

Procedure

YOU CAN TEACH THIS LESSON AS A *STAND-ALONE UNIT OR INTEGRATED* WITH YOUR CURRICULUM/OTHER JPEF MATERIALS.

SEE THE APPENDIX FOR INSTRUCTIONS AND A LIST OF SUGGESTED OPENINGS.

A) SHARING – 10-12 minutes

1. Introduce the lesson with your selected opening (see Appendix) –or– the standard opening below:

"The Jewish people have been around for over 3,500 years and we are considered one of the oldest continuous cultures in the world. Our history is filled with amazing spiritual and cultural moments: some joyous, some tragic. I want to talk to you today about Jewish pride, particularly taking pride in one of our most tragic moments."

2. Ask: "What images come to mind when I say the word 'Holocaust'?" Keep students to brief descriptions of images (or sounds, smells, etc.) – not stories.
3. Echo responses back, asking clarifying questions to set context and correct misperceptions as needed. (Example: if a student says, "I see fire," say, "Did you know the Holocaust literally means an all-consuming fire? In Hebrew it's *Shoah* – 'catastrophe' or 'whirlwind of destruction.'")
4. Stand students into a circle and explain that because the Holocaust can bring up many difficult feelings, it's helpful to talk about them and see that we are not alone in how it affects us.
5. Ask students how talking about the Holocaust makes them feel. Invite everyone who has ever felt the same way to step into the circle. Have students step back out, and repeat four to six times. (Note: if students need prompting, say: "Take two steps in if you feel sad when you think about the Holocaust. Frightened? Angry? What else?")
6. Validate their concerns, emphasizing that feelings of sadness, anger, shame, etc. are common responses. For example:

"When I first learned about the Holocaust, I felt the same way. All I learned about were the mass graves and death camps, the images you talked about."

"Yes all those horrible things happened. But if we were to focus only on the suffering, on the sadness or fear, we'd be giving Hitler a victory. I'd like you to watch a short video that shows an important side of the Holocaust that most people have never heard about."

B) TEACHING JEWISH RESISTANCE – 10 minutes

1. Show *Introduction to the Jewish Partisans* film or read "Who Are the Jewish Partisans?" on page 1.
2. Say: "Some people say that the Jews did not stand up for themselves, that we went willingly to our deaths. As you can see, that is not true."

"In fact, there were literally millions of acts of Jewish resistance during the Holocaust, most of them non-violent. Do you remember in the film how Sonia Orbuch said that 'people were fighting back every which way they can'?"

"A small number like Sonia had the rare opportunity to take up arms. But for millions, fighting back meant unarmed resistance: spiritual, political, artistic – a vast number of ways both large and small. Nearly everyone who could resist, did resist, to the best of their abilities."
3. Ask for other examples of Jewish resistance, emphasizing NON-VIOLENT tactics (refer to the Tactics List in the Appendix for examples, if needed). Field responses, write on board, and validate their answers.

IF INTEGRATING OTHER JPEF LESSONS/MATERIALS, DO SO NOW. WHEN FINISHED, CONTINUE WITH STEP C, BELOW. SEE APPENDIX FOR FURTHER GUIDANCE.

C) TYING IT TOGETHER – 6-8 minutes

1. Ask students to list positive qualities of Jews displayed in resisting the Holocaust that they can take pride in.
2. Ask which attributes they would like to bring into their lives, and why.
3. Inform students that they already possess the same qualities that Jewish resisters did (to at least some degree). The only difference is that these people lived in extraordinary times, and rose to the occasion.

Optional: Inform students that many partisans went on to help found the State of Israel after the war; some even helped smuggle fellow Jews into mandate Palestine or fought in the Israeli War of Independence.
4. Conclude with the following:

"G-d willing, you will never be forced into a similar position. But there's no reason to wait for an extraordinary moment to make a difference."

"So I ask you to go home and think about a difficult situation in your life, and how you can use the skills and abilities you possess to make a difference. As Rabbi Hillel the Elder said: 'If I am not for myself, who will be for me? If I am only for myself, what am I? And if not now, when?'"

"One last thing, something you can do right away: tell your family, tell your friends, tell your enemies: We are strong, we are tenacious, and we are here."