



ACTIVITY

Be Your People

Materials Needed

- Video clip
- screening device and internet connection
- Plain T-shirts or baseball hats
- Fabric markers

Time Needed

45 minutes-1 hour

Goal

To provoke participants to consider their reaction to someone who discovers they are Jewish and confronts them about it.

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. Watch the clip from the Hebrew Mamita (also named Vanessa Hidary) all the way through. (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yAeWyGGTdEE>)
2. Ask participants to share what inspired them, surprised them or made them think. In particular, ask them to share what it means to "look Jewish" or to "act Jewish". Have they ever been told they don't look or act Jewish?
3. Describe that situation. Did it strengthen your resolve to identify with the Jewish collective (as it did for Hidary?) or did it have a different effect?
4. Hidary affirms at the end, when someone says "you don't look like, or act like your people. Impossible, because you are your people." Ask participants to react to this statement. Do they agree that by being called a "Jew" they are being identified as a part of a collective?
5. "Becoming your people" is not something new for Jews. For a more extended conversation on the topic see Amir Gilboa's song and discussion points. (see activity 7 in the Israel and Jewish Peoplehood section.)
6. To bring the idea of 'Being your people' home, ask participants to make T-Shirts or baseball caps that broadcasts the idea "I am my people." It can be: "I am the Jewish people", "I'm a Jew". Have them wear these t-shirts/ baseball caps for a week and then check in to process what it was like for

them to broadcast their Jewish identity so boldly? Did it feel more comfortable knowing that others in the class/ group were doing the same?

7. 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?