

What's Jewish about Social Justice

8th/9th Grade Elective
Wednesday Night Teen Program
Peninsula Temple Beth El
San Mateo, CA

Course Details

- Evening Synagogue School Program
- Elective
- 7 week trimester
- 50 minute class
- 12 registered
- 5 – 10 show up on any given evening,
who and how many unknown until start time

Class Overview

- Intro – will be covered here
- Modern Slavery
- Global Hunger/Food Aid
- Labor Rights
- Fair Trade
- Climate Change
- Taking Action

Intro Class - Elements

- Living The Legacy – Labor
[Unit 1/Lesson 1/Part 1](#)
- Living The Legacy – Civil Rights
[Unit 1/Lesson 2/Part 4](#)

Big Ideas

Work

Leisure

Need

Joy

Labor

Culture

Money

Sustenance

Living

Choice

Education

Fresh air

Beauty

Oppression

Rights

Free time

Uniqueness
Jazz
Difference
CULTURE
unique diversity

like muddy contentment
JOY
Solitude
Sleep
Shit
Cool
DfC.

Freedom to love
Freedom
RIGHTS
equality

rights
freedom
biotech
Diversity
CHOICE
freedom
marriage

Slavery
racial slurs
Anger
OPPRESSION
Racism
bigotry

Smoking
Smoking
FRESH AIR
non-pollution
Life
brave

gradual requirements
shelter
required
NEED
Food
oxygen
tolerance
have to have
folk

Wage
a job opportunity
fulfillment
Birth
LABOR work
hardships
work

Marilyn Heiss, Synagogue Supplementary School, San Mateo, CA

STUDENT RESPONSES TO WORDS

FRESH AIR

It's about life not becoming stagnant; there are always new things to experience & discover, and old things to master. It's also respecting the world around you

RIGHTS

Rights are important to me because without them people will never be able to succeed in any environment. If you don't have equal rights, you will never have equal opportunity, choice, or anything else.

CULTURE

Culture is connecting with your roots, so you do what your ancestors did. Also, if you are in a large culture, then you are a part of something bigger than just yourself.

What's Jewish About Justice?

We have suffered injustice. In our lifetimes and those of our parents and grandparents, we have been the victims of individual and institutional anti-Semitism. We have forgotten neither the atrocities of the Holocaust nor the exclusionary policies of the early twentieth century nor the individual acts of anti-Semitism that continue today. We know that discrimination against any minority threatens all minorities.

<http://jwa.org/teach/livingthelegacy>

Contact JWA at education@jwa.org

"What's Jewish about Justice?" teaching materials were developed by Simon Green and Rabbi Jill Jacobs, Jewish Funds for Justice, jewishjustice.org

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What's Jewish About Justice?

We are the inheritors of a legal system that teaches us ethical interpersonal practices, not only ritual practices. From our tradition, we learn how to create equitable and mutually-responsible relationships between workers and employers, landlords and tenants, buyers and sellers, and others between whom there is often an unequal distribution of power.

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What's Jewish About Justice?

We recognize that our own fate is bound up in the fate of others. During the 1960s, we joined the civil rights movement in part because we stood to gain from the dismantling of restrictive covenants and quotas. We continue to work on issues such as health care, education, and the environment that have a direct impact on our lives and on the lives of our children, and recognize that we will be most effective when we partner with other communities that share our own economic and social interests.

My Model - NEED

What's the difference between need + want
Getting what we want vs getting what we need
We need basics - food, water, air
believe shelter
We need basics - education, knowledge
to survive
Our wants are extra - do we they?
IS POWER A WANT OR A NEED
SOMETIMES YES/SOMETIMES NO

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NEED OR WANT

Inherit a system

Ethical practice?

Ritual practice?

Need or want?

Tradition creates relationship

Basics for life: food, water, air

Basics for survival: education, knowledge

Workers & Employers

Landlords & Tenants

Buyers & Sellers

Wants & Needs

Distribution of power

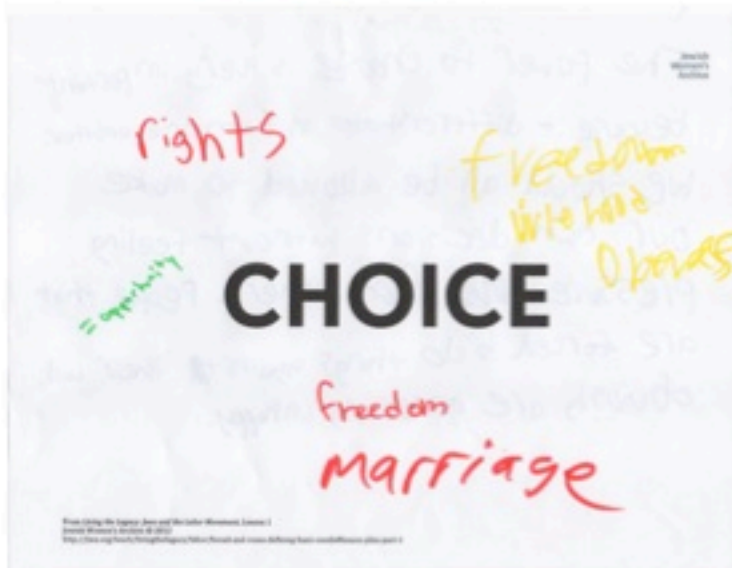
Is power a want or a need?

Student Example 1

CHOICE

The power to choose is very important because it differentiates us from one another. We should all be allowed to make our own decisions without feeling pressure ~~with~~ from others. People that are forced to do things against their will, obviously are generally unhappy.

We share a communal narrative that reminds us of our enslavement to Pharaoh, and of our liberation from Egypt. Rather than draw from this memory permission to hate or fear others, we have learned the lesson of protecting the most vulnerable. Time and again, the Torah reminds us that our personal experience of being strangers instills in us a responsibility toward those in our own society who are at risk for discrimination and oppression.



We share a communal freedom
our own choice
freedom; liberation; equal opportunity
choice - marriage
risk for discrimination and oppression from our own society
choice; openness; freedom; rights
protecting the strangers choice
our personal choice
freedom

Student Example 2

We have suffered injustice. In our lifetimes and those of our parents and grandparents, we have been the victims of individual and institutional anti-Semitism. We have forgotten neither the atrocities of the Holocaust nor the exclusionary policies of the early twentieth century nor the individual acts of anti-Semitism that continue today. We know that discrimination against any minority threatens all minorities.

We ~~have~~ all suffered injustice

We are all victims

Whether individual or institutional

We are all victims

from the atrocities to the exclusionary policies

We are all victims

from acts of anti-semitism

We are all victims

We know discrimination against any minority threatens all minorities

We are all victims

Student Example 3

We believe in and work toward a perfected world.

From our mystical tradition, we have learned that human beings have the power to return the world to its original perfection. Even in the darkest of days, we maintain faith in our own ability to contribute to the ultimate redemption of the world.

Humans,
working toward a perfect world.
Now we are learning
how to make our work
The end, is only the
beginning.