



ACTIVITY

Creating Your Jewish Identity Timeline

Materials Needed

- Text by Buber
- Paper
- Pens/Pencils

Time Needed

30-40 minutes

Goal

Participants will explore key events that have contributed to the connection to (or disconnect from) their own Jewish identities.

Before You Get Started

Look at the list of enduring understandings. Which one would you like to emphasize through this activity?

1. Judaism is not (only) a religion. It is also a People and the national component of Jewish civilization is central to understanding Jewish texts, practices and culture.
2. Many of Judaism's norms, laws and mitzvot are articulated and relevant through the Jewish collective.
3. The Jewish People (and not its constituent individuals) is the carrier of Jewish religion and civilization. Sustaining the People and continuing its legacy is therefore a core Jewish value.
4. "The Jewish People are bound by a shared past (the covenant of fate) and a shared future (the covenant of destiny)" – Soloveitchik.

Directions for Activity

1. Examine the text from Buber.
2. Let each individual create a Jewish consciousness or identity time line for themselves. Ask participants to add between 5-10 events that they can identify which helped either increase or decrease their Jewish consciousness and identity. (For an interesting conversation later on encourage them to think about some events that increased their sense of identity and some events that might have distanced them from feelings of being Jewish.) Give them prompts including: How old were they? What actually happened at that stage in their lives? Who were their friends and circle of influence?
3. When they have created their own personal timeline, they should share it with someone else in the group.
4. Finally as a whole group, generate a list of the different events that have influenced people's timelines. See what patterns emerge.
5. Discuss what the participants feel about their own Jewish consciousness at the moment and the place that Jewish identity plays in their life. Is it too much for them or too little? If they would like to increase the Jewish awareness in their life, which strategies would they suggest for themselves?
6. Sum up the discussion and ask participants to share a question or idea they are left with.

Note to Educator

Did the enduring understanding that you set out to teach surface during this activity?