TEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

Hashem commands us, "V'lo sonu ish es amiso" (Vayikra 25.17)—You should not cause pain to one another. Rashi explains that this commandment includes ona'as devarim, causing pain with words. Mean words can cause even more pain than physical damage can. When mean words are said, the hurt and pain can last for months or even years—sometimes for a lifetime!



Classroom Activity



"Let's all close our eyes for a few moments and imagine... how would you feel if someone said something mean to you?"

FIELD RESPONSES:

Use samples in parentheses to help students verbalize answers:

- What words can you use to describe how you feel? (Sad, lonely, upset...)
- Why do you think a person remembers a mean comment for a very long time?
 (Because it hurt so much...)
- Do you think it hurts more if others laugh and no one stands up for you? Why?

(Yes. I would feel more embarrassed and I would feel that I have no friends...)

Oh No. Someone just said something mean to your classmate!

Someone just said something mean to your classmate!
The Torah says hurting someone with words is an aveirah! It's called ona'as devarim.

What can you do to help the person who is being hurt?

POW

Classroom Discussion

Have you ever witnessed someone being made fun of? How did *you* feel when seeing this? What could you *do* that would help in such a situation?

FIELD RESPONSES:

- **P**-lay with him/her. This will distract the person being hurt and make him/her feel part of things again.
- O-ffer to be a friend. Stand with the person being hurt. Just be there to schmooze...
- **W**-alk him/her away. Say, "Come, Yanky/Sara, let's go to the other side of the gym." or walk with him/her back to class.



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TEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

When it comes to ona'as devarim, saying hurtful things, people sometimes give an excuse and say, "It was only a joke!" We know that very often mean words hurt more and last longer than other types of pain. If a person punches someone in the nose and says that it's a joke, it surely doesn't take away the pain. When someone says a hurtful comment and then says, "Hey, I was just kidding!" it still hurts and it is still ona'as devarim.



Classroom Activity

WISDOM A joke isn't funny unless everyone enjoys it; otherwise it is ona'as devarim!

Raise your hand if you think that another person may feel bad if this were said about him/her. (Be sure to point out that the context and tone are integral parts of how the comment is perceived by others.)

"You're (a)...

- Nerd
- Amazing
- Spaced-out
- Genius
- Shorty
- Dumb
- Goody-goody
- Teacher's bet
- Fatso

Someone just made a joke that poked fun at another person while a bunch of kids stood around watching.

By standing around and/or laughing:

- · you show that you agree with the mean behavior and that what happened is okay.
- you make the person who is being hurt feel worse.

Classroom Discussion

"Why is it helpful to walk away immediately when you hear someone make a joke that hurts another person?"

FIELD RESPONSES. THEN ELABORATE ON THESE SUGGESTIONS:

- Laughing will surely make the person feel worse.
- The more people that laugh the more it hurts.
- Laughing—or even just standing around watching—gives attention to the person who made the joke. If s/he gets attention, s/he will continue with this terrible behavior.



FEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

We know that the Beis Hamikdash was destroyed because of the story of Bar Kamtza and the man who kicked him out of his party. Why is it that this one man's meanness caused all of Klal Yisrael to suffer? The answer is that there were many people—including important men—standing by and watching and no one said anything to stop what was going on.



Classroom Activity

Forcing someone to say or do something that they don't want to

WISDOM The power of the group can stop this!

Ask one student to try to lift the teacher's desk. Then call on a group of kids to do it (make sure they will be able to do it!!). Say, "You see how a group working together can do something that one person alone cannot do. You can use this same power of a group to stop mean behavior.

If someone is being mean and trying to control everyone at recess, you can stop this from happening by joining together as a group. Together you can say, "WE DON'T DO THAT HERE!" and but an end to this meanness.

Now, ask the group to try to lift it again, and this time, taunt them by saying "Ah! You guys can't lift that! You're too weak!" When they lift it anyway, say, "You see that when you work as a group, even if someone says mean things, it doesn't weaken your power!"

When you see someone forcing another kid to say something or do something, you might feel:

- Scared that you will also get picked on
- Angry about what's happening
- Very uncomfortable
- Terrible for the person who is being hurt

YOU'RE NOT ALONE! LOTS OF KIDS HAVE THE SAME FEELINGS!

Classroom Discussion

"By standing up to the person being mean, what two positive outcomes might your actions cause?"

FIELD RESPONSES

- 1. We can hopefully stop the bad behavior, and protect innocent kids from getting hurt. If the person being mean sees s/he has no followers, chances are the bad behavior will stop. Everyone wants to be popular, even the kid being mean. If s/he sees that everyone is on the other side, hopefully the meanness will stop.
- 2. We can show the person being hurt that s/he is not alone. We let him/her know that there are others who do care about his/her feelings. We let the one being hurt know that the kid saying/doing hurtful things is just being mean, and we don't agree with the hurtful things s/he is saying or doing.

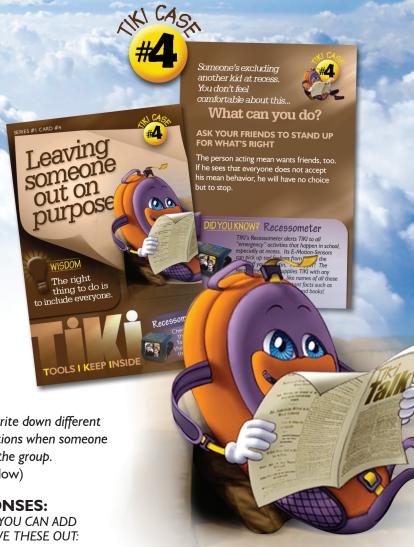


TEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

כל המקיים נפש אחת מישראל כאילו קיים עולם מלא (בבא בתרא יא.)

Every person is important—He is an entire world! When you stand up for what's right and save a person from being excluded or hurt you are saving an entire world!



Classroom Activity

Leaving purpose

WISDOM

The right thing to do is to include everyone.

Students should write down different examples of situations when someone is not included in the group. (see examples below)

FIELD RESPONSES:

SOME EXAMPLES YOU CAN ADD IF STUDENTS LEAVE THESE OUT:

- a conversation
- · everyone's laughing and someone comes up and asks, "Hey, what was the joke?"
- lunchroom seating
- playing at recess
- class project
- after school ball game, etc.
- walking home from school
- seats on the bus

Someone's excluding another kid at recess. You don't feeling comfortable about this...

What can you do?

ASK YOUR FRIENDS TO STAND UP FOR WHAT'S RIGHT

The person acting mean wants friends too. If he sees that everyone does not accept his mean behavior, he will have no choice but to stop.

Classroom Discussion What can you say if someone is being left out?

FIELD POSSIBLE ANSWERS

Examples:

Here are two statements that show empathy for the victim.

Say, "Hey, it's not right to leave someone out! How would you like it if you were left out of the game?"

"S/He must feel so bad."

Here are some statements that show assertiveness towards the bully

"No, we don't play like that here.

"Everyone deserves to play!"

Here is an example of a reaction that students may suggest but which IS NOT a good way of dealing with the situation. Discuss why not.

"Hey everyone, let's play a game and not let _____ (person leaving out) play!"



TEACHER'S **GUIDE**

Torah Thought

Achdus, means being nice and getting along with everyone. Before Hashem gave us the Torah at Har Sinai, Klal Yisrael had to show that we were united, b'achdus, as one. Playing a game without achdus is against what the Torah teaches. If we play a game and do not give everyone a chance to play, we are excluding people—leaving them out—and not acting the way the Torah expects us to act.



Classroom Activity



The real winner is the one who makes someone else feel good!

Let's see how easy this is.

Think of a positive comment you could say to a friend (not naming anyone). Raise your hand and share it with the class.

(Teacher can start: You are a...

good friend; funny; you always lend your things, you know a lot...)

The real winners are those who don't hurt anyone's feelings!

KEEP IN MIND:

Who won yesterday's game will be forgotten; hurtful words will not!

Classroom Discussion "Is competition good or bad?"

FIELD ANSWERS

and then read the following:

"Competition is what makes people motivated to try to win the game. Without competition the players often wouldn't try too hard. Imagine playing a game where there was no score."

CONTINUED DISCUSSION:

What if you knew that the only way to win the game was to hurt someone's feelings?

Teach empathy:

- "How would you feel if you were left out?"
- "S/he must feel so bad."

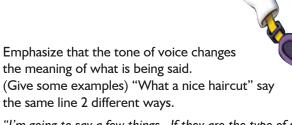


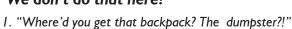
FEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

The Torah says, "... V'lo sisa alav chet," which means that when you are trying to get someone to stop doing an aveirah, you have to be careful how you say it. We must be careful not to put the other person down.

When we try to get someone to stop hurting others we must make sure that what we say or do is not hurtful.





- "We don't do that here!"
- 2. "No, you can't play!" "We don't do that here!"
- 3. "I like your watch—it's really cool!"
- 4. "You have such a weird accent!" "We don't do that here!"
- 5. "The test was so easy—how'd you only get a 75?" "We don't do that here!"
- 6. "New shoes?" talk about how the tone could turn this into a negative statement
- 7. "Why do you have to sit here? There are a million other seats in the lunch room?" "We don't do that here!"

Classroom Activity



Someone is picking on another kid while others are just standing around. No one really thinks it's right but nobody is doing anything about it.

What can you do to help?

Get your friends together and say:
"We don't do that here!

Classroom Discussion

Someone is being mean all the time. Where do you turn?

An adult can help!

Speak to a rebbi, teacher, principal or parent in private.

Make sure to tell the entire story to the adult, and be completely honest about what happened.

The Chofetz Chaim teaches us that it is not loshon hora when it is necessary to tell an adult who can help out. It is not loshon hora because "telling is not tattling" if it is done to help someone. By telling an adult, you are trying to help the person in trouble (yourself or a friend) and not just telling on the other person.



TEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

Chazal teach us that "Middah tovah merubah," the good is always greater than the bad. If a group of kids can team up to act mean to someone else, and put him down and "destroy" him, imagine how much greater results there would be if they "team up" to be nice to people—to "build" them! That's guaranteed!



Classroom Activity



Have a cup of water on the teacher's desk and ask for a volunteer to come up. Tell the volunteer (quietly) that when you tap his/her hand s/he should say a brachah and drink the water.

Then tell the volunteer and the whole class:

Close your eyes and imagine that you are trudging through the desert. You have been traveling for 3 long days in the hot desert sun. You are lost.

Your water has run out a good while ago. Your mouth is parched, your palate dry. You feel scared, sad and bewildered.

You feel forgotten and alone. You feel hopeless. (Pause)

Then, out of nowhere, someone comes towards you and brings you a big jug of water to drink.

Signal to the volunteer to say the brachah and drink the water.

Then tell everyone to open their eyes.

Now ask the volunteer how s/he feels and help her include these words in the description. You feel revived, built up. Your energy has returned. You are hopeful about the rest of the journey. And what do you feel about the person who gave you the water?

That person revived you... you feel the genuine feelings of friendship.

Then say to the whole class: While you were alone in the desert you felt the same way the person who was made fun of feels. Alone, bewildered, sad, hopeless. Those who come to the person's aid and say encouraging words and offer friendship are like that person in the desert who offers the life-saving, precious water. You can be that person! You have the power to build! You can lift up the feelings and change the perspective of the person who was hurt. You can help them smile again and feel part of the group.

One person tried to put them down—You can build them up!

What can you say to make the person who is hurt feel better?

Show that you care

say: "No one should be spoken to like that! It's not your fault. That person was acting mean!"

Classroom Discussion

Sometimes someone says a mean comment or joke to another kid, and suddenly a bunch of other kids join in. Why do you think this happens?

FIELD POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

- I. They think that the one who started might pick on them next. (If you join others to be nice to the victim, the person being mean will just have to stop.)
- 2. They just get caught up in the joke and don't think. (Put yourself in the victim's shoes for a minute!)
- 3. Everyone wants to be popular and part of a group.



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TEACHER'S GUIDE

Torah Thought

Klal Yisrael is considered as one person. We are all parts of one whole. If a person had a toothache, would he say,"Everything is fine. I don't feel the pain. Only my tooth does."? That would be ridiculous! It's the same with Klal Yisrael. Since we are all parts of one whole then if one part is hurting we need to feel that pain. If your classmate is hurting you should feel for him/her. You certainly wouldn't want to cause him/her pain. If you remember this, you will make sure that what you say and do to others never hurts them.



Classroom Activity

The group leaves someone out because there's no room wisdom stop, THINK, and FEEL... how the other boy feels

Get used to thinking, "How does the other person feel?" How would *you* feel if:

- There was only room for 6 in the carpool... You were left out and had to walk home.
- You were left to watch on the sidelines because there were too many people for the team.
- You weren't invited on the trip because there was only room for five in the car.

You may play a game that includes only a few players as long as you don't hurt the feelings of those who are not included.

STOP – mean behavior

THINK – it is wrong to hurt another person

FEEL – how the other person feels and how it would feel if someone did the same thing to you

Classroom Discussion

Problem: someone is left out because there is no room. Stop, think and feel before you speak to the person being left out:

- A. Choice of words—how do you tell the person there is no room? How do you make sure it doesn't become personal?
- B. Control your tone of voice and let the person know you feel bad.
- C. When you think about the other person's feelings, you open your mind to finding solutions. You might even find a way to include him/her.

Solutions: (Try to get students to think of possible solutions)

Play in pairs, alternate players per inning, time the game—play only for a set amount of time and then change to something else. Find another activity to do. Walk home with the boy who is left out of the car pool. What else could you do?