

RAY FRANK on KLAL YISRAEL
Lesson plan for middle school or high school

1. **Read Ray Frank's biography** or describe her life and achievements. Point out that one of Frank's main concerns about Judaism in her time was the growing gulf between Jews keeping traditional Jewish observance and Jews supporting "reform" (a more liberal approach to religious practice).
2. **Read Ray Frank's sermon and discuss:**
 - Do you agree with Frank that Jews should try to form one congregation?
 - Does it matter whether you're living in a small community (like Spokane at the time, where neither the Orthodox nor the Reform groups were large enough to create their own congregation) or in a larger Jewish population?
3. **Teach the phrase *Klal Yisrael***, meaning "the whole Jewish community." This phrase is used to communicate the value of uniting the entire Jewish community. Discuss:
 - What are the biggest issues dividing Jewish communities today?
 - Do you think these issues could be put aside to create a more unified Jewish community?
 - Can you think of examples of times when you feel the Jewish community is unified?
 - Are there benefits to having different Jewish movements with different viewpoints? If so, what are they? (For a short article on the divide among Jewish denominations, read Rabbi Joseph Telushkin's chapter on "Denominational Conflicts" in his book, *Jewish Literacy*. For information on an organization dedicated to healing the denominational divide, look up CLAL: The National Jewish Center for Learning and Leadership at www.clal.org)
4. **Read this Talmudic text**, paraphrased from *Berachot* 11a:

Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Elazar ben Azaria were once staying in the same room. Rabbi Ishmael was lying down and Rabbi Elazar was standing up. When it came time to say the evening Shema, Rabbi Elazar lay down to say the prayer, following the teaching of the House of Shammai about how to say the evening Shema. However, when he did so, Rabbi Ishmael stood up to say it. Afterward Rabbi Elazar said to his companion: "Why are you being so contrary? You have no objections to saying the Shema while lying down." Rabbi Ishmael responded: "I stood up in order to follow the teaching of the House of Hillel. If students were watching us, I did not want them to assume that there was only one correct way."

- Why did Rabbi Ishmael and Rabbi Elazar switch positions when it was time to say *Shema*?
 - How was Rabbi Ishmael acting out of a concern for *Klal Yisrael*?
 - How could Jewish communities today act like Rabbi Ishmael?
5. **Create an art project on *Klal Yisrael***: collect images of contemporary Jewish communities from different movements and different parts of the world. These could be from calendars, magazines, the internet, etc. (For example, google "Jews, images" and you'll see many diverse, printable images of Jews around the world. Don't forget to use www.jwa.org to include images of contemporary women, especially from our Women Who Dared exhibits). Create posters or a mural depicting the many faces of *Klal Yisrael*.