

SHALOM VALUES

FEATURING
*Right
Of
Way*



Overview

Challenge: Girls sometimes lack proper sensitivity and empathy towards others, which can be very hurtful. Sometimes, the consequences can be quite devastating, even detrimental to those on the receiving end of hurtful words or actions.

Goal: Based on the Torah lesson of *לא תעביר סני לחברך*, we've developed a program geared to older students to help curtail bullying and foster empathy. The Shalom Values Program will *bez"H* **help the students create and maintain a class environment that is positive and safe for everyone.**

Means: With your guidance, the students will first develop and then commit to uphold a list of basic class rules, referred to as **Class Yesodos**. These **Yesodos** will reflect an appreciation and respect for others' personalities, opinions, belongings, and very selves.

Curriculum Outline:

The curriculum is comprised of a list of basic rules and benefits [*yesodos*] which is incorporated through a story format. In this captivating, true-to-life story, the characters encounter challenges that are very relatable to your students.

- ✎ The story is divided into **nine chapters**. **The first two** introduce the concept of **Yesodos (and their benefits)** and lay the foundation for your class to create their own set of rules.
- ✎ In the **seven chapters** that follow, different challenges are presented within the story, with the characters themselves tasked with coming up with resolutions. They are propelled to formulate 'their own set' of '**Yesodos' (and benefits)**.
- ✎ Each chapter (3 – 9) concludes with an allusion to a specific *Yesod*, without having it stated outright.
- ✎ Following the overview, you will find a list of the *Yesodos* for you to easily discern what the rule should be following each chapter. You may choose to tweak or change the rules, using your own discretion.

Running the Program:

1. There are three options for how to have each chapter read:
 - a. **Read** (or have your students read) a chapter aloud in class each week. The script format found after the questions can be used to divide the characters among the students for them to read out loud.

- b. Hand out in advance the provided **script**, for students to prepare and act out each of the weekly chapters.
 - c. Play the **audio version** of the chapters each week for the students to listen to and enjoy.
(You may also choose to do a combination of all three options.)
2. After reading it aloud/acting it out, guide the students to come up with the basic goal for the intended **Yesod**: Guided questions have been provided found following the story.
 - a. Allow students the time to write down their thoughts and reactions to the chapter on their own paper/notebook.
 - b. Invite students to share their own related experiences and offer their ideas and suggestions.
You may choose to divide the class into the groups to discuss amongst themselves first.
 - c. Write the girls' ideas on the board for all to see.
 - d. Finally, combine ideas on the board to provide one cohesive idea for a *Yesod*.
 - e. Allow the students the time to write down the *Yesod* on the card to keep for themselves.
Teacher should encourage the students to write a personal *kabbalah* in how they will be extra careful to uphold the *yesod*.

*As an additional goal, you may want to challenge your students to recognize which mitzvah in the Torah is being fulfilled when upholding each of these "rules". (i.e. ואהבת לרעך כמוך, *shmiras haloshon*, the *issur* of *ona'as devarim*, the *issur* of *halbonas panim*, the *issur* of *gezel*, etc.)
3. The class should be divided into groups. As each **Yesod** is decided upon by the class, allow one group to **design a poster** (template provided) that depicts the new *Yesod*, which should then be displayed in the classroom.

*It is recommended that the *Yesodos* posters be made in a way that they can be properly displayed in the classroom for the duration of the program/year.
4. At the conclusion of the program, you may choose to conduct a wrap-up discussion (using the provided questions as a springboard) to recap all that the students have learned and gained from "Shalom Values."

“Can you believe we are finally going!?” Estie turned to Zehava with a huge smile on her face. Zehava grinned back.

“I never thought it would actually happen! And even if it would, I didn’t think it would be *us*!”

The two girls sat thoughtfully, savoring the moment. Zehava finally broke the silence.

“When Mrs. Schreiber said that our class may be chosen as the “Eighth Grade Ambassadors” at the Tehillas convention, I figured we barely had a chance. I mean, who even knows much about our school out here in Brackville?”

The girls both rolled their eyes, as if on cue.

“Yeah, same here,” Estie agreed. “But then last week, when she came into the classroom holding that bright pink Tehillas paper, with a grin across her face —”

“That wasn’t a grin,” Zehava cut in. “It was an ear-to-ear smile!”

The two girls chuckled. Estie continued. “Well, then I thought, maybe just maybe we had made it!”

Zehava nodded emphatically.

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CHAPTER

1

“I guess someone *does* know about us out here in Brackville!”

It had been three years since Bnos Esther had joined Tehillas Yisroel’s nation-wide Shalom Campaign. Each year, the girls would participate in *Yimei Iyun*, projects, presentations and

more, all revolving around the topic of getting along with others. This year, after picking up international momentum, with dozens of new schools joining the program, a convention was being held for hundreds of girls to gather and share their experiences. At the same time, these girls would brainstorm new ideas which the Tehilas staff would then try to implement in the future. The program heads had announced that every year, one entire upper-grade class from each school would be chosen to attend the convention, representing that grade level.

“You know,” said Estie, “it’s lucky we only have one class in eighth grade. Can you imagine the politics and drama that go on in schools with more than one class in each grade level, and only one class gets chosen to ----”

“May I have your attention, girls!” The chaperone’s voice over the bus’s mic system interrupted the girls’ conversation.

“Everyone in their seats! The driver would like to leave already.” A loud cheer erupted throughout the bus, as Miss Yocheved Bastin attempted to get everyone quiet. As the special program coordinator at Bnos Esther, Miss Bastin had a wonderful relationship with the girls. “Remember, we really need to think about how we are going to act during this trip,” she said over the slowly quieting din. “It’s only Thursday morning, and the convention isn’t starting until Friday, so as you know, even before the convention, we’ll be staying at different homes in Union Park, and we want to make a great impression for Bnos Esther and our community. Let’s review the rules we discussed...”

As her voice droned on, Estie looked out the window. Her parents were still standing near the bus, despite the darkening sky and light rain that had just started. She caught her mother’s eyes. She waved feverishly, and her mother returned the wave and blew some kisses for good measure. Estie was jolted back as the bus pulled out and began to move. She settled into her seat. It was close to an eight-hour drive to Union Park, and she hoped to catch a few winks. That is, after she socialized a bit!

Estie turned around toward the back of the

bus. As usual, Tamar was holding court, with a bunch of girls hanging onto her every word. Estie strained to hear what she was talking about, but Zehava’s cheery voice interrupted her focus. “Estie, do you really care about the new booties that are *‘totally a must-have’* for next winter?” Estie turned back around and smiled at her. Zehava had a way of keeping her grounded. She wondered what it was about Tamar that made her so popular. Was it her looks? Her clothing? Her grades? Her style? She seemed to have it all, but somehow that didn’t make her nice. Estie frowned to herself.

“Penny for your thoughts!” Zehava smiled at Estie as she turned her attention back to her friend.

“Come on!” said Estie, smiling back. “You think my thoughts are only worth a penny? I *was* thinking, though, that I really hope that the convention will help our class develop some of the *achdus* that we so desperately need. I mean, do you realize how often we have girls moping around because someone said something not nice to them or they feel excluded from what’s happening...”

“Or,” continued Zehava, “they just feel like nobody likes them.” The two girls looked



at each other and sighed. Estie continued her thought.

“There are so many nice girls in the class, but somehow, a lot of the girls feel that their opinion doesn’t count and that they literally are like background scenery in the class.”

Suddenly, as if on cue, a raised voice caught their attention from the back of the bus. “N-o w-a-y! That’s *totally* socially off!” It was Tamar, and her loud comment seemed to be directed at Meira. A few girls sitting in that area nodded in agreement. Meira looked like she wanted the ground to open up beneath her right then and there. As the girls strained their ears to hear what was happening, they learned that Meira had suggested that their class split into groups and prepare skits on topics of *bein adam l’chaveiro*, and they would ask the program directors at the convention if they could perform the skits over Shabbos for the other delegates. Chaya was sitting right near Tamar, and she chimed in. “You don’t want everyone at the convention to think we’re nerds, right?” Estie was about to comment to Zehava, but Zehava raised her eyebrows.

She’s right, thought Estie. *Loshon hora*. She wished someone would have the courage to stand up to Tamar when she got like that. And to make things worse, Chaya – and others – would inevitably stand by whatever Tamar said, no matter if it was not nice.

Zehava turned to Estie and said wistfully, “You know, this year, in *halachah* class with Rabbi Rottenberg, we had such a clear set of rules about exactly what we are allowed to do and what we can’t do in the kitchen. I have it all written down so clearly, piece by piece. This is ok. This isn’t.” Estie nodded.

Zehava continued, “Well, I wish there was some kind of rulebook about what is ok and what isn’t when it comes to how people act with each other. I mean, of course there are rules, but every situation is different, and every personality is different...”

“There are certain things,” said Estie, “that we can all agree are not ok for anyone, anywhere.”

Zehava nodded. Half jokingly, she added, “Hey, maybe we should write up a ‘Bill of Rights’ for our class.”

“Like *anyone* is going to go for that,” Estie retorted.



INTRO 1

Lead a Class Discussion:

LET'S DISCUSS ZEHAVA'S IDEA.

OPTIONAL GUIDED QUESTIONS:

Objective: Laying the groundwork for creating a list of rules, 'Yesodos'.

? Do you think it's a good idea? Why or why not?

? What could be possible challenges in creating such rules?

After fielding a few responses, ask your students to take out a paper and fold it down the middle, and on each side, they should write down the possible benefits and challenges of Zehava's idea. Then call on girls to share what they wrote.

*Try to help navigate through the challenges. (Some examples: "The class will never agree on the same rules!" -> Well, let's see if we can give it a try!; "Girls don't like to be given extra rules!" -> When girls realize that everyone gains from these values, they will not look at them as more rules, but as **tools** to help everyone get along better.)*

? What types of things should be included in a "bill of rights" such as this?

Field answers from students on a variety of *bein adam l'chaveiro* ideas. Write each one on the board. Allow for a broad range of answers. Many will overlap; try to merge them together if possible. (e.g., If someone says, "Don't exclude people," and another says, "Everyone should be allowed to join in games at recess," you can write, "Don't exclude people, such as from games during recess.")

Explain to the class that as we move through the program, we will develop our own set of rules, which will certainly include many of the ones written on the board.