



ACTIVITY

‘The Jews’ by Yehuda Amichai

Materials Needed

- Copies of poem “The Jews” by Yehudah Amichai
- Paper
- Pens/Pencils
- Art supplies

Time Needed

30-60 minutes (depending on how much time you spend on the art project)

Goal

Participants will use poetry and metaphor to understand the multiple dimensions of the concept “The Jews”.

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 the whole poem, "The Jews" closely.
2. Ask your students to look carefully at the metaphors that Amichai uses to describe the Jewish People. What do we learn about (Amichai's understanding of) the Jewish People? What kind of People are we, according to him? Do your students find these metaphors accurate and resonant for them?
3. Ask your students to suggest other metaphors.
4. Get out some art supplies (markers, colored pens or other materials) and ask your students to illustrate the metaphors or write about them more extensively.
5. Create a large display around the phrase "The Jews are ..." and add your written pieces, Amichai's poem and any artistic display you make to go with it.
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?