



ACTIVITY

Collective Memory & Haggadah

Materials Needed

- Copies of excerpts from the Haggadah

Time Needed

30-40 minutes

Goal

This activity asks participants to explore the key themes of the Passover Haggadah with regard to how it relates to collective memory.

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. Read Text #1 Collective History and Memory from Passover (Pesach) Haggadah:

In every generation, every person must see him (or her) self as if they themselves came out of Egypt.

- Pesach Haggadah

2. Suggest to the participants that the Pesach Haggadah is a great educational and pedagogic text, put together by the Rabbis in the Middle Ages in order to put forward a number of educational messages to the scattered world community of Jews.
3. Divide the group up into small groups and give each group a few pages of the traditional Haggadah (you could give each group different pages, or the same to everyone).

Examples of texts to include:

- "This is the Bread of Affliction" (*Ha Lachma Anya*)
- "Once we were slaves" (*Avadim Hayinu*)
- "It would have been enough" (*Dayenu*)
- "Next Year in Jerusalem" (*L'Shana Haba'ah*)

4. Ask each small group to identify educational messages in their pages and to present them to the whole group. What are the rabbis trying to teach us through the way that they have organized the Haggadah?

OR

1. Alternatively do a “jigsaw exercise” in which a member of each of the small groups becomes a member of another small group in which all of the pieces in the Haggadah are represented.
2. Try and identify which major messages the Rabbis are trying to give and why? What are they saying about the way that Jews should relate to their history? Why? What does that mean?
3. Now listen to this film clip (www.youtube.com/watch?v=gRmG-aRBsPI) dealing with Jewish memory. In this very short (under a minute) piece we hear Jewish educator Avraham Infeld talking about the importance of memory for Jews. What do the students think about the idea that “Jews must not have amnesia”?

Note to Educator

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