

Discovering Our History

Through the Lives of Jewish Women



Sample Edition

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Forward

Dear Teacher,

This curriculum was developed with the goal to give students a basic understanding of the timeline of Jewish history, with a focus on the lives of different Jewish women.

The first volume covers six units, from creation until the 2nd Beis Hamikdash. In this volume, students will explore our history through the lives of the amazing Jewish women who lived during these times. Students will be learning different lessons from each of the women, and discovering more about themselves through a project they will build upon throughout the entire year.

This curriculum combines creativity with life lessons and Jewish History.

The second volume will cover a more modern period of Jewish history, from the second Beis Hamikdash until the early Acharonim.

The objective of this course is to empower the students to work on personal growth, and the ability to use their creativity to shine. Just like all these women, your students will impact their world and make a difference.

Differentiating the Material

Although this curriculum is geared towards middle school students, it can easily be adapted for older students.

In older graders or non-traditional classrooms, you might decide to facilitate more of a discussion or use this curriculum as a base and add in other stories related to these women. You can always add in an extra game, various assessments, a short sicha, or anything else you might find helpful for your students.

Each of these lessons works as a stand-alone, for one or two periods, and makes a great option for substitutes as everything is completely prepared. In the resource folder, there is a substitute log you can print and use for your reference.

Throughout this curriculum, there are footnotes that don't need to be taught but might be helpful for you when students ask questions. Please be mindful of your students and what content is appropriate for your class. Although the lessons in this teacher's edition are quite comprehensive, every classroom is unique. So please don't forget to make it your own and cater to your students.

The Lessons

For each lesson, there is a clear lesson plan. Some lessons should take one 40-minute class while others are expected to be covered in two separate 40-minute sessions. Every teacher moves at a different pace, and you may find it takes you longer or shorter than the expected time. **You can always shorten a discussion or do the Chavrusa learning as a class, or even for homework, depending on the ages of your students.**

The lesson plans include notes on the extra materials you will need. Know that some of these materials are available in the resources folder that was shared with you upon purchase, while some others you need to source on your own.

Each unit has an accompanying slideshow which you may use. Teachers should use the teacher's guide for the lessons and not rely on the slideshows alone.

Projects

Students will be working on an individual project that they will build upon during the year and compile into a final piece. At the end of the year, students should present their projects to their classmates and family. For example, a student might decide to make a newspaper for her end-of-the-year project and have one piece per unit or lesson.

There are a few different ways you can run the project. You can have the student do one per woman or one or two per unit. Depending on how much time you have for the curriculum, you might give in-class work time for the projects or have them do it all at home.

Students should be encouraged to pick a project they want to do, as they will be more invested in their work. However, as the teacher, you can also give your students a few choices if you feel that it is better for you. Look at the project samples and rubrics in the resource folder.

Pro Tip:

- Set up a meeting with each of your students to check in and help them pick a project. It's a great opportunity for one-to-one time with your students.

Ideas for student projects

- Newspaper
- Diary entries
- Scrapbooks
- Comic strips
- A cookbook or recipe cards
- Poems
- Drawings (with explanations)
- 3D objects with an explanation

Student Workbook

The student workbook is meant to be a guide for taking notes. All the Chavrusa work is included in the student's edition. The workbook pages are included in this teacher's edition at the end of the lessons for your convenience with the answers filled in.

A reminder that no part of this curriculum may be copied or reproduced without explicit written permission from Judaic Resources.

School Price: \$499

(Includes all slideshows, one printed teacher edition, and access to the resource files)

Additional Teacher' Edition: \$79 (US Letter: Color and coil bound)

Student workbook PDF: \$100

Women & Lessons Included

1. Chava
2. Sara
3. Rivka
4. Leah & Rochel
5. Serach
6. Yocheved

7. Tzipporah
8. Miriam
9. Tzelophchad's Daughters
10. Rachav
11. Devorah & Yael
12. Rus
13. Chana & Penina
14. Michal
15. Batsheva
16. Three Exceptional Women: (Widow of Tzarfas, Ovadyia's wife, Isha HaShunamis)
17. Chulda
18. Esther
19. Our Role Models
20. Your Role

SAMPLE LESSON

Leah

The Birth of a Nation

Lesson Plan: Leah and Rochel

Lesson 2: Leah & Rochel	Two 40-minute classes	Materials
Warm – Up	5 minutes	Mind maps
Setting the Scene	5 minutes	Chumash Bereshis
Chavrusa Learning	20 minutes	Chavrusa pdf/ slideshow
Gratitude	10 minutes	
Warm – Up	5 minutes	* LEMONS
HaKaras HaTov	10 minutes	Gemara Text
Rochel's Passing	10 minutes	
To Love a Fellow Jew	5 minutes	
Summarize	10 minutes	

Lesson Objectives

- Students will recognize that everything in life is a bracha from Hashem.
- Students will analyze the importance of Hakaras HaTov.
- Students will reflect on the effects of Ahavas Yisroel.

Warm-Up Activity

Write the word gratitude on the board and have students right out everything they are grateful for. Encourage some of the smaller things, like clothes, shoes, music, games etc. Then change the word from gratitude to bracha.

It's important to be thankful for everything in our life. From the big things like our family to the little things like having air conditioning or internet. Everything comes from Hashem, and we should look at everything as a bracha from Hashem and make sure to show gratitude. That's why we say a *bracha* before we eat, and bench when we finish.

Setting the Scene

Historical Timeline:	The Birth of a Nation
Jewish Year	2171 – 2207 ¹
Secular	(-1590) – (-1553) BCE

When Yaakov and Eisav were born, Yaakov tried to be born first by grabbing onto Eisav's ankle, the *Eikev*, which is why he was named Yaakov. When Yitzchak was sitting Shiva for his father, Yaakov was cooking him lentil soup for dinner. Eisav, who spent his day hunting, came in starving and begged Yaakov to sell him some of the soup in exchange for the rights of being the bechor, the firstborn.

As Yitzchak grew older, he became blind and wanted to bless both of his sons. Eisav, being the older one, would get the bechor bracha which included continuing the Jewish people. Rivka helped Yaakov dress up like Eisav to ensure that he would be the one to receive this special bracha and continue Avraham's legacy. Upon finding out, Eisav was so angry he threatened to kill his brother for taking his birthright.

Yaakov ran away and spent fourteen years at the Yeshiva of Shem V'Ever, and then continued to Charan to live with his uncle Lavan.

When Yaakov arrived, he met Rochel by the well and immediately knew that he wanted her to become his wife. Yaakov asked Lavan if he could marry her, to which he agreed on the condition that he work for him for seven years. After waiting seven years, it was finally Yaakov and Rochel's wedding day.

¹ Some sources say 2208.

Chavrusa Learning

Divide your class into small groups to review the story of the wedding day switch between Rochel and Leah.

Instructions

1. Go over the discussion questions.
2. Read *בראשית כט:יז*
3. Read the Rashi *לְאָה רַבּוֹת*
4. Discuss the story of the wedding.
5. Read Pasuk *כט:כה*

Discussion Questions

- What do we know about Lavan?
- Why did Rochel and Leah switch places on her wedding day?
- What was Leah crying over?
- What did Yaakov do when he realized he married Leah?
- What did Lavan promise him?

Sources

וַעֲיַגְי לְאָה רַבּוֹת וְרַחֵל קָיָמָה יָפֶת־תָּאֵר וַיִּפֶּת מְרָאָהּ: *בראשית כט:יז*

Leah had weak eyes; Rachel was shapely and beautiful.

Rashi: *רַבּוֹת*

Question: Why were Leah's eyes weak?

רְכוּת. שֶׁהָיְתָה סְבוּרָה לַעֲלוֹת בְּגוֹרְלוֹ שֶׁל יַעֲקֹב וּבִזְכָּה, שֶׁהָיוּ הַכֹּל אוֹמְרִים שֶׁנִּי בָּנִים לְרַבֵּקָה וְשִׁתִּי בָּנוֹת לְלֵבָן, הַגְּדוּלָה לַגְּדוֹל וְהַקְטָנָה לַקָּטָן

Leah was always crying because she feared that she would be married to Eisav.

Everyone said, "Rivka has two sons, and Lavan has two daughters. The elder daughter for the elder son, the younger daughter for the younger son."

Leah cried and davened to Hashem that she shouldn't have to marry such a wicked man and Hashem answered her prayers and allowed her to marry Yaakov. When Lavan saw his older daughter crying, he decided that Rochel and Leah would switch places, claiming that it wasn't appropriate for the younger to marry before the older.

Yaakov and Rochel knew Lavan was a trickster, so Yaakov created a special sign for Rochel to tell under the *Chuppah*, just in case Lavan tried to switch them. Rochel exchanged places with Leah and even shared with her the special sign, and she married Yaakov.

וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַהֲגִהָהּ הוּא לְאָהָה נִיאָמָר אֶל־לָבָן מַה־זֹּאת עָשִׂיתָ לִּי הֲלֹא בְרַחֵל עַבְדָּתִי עָמְדָה וְלֵאמֹר רְמִיתָנִי: כַּט:כח
And it came to pass in the morning, and behold she was Leah! So, he said to Lavan, "What is this that you have done to me? Did I not work with you for Rochel? Why have you deceived me?"

Rashi: וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַהֲגִהָהּ הוּא לְאָהָה

Question: How did Yaakov not realize until the morning that she was Leah?

וַיְהִי בַבֹּקֶר וַהֲגִהָהּ הוּא לְאָהָה. אֶבְל בַּלַּיְלָה לֹא הָיְתָה לְאָהָה, לְפִי שֶׁמָסַר יַעֲקֹב סִמְנִים לְרַחֵל, וְכִשֶּׁרָאָתָהּ רַחֵל שֶׁמִּכְנִיסִין לוֹ לְאָהָה אָמְרָה: עָכְשָׁו תַּכְלֵס אֲחוֹתִי, עֲמָדָה וּמָסָרָה לָהּ אֲוֹתָן סִמְנִים
But at night it was not Leah because Yaakov had given Rochel certain secret signs, and when Rochel saw that they were about to bring Leah, she thought, "My sister may now be put to shame", and she therefore readily transmitted these signs to her.

In those days they used a dark cloth veil, and there was no badekin – veiling at the wedding. It was dark when they went to sleep, and he only saw her face the next morning. According to some Meforshim, Rochel and Leah were twins and looked very similar. Yaakov and Rochel also had a seemingly foolproof plan, so he didn't think to doubt it. Nowadays the Chosson veils his Kallah to ensure that he is marrying the right person.²

Gratitude

Although Yaakov married both Rochel and Leah, he loved Rochel more.

וַיֵּרָא ה' בֵּי־שְׁנוֹנָהּ לְאָהָה וַיִּפְתַּח אֶת־רִחְמָהּ וַרְחֵל עָקְרָה: כַּט:כח

² How could Yaakov marry both Rochel and Leah if they were sisters? Well, Torah wasn't around yet so these sorts of Halachos weren't an issue at the time. Moreover, the Rebbe explains that keeping your word was one of the Mitzvos that everyone was commanded at the time, so this took priority over the mitzvos that were not yet given. Chassidus explains that because Yaakov took the birthright from Eisav, he possessed both the traits of the older and the younger and was able to marry both counterparts.

Hashem saw that Leah was unloved and he opened her womb; but Rachel was barren.

Leah became pregnant three consecutive times with Reuven, Shimon, and Levi. Each name with a meaning connected to her feelings of being “unloved.” Rachel was still barren and gave her maidservant Bilhah to Yaakov to marry, as did Leah with her maidservant Zilpah. Yaakov was to have twelve sons.

Ask students to divide twelve by four.

That would mean that each wife should have birthed three of the twelve to be equal.

וַתֵּהֱרָ עוֹד וַתֵּלֶד בֶּן וַתֹּאמֶר הַפַּעַם אֵלֶּכָּה אֶת־יְהוָה עַל־כֵּן קָרָאתִי שְׁמוֹ יְהוּדָה וַתִּפְעֹם מִלְּדוֹתָּ: כַּטֹּ: לֵה

She conceived again and bore a son, and declared, “This time I will praise Hashem.” Therefore, she named him Yehuda. Then she stopped bearing.

Leah realized that this baby meant that she would have more than an equal share of the sons. So, she named him Yehuda.

The name, Yehuda, comes from the word *Hoda'ah*, which means to give thanks.

Ask: Which Tefilla do we say each morning as a thank you to Hashem?

Everything in life is a blessing. That’s why we start every day by saying Modeh Ani in which we are thanking Hashem for returning our *Neshamos* each day. We are Jewish, Judaism, *Yehudim*, which comes from the name Yehuda. Our essence is to be thankful. It’s always important to remember to give thanks to everyone who deserves it, especially Hashem. We need to see things as a gift and that it all comes from Hashem above. Just like Leah, we need to make sure to show our gratitude and use our tefillah to help make a difference. Realize, as Leah did, that every moment of life is a gift.

Discussion Question

Ask: Put yourself in the shoes of Rachel and Leah. Would you have given up something so great if it meant saving your sister from embarrassment? Or would you let life run its course?

SAMPLE

Student workbook: Sara

Timeline

Jewish	<u>1948</u>	-	<u>2085</u>
Secular	<u>-1813</u>	-	<u>-1677</u>

Summary Questions:

1. What is Monotheism? Belief in one G-d, being Hashem.
2. Why was monotheism such a unique belief during Avraham and Sara's time?
Because everyone around them served many idols and gods.
3. How was Sara tested by Hashem?
Hashem closed her womb, and she was unable to have children. In addition, she was affected by many of the tests of Avraham as well.
4. Explain why Sara felt she needed to send Yishmael away. Yishmael was a negative influence on Yitzchak, and she wanted to protect her son and his future, as he would be the one to carry on the Jewish nation.
5. **Do you think Sara was being fair in asking Avraham to send away Yishmael? Why or why not? Discuss**
I think Sarah was fair or unfair because ...

Chavrusa Learning:

Read and translate: **בראשית כא:י**

And she said to Avraham	וַתֹּאמֶר לְאַבְרָהָם
Drive out this handmaid and her son	גֵּרֶשׁ הַאֲמָהָה הַזֹּאת וְאֶת־בְּנָהּ

Because he will not inherit	כִּי לֹא יִירָשׁ
The son of the handmaiden	בֶּן־הַקְּדָמָה הַזֹּאת
With my son, with Yitzchak	עִם־בְּנִי עִם־יִצְחָק

Read and translate בראשית כא:יא

And the matter was very displeasing	וַיִּרַע הַדָּבָר מְאֹד
In the eyes of Avraham	בְּעֵינֵי אַבְרָהָם
Concerning his other son	עַל־אוֹלָת בְּנוֹ

Read and translate בראשית כא:יב

And Hashem said to Avraham	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים אֶל־אַבְרָהָם
Don't be displeased in your eyes	אַל־יִרַע בְּעֵינֶיךָ
About the boy, and about the handmaid	עַל־הַנֶּעֱר וְעַל־אִמָּתְךָ
All which Sara said to you	כָּל־אֲשֶׁר תֹּאמַר אֵלַיךְ שָׂרָה
LISTEN to her voice	שָׁמַע בְּקוֹלָהּ
Because in Yitzchak	כִּי בְיִצְחָק
Will be your seed (for your future)	יִקְרָא לְךָ זָרַע

Read and translate רש"י שמע בקולה

We learn	לְמַדְנֵנוּ
That Avraham was	שָׂהִיָּה חֹבְרָהִם
Inferior to Sara	טָפַל לְשָׂרָה
In Nevuah	בְּנְבִיאוֹת

Rashi's Question: What does listen to her voice mean?

Rashi's Answer: Sara was greater in Nevuah, and her request was actually a Nevuah

Questions:

6. What does *Perseverance* mean for you?

To remain strong in my beliefs when I know they are right. I should stick to my values
and not give in to peer pressure.

7. Explain each of Sara's names:

a. Yiscah To see, either referring to her nevuah or people would look at her
beauty.

b. Sarai My princess, referring to her Tznius and dignity

c. Sara The princess, everyone saw her as a true princess of Hashem.

8. What were the three miracles that occurred in Sara's tent?

Her candles remained lit from Shabbos to Shabbos, her Challah stayed fresh the entire
week, and a cloud of Hashem rested above her tent.

9. What makes a Jewish home?

Kosher, Shalom Bayis, Mezuzah, Seforim, Shabbos candles, Shabbos and
Yom Tov, etc