

Values Curriculum:

Divine Differences/B'Tzelem Elohim

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| OVERVIEW | This session explores the Jewish concept of being made in the image of God, B'Tzelem Elohim, and the value of celebrating the qualities that make each person unique. Through fingerprint art and self-portraits, this lesson investigates children's unique characteristics. Through "Only One Club" badges children are invited to celebrate what makes them unique. |
| OBJECTIVE | To notice our own individual characteristics and qualities and celebrate all of them as expressions of the image of God, inspiring children to see difference and diversity as a blessing. |
| VALUE(S) | <i>B'Tzelem Elohim</i> (made in the image of God) |
| STORY | "The Only One Club" by Jane Naliboff |
| MATERIALS | Fingerprint art supplies, Self-portrait materials, Badge materials |
| AT HOME CHALLENGE | Students will be challenged to spend a week paying attention to the unique qualities of the people they encounter. Families will be challenged to talk about what unique gifts each member of the family brings to their family. |

Materials List

Activity One

- White paper (8x11)
- Small hand-held mirrors (one for every child or two)
- Pencils and erasers
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons
- Collage material: colored paper or magazines
- Pairs of scissors
- Glue sticks

Activity Two

- Cardstock of any color
- Circle stencils
- Pairs of scissors
- Colored pencils, markers or crayons
- Hole punch
- Yarn or string
- Stickers or glitter glue

Gathering Activity

- White paper
- Washable inkpads of various colors (enough for children to actively share)
- Wet-wipes
- Magnifying glasses (a few for sharing)
- Thin markers or colored pencils

Opening/Closing Circle

- Book: The Only One Club by Jane Naliboff
- Big pad of paper and markers
- At Home Challenge Sheet

Gathering Activity: Fingerprint Art (15 Minutes)

Children will make art with their fingerprints.

1. Gather children around a table with materials laid out.
2. Show children a sample of fingerprint art to inspire them.
3. Give each child a piece of paper and ask them to make just one fingerprint to start.
4. Look at the fingerprints together. What do you see? (Share the magnifying glasses if you have them.)
5. Look at the fingerprint of the child next to you. Is it the same or different? How is it the same? How is it different?
6. Let the children play with the ink pads and create fingerprint art.



Opening Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle and begin with a melody, a niggun or a greeting song such as Hineh Ma Tov.

Tell about today's theme:

- Have the children hold up their fingerprint art to show each other.
- Did you know that no two people in the world have the same exact fingerprint? We are all born with a different pattern on our skin.
- What else is different about people? Let's look around. Wiggle your hands if you have curly or wavy hair. Wiggle your hands if you have straight hair.
- Touch your nose if you like spicy food. Touch your ears if you don't like spicy food.
- Stomp your feet if there's something you like to collect. Stomp your feet if you share your room.
- Today we are noticing the ways that people are different from one another and how interesting and beautiful that makes our world.

Introduce today's Hebrew word — B'Tzelem Elohim:

- Everyone put your palms over your face and say, "Beh." Slide your hands away from each other and say, "Tzeh." Put them back together and say, "Lem." Put it together, "Beh-Tzeh-Lem."
- B'Tzelem means "in the image of."
- Everyone bring your hands to your forehead and say, "Eh." Bring your hands to your mouth and say, "Lo." Bring your hands to your heart and say, "Heem." Put it together, "Eh-Lo-Heem."
- Elohim means God.
- B'Tzelem Elohim together means "in the image of God."
- Each of us is made in the image of God.

Story (20 Minutes)

Introduce the Story — The Only One Club

- Our tradition tells us that each of us is made in the image of God/B'Tzelem Elohim. What does that mean? What does that tell us about God? What does that tell us about ourselves and each other?
- Have you ever felt like there was something about you that made you different from all of the other people around you?
- The story we are going to read is about a person named Jennifer. Jennifer finds out that there is something about her that makes her different from all of the other people in her class. Let's find out what it is.

Read the Story. Ask some good Questions.

- **Check for Understanding**

- ◇ What was Jennifer “the only one” of?
- ◇ What did her classmates think of Jennifer’s Only One Club?
- ◇ What kinds of things were her classmates the “only one of”?

- **Get Curious**

- ◇ What are kids wondering about the story?
- ◇ Encourage kids to wonder about WHY something happened in the story, WHAT might happen next, or HOW someone did something.
- ◇ Record these questions on the big pad of paper.
- ◇ These questions don’t have to have answers – though kids are welcome to try and answer each other’s questions.
- ◇ Have kids respond to each other’s questions with “good question!” and a thumbs up

- **Give one more Question to Ponder**

- ◇ I’m wondering: What am I “the only one” of?

10 Minute Break

Activity One: Self-Portrait (25 Minutes)

Children will make self-portraits, using mirrors to look carefully at themselves. The goal is careful noticing and curiosity, not a perfect self-portrait.

Introduce the Activity:

Jennifer discovered what was unique about her, and all of her classmates also discovered that they were different from everyone else in some way.

Each one of us is also different from everyone else in some way or maybe in many ways. No one before has ever had the exact combination of hair, eyes, skin, voice, or laughter as you. And no one before has ever had the same experiences as you or liked all the same things, or been to all of the same places. Each one of us is truly the ONLY ONE exactly like us!

We’re going to spend some time celebrating the unique combinations that make us who we are by looking at ourselves in these mirrors and trying to copy that through a self-portrait. A self-portrait is when an artist makes a picture of themselves. When we finish, no two self-portraits will look the same!

1. Offer a guided exploration with the mirrors: have children hold up the mirrors and ask them guiding questions to notice different facial features, textures, colors.
2. Show the children a sample self-portrait that demonstrates how to use the materials to represent different features, especially how to combine different media (pencils, markers, collage).
3. Tip: Make sure you keep your examples relatively abstract (an ear can be a simple cutout shape) so that there is no pressure for exact replicas but rather an invitation to creativity.
4. Have children focus on the face and the shoulders so that kids can get into detail and really notice themselves.
5. As children work, you may want to offer a “pause and walk around” so that kids can get ideas from each other.
6. When everyone is done or you are out of time, have the children do a gallery walk and look at each other’s work.
7. Ask the children what is one thing that you noticed about yourself or that you think stands out about you?



Activity Two: Only One Club Badges (15 Minutes)

Children will make Only One Club badges for themselves. Introduce the activity:

Jennifer started the Only One Club because she noticed that she was the only Jewish kid in her class, and she thought that was pretty special. Her classmates wanted to join the club; Jennifer figured out what they were each the only one of so that they could join. We are going to make our own Only One Club badges. While you work on yours, think about what you are the Only One of — in our class, in your family, or maybe in your class at school.

1. Have each child take a piece of cardstock and draw a circle on it. They may use a stencil or draw it free hand as they prefer.
2. Each child cuts out their circle.
3. Each child writes Only One Club on their circle. Make sure you have it written somewhere for those who need to copy the words.
4. Then have each child decorate their badge as they wish. They might include a picture or a reference to what make they are the only one of.
5. When their badge is done, help them punch a hole at the top and cut a length of string or yarn long enough to over their hand.
6. Tie the string or yarn on each badge and have the kids put them on.

Closing Circle (10 Minutes)

Gather everyone into a circle with their badges.

Have each child share their badge by saying “I am the only one who...” and fill in with their only-oneness.

Review the Hebrew Words of the Day:

- Have the children practice the Hebrew words with their bodies: Your palms go over your face “Beh,” slide apart “Tzeh,” come back together “Lem.” Beh-tzeh-lem.
- Your hands go on your forehead “Eh,” on your mouth “Lo,” over your heart “Heem.” Eh-lo-heem.
- Have the children say what B’tzelem Elohim means (in the image of God).
- We are all unique and amazing and each of us is made in the image of God.

Pass out the At Home Challenge Sheet

Sing a goodbye song like *Shalom Chaverim* or *Oseh Shalom*.

At Home Challenge: Divine Differences / B’Tzelem Elohim

Today, we learned about being made B’Tzelem Elohim/in the image of God. We talked about how each of us is uniquely amazing and all of us reflect the image of God. We noticed how we are different and celebrated being the Only One of something. We made fingerprint art, self-portraits and Only One Club badges.

Here are the next steps to take at home to celebrate our divine differences:

1. As a family talk about what makes each person in your family unique. Reflect together on how those uniquenesses make your family special.
2. Have your child pay attention to what is unique about the people they encounter this week. See if you can remember to ask them each day about at least one person they saw and what made them unique. Leave the Only One Club badge hanging somewhere you will see it to remind you to notice and talk about these divine differences.