, so they can think about this ahead of time.

## **Part 1: Looking at Jewish women through photographs**

### What participants should bring to the first meeting:

- Photographs of mom in different settings: alone, with family, and with friends. Especially bring photos from when they were young (close to daughter's age now).
- Current photographs of daughter in different settings: alone, with family, and with friends.
- If you are going to do Part 2, people should bring cameras to the first session (for use in Exercise 5). As an alternative, the group leader could supply disposable cameras.

### What the group leader should have ready for the first meeting:

- Copies of the packet for Part 1 (photos and the statements from the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* exhibit) or enough on-line computers to share so that everyone can see the materials.
- Facilitators who will be doing Part 2 should bring digital, Polaroid, or disposable cameras to the first session to get started on the project for the second session. (Even if people have been told to bring their own cameras, some people will forget, so have some extras on hand.)

## **Part 1: Exercise 1**

In this first session, we are going to look at representations of women through photographs.

### To start the session:

- Put all of the group's mom photos together on a table. On another part of the table, place all the photos of the daughters. Have everyone look at these photos.
- Break into small groups of 2 or 3 mother-daughter pairs to discuss the following questions. You may want to assign someone to be the informal facilitator for each group. (If the whole group is small, you don't need to divide into groups.)

Questions for girls:

- What do you notice about the pictures of the moms when they were pre-teens or teenagers? What do you notice about their styles of clothes? How do they look?
- What do you notice about their friendships? Are they like your friendships? Are they different?
- What do you notice about their activities?
- What is something about your generation of girls that you are proud of?
- What is something you like about being a girl?

Questions for moms:

- Looking at the photos, what do you notice about your own generation when you were a pre-teen or teen?
- Looking at the pictures of the daughters, what do you appreciate about your daughter's generation?
- What about your generation are you proud of?
- What is something you like about being a woman?

**Part 1: Exercise 2**

Now we are going to read a short background piece about the history of Jewish women and feminism. Stay in your small groups or mix the groups so different mom-daughter pairs get to meet each other. Take turns reading the hand-out aloud in the small groups. (If the whole group is small, you don't need to divide into groups).

After that, we will be looking at and discussing photographs from the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution*.

## **Introduction to *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution***

The *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* online exhibit (<http://www.jwa.org/feminism>), created by the Jewish Women's Archive (JWA), tells the story of Jewish women who played key roles in building and advancing the modern American women's movement. Jewish feminists helped reshape every aspect of American life. Some Jewish feminists transformed the Jewish community as well. This exhibit focuses on both.

The modern period of the American women's movement spans from the 1960s through the end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. That period is called the "second wave" of feminism. It is called this because there was an earlier American women's movement that we now call the "first wave," which started in the mid-1800s and continued until approximately 1920 when women won the right to vote. (Today, some young feminist activists consider themselves part of a "third wave" of feminism that began in the 1990s). Some of the women who were active in the "first wave" were Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Susan B. Anthony, Lucretia Mott, Lucy Stone, Carrie Chapman Catt, and Alice Paul. These women fought for women's suffrage and equality for women throughout American society. Their values and goals were similar to those of modern day "feminists," although they didn't use that word to describe themselves or their movement.

The "second wave" of feminism began in the 1960s. Many women were inspired by the civil rights movement, and some had participated in this movement (or in the anti-war movement) and had learned organizing skills there. Some had experienced sexism in these other movements that sparked them to think about creating a movement for women's liberation.

The second wave of feminism began when women like Betty Friedan began to challenge social expectations for women and to demand equality for women. In 1966, the National Organization for Women (NOW) was founded to advocate for women's rights.

In the late 1960s, younger women began to form "consciousness raising groups." These informal groups provided a place where women talked about their personal lives as women. Many women began to realize that their experiences and frustrations were often caused by inequities in society, rather than their own personal problems. Within a short period of time, the terms "women's rights," "women's liberation," and "feminism" became popular terms.

In the 1970s, women who had been active in the American feminist movement began to apply their new feminist insights to their experiences in the Jewish community. Realizing that they often felt excluded from full participation in Jewish life, they created a Jewish feminist movement to help make Judaism and the Jewish community more inclusive. Jewish feminism has been one of the most important forces in shaping and revitalizing American Jewish life in the past 30 years.

Jewish feminism has taken many forms. Some women have focused on women's access to public ritual roles, such as inclusion in a *minyan* [prayer quorum, traditionally ten men] and acceptance to rabbinical school. Orthodox feminists developed other innovative ways for women to participate in Jewish practice, such as the creation of women's *tefilah* [prayer] groups in which women lead prayers and read from the Torah but omit prayers that require the presence of a *minyan*.

Jewish feminists have also struggled to make sure that Judaism includes their voices, questions, and perspectives. They pointed out that since many traditional texts, such as prayer books and the legal writings of the rabbis, were all written by men, the experiences of half of the Jewish population were absent from the official record of Judaism. To address this imbalance, feminists began to create their own *midrashim* – interpretations of traditional texts – some in the form of traditional commentaries, and others in creative media such as poetry, fiction, or visual art.

Jewish (and non-Jewish) feminists have wrestled with traditional depictions of God as male. In the 1970s and 80s, some women began to change liturgy so that it would reflect more inclusive, and in some cases, more feminine, images. This creative approach to God-language and prayer has had a strong influence even on mainstream American prayer books.

Women have also developed new rituals to provide women and girls with opportunities for meaningful Jewish experiences. The most obvious example of such innovations is the bat mitzvah, first held in 1922 and a widespread practice since the 1970s. Feminists have also developed ceremonies to mark experiences specific to women, such as childbirth and menstruation. Some Jewish women have also re-embraced rituals and holidays traditionally considered part of women's religious practice, such as the *mikveh* [ritual bath] and *Rosh Hodesh* [new moon] celebrations.

*Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* highlights 74 Jewish women who were involved in “second wave” feminism. The exhibit includes a statement by each woman about her role in the feminist movement and a short biography, as well as artifacts, documents, photographs or videos that she submitted about her experience of feminism. The exhibit is organized so that the viewer can read about the events and women in chronological order on a timeline or can explore different themes in feminism. A viewer can also go to “Search the Collection,” to find exhibit entries according to a list of women, topic, dates, formats or keywords.

There were many more Jewish feminists than are represented in this exhibit. This is just a sampling of some of the Jewish women involved in the feminist movement.

Some of the following questions and activities are based on excerpts from the exhibit that your group leader will provide for you. At another time, you may want to browse the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* exhibit, which you can find online at <http://www.jwa.org/feminism>.

### **Part 1: Exercise 3**

In the small discussion groups of 2 or 3 mother-daughter pairs, look together at the following photos from the *Jewish Women and the Feminist Revolution* exhibit and discuss the accompanying questions.

#### Photo 1: Nicole Hollander with mother and friends

This is a picture of Nicole's mother and her friends (with Nicole as a little girl). This photo was taken in the late 1930s, a few decades before the second wave of feminism began.

- What do you notice about these people?
- Do they look different from people today? How are they similar to people today?
- Now read Nicole Hollander's statement. Does her statement change the way you see the pictures? If so, how?

#### Photo 2: NOW founding conference

This photo was taken at a conference at which the National Organization of Women (NOW) was organized. NOW was founded in 1966 to serve as an organization that stands up for women's rights and equality. It is now the largest feminist organization in the U.S., with 500,000 contributing members. NOW's goals include eliminating discrimination and harassment in workplaces, schools, and all other sectors of society; securing reproductive rights for all women; and ending all forms of violence against women.

- What is interesting or surprising about this photo? How would you describe the founders of NOW, based on this photo?
- Two of the Jewish women in this photo are Sonia Pressman Fuentes and Betty Friedan (Sonia is third from the right in the front row, and Betty is on the far right in the front row). Many women leaders of the feminist movement were Jewish. Why do you think so many Jewish women have been involved in the women's movement?
- After answering these questions, read the statement by Sonia Pressman Fuentes. What did you learn from reading this?

#### Photo 3: "The March into the First National Women's Conference"

In November of 1977, more than 20,000 people gathered in Houston for the First National Women's Conference. The primary goal of the conference was to create a national plan of action to achieve gender equality. The conference voted for 18 resolutions on issues including health care, abortion rights, education, minority rights, lesbian rights, and the Equal Rights

Amendment. This photo was taken by Diana Mara Henry, a feminist photographer.

- How does this image of feminism look different from the previous photo?
- Are there any similarities to the previous photo?

Photo 4: Amy Eilberg becomes a rabbi

This is a photo of Amy Eilberg, the first Conservative woman rabbi, at her rabbinical ordination from the Jewish Theological Seminary in 1985.

- What does this image communicate?
- How do you think a current rabbinical ordination photo might look different?

Photo 5: V-Day Public Service Announcement posters

These posters were created in 2003 by V-Day, a national organization founded by Eve Ensler, the author of *The Vagina Monologues*, to end violence against women. One poster features feminist leader Gloria Steinem, and one features Eve Ensler and the actress Salma Hayek. Each poster begins with “When violence to women and girls end, I will...” and the person featured in the poster finishes the sentence.

- What do these images of women communicate? How are they different from the other photos we’ve looked at today?
- If you were to be featured in one of these posters, what would be your answer to “When violence to women and girls ends, I will...”?

**Part 1: Exercise 4**

Now we are going to talk about women’s rights and feminism. (Note to facilitator: this exercise can also be included in Part 2.) Please remember that there are no wrong answers to the following questions. These are questions to consider and think about.

Questions for the girls

- Do you think people take your opinions seriously, as a girl? Can you give some examples of times you have been taken seriously and times you haven’t been taken seriously?
- Are there ways that things could be better for girls and women?

- Do you believe that today girls/women have rights equal to those of boys/men? If not, what should change?
- Do you consider yourself a feminist? Why or why not?
- Do you consider yourself a Jewish feminist? Why or why not? What do you think is the difference between the term “feminist” and “Jewish feminist”?

Questions for the moms

- Do you think people took your opinions seriously, when you were a girl? Can you give some examples of times you have been taken seriously as a woman and times you haven't been taken seriously?
- Are there ways that things could be better for girls and women today?
- Has feminism affected your life as a Jewish woman? If so, how?
- Did you see yourself as a feminist when you were young? Are you a feminist now? Why or why not? What does this term mean to you?

**Part 1: Exercise 5**

Mother and daughter take pictures of each other, or pairs of mothers/daughters take pictures of each other. Approach the photos any way you want. Photos can be traditional or playful. They can be portraits or candid, goofy or inventive. Perhaps do a close up of your hands together or have someone take an aerial view of you both looking up. Have fun with this. (These photos will be used in Part 2.)

**Part 1: Exercise 6: Conclusion**

- What was the most interesting thing you learned today?
- What did the photographs help you understand about women's lives and feminism?
- What else would you still like to learn about Jewish women and feminism?
- What did you like about this workshop?

## **Part 2: Looking at Jewish women through photographs, continued**

### What group leaders should have ready for the second session:

- 1 32 oz bottle of matte mod podge (used to glue down pictures – it dries transparent)
- 1 inch foam brushes (enough for each person)
- Scissors (enough for each person)
- A bunch of old magazines (in case people want to cut out additional pictures to put in the photomontage)
- Shadow boxes or heavy poster board (shadow boxes work best: they make a nice frame)
- Newspapers or other protective paper to put on tables or desks
- Baby wipes or paper towels for cleaning hands

### What participants should bring to the second session:

- The photographs that they took of each other at the previous session
- If they want, they can also bring additional photos of both of them that they don't mind cutting up (or color copies of these photos)

## **Part 2: Exercise 1**

Group activity: making a mother-daughter photomontage (45-60 minutes)

Directions: Cut and glue your photos down in any design you want. You can work as a mother-daughter team, or each person can do her own. You get to decide how you want to do this art project. What are the different ways you want to portray each of you and both of you together? You can use this project to tell a story.

When the projects are finished, have each mother-daughter pair show their photomontage to the group and tell them about it.

Suggested questions for daughters and moms (daughters should generally answer first):

- What should people know about this photomontage? Is there a story?
- Are there symbols in it? Inside jokes between you and your mom?
- What's one thing about how this photomontage turned out that makes you proud? (Don't be afraid to brag – each person gets a chance to say how she is pleased with her project.)

Note: It's best to allow a certain amount of time for each mom-daughter pair to talk about their work. Try to stick to the time you decide on or people will lose attention and some people may get short changed. A five minute limit for each mom-daughter pair is suggested.

## **Part 2: Exercise 2**

Look at the covers of *Hues* magazine and read the statement by Ophira Edut

Then look at the cover of the first issue of *Ms.* magazine and read the statement by Letty Cottin Pogrebin

Break into groups of two to four mother-daughter pairs and answer the following questions:

- What do you notice about each magazine? What is similar about them and what is different?
- The two magazines communicate very different images of feminism. What are the differences between the feminism of the older generation and the feminism of the younger generation?
- Question for daughters: What about your generation's feminism are you proud of? What do you think girls your age can teach women of the older generation?
- Question for moms: What about your generation's feminism are you proud of? What is one thing you learned from the feminism of your generation that you hope your daughter will know?
- Questions for daughters: What do you like about being a girl today? What is difficult about being a girl?
- Questions for moms: What do you like about being a woman today? What is difficult about being a woman today?

## **Conclusion for Part 2:**

- What did you learn about feminism today?
- What did you learn about your mom/daughter?

### **Part 3: Oral Histories**

Materials needed for this session:

- tape recorders, camcorders, or other recording devices (make sure you have microphones if they are not built in)
- tapes, minidiscs, or cds, if needed for your equipment (enough to be able to record an hour for each machine)
- notepads and pens
- extra batteries

Directions for facilitator:

There are several possible ways to structure this session. Decide if you think this group of young people should do the oral histories with their own mothers or whether they would like to interview another mother. Either way would be interesting and would also have its own challenges. You might ask the daughters what their preference is.

You can do an oral history workshop in one session: plan 30 minutes for the girls to prepare the interviews, 30-45 minutes for the interview itself, and 45 minutes to report back and wrap up. You will probably need several different spaces to hold the interviews, so that the noise isn't distracting.

The daughters may want to conduct their interviews in teams of two, with one daughter asking the questions and the other managing the equipment. In this case, the two daughters should interview two mothers, so that each girl has the opportunity to conduct an interview and to assist with equipment.

Ideas for extension projects:

- Have the girls write up their oral histories and display them or print them in the synagogue or school newspaper.
- Have each daughter team up with her mother, or another mother in the group. This time the mother should interview the daughter about *her* life and history as it relates to being a girl.
- After doing interviews with mothers, have the daughters (or mother-daughter pairs) interview another Jewish woman in the community about her experiences growing up and her encounters with the feminist movement. (If choosing this project, write a letter to this woman, requesting the interview and stating the goals of the interview. A week or two later, follow-up with a phone call to see if she is willing to be interviewed, and also to set up an interview time and place.)

**Read the following introduction to oral histories together:**

We all like to tell stories. Have you ever sat around a table or living room and people went around and told stories about something scary or funny or amazing that happened to them? Sometimes people stay up late into the night to tell stories to each other. People love to talk and people love to listen to stories.

Oral history is the telling of stories. When we take the time to find out about someone's life or find out about a period of history in which someone lived, we are helping to make history. Listening to a person talk about her life lets you see a person in a deeper way. You get to go beyond the way a person looks or talks in her day-to-day life. You start to understand how she became who she is. And you get to understand how the events of politics or wars or social movements shape people's lives.

We are going to do oral histories of moms. Today the young people will ask questions of the moms and their experiences growing up as a girl. Although we've already talked about this a little in other sessions, we are going to ask more questions and we are going to record what the mothers say.

**Tips on oral history preparation, interviews, and reporting back**

Preparation:

1. Prepare questions ahead of time. The questions below are suggestions. You can add questions or omit some suggested questions. Have lots of extra questions ready in case you need them.
2. Prepare many open-ended questions. Open-ended questions are questions that ask for a story, opinion, feeling, or a description rather than a fact. It's fine to ask fact questions like, "When did you first hear about the women's movement?" but make sure you also have lots of open-ended questions like, "What did you think when you first heard about the women's movement?"
3. If you are going to use a recording device, make sure you practice with it before the interview so you don't have to take time figuring out your equipment during the interview.
4. If two people are going to conduct the interview, decide ahead who is going to do what. For example, have one person handle the equipment while the other asks the questions. (You can trade roles if you conduct two interviews.)

Interviews:

1. Remember to enjoy yourself while you do this. When you are interviewing someone, it's similar to making a new friend or getting to know a friend a lot better—it can be a little awkward but fun and interesting. Start with the questions that are easier to answer so the person gets a chance to warm up.

2. Don't be afraid of pauses or silences. Sometimes it takes a moment for the person being interviewed to collect her thoughts.

3. Don't interrupt the person you are interviewing with other questions while she is in the middle of a story.

Suggested questions:

Read these questions ahead of time and pick the ones you want to use. You can also write your own questions. It may take some time to prepare questions.

- Name a Jewish woman who made a difference in your life. How did she make a difference to you?
- What were some of your favorite games to play when you were young?
- What was good about being a girl when you were young and what was difficult about it?
- Did you play sports when you were growing up? If so, what sports?
- What were your hopes and dreams when you were young?
- Did you ever notice that things were unfair for girls? If so, how were they unfair?
- What made you proud of yourself when you were young?
- When was the first time you heard about feminism or the women's movement? What did you think about it then?
- What was it like to grow up as a girl in your Jewish community? Was there sexism in your Jewish community? If so, how did you see it operating?
- Did you notice if Jewish girls experienced sexism differently than non-Jewish girls?
- How are things different for girls today compared to when you were young?

- How are things different for *Jewish* girls today compared to when you were young?
- Can you think of a time when you spoke up about the unfair treatment towards yourself as a girl or the unfair treatment of another girl? What was the outcome? How about when you became a teen or an adult?
- Did you become involved in the women's movement? Why or why not?
- As you grew to be a teenager and then a young adult, what was occurring in the women's movement? Did that affect you? If so, how?
- Was there one particular feminist event or issue that you can remember reading about in newspapers or hearing about on TV?
- Was there a particular Jewish feminist whom you saw as your role model or whom you admired? Why do you think there were so many prominent Jewish feminists?
- Do you think the media portrayed/portrays the feminist movement accurately?
- What do you think the women's movement should focus on today?
- Do you think there is equality in the Jewish community today? Why or why not? What do you think Jewish women should do to further equality in the Jewish community?
- What are your dreams and hopes for yourself now?
- What are your dreams and hopes for me? (or "for my generation" depending on who is doing the interview)

Reporting back and wrapping up:

After the interviews, come back to the whole group and summarize what you learned about the person you interviewed. Share one or two stories you learned about the interviewee. Daughters and moms can each talk about what the interview process was like for them. What was fun? What was difficult? To make sure everyone gets a chance to share, keep each report to a time limit of 5-10 minutes.