

The TEL Program

Teens: Experience & Learning

Year Three: *Derekh Eretz*

Havayot Lesson Plans

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**Jewish
Reconstructionist
Federation**

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Guidance for Using These Materials

Introduction

A *TEL* is a hill made of and built upon an archeological site – the remains of previous experiences. The *TEL* program is designed to enable teens to build upon past learning as congregational communities within a community of congregations and *havurot*, the Jewish Reconstructionist Movement.

The word *havayah* comes from the Hebrew word for experience. *Havayot* are experiential learning sessions. These lesson plans have been written to enable groups of teens to have a meaningful set of experiences together.

These *havayot* are designed to be implemented between two *kallot* (retreats) for the *TEL* teens, although they can be adapted to stand on their own.

Each *TEL* group, like each Reconstructionist congregation of which it is a part, will have its own personality and dynamics and interests. In fact, *TEL* groups meet for different amounts of time and with different levels of frequency. *Therefore, we fully expect TEL Group Leaders to use this material as a launch pad for your group's TEL experience. Don't feel bad if you skip something, and please tell us if you add something that works!*

We believe that all teaching resources for teens are most effective when the group leaders feel empowered to shape the *havayot* in whatever manner best suits their personal teaching style and the particular dynamics of the *TEL* group. For example, one of you may opt to incorporate the songs we include in each *havaya*, while another might choose to spend more time on the text study component.

Some of you may need more help explaining how the *havayot* are structured and why, so we have also written out explanations and connective pieces in **great detail** – particularly in the first *havayah*. We have tried to write them out in such a way that a *TEL* group leader could just read them verbatim to the teens in their group if they need to. We have labeled these sections, “Big Ideas,” and we hope you will be able to use them to share the “Big Ideas” of the *havayah*. More experienced leaders will probably find it more effective to just paraphrase the “big idea.”

TEL Group Leaders will be able to exchange ideas with their counterparts about how best to utilize the material provided and how to tailor it to their particular group.

We also hope *TEL* leaders will encourage their teens to communicate with one another between the *kallot* on a *TEL* webpage (that will be linked to www.noarhadash.org) where they can share gleanings from the *havayot*.

Thank you to Menschlekeit Matters!

We are grateful to the Menschlekeit Matters! curriculum for providing inspiration for selecting the Jewish values that make up the *TEL Derech Eretz* curriculum. The ideas for learning about and living those values for elementary age children in Menschlekeit Matters! helped us to consider how we could apply them to engage teens.

Menschlekeit Matters! is a curriculum of the Auerbach Family Religious School of Reconstructionist Congregation Kehillat Israel in Pacific Palisades, California. Funded by the Covenant Foundation, Menschlekeit Matters! is a Jewish adaptation of Character Counts!, a secular character development program published by the Josephson Institute of Ethics and founded by Michael Josephson.

The curriculum was written by Dr. Cheryl Weiner, former Acting Director of the Auerbach Family Religious School and Menschlekeit Matters! Project Director.

The Path of the *Derekh Eretz*: The *Havayah*

Havayah One: Derekh Eretz Itself

Havayah Two: Teshuvah/Forgiveness

Havayah Three: Hesed/Kindness

Havayah Four: Emet & Emunah/ Truth & Trustworthiness

Havayah Five: Kavod/Respect

Havayah Six: Aharayut: Responsibility

Havayah Seven & Eight: Working on Group Projects

Havayah Nine: Preparing Presentations

VALUE	Drama/Improv GAME	TEXT	CREATIVE EXPRESSION - Opportunity for Teens to teach Teens	REFLECTION JOURNAL
<i>Teshuvah</i> Turning Forgiveness	Saying Sorry to someone you have hurt/Accepting an apology from someone who has hurt you	Torah	Decoupage/Writing a Letter	What is more challenging: to forgive or ask for forgiveness?
<i>Hesed</i> Kindness	Reaching out to different kinds of teens who feel isolated/not part of the group	Mishnah	Making Public Service Announcement videos	What situations have you faced in which it has been hard to be kind to another person?
<i>Emet-Emunah</i> Truth & Trustworthiness	When a friend confides in you/When do you need to speak with an adult	Talmud	Listening to songs about trust & betrayal/writing songs	Has someone closed to you ever betrayed you? How did you respond? Were you able to repair the relationship?
<i>Kavod</i> Respect	Dealing with a teacher you don't like	Pirke Avot	Creating contemporary <i>Pirke Nearim</i> on webpage	What does it feel like to receive respect? To be disrespected?
<i>Aharayut</i> Responsibility	Taking responsibility at home and at school	RRA statements	making original Bumper stickers or T-Shirt decals	What are the ways that your parents still maintain responsibility for your well-being? What are the areas in which you take responsibility? How does it feel to be held accountable for your choices and decisions?

Havayah One: Derekb Eretz and Our TEL Group

Havayah One Overview

- Introduction to *Derekb Eretz* (10 minutes)
- Icebreakers (20 minutes)
- Texts for *Derekb Eretz* (15 minutes)
- Teen Issue Brainstorm (30-40 minutes)
- Jewish Values Scenario (30 minutes)
- Closing Activity (15 minutes)

Materials Needed

- 1 small pack of M&Ms per teen
- Cards with parts of a taco (shells, cheese, lettuce, etc.)
- Different Color Construction Paper (to make signs with)
- Tape to hang signs
- Paper and pens
- Small stickers to give each teen (optional)
- Collage materials:
 - A 12 x 2 feet banner (butcherblock paper is fine) with “*Derekb Eretz*” written in the middle
 - Magazines
 - Markers
 - Glue sticks
 - Rubber stamps
 - Stickers
 - Markers
 - Tape
- Camera to capture creations and gathering so that they can be uploaded on *TEL* webpage.

The Big Idea (summarize for teens):

The world that we live in is a complicated place and every day, we are called on to make choices that impact not only those people close in our orbit, but that may impact the larger world. Whether those choices involve the kinds of food that we eat, the clothes that we wear, or more personal decisions like how we treat peers at school or reach out to include people who don't feel part of the group, they involve us in making conscious decisions about doing what we think is right.

Derekh Eretz literally means “the path of the land,” the proper behavior the people in a community expect of one another. In Jewish tradition, the concept of *Derekh Eretz* is about following a path that leads to living in a way that is respectful to you, yourself, to those living around you (friends, family, peers at school and TEL, teachers) and even to people you don't know (the people growing the food you eat or making the clothing that you wear, for example).

Another Jewish term that closely corresponds to the way we have defined *Derekh Eretz* in TEL is *Menschlichkeit*. [It probably will be easier to use in conversations with the teens!]

➤ Invite the teens to share what they think a “mensch” is and how a “mensch” acts in the world.

<p><u>Mensch</u>: Yiddish, literally means “a human being.” In Jewish tradition, a <i>mensch</i> is a person of good character and values.</p>

<p><u>Menschlichkeit</u>: Acting in a way consistent with Jewish values; being a person of good character.</p>

Following the *Derekh Eretz* –the path of living an ethical life– is not always easy. Sometimes the ethical choice is not the one that we want to make. Sometimes we feel ourselves living in a world in which it seems that no one else is paying attention to *Derekh Eretz*. Sometimes it feels easier to go with the group rather than behave in a different way, even if our conscience feels pulled

This year, we will explore the theme of *Derekh Eretz* by looking at some important Jewish values that can help to guide us in making ethical choices. In each *havayah* (Jewish Learning

Experience), we will explore a different Jewish value in the context of real life scenarios you might follow on your personal teen paths. We will contemplate each Jewish value by engaging in drama games; by studying ancient and contemporary Jewish texts about the value; by exploring the value through some creative arts modality and by reflecting in our journals about how this value resonates personally with us and can guide us to follow the path of *Derekh Eretz* in our lives.

Icebreakers (20--30 minutes)

Take some time in this first session to have fun mixing up the teens and getting them talking to each other. Choose one or both of these games.

M&M Get-to-know-you

Give each teen a small package of M&Ms and instruct them they can eat all but one color. They must then answer the question coded with the color of the candy they saved. Whip around the group and invite teens to share their answers.

(Make up your own questions or use the following.)

Red: What is your favorite book and why?

Orange: What was the last movie you watched and how was it?

Yellow: Who is your favorite musical group and which of their songs is your favorite?

Green: Do you have a collection? What is it and how old were you when you started it?

Blue: Which foreign country would you like to visit and why?

Brown: What is the best vacation you've ever been on?

Human Taco

Provide cards that have ingredients for tacos (shells, cheese, lettuce, etc.). Provide as many copies as

needed so that each teen is an ingredient. Tape the cards to the teens' backs and they must assemble themselves in small groups, each with all the ingredients of a taco by asking each other yes and no questions.

Text for *Derekh Eretz* (15 minutes)

To help teens understand the place of *Derekh Eretz* in Jewish tradition, share the following text from *Pirke Avot*. A page with nothing but the text and the questions on it is included at the end of this *havayah*.

"If there is no Torah, there is no *Derekh Eretz*. And if there is no *Derekh Eretz*, there is no Torah."

-Pirke Avot, the Ethics of our Ancestors 3:21

Questions to ask about the text:

- What is the relationship between Torah and *Derekh Eretz*?
- Why are they so interconnected?
- What would a world with no *Derekh Eretz* or *Menschlekeit* look like?

Teen Issues Brainstorm (30 minutes)

Big Idea Two (summarize for teens):

Explain to the teens that in the *TEL havayot*, there will be times to do icebreakers and games and to keep getting to know each other better and building our *TEL* teen community. The goal of our time together is to explore *Derekh Eretz* as a group and to help each other think about living a life according to our best shared values. We hope that teens will be able to take the ethical decision-making work we do together in *TEL* out in the world –at home, at school, with friends and wherever their life paths take them. To get started in this process, let's think about the issues are that teens today are facing.

Directions:

Give each teen paper and pen and challenge them to list every pressing teen issue they can think of. After everyone has had a chance to come up with an individual list, have the teens take turns contributing to a communal master list. Chat with the teens informally as the group master list is constructed – “Who else put that down? Had anyone else thought of that?”

If the teens need help getting started, here are some suggestions you might offer: Pressure at school/too much homework, Body Image, Bullying, Drinking/Drugs, Depression, Arguing with Parents or Step-Parents, Sexuality and Coming Out, Dating, Pre-Marital Sex, Social Media, Sexting.

Note: this activity calls for teens to choose based on their sense of teen concerns in general, rather than to disclose which issue is most pressing to them personally.

Two options for processing the communal list:

Option One: have the teens make a sign for each issue on the final list and hang them throughout the room. Have the teens go stand next to the issue they think teens are most concerned about. Point out any patterns (or lack thereof) and invite the teens to explain their choices. Then repeat, this time asking them to go to the issue that they consider the second most pressing issue.

Option Two: give each teen five stickers and tell them they can distribute them any way they wish, for example they could place one sticker on each issue they consider highly pressing, or five on the issue they consider far and away the most pressing. Point out any patterns (or lack thereof) and invite the teens to explain their personal choices and their reactions to which topics received the most “votes.”

Big Idea Three (summarize for teens):

The building blocks of decisions about *Derekh Eretz* – figuring out how to address to particular teen challenges are values. Teen issues are complicated and have many layers of issues and possible responses. When you explore an issue in terms of specific values, it breaks down issues that can be daunting and overwhelming and makes them more manageable and makes your responses more thoughtful and deliberate

Jewish Values Scenario (30 minutes)

We are now going to consider a scenario that involves many of the issues that we just talked about. Then we'll try to think of all the different values that could come in to play when trying to figure out how to deal with this particular problem.

"It is the end of freshman year in high school and Max's parents have given him permission to invite

friends from school over to their house for a pool party after school. The parents will both be at work when Max and his friends arrive there, but his mom will arrive home about 5PM (2 hours later). His parents trust Max and his friends to be responsible at the pool.

Max invites Nicole to the party. Nicole's father has a rule that she is not allowed to be at a party when a parent isn't there. None of her other friends have that rule and Nicole resents her father. In the past, when Nicole has wanted to hang out at a home where her father didn't know the other parents, they call and talk with them and find out if an adult will be present when the teens plan to get together.

Nicole is trying to decide what to do. She could talk to her father about changing the rule. She could lie to her father about where she is going. She could stay home and be miserable. What should Nicole do?"

Rather than trying to solve Nicole's problem right now, the teens' initial task is to make a list of all of the Jewish values that could come in to play in this complicated situation. Make it a challenge to think of as many values as possible.

It doesn't matter if the values the teens think of are values you or they think of as particularly or explicitly Jewish or not, nor if they know Hebrew terms for the values they think of. However, you may want to start the teens out by sharing one or two values from this list:

- Honesty/*Emet*
- Honoring parents/*Kavod Ha'av*
- Respect/*Kavod*
- Responsibility/*Abarayut*
- Taking care of one's self/*Shmirat HaGoof*

When the group has generated as thorough a list as possible, go back to the scenario and think about Nicole's decision through the lens of each value. If honesty/*emet* is the primary value in terms of which she approaches her decision, what should she do? How does the value of "honesty" impact her fathers' relationship with her? If respect/*kavod* is the primary value, what decision should Nicole make? Does she feel that her father is treating her with respect/*kavod*?

Other discussion questions that you may want to include:

- Are there important values to the teens that they don't identify as "Jewish" values?
- If so, where did they learn those values?
- What values seem most important to their family? their congregations?
- Are there values that the teens have been raised with which are not important to them?

Big Idea Four (summarize for teens):

The next few lessons are going to delve deeply into a number of particular values. When we have learned about five different Jewish values in depth, we are going to use all of the values together to examine a teen issue that the group selects. Our *TEL* project will be to and create something that helps other teens consider how to respond to that issue in future. Exactly what topic and what the response will look like will be up to our group.

In our *Derekh Eretz havayot*, we will be using a variety of Jewish texts to help us explore Jewish values and *Derekh Eretz*. In addition to reading and studying texts, teens will have the opportunity to create their own version of Jewish texts that they will share with other teens in the *TEL* program and may be used to reach out to other teens.

In Jewish tradition, there is a *Mishnah* that jumps off the Torah to identify issues and gives crisp explanations of how to address it. Then later rabbis wrote the *Talmud* to further delve into the issue and the possible variations in scenarios and determine how to respond ethically and responsibly. All the way up to today, rabbis write response and sermons about contemporary situations. They search our tradition for texts and stories that might help elucidate the best response and then they suggest to the community a way to handle the particulars. Today, people who are not rabbis do this all the time too – Jewish tradition belongs to everyone and we all have the ability –and responsibility- to follow *Menschlikeh* paths. Artists and teachers and congregational lay leaders do the modern equivalent of what the rabbis did all the time.

That’s all well and good, but perhaps in terms of teen issues, YOU are the best people to consider the issues and study the wisdom of the tradition and determine the best path forward and share that with other teens. Part of each *havayah* will be an opportunity to create something that expresses your ideas about a certain value and is an opportunity to share your teachings with other teens.

You can post it on the *TEL* webpage for other *TEL* teens to see and the pieces will eventually be combined with the other *TEL* teens’ insights on the topic to become an extensive guide to teen teachings on key values and topics in contemporary teen life.

Closing Activity

In this *havayah*, you have started to consider the issues facing teens today and thinking about how Jewish values can guide you and other teens to whatever seems like the right path for you as you navigate these issues. After exploring the *Derekh Eretz* value through role play and text study, each *havayah* will have time for the teens to explore a particular value through a creative modality. This *havayah* concludes with a creative art activity to reflect on our ideas about *Derekh Eretz*.

Directions:

Hang up a plain white banner, approximately twelve feet long and two feet wide, with the words *Derekh Eretz* written in the middle. Provide the teens with magazines, markers, glue sticks, rubber stamps, stickers, markers, and tape. With these materials, teens create a symbolic picture of what *Derekh Eretz* means to them. Once completed, each teen shares his/her picture and then tapes it to the banner.

Take a photo of the teens presenting and of the banner that they create to share with other *TEL* groups.

Derech Eretz Text Study

"If there is no Torah, there is no *Derech Eretz*. And if there is no *Derech Eretz*, there is no Torah."

-*Pirke Avot*, the Ethics of our Ancestors 3:21

Questions to ask about the text:

- What is the relationship between Torah and *Derech Eretz*?
- Why are they so interconnected?
- What would a world with no *Derech Eretz* or *Menschlichkeit* look like?

Havayah Two: The Value of Teshuvah

Havayah Two Overview

- *Teshuvah* Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)
- *Teshuvah* Scenario (30 minutes)
- Text Study (30 minutes)
- Creative Expression/“Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity (30 minutes, including sharing)
- Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- Posterboard or butcher paper with “*Teshuvah*” written on it
- Markers
- Song: “Return Again”
- Cardboard circles (to glue onto)
- Magazines with color pictures (nature images are essential)
- Modge Podge (decoupage-making product found in any craft store)
- Rags/sponges
- Paintbrushes
- Scissors
- Paper
- Envelopes
- Camera or video camera

***Teshuvah* Brainstorm** (15 minutes)

'Teshuvah' is the first value on *TEL's Derech Eretz* path. We are going to open with a brainstorm to find out how much they know about this value already.

Spread out the posterboard or butcher block paper with the word "*Teshuvah*" written on it in the center. Divide the *TEL* teens into pairs and hand each pair a different color marker. Invite each pair to write somewhere around the word:

- What do you think "*Teshuvah*" means?
- When in Jewish tradition do we focus on the idea of "*Teshuvah*"
- A time(s) in your lives when you practiced "*Teshuvah*"

The teens can write on the paper simultaneously. You may want to play a song about *Teshuvah* as they work, such as "Return Again."

When the teens finish, have each pair go up to the posterboard or butcher block paper with the word "*Teshuvah*" written on it and share their ideas. When each group shares, they can put a check or star with their color marker on similar ideas/definitions to their responses.

At the end of the brainstorm, make sure that the following points about the value of *Teshuvah* have been brought out:

- Acknowledges that all human beings make mistakes
- *Teshuvah* literally means "turning" and refers to changing behavior that has hurt others, hurt ourselves or hurt the world in some way
- The High Holy Days are when Jewish people do a "*heshbon hanefesh*" or accounting of the soul and do *Teshuvah*, though we should be conscious of doing *Teshuvah* at all times

- Being willing to acknowledge where we have gone off the mark is the first step towards changing
- To do *Teshuvah* for hurting another person, you must ask for their forgiveness and also change your behavior

In this *havayah*, we are going to explore the complexities of doing *Teshuvah* and consider the way that the acts of apologizing, forgiving and changing behavior can lead us to act according to our understanding of *Derekh Eretz* or *Menschlichkeit*.

***Teshuvah* Role Play** (20-30 minutes)

This is a Freeze Tag role-play in which teens will have the opportunity to explore a situation in which the value that we are exploring is featured. The rules of the freeze tag are that some teens will begin as one of the characters and others will be able to call out "freeze" when they want a turn to play that character. *TEL* group leaders should facilitate the role play, asking questions to get a dialogue going, inviting participants on the side to get involved, etc.

Scenario:

Sarah and Talia have been best friends for years. They have just started freshman year of high school and Sarah has started being invited to parties and to hang out with the popular crowd in school. She has invited Talia to join her at times, but one of the girls, Emily, she has become friends with has told her that Talia is not welcome to hang out with them. Sarah and Talia have plans one night when Sarah gets a call from Emily inviting her to a sleepover. Sarah cancels her plans with Talia at the last minute and goes to the sleepover. Sarah has a really terrible time and when she calls Talia the next day, Talia refuses to speak to her. Sarah realizes how much her behavior has hurt her friend but isn't sure what to do.

The characters are:

Sarah, 14, really likes being part of the popular crowd

Talia, 14, confused and hurt by her friend's behavior

Jason, 17, Talia's older brother who encourages her to stand up to Sarah

Sarah's mom, wants to support Sarah

Role play:

1. Talia talks to Jason after Sarah cancels their plans
2. Sarah talks to her mom about what happened at the party
3. What happens if Sarah calls Talia to apologize to her for her behavior?

Questions for discussion:

- Why does Sarah make decisions that will hurt Talia?
- What does it feel like when Talia is being left out?
- What is Sarah feeling when she calls Talia? Have you ever been in the position of apologizing to someone whom you know is mad at you?
- What is Talia feeling when Sarah apologizes? Is it easy or hard to accept someone's apology?
- How can Sarah and Talia learn from this experience? How will this experience help them move forward to treat each other with *Derekh Eretz*?

***Teshuvah* Text Study** (20-30 minutes)

In each *havayah*, we will study a Jewish sacred text that explores the value that we are learning about.

We begin with a text from the Torah and in each session, we will move forward in history with a different kind of sacred text.

Before reading the text with the teens, review with them the story of Jacob and Esau. The text that we read is their encounter after not seeing each other for years after Jacob's deception of Esau.

Text: Genesis 33 1-16, Jacob and Esau meet

1. Jacob lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men; so he divided the children with Leah and with Rachel and with the two maidservants. 2. And he placed the maidservants and their children first and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and her Joseph last. 3. And he went ahead of them and prostrated himself to the ground seven times, until he came close to his brother. 4. And Esau ran toward him and embraced him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, "Who are these to you?" And he said, "The children with whom God has favored your servant." 6. And the maidservants and their children drew near and prostrated themselves. 7. And Leah and her children drew near and prostrated themselves, and after [them], Joseph and Rachel drew near and prostrated themselves. 8. And he said, "What is to you [the purpose of] all this camp that I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in my master's eyes." 9. But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have remain yours." 10. Thereupon Jacob said, "Please no! If indeed I have found favor in your eyes, then you shall take my gift from my hand, because I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of an angel, and you have accepted me. 11. Now take my gift, which has been brought to you, for God has favored me [with it], and [because] I have everything." He prevailed upon him, and he took [it]. 12. Thereupon, he said, "Travel and we will go, and I will go alongside you." 13. And he said to him, "My master knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and the cattle, which are raising their young, depend upon me, and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. 14. Now, let my master go ahead before his servant, and I will move [at] my own slow pace, according to the pace of the work that is before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master, to Seir." 15. Thereupon Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "Why [do] that? May I find favor in my master's eyes." 16. So Esau returned on that day on his way to Seir.

Questions for the Teens:

- In this text, Jacob does not know whether his brother will forgive him or not. How might Jacob feel when he sees Esau?

- What could Esau's reactions to Jacob be?
- In line 4, how does Esau react? What do you think he is feeling?
- Why do you imagine he might forgive Jacob?

After reading the text, think about Jacob and Esau in terms of following the *Derekb Eretz* path.

- What takes Jacob off the path?
- What brings him back?
- What would have happened if Esau had not met him with the value of *Teshuvah*?

***Teshuvah*: Creative Expression/“Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity (20-30 minutes)**

The teens now have the option of exploring *Teshuvah* through one of two creative modalities: *Teshuvah* Decoupage or Writing a *Teshuvah* Letter.

Decoupage

Decoupage is the art of decorating an object with colored paper cut-outs and glue. Supplies listed at beginning of this *havayah*.

Instructions:

1. Cut out images from magazines that resonate with you.
2. Arrange the images your cardboard circle in a collage.
3. Glue on with the Modge Podge
4. Paint over the collage with Modge Podge

Questions to consider while doing Decoupage *Teshuvah* Project:

- What images evoke the themes of *Teshuvah*?
- What expressions can you find that show forgiveness, acceptance, change?
- What images from nature symbolize *Teshuvah*?

***Teshuvah* Letter**

Apologizing for something that you regret is not easy. One way to express the feeling of regret is to write a letter. Think about a way that you may have hurt another person--or hurt yourself. Write a letter to that person (or to you) that expresses your sorrow and how you plan to change your behavior. Ask for forgiveness from that person (or from yourself). This letter is not something that you need to share with your *TEL* group unless you wish to.

Allow time for the *TEL* teens to share their creative expressions. As they do, take some time to share as a group what they have learned about *Teshuvah* and what they would like other teens to know about the value of *Teshuvah* in their lives. You can do this sharing in a number of ways:

- Use a video camera and whip around as teens share their creative expressions. These short clips can be edited into an imovie.
- Invite teens to write on the *TEL Derekh Eretz* webpage. You can upload pictures of the collages to the webpage.

Reflection Journal (10 minutes)

Teens can respond to the following questions:

- What is more challenging: to forgive or ask for forgiveness?
- What was a moment in your life in which you forgave someone?
- What was a moment in your life in which you changed a behavior?
- How can the value of *Teshuvah* help to lead you on the *Derekh Eretz* path?

Teshuvah Text Study (20-30 minutes)

Text: Genesis 33 1-16, Jacob and Esau meet

1. Jacob lifted his eyes and saw, and behold, Esau was coming, and with him were four hundred men; so he divided the children with Leah and with Rachel and with the two maidservants. 2. And he placed the maidservants and their children first and Leah and her children after, and Rachel and her Joseph last. 3. And he went ahead of them and prostrated himself to the ground seven times, until he came close to his brother. 4. And Esau ran toward him and embraced him, and he fell on his neck and kissed him, and they wept. 5. And he lifted his eyes and saw the women and the children, and he said, "Who are these to you?" And he said, "The children with whom God has favored your servant." 6. And the maidservants and their children drew near and prostrated themselves. 7. And Leah and her children drew near and prostrated themselves, and after [them], Joseph and Rachel drew near and prostrated themselves. 8. And he said, "What is to you [the purpose of] all this camp that I have met?" And he said, "To find favor in my master's eyes." 9. But Esau said, "I have plenty, my brother; let what you have remain yours." 10. Thereupon Jacob said, "Please no! If indeed I have found favor in your eyes, then you shall take my gift from my hand, because I have seen your face, which is like seeing the face of an angel, and you have accepted me. 11. Now take my gift, which has been brought to you, for God has favored me [with it], and [because] I have everything." He prevailed upon him, and he took [it]. 12. Thereupon, he said, "Travel and we will go, and I will go alongside you." 13. And he said to him, "My master knows that the children are tender, and the flocks and the cattle, which are raising their young, depend upon me, and if they overdrive them one day, all the flocks will die. 14. Now, let my master go ahead before his servant, and I will move [at] my own slow pace, according to the pace of the work that is before me and according to the pace of the children, until I come to my master, to Seir." 15. Thereupon Esau said, "Let me leave with you some of the people who are with me." But he said, "Why [do] that? May I find favor in my master's eyes." 16. So Esau returned on that day on his way to Seir.

Questions for the Teens:

- In this text, Jacob does not know whether his brother will forgive him or not. How might Jacob feel when he sees Esau?
- What could Esau's reactions to Jacob be?

- In line 4, how does Esau react? What do you think he is feeling?
- Why do you imagine he might forgive Jacob?

After reading the text, think about Jacob and Esau in terms of following the *Derekh Eretz* path.

- What takes Jacob off the path?
- What brings him back?
- What would have happened if Esau had not met him with the value of *Teshuvah*?

Havayah Three: The Value of Hesed

Havayah Three Overview

- *Hesed* Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)
- *Hesed* Scenario (30 minutes)
- Text Study (30 minutes)
- Creative Expression/“Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity (20-30 minutes)
- Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- A poster or piece of butcher block paper with the word *Hesed* written in bold letters
- Markers
- Song: “*Al Shloshah Devarim*”
- Texts
- Paper & pens
- Video cameras (if possible)
- Props for commercials

***Hesed* Brainstorm**

Open with a brainstorm to find out how much the teens know about the value of *Hesed* already.

Divide *TEL* teens into pairs and hand each pair a different color marker.

Invite each pair to write somewhere around the word:

- What they think "*Hesed*" means
- Why the concept of "*Hesed*" is important in Jewish tradition
- A time(s) from their lives when they practiced "*Hesed*"

The teens can write on the paper simultaneously.

You may want to play a song about *Hesed* as they work, such as “*Al Shloshab Devarim.*”

When the teens finish considering the questions, have each pair go up to the sheet and share their ideas. When each group shares, they can put a check or star with their color marker on similar ideas/definitions to their responses.

Make sure the following key points about *Hesed* have been raised:

- *Hesed* translates to kindness/caring
- *Hesed* can be expressed both in our actions and in our attitudes; in this *havayah*, we will explore both feeling and doing *Hesed*
- In Jewish tradition, an important teaching from *Pirke Avot* states that the world stands on 3 things: Torah, *Avodah* and *Gemilut Hasadeem* (Acts of Loving Kindness) –you may need to point out the connection between *Hasadeem* and *Hesed*.
- There is also a concept in Jewish tradition called "*Hesed Shel Emet*" that refers to acts of kindness that can never be repaid, such as burying those who have died.
- In this *havayah*, we will explore the complexities of living with an attitude of "*Hesed*" and consider the way that the act of being kind to all people--those we like and those we don't--can lead us to *Derech Eretz*

***Hesed* Role Play**

Scenario:

Jake and Holli are teens in a large Reconstructionist congregation. There are over 30 7th graders, and getting invited to *Bar/Bat Mitzvah* parties is a major part of the social scene. There are some 7th graders in the class who rarely get invited to parties. Two of those teens, Jake and Holli, are both outsiders within the larger group of teens. Jake joined the congregation when he was in 6th grade

and didn't know anyone there. He only comes every other week because his parents are divorced and when he stays with his dad, he doesn't come to the congregational school. Holli has been in the congregational school since she was in first grade but never really made a friend there. She is extremely shy and struggles with making friends.

At your friend David's *Bar Mitzvah*, his mother makes him invite Jake and Holli to the party. When you are there, you see them both looking lost and not hanging out with the other teens. You mention this to a good friend of yours, Julie, who says "Whatever." What do you do?

Role play:

- David and his mother discussing whether or not to invite Jake and Holli
- You and Julie talking about Jake and Holli being left out at the *Bar Mitzvah* party
- You taking action to include Jake and Holli

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the role of *Hesed* in this scenario? Who shows *Hesed*? When is *Hesed* absent from what is happening?
2. Why are no other families including Jake and Holli? What does this lack of inclusion say about the community?
3. Have you ever had an experience of being on the outside of a group? What does it feel like to be on the outside?
4. What experiences do you see in your community (school/*TEL*/camp) in which teens are left on the outside? What can you do to change that experience? Think about living the value of *Hesed* in terms of both an attitude and behavior.
5. How is extending yourself to get to know and include other teens an act of *Hesed*? What are the challenges of reaching out and being inclusive?
6. Is it possible to have an attitude of *Hesed* when someone has been unkind to you? Can you show *Hesed* to someone whom you really don't like?

***Hesed* Text Study (20-30 minutes)**

In this *havayah*, our sacred text comes from the *Mishnah*. Invite the teens to share whether they have heard the term "*Mishnah*" and what they think it may refer to. Explain that the *Mishnah* is the first major written rabbinic text following the Torah, also called the first part of our Oral Torah.

Mishnah Peab:

These are the things that have no measure:

The *Peab* of the field, the first-fruits, the appearance [at the Temple in Jerusalem on Pilgrimage Festivals],

acts of kindness, and the study of the Torah.

These are things the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world,

while the principle remains for him in the World to Come:

Honoring father and mother,

acts of kindness,

and bringing peace between a man and his fellow.

But the study of Torah is equal to them all.

Questions for discussion:

- "Acts of Kindness" are listed in this rabbinic text written thousands of years ago as one of the *mitzvot* that has no measure—in other words, there is no limit to how many acts of kindness that you can do. Why would doing acts of kindness be highlighted this way?
- This *Mishnah* implies that doing acts of kindness is an integral part of life. How do you think this value has shaped Jewish tradition?
- In what ways do you perform "acts of kindness" without any limit?

***Hesed*: Creative Reflection**

Making PSA [Public Service Announcement] Videos

For our *Hesed* creative reflection, divide the teens into small groups of 3-4 people. Each group is going to write, act and film (if cameras are available) short PSAs about the value of *Hesed*.

Each group should:

- Come up with a slogan for *Hesed* (example: "*Hesed*: Just Do it!")
- Create a message that expresses the importance of doing *Hesed* and sharing an attitude of *Hesed*
- Incorporate Jewish teachings in some way—for example using "*Al Shloshah Devarim*" or using the text from *Mishnah*.

When the teens have written and practiced their commercials, share them as a group and film them if possible. If you are able, upload them to the *TEL* webpage. If you are not able to film, allow time for the teens to write on the *TEL* webpage about their PSAs and what they learned about *Hesed*.

Reflection Journal (10 minutes)

Teens can respond to the following questions:

What situations have you faced in which it has been hard to be kind to another person?

Take some time to a "*heshbon ha'nefesh*"--accounting of your soul. Think over the last week of your life.

In what circumstances did you have an attitude of *Hesed*?

At what moments might you have acted with *Hesed*?

How can the value of *Hesed* help to lead you on the *Derech Eretz* path?

***Hesed* Text Study (20-30 minutes)**

Mishnah Peab:

These are the things that have no measure:

The *Peab* of the field, the first-fruits, the appearance [at the Temple in Jerusalem on Pilgrimage Festivals],

acts of kindness, and the study of the Torah.

These are things the fruits of which a man enjoys in this world,

while the principle remains for him in the World to Come:

Honoring father and mother,

acts of kindness,

and bringing peace between a man and his fellow.

But the study of Torah is equal to them all.

Questions for discussion:

- "Acts of Kindness" are listed in this rabbinic text written thousands of years ago as one of the *mitzvot* that has no measure—in other words, there is no limit to how many acts of kindness that you can do. Why would doing acts of kindness be highlighted this way?
- This *Mishnah* implies that doing acts of kindness is an integral part of life. How do you think this value has shaped Jewish tradition?
- In what ways do you perform "acts of kindness" without any limit?

Havayah Four: The Values of Emet/Emunah

Havayah Four Overview

- *Emet/Emunah* Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)
- *Emet/Emunah* Scenario (30 minutes)
- Text Study (30 minutes)
- Creative Expression/“Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity (20-30 minutes)
- Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- A piece of posterboard or butcher block paper with the words *Emet/Emunah* written in bold letters
- Markers
- Songs of Trust & Betrayal
- Texts
- Paper & pens

***Emet & Emunah* Brainstorm (15 minutes)**

Emet and *Emunah* are the third values in the *Derekh Eretz* path. Divide TEL teens into pairs and hand each pair a different color marker.

Invite each pair to write somewhere around the word:

- What they think "*Emet*" and "*Emunah*" mean
- How do these two values relate to one another?

The teens can write on the paper simultaneously.

You may want to select one of the songs of trust to play while they are writing.

When they finish, have each pair go up to the sheet and share their ideas. When each group shares, they can put a check or star with their color marker on similar ideas/definitions to their responses.

Bring out the following points about the value of *Emet* and *Emunah*:

- Mean "Truth" and "Trustworthiness"; *Emunah* can also be translated as "faith"
- In Jewish tradition, these values are very connected. One needs to act with honesty in order to be trustworthy
- These values are about living in integrity. Being truthful and trustworthy mean that you do what you say that you will do
- There are times when being truthful and acting with *Hesed* can be in conflict. The Talmud tries to help us around that tension by pointing out that "all brides are beautiful on their wedding day." In other words, the tradition acknowledges that there are "white lies" that we may tell to avoid hurting people's feelings.
- Being honest is a value that is essential in many human behaviors, not only in telling the truth; honesty is a corner stone of not cheating, not stealing and not breaking commitments/vows.

- In this *havayah*, we will explore the importance of living these values and of creating relationships and communities that embody integrity

Emet and Emunah Role Play

Scenario:

Your friend Mira has been very withdrawn and not wanting to hang out very much. One day at school, you notice a really bad scratch on her wrist and when you ask her about it, she says that her cat scratched her. You remember that her cat is de-clawed and then you start noticing that she wears long sleeve shirts every day, even when it's really hot. You have a feeling that something strange is going on with her and you invite her for a sleepover. At first she doesn't want to come, but then she agrees. When you guys are getting ready for bed, you ask her about wearing the long sleeves (she has them on tonight). She asks you to promise not to tell anyone and you agree. She shows you her arms and they are full of scratches. She tells you that sometimes she cuts herself with a razor. You ask her why she is doing that and she says that she doesn't know but sometimes it helps her to feel better. You try to ask her what is wrong but she turns on her ipod and goes to sleep. The next morning, you try to ask her some more but she ignores you and goes home quickly. What do you do?

Role Play:

- Share the conversation between you and Mira in which Mira makes you promise not to tell about her cutting to anyone
- Show a conversation between Mira and an adult (rabbi/parent/teacher/TEL leader/coach) asking her about the long sleeves
- Show a conversation in which you go to an adult and tell him/her about what is going on with Mira

Discussion questions:

- Mira has asked you not to tell anyone. What is your responsibility? Is sharing Mira's situation with

an adult violating your integrity?

- In what ways is Mira struggling to be truthful about her feelings? What are ways that you can cope in a truthful way with feelings of depression, sadness or anger?
- In what ways does the friend in this scenario create a trusting environment with Mira?
- Mira may be angry at her friend for breaking her trust. In what ways could the friend work on rebuilding trust in the relationship?

You may want to add:

In this scenario, the Jewish value of "*Pikuah nefesh*" —saving a life—comes into play. The value of *Pikuah nefesh* is more important than keeping Mira's secret. Mira's behavior is a sign that she is seriously depressed and needs help. Just as you would not let a friend be seriously ill and not get the medicine that he/she needs, you can not keep a promise not to tell anyone if it means not getting help for someone who is in danger.

***Emet/Emunah* Text Study (20-30 minutes)**

In this *havayah*, our sacred text comes from the *Talmud*. The *Talmud* is another central rabbinic text. It includes the *Mishnah* as well as the *Gemara*, which is rabbinic commentary that ostensibly builds upon the *Mishnah*.

Read both of these teachings from the *Talmud*, followed by questions for discussion:

"Such is the punishment of the liar--even when speaking the truth, the person is not listened to by anyone." - *Sanhedrin* 89b

"People should not say one thing with their mouths and something else with their hearts"

Questions for discussion:

1. What does it mean to "say something with your heart"?
2. Describe the punishment of the liar. How would that punishment affect his/her day-to-day life?
Friendships? Social life?
3. How do you feel when you know that someone is lying to you?
4. Have you ever encountered a person who said one thing but behaved in a way that was not consistent with what he/she said? Describe that person's integrity.
5. Besides telling an occasional white lie to protect someone's feelings, why do people lie?
6. What is the relationship between telling the truth and building relationships that are based on *Emunah*/trustworthiness?

Emet/Emunah Creative Expression/"Teens Teaching Teens" Opportunity

Songs of Trust & Betrayal

"*Emet*" and "*Emunah*" are not only important Jewish values but are universal values. All human beings need to create authentic relationships. When people have been lied to or betrayed, their trust is broken and breaking trust can destroy relationships between people who love and care about each other deeply. Feeling betrayed or lied to is such a terrible feeling that it has inspired millions of songs as artists try to express the feeling of betrayal.

How many songs on the theme of betrayal can you think of?

How many songs on the theme of trust can you think of?

Teens are encouraged to post the lists of songs they generate on the TEL webpage.

Listen to some examples of songs that express the theme of "betrayal" and "trust" together. (Lyrics included at end of chapter, songs available on iTunes and YouTube.)

Songs of Betrayal:

- Marvin Gaye "Heard it Through the Grapevine"
- Justin Timberlake "Cry Me a River"
- Gin Blossoms "Found Out About You"

Songs of Trust:

- James Taylor, "You've Got a Friend"
- Billy Joel "It's A Matter of Trust"
- Bob Dylan "Trust Yourself"

Invite teens to share which ones that they think really express the feelings of betrayal or trust in relationships the best. Why? What do they imagined inspired the artists' to write these songs?

*If you have time: divide teens into small groups and allow them to pick a theme of either "trust" or "betrayal." Invite them to write their own original song lyrics about the theme. They can use the tune of one of the songs that you've listened to or pick their own melody. If time allows, share the lyrics. Teens are encouraged to share the songs they write on the *TEL* webpage.

Reflection Journal (10 minutes)

Teens can respond to the following questions:

Have you ever been lied to or betrayed by someone who is close to you?

Were you able to repair the relationship? If so, how did you do it?

Has there been a circumstance in which you betrayed the trust of a friend? If so, is there a way to repair that relationship?

How can the value of *Emet/Emunah* help to lead you on the *Derekh Eretz* path?

Emet/Emunah Text Study (20-30 minutes)

Read both of these teachings from the *Talmud*, followed by questions for discussion:

"Such is the punishment of the liar--even when speaking the truth, the person is not listened to by anyone." - *Sanhedrin* 89b

"People should not say one thing with their mouths and something else with their hearts"

- *Baba Metziah* 49a

Questions for discussion:

1. What does it mean to "say something with your heart"?
2. Describe the punishment of the liar. How would that punishment affect his/her day-to-day life? Friendships? Social life?
3. How do you feel when you know that someone is lying to you?
4. Have you ever encountered a person who said one thing but behaved in a way that was not consistent with what he/she said? Describe that person's integrity.
5. Besides telling an occasional white lie to protect someone's feelings, why do people lie?
6. What is the relationship between telling the truth and building relationships that are based on *Emunah*/trustworthiness?

Lyrics to "Songs of Betrayal"

I heard it through the Grapevine Marvin Gaye

Ooh, I bet you're wondering how I knew
About you're plans to make me blue
With some other guy that you knew before.
Between the two of us guys
You know I love you more.
It took me by surprise I must say,
When I found out yesterday.
Don't you know that...

(Chorus:)

I heard it through the grapevine
Not much longer would you be mine.
Oh I heard it through the grapevine,
Oh and I'm just about to lose my mind.
Honey, honey yeah.

I know that a man ain't supposed to cry,
But these tears I can't hold inside.
Losin' you would end my life you see,
Cause you mean that much to me.
You could have told me yourself
That you love someone else.
Instead...

(Chorus)

People say believe half of what you see,
Son, and none of what you hear.
I can't help bein' confused
If it's true please tell me dear?
Do you plan to let me go
For the other guy you loved before?
Don't you know...

(Chorus)

Cry Me A River Justin Timberlake

You were my sun
You were my earth
But you didn't know all the ways I loved you, no

So you took a chance
And made other plans
But I bet you didn't think that they would come crashing down, no

You don't have to say, what you did,
I already know, I found out from him
Now there's just no chance, for you and me, there'll never be
And don't it make you sad about it

You told me you loved me
Why did you leave me, all alone
Now you tell me you need me
When you call me, on the phone
Girl I refuse, you must have me confused
With some other guy
Your bridges were burned, and now it's your turn
To cry, cry me a river
Cry me a river-er
Cry me a river
Cry me a river-er, yea yea

I know that they say
That somethings are better left unsaid
It wasn't like you only talked to him and you know it
(Don't act like you don't know it)
All of these things people told me
Keep messing with my head
(Messing with my head)
You should've picked honesty
Then you may not have blown it
(Yea..)

You don't have to say, what you did,
(Don't have to say, what you did)
I already know, I found out from him
(I already know, uh)
Now there's just no chance, for you and me, there'll never be
(No chance, you and me)
And don't it make you sad about it

You told me you loved me
Why did you leave me, all alone
(All alone)
Now you tell me you need me
When you call me, on the phone
(When you call me on the phone)
Girl I refuse, you must have me confused
With some other guy
(I'm not like them baby)
Your bridges were burned, and now it's your turn
(It's your turn)

To cry, cry me a river
(Go on and just)
Cry me a river-er
(Go on and just)
Cry me a river
(Baby go on and just)
Cry me a river-er, yea yea

Oh
(Oh)
The damage is done
So I guess I be leaving

Oh
(Oh)
The damage is done
So I guess I be leaving

Oh
(Oh)
The damage is done
So I guess I be leaving

Oh
(Oh)
The damage is done
So I guess I be... leaving

You don't have to say, what you did,
(Don't have to say, what you did)
I already know, I found out from him
(I already know, uh)
Now there's just no chance, for you and me, there'll never be
(No chance, you and me)
And don't it make you sad about it

Cry me a river
(Go on and just)
Cry me a river-er
(Baby go on and just)
Cry me a river
(You can go on and just)
Cry me a river-er, yea yea

Cry me a river
(Baby go on and just)
Cry me a river-er
(Go on and just)
Cry me a river
(Cause I've already cried)
Cry me a river-er, yea yea
(Ain't gonna cry no more, yea-yea)

Cry me a river

Cry me a river, oh
Cry me a river, oh
Cry me a river, oh

Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)
Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)
Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)
Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)

Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)
Cry me a river, oh
(Cry me, cry me)
Cry me a river
(Cry me, cry me)

Found Out About You Gin Blossoms

All last summer in case you don't recall
I was yours and you were mine forget it all
Is there a line that I could write
Sad enough to make you cry
All the lines you wrote to me were lies
The months roll past the love that you struck dead
Did you love me only in my head?
Things you said and did to me
Seemed to come so easily
The love I thought I'd won you give for free
Whispers at the bus stop
I heard about nights out in the school yard
I found out about you
Rumors follow everywhere you go
Like when you left and I was last to know
You're famous now and there's no doubt
In all the places you hang out
They know your name and know what you're about
Whispers at the bus stop
I heard about nights out in the school yard
I found out about you
Street lights blink on through the car window
I get the time too often on AM radio
You know it's all I think about
I write your name drive past your house
Your boyfriend's over I watch your light go out
Whispers at the bus stop

I heard about nights out in the school yard
I found out about you

Lyrics to "Songs of Trust"

You've Got a Friend in Me
James Taylor

When you're down and troubled
and you need a helping hand
and nothing whoa nothing is going right.
Close your eyes and think of me
and soon I will be there
to brighten up even your darkest nights.

You just call out my name
and you know wherever I am
I'll come running oh yeah baby
to see you again.

Winter spring summer or fall
all you have to do is call
and I'll be there yeah yeah yeah.
You've got a friend.

If the sky above you
should turn dark and full of clouds
and that old north wind should begin to blow
Keep your head together and call my name out loud
and soon I will be knocking upon your door.
You just call out my name and you know where ever I am
I'll come running to see you again.
Winter, spring, summer or fall
all you got to do is call
and I'll be there, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Hey, ain't it good to know that you've got a friend?
People can be so cold.
They'll hurt you and desert you.
Well they'll take your soul if you let them.
Oh yeah, but don't you let them.

You just call out my name and you know wherever I am
I'll come running to see you again.
Oh babe, don't you know that,
Winter spring summer or fall,
Hey now, all you've got to do is call.
Lord, I'll be there, yes I will.
You've got a friend.
You've got a friend.
Ain't it good to know you've got a friend.
Ain't it good to know you've got a friend.
You've got a friend

It's a Matter of Trust
Billy Joel

Some lovers just rely on their hearts
The core remains of what began with a passionate start
And they may not want it to end
But it will, it's just a question of when
I've lived long enough to have learned
The closer you get to the fire the more you get burned
But that won't happen to us
'Cause it's always been a matter of trust

I know you're an emotional girl
It took a lot for you to not lose your faith in this world
I can't offer you proof
But you're gonna face a moment of truth
It's hard when you're always afraid
You just recover when another belief is betrayed
So break my heart if you must
It's a matter of trust

You can't go the distance
With too much resistance
I know you have doubts
But for God's sake don't shut me out

This time you've got nothing to lose
You can take it, you can leave it, whatever you choose
I won't hold back anything
And I'll walk away a fool or a king
Some lovers just rely on their minds
It's make believe until it's only a matter of time
And some might have learned to adjust
But then it never was a matter of trust

I'm sure you're aware love,
We've both had our share of believing too long
When the whole situation was wrong

Some lovers just rely on their souls
A constant battle for the ultimate state of control
After you've heard lie upon lie
There can hardly be a question of why
Some lovers just rely on their hearts
The core remains of what began with a passionate start
But that can't happen to us
'Cause it's always been a matter of trust

It's a matter of trust

It's always been a matter of trust
It's a matter of trust

Trust Yourself
Bob Dylan

Trust yourself,
Trust yourself to do the things that only you know best
Trust yourself
Trust yourself to do what's right and not be second-guessed
Don't trust me to show you beauty
When beauty may only turn to rust
If you need somebody you can trust, trust yourself.

Trust yourself
Trust yourself to know the way that will prove true in the end
Trust yourself
Trust yourself to find the path where there is no if and when
Don't trust me to show you the truth
When the truth may only be ashes and dust
If you want somebody you can trust, trust yourself.

Well, you're on your own, you always were
In a land of wolves and thieves
Don't put your hope in ungodly man
Or be a slave to what somebody else believes.

Trust yourself
And you won't be disappointed when vain people let you down
Trust yourself
And look not for answers where no answers can be found
Don't trust me to show you love
When my love may be only lust
If you want somebody you can trust, trust yourself.

You, you got to trust yourself ...

Havayah Five: The Value of Kavod

Havayah Five Overview

- *Kavod* Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)
- *Kavod* Scenario (30 minutes)
- Text Study (30 minutes)
- Creative Expression/“Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity (20-30 minutes)
- Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- A piece of posterboard or butcher block paper with the word *Kavod* written in bold letters
- Markers
- Song: “Respect” by Aretha Franklin
- Texts
- Paper & pens

***Kavod* Brainstorm** (15 minutes)

Kavod is the fourth value in the *Derech Eretz* path. Open with a brainstorm to find out how much they know about this value already. Divide *TEL* teens into pairs and hand each pair a different color marker. Invite each pair to write somewhere around the word:

- What they think *Kavod* means
- Examples of showing *Kavod*

The teens can write on the paper simultaneously. You may want to play the song “Respect” by Aretha Franklin while they are writing.

When they finish, have each pair go up to the sheet and share their ideas. When each group shares, they can put a check or star with their color marker on similar ideas/definitions to their responses.

When you finish the brainstorm, emphasize that the value of *Kavod*:

- *Kavod* means "respect" or "honor." This value is a foundation of Jewish life.
- *Kavod* is the manner in which we treat family, friends, teachers, the elderly, and especially people who are different from us.
- *Kavod* is the way that we are to treat the earth and all living things.
- *Kavod* applies to how we treat people that we disagree with
- *Kavod* also refers to the way that we are supposed to treat ourselves and take care of our bodies. (*Shmirat haguf* is the value that is more specific to “guarding your body.”)

***Kavod* Role Play** (20-30 minutes)

Scenario:

For high school biology, you have the dreaded Mr. Stevens as your teacher. You have heard horror stories about him yelling and picking on teens who are not prepared. Science is your hardest subject and even though you study, you tend to struggle with understanding the material. Within the first

two weeks of class, Mr. Stevens gives you two pop quizzes that you do really poorly on. You walk into the classroom the day after the last quiz and in front of everyone Mr. Stevens asks why you never bother to study. His voice is raised and you feel yourself getting tears in your eyes. He is the teacher and you don't want to be disrespectful, but you feel totally disrespected. What do you do?

Role Play:

- You and your friends talking about Mr. Stevens and what a jerk he is
- You and your parents talking about what is going on in class
- A dialogue between you and Mr. Stevens after class

Questions for Discussion:

1. What is the difference between liking someone and respecting someone?
2. Jewish tradition teaches us to respect our elders--including parents and teachers. What happens when an adult is treating a teen or child unfairly?
3. In what ways does the teen in this scenario show respect for herself?
4. How do relationships break down when *kavod* is not present? Can you think of an example in your life in which *Kavod* wasn't present?
5. In the reverse of this scenario, what is it like when teens don't respect a teacher?

***Kavod* Text Study (20-30 minutes)**

In this *havayah*, our sacred text comes from *Pirke Avot*. *Pirke Avot*, a collection of ethical teachings and sayings, is our third text from the rabbinic period. *The text study about Derech Eretz and the song Al Shloshah Devarim actually both came from Pirke Avot as well.*

Read all of these teachings from *Pirke Avot*, and then consider the questions that follow:

“Your house should be open wide, and you should make the poor members of your household.” (1:5)

“Meet every person with graciousness.” (1:15)

“What is the right path a person should choose? Whatever is honorable to that person,
and honorable in the eyes of others.” (2:1)

“Let your friend's honor be more dear to you than your own.” (2:15)

“Let your friend's money be more dear to you than your own.” (2:17)

“In a place where there are no (worthy) persons, strive to be worthy.” (2:6)

“One who acquires a good name, has acquired something indeed.” (2:8)

Questions for Discussion:

1. Which teaching expresses the value of "*Kavod*" the most in your opinion? Why?
2. Explain the idea of making your friend's honor more dear than your own; how might you do that?
3. What does "in a place where there are no (worthy) people" mean? This statement can be translated as "in a places where there are no *mensch*s, strive to be a *mensch*." Can you imagine in a situation in which you alone might be the only *mensch*? How would you respond?
4. What does it mean to acquire a "good name"? How do you want other people to talk about you? How do you go about earning a good name?

***Kavod* Creative Reflection / “Teens Teaching Teens” Opportunity**

Creating your own *Pirke Nearim* (Ethics of Youth)

We imagine that there are ethical teachings that need to be written to teach about how to live with *Kavod* in contemporary situations. You have wisdom and insights that could help other teens think about acting with *Kavod* in their life. As a *TEL* community, we will gather all of our teens' contemporary "*Pirke Avot*" and create a section on our webpage for "*Pirke Nearim*" (Ethics of Youth).

Work with a partner to write a short teaching (1-2 sentences) about these situations:

- How can you act with *Kavod* on Facebook?
- How can act with *Kavod* in school? What if you don't like a teacher?
- How can you act with *Kavod* towards your parents when you disagree with them?
- How can you act with *Kavod* towards other teens that you don't like?
- How can you act with *Kavod* towards the environment?
- How can you act with *Kavod* towards your body?

Teens should add their original *Pirke Nearim* texts on the *Derech Eretz* webpage.

Reflection Journal (10 minutes)

Teens can respond to the following questions:

What does it feel like when someone shows you respect? Think of a moment when you felt especially respected.

What does it feel like to be disrespected?

How do you show respect to yourself?

How can the value of *Kavod* help to lead you on the *Derech Eretz* path?

***Kavod* Text Study** (20-30 minutes)

Read all of these teachings from Pirke Avot, and then consider the questions that follow:

“Your house should be open wide, and you should make the poor members of your household.” (1:5)

“Meet every person with graciousness.” (1:15)

“What is the right path a person should choose? Whatever is honorable to that person, and honorable in the eyes of others.” (2:1)

“Let your friend's honor be more dear to you than your own.” (2:15)

“Let your friend's money be more dear to you than your own.” (2:17)

“In a place where there are no (worthy) persons, strive to be worthy.” (2:6)

“One who acquires a good name, has acquired something indeed.” (2:8)

Questions for Discussion:

- Which teaching expresses the value of "*Kavod*" the most in your opinion? Why?
- Explain the idea of making your friend's honor more dear than your own; how might you do that?
- What does "in a place where there are no (worthy) people" mean? This statement can be translated as "in a places where there are no *mensches*, strive to be a *mensch*." Can you imagine in a situation in which you alone might be the only *mensch*? How would you respond?
- What does it mean to acquire a "good name"? How do you want other people to talk about you? How do you go about earning a good name?

Havayah Six: The Value of Abarayut

Havayah Six Overview:

- *Abarayut* Brainstorm (15-20 minutes)
- *Abarayut* Scenario (30 minutes)
- Text Study (30 minutes)
- Creative Expression (20-30 minutes)
- Closing Reflection (10 minutes)

Materials Needed

- A piece of posterboard or butcher block paper with the words *Abarayut* written in bold letters
- Markers
- Song: “*Lo Alecha*”
- Texts
- Paper & pens
- Sharpies in all different colors
- blank bumper stickers (available at office supply stores and on-line)
- t-shirt transfer paper (available at office supply stores and on-line)

- t-shirts, iron, etc. if you wish to actually make the t shirts with the teens

***Aharayut* Brainstorm** (15 minutes)

Aharayut is the fifth value in the *Derekh Eretz* path. Open with a brainstorm to find out how much the teens know about this value already. Divide *TEL* teens into pairs and hand each pair a different color marker. Invite each pair to write somewhere around the word:

- What they think *Aharayut* means
- Ideas about *Aharayut* in Jewish tradition

The teens can write on the paper simultaneously. While they are writing, you may want to play the song “*Lo Alecha*.”

When they finish, have each pair go up to the sheet and share their ideas. When each group shares, they can put a check or star with their color marker on similar ideas/definitions to their responses.

Emphasize the following about the value of *Aharayut* :

- *Aharayut* means "responsibility"
- It refers to being accountable for a promise, trust or debt
- *Aharayut* is about keeping your word and honoring your commitments
- A challenge for contemporary teens can be living with *Aharayut* because you have **so many** responsibilities--we will examine how we can prioritize our commitments

***Aharayut* Role Play** (20-30 minutes)

Scenario:

It is a busy weekend for you. On Friday night, you have a friend's birthday sleepover party. You

don't get much sleep that night and on Saturday afternoon you are supposed to get most of your homework done. Saturday night is your chorus concert and you aren't home until late. On Sunday mornings, you are a teacher assistant in your congregation's Sunday school and after school, you have your *TEL* group meeting. You get home late in the afternoon and only have two hours to get all of your homework done before leaving for a baby-sitting job at 7PM. You realize that you are not going to get your homework done before babysitting. You think about calling and canceling your sitting job. Your parents say that is not good to do with only two hours notice. You are stressed about getting your homework done. What do you do?

Role Play:

- You and your friends talking about the weekend
- You and your parents figuring out when you will get your homework done
- You calling the people that you are supposed to babysit for and talking about your responsibility

Discussion Questions:

1. What are the teen's primary responsibilities in this scenario?
2. What responsibilities are competing with each other?
3. What is the teen's priority to taking care of him/herself?
4. How can he/she prioritize responsibilities?
5. How do you prioritize responsibilities in your life?
6. If you make a commitment that you later cannot keep, how can you get out of it in a responsible way?

***Aharayut* Text Study** (20-30 minutes)

Our previous texts were from previous eras of Jewish life. This text is a contemporary text. It is an official statement from the RRA, the Reconstructionist Rabbinical Association. It was written in

August, 2010 and concerns the RRA's position on the building of a Muslim community center in New York City near Ground Zero.

“RRA STATEMENT on PARK 51”

The Reconstructionist Rabbinic Association (RRA) has watched the conversation unfold around Park51, the proposed community center in lower Manhattan, with deep concern. We fully recognize the strong sentiments that have been aroused, and the passionate expressions of grief that are still raw for many families. As Jews and as rabbis, however, we want to state unambiguously our commitment to the principle of the free exercise of religion, a principle that has allowed Jewish Americans to flourish in this country.

Park51 is a project that seeks to emulate communal institutional expressions of other religious traditions like the YMCA and the JCC which not only provide for their respective faith communities to come together for social and educational offerings, but more importantly, are open to the larger neighborhood regardless of religious affiliation. As Reconstructionist Jews, we understand that peoplehood is at the core of these institutions - reflecting that Americans of all faiths live in two civilizations simultaneously and Park51 is an opportunity for American Muslims to celebrate their history, traditions and heritage in the embrace of one of the highest American ideals, that of freedom of religion.

We commend Mayor Bloomberg and President Obama for their support of this project and urge them both to be strong and of good courage in the face of rising hate speech and condemnation of the voices of tolerance. We call on Jews of all denominations to oppose the dangerous rise in these debates and protests. At this time on the Jewish calendar of moral introspection and *teshuvah* (returning and repenting), we call on our rabbis to work with their communities to turn toward the kind of America we want to live in going forward, one whose deep commitment to religious

pluralism will be strengthened, for Muslim Americans and for all of us.

Questions for Discussion:

1. What position does the RRA take on Park51?
2. This is not a particularly or exclusively "Jewish problem." Why does the RRA get involved in the Park51 issue by writing a statement?
3. In what ways is this an expression of *Aharayut*? What is the RRA taking responsibility for?
4. We discussed taking responsibility for our lives. In what ways can/do you take responsibility for issues that you care about?
5. In previous texts we read rabbinic teachings from previous eras. How does it feel to read a contemporary rabbinic teaching?

***Aharayut* Creative Reflection / "Teens Teaching Teens" Opportunity**

Making Your Own Bumper Stickers & T-Shirt Designs

Think about what issues that you care deeply about. What are ways that you can take responsibility for helping to work on that issue?

One simple way to spread awareness about an issue is to create a bumper sticker or T-Shirt decal. In this Creative Reflection / "Teens Teaching Teens" Opportunity time, select an issue that you care about and design your own bumper sticker or T-shirt about that issue.

When you complete your bumper stickers or T-shirt designs, take photos of them to share with other teens on the *Derech Eretz* webpage.

Reflection Journal (10 minutes)

Teens can respond to the following questions:

What are the ways that your parents still maintain responsibility for your well-being? What are the areas in which you take responsibility? How does it feel to be held accountable for your choices and decisions?

How can the value of *Abarayut* help to lead you on the *Derekh Eretz* path?

Aharayut Text Study (20-30 minutes)

“RRA STATEMENT on PARK 51”

The Reconstructionist Rabbinic Association (RRA) has watched the conversation unfold around Park51, the proposed community center in lower Manhattan, with deep concern. We fully recognize the strong sentiments that have been aroused, and the passionate expressions of grief that are still raw for many families. As Jews and as rabbis, however, we want to state unambiguously our commitment to the principle of the free exercise of religion, a principle that has allowed Jewish Americans to flourish in this country.

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1. What position does the RRA take on Park51?
2. This is not a particularly or exclusively "Jewish problem." Why does the RRA get involved in the Park51 issue by writing a statement?
3. In what ways is this an expression of *Abarayut*? What is the RRA taking responsibility for?
4. We discussed taking responsibility for our lives. In what ways can/do you take responsibility for issues that you care about?
5. In previous texts we read rabbinic teachings from previous eras. How does it feel to read a contemporary rabbinic teaching?

Havayah 7 and Havayah 8: Teen Teaching Teens

We have just learned about five key Jewish values and explored the complexity of certain scenarios in terms of one of those values. In the first *havayah*, we said that our values are the building blocks to a *Derekh Eretz*. Now we are going to see how that works as we put everything we have done in the first six *havayot* together into one or two group *Derekh Eretz* Projects. The group might choose which project to do, or you might decide to do the Teen *Talmud* page project as a discreet *havayah* that will help the teens “warm up” for an Awareness and Advocacy Campaign.

There are two options – one is a fairly straightforward Teen *Talmud* Page. The other is a Teen Awareness or Advocacy Campaign. Some groups might prefer to do two smaller projects instead of one multi-session project.

Option One: The Teen Talmud Project

1. Do a quick review of all the “brainstorm” charts with the teens and emphasize how many different Jewish values that they have explored that will help guide their *Derekh Eretz* paths.
2. Begin by identifying one key teen issue or topic that the group would like to focus on.

Examples include:

- Peer Pressure

- Body Image
- Living in the Digital Age/Social Media
- Sexting
- Coming Out
- Creating a Safe Space for GLBTQ teens
- Bullying
- Making Healthy Choices
- Pre-Marital Sex
- Cheating

3. Break the teens up into small groups and have them each develop scenarios around this issue in which all the values we have focused on (or as many of them as possible) could come into play. *The scenario may well have to be a bit more elaborate than those provided in the previous havayot - but be careful not to let it become a soap opera!*
4. Make sure they really start to sink their teeth into the scenarios and the complexity of figuring out the *Derekh Eretz* that they as teens want to walk in terms of this issue. You may want the group to sketch out the scenarios by doing some more freeze-tag drama. *Consider if the group can guide it themselves this time.*
5. Ask them to briefly consider the scenario they develop in terms of each value. It may be that different values come into play only with certain particular twists to the story. If X does Y, then they might have issues of *Emunah* to consider. If Y talks to Z, than a question of *Teshuvah* might arise.
6. The group should probably eventually choose one or two of the most stimulating scenarios concerning their topic area to use as their primary reference point for the Group Project on this issue.

7. The scenario itself – probably only articulated in a general way without any of the details of specific twists or turns in the story – then becomes the Teen *Mishnah* of a giant Teen *Talmud* page.
8. Each Teen should then be asked to compose a rabbinic commentary around the outside of the piece of Teen *Mishnah*. The different commentaries to the Teen *Mishnah* can address different possible issues that might arise from the very basic scenario. We want them to each write their own opinions or pieces of wisdom about how, if P laughs at Q, P might for accept her *Abarayut* and/or R might respond with *Hesed*.
9. Next ask the teens to share their different responses to the Teen *Mishnah*. Take notes on big ideas that arise from the conversation that follows. Are there significant shared ideas and priorities that are clear? These gleanings become the larger group teachings that should, in turn, be written in such a way that they literally surround the rest of the words on the Teen *Talmud* Page. [You might want to show them a sample *Talmud* page – for example, <http://people.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html>.)]
10. Help the teens to take their time and work together to pack in as much information about handling the topic as possible. The *Talmud* has been studied and cherished for hundreds and hundreds of years precisely because it contains such richness and the wisdom within it can be applied to circumstances the rabbis who wrote and compiled it could hardly imagine. What could the teens add to their page to help make sure it can stand the test of time?
11. You may also want to remind the teens of the original concept of *Hiddur Mitzvah*, that beautifying sacred items enhances the mitzvah. If they take the time to really beautify this Teen *Talmud* page, it is more likely to be taken to heart and considered seriously by other teens.

Option Two: The Teen Issue Awareness or Advocacy Campaign

1. Do a quick review of all the “brainstorm” charts with the teens and emphasize how many different Jewish values that they have explored that will help guide their *Derech Eretz* paths.
2. Begin by identifying one key teen issue or topic that the group would like to focus on. You may want to go back to the issues that they identified in *havayah* 1.

Examples include:

- Peer Pressure
 - Body Image
 - Living in the Digital Age/Social Media
 - Sexting
 - Coming Out
 - Creating a Safe Space for GLBTQ teens
 - Bullying
 - Making Healthy Choices
 - Pre-Marital Sex
 - Cheating
3. Invite teens to share their ideas for a group project and give time for discussion.
 4. Take a vote (with ballots) asking teens to select a first and second choice for an issue.
 5. Once you have selected your issue, take a large piece of butcher paper and create a new chart about that issue.
 6. List the issue at the top with the 5 Jewish values on the side.
 7. Invite teens to think about and share ways that those values impact this issue.

For example:

Body Image

Teshuvah

“Forgiving yourself for when you have not taken care of your body”

<i>Hesed</i>	“Looking at your body with kindness”
<i>Emet/Emunah</i>	“Being honest about what you put into your body”
<i>Kavod</i>	“Respecting your body”
<i>Abarayut</i>	“Eating healthy food”

8. Allow ample time for everyone to share his/her ideas.
9. When you finish the brainstorm, you will have a chart that can help the teens think about what they would like to teach other teens about this issue.
10. You will spend the bulk of your time in these two sessions giving the teens time to create a way for them to make a values-based statement about the issue that they choose.
11. The goal is for them to create some form of expression/communication that they can use to teach other teens about the issue. During the *havayot*, we have used a number of creative expressions that the teens can select or come up with their own ideas. Possible expressions include:
 - Write, perform and film a PSA
 - Design t-shirts, bumper stickers and buttons about the issue
 - Write an article about the issue
 - Design and create a poster campaign
 - Design and create a web site about the issue
 - Create a letter-writing campaign about the issue

Closure & Communication

The goal of this *havayah* is to celebrate all of the work that the teens have done this year, plan on how to use their Teen *Talmud* Pages or Awareness/Advocacy Campaign and prepare for the *TEL* spring *Kallah* (if this session falls before the *kallah* in your schedule).

To Communicate:

- Brainstorm about how the teens can use their advocacy piece in the community.
 - Teens could present their wisdom to any of the following a) the congregational school b) congregational board c) teen parents d) a bnai mitzvah family education class e) congregational participants at a service f) students in their schools
 - Teens may also want to post on the congregational web site, taking materials (buttons/bumper stickers) to places in the community, writing a piece for the congregational newsletter.
- Help the teens make a plan about which teens will take on which pieces of the advocacy campaign follow-up.
- Let the teens know that you will be following up with them and do so.
- Set a date for when they should have fulfilled their responsibilities.

To Prepare for the *Kallah*:

- Each *TEL* group will share their project at the *Kallah*. *This can mean describing it **or** teaching the issue from a particular TEL group's point of view.*
- Practice telling the story of how you chose your issue and about how the values intersected with that issue.

- Practice presenting your project with the teens taking turns to be presenters and audience.

To Celebrate:

- Make this *havayah* extra special—include a special dessert or snacks that the kids will really like (making ice cream sundaes, for example). Explain that in Jewish tradition, a *siyyum* is a party that closes a school year or period of learning together and that in this session, we want to celebrate everyone’s meaningful experience and hard work together.
- Honor each teens’ contributions to the group.
- Invite the teens to celebrate each other: one way to do this is a game called “Something I like about you...”Teens go around in a circle and tell the teen sitting next to them one thing that he/she likes about that teen.

To close:

- Thank the teens for their great work all year!
- Get suggestions for the *Kallah* or next year.
- Invite any teens who wish to share an insight from their Reflection Journals