

Part 1: Havdalah Exploration

Key Prayer Text:

"Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, Who distinguishes between the sacred and the profane, between light and darkness, between Israel and other people of the world, between the seventh day and the six days of the week."

Reflection Questions (Choose 2-3 to answer):

Why does this prayer mention "Israel" specifically?

What does "distinguish" mean in this context?

How does it feel to say this prayer every week?

Part 2: Torah Blessings Discover

Torah Blessing (English Translation):

"Blessed are You, Eternal our God, Ruler of the universe, who has chosen us from among all peoples, giving us the Torah."

Word Investigation: The word
"chosen" appears in this blessing.
Let's explore what this might mean:
✓ if you agree

- ☐ Selected for a special purpose
- ☐ Given special responsibilities
- ☐ Picked to receive the Torah
- ☐ Other idea: _____

How does this prayer make you feel?



Part 3: Aleinu Prayer Connection

Aleinu Text:

"It is for us to praise the ruler of all, to acclaim the Creator, who has not made us merely a nation, nor formed us as all earthly families, nor given us an ordinary destiny."

Pattern Recognition: We've now seen the idea of Jewish specialness in THREE prayers:

1. Havdalah: "between Israel and other people"
2. Torah Blessing: "chosen us from among all peoples"
3. Aleinu: "not given us an ordinary destiny"

Why do you think this theme appears so often in our prayers?

Part 4: Torah Text Investigation

Instructions: Read each Torah passage and fill in the information. You can work at your own pace and choose which passages to focus on first.

Text Analysis Chart:

Torah Passage	Who is God talking to?	What does it say about the relationship?	Key words I notice
Exodus 19:4-6 "You have seen what I did to the Egyptians, how I bore you on eagles' wings and brought you to Me..."			
Deuteronomy 7:7-8 "It is not because you are the most numerous... but because the Eternal loved you..."			
Deuteronomy 14:2 "For you are a people consecrated to the Eternal your God..."			
Deuteronomy 26:17-18 "You have affirmed this day. that the Eternal is your God..."			

Part 5: Reflection & Discussion

Comparing the Texts:

What similarities did you notice across the different passages?

- ☐ They all mention a special relationship
- ☐ They talk about God's love
- ☐ They mention responsibilities
- ☐ Other: _____

What differences did you notice?

Learning Check

By the end of today's lesson, I can:

- ☐ Identify the concept of chosenness in Jewish prayers
- ☐ Explain what Torah passages say about being chosen
- ☐ Describe what purpose might come with being chosen
- ☐ Ask thoughtful questions about this concept

Today's Learning Goals:

- ✓ Explore what it means to have a "mission" as the chosen people
- ✓ Understand that being chosen means being different, not better
- ✓ Learn how modern Jewish thinkers view chosenness
- ✓ Feel comfortable discussing difficult concepts

Quick Review: Think back to our previous lesson. Fill in what you remember:

Question	My Memory
What does "chosen people" mean?	
Which prayers mention chosenness?	
One thing I learned from the Torah texts:	

Torah Text Analysis

Text 1: Exodus 19:1-8 (At Mount Sinai)

"Now then, if you will obey Me faithfully and keep My covenant, you shall be My treasured possession among all the peoples. Indeed, all the earth is Mine, but you shall be to Me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation."

Understanding the Mission:

Question	My Answer
What mission is God giving at Mount Sinai?	
Do the Jewish people have a choice in this mission?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Not sure
What do the people choose to do?	

Text 2: Isaiah 42:6-7 (Another Mission)

"I the Eternal have called you in righteousness, and will hold your hand, and will keep you, and give you for a covenant of the people, for a light of the nations; to open the blind eyes, to bring out the prisoners from the prison."

Mission Analysis:

This text says the Jewish people should be a "light of the nations."

What do you think this means?

- ☐ Teaching others about God
- ☐ Being a good example
- ☐ Helping make the world better
- ☐ Other: _____

Important Question: Do Jewish people try to make everyone else Jewish?

- ☐ Yes ☐ No

Thinking About "The Others"

Think about this carefully:

1. How might people from other religions or backgrounds feel about Jews calling themselves "chosen"?

2. What could we say to explain that "chosen" doesn't mean "better"?

3. Can you think of an analogy? (For example: How is being "chosen" like being chosen for a specific job or role?)

Modern Jewish Thinkers: Two Different Perspectives

Thinker 1: Abraham Joshua Heschel

"We have not chosen God; He has chosen us... The 'chosen people' means a people approached and chosen by God. The significance of this term is genuine in relation to God rather than in relation to other peoples. It signifies not a quality inherent in the people but a relationship between the people and God."

Heschel's Main Points: (Check the boxes that match what he's saying)

- ☐ We chose God
- ☐ God chose us
- ☐ Being chosen is about our relationship with God
- ☐ Being chosen makes us superior to others
- ☐ Being chosen is NOT about being superior to others

Thinker 2: Mordechai Kaplan

"The idea of race or national superiority exercises divisive influences generating suspicion and hatred... we cannot assume that Israel must at all times possess that spirit to a higher degree than other people."

Kaplan's Concern:

He worries that the idea of chosenness might lead to:

- ☐ Better relationships with other people
- ☐ Suspicion and hatred from others
- ☐ Feeling superior to other people
- ☐ Understanding our special relationship with God

👉 Comparing the Thinkers

Aspect	Heschel's View	Kaplan's View
Main Focus	Relationship with God	Relationships with other people
Main Concern		
Which view makes more sense to you?		

Personal Reflection: How I Feel About Chosenness

It's okay to feel uncomfortable with this concept! Many people do.

Choose the response style that works best for you:

Option A - Emotion Check:

When I think about Jewish chosenness, I feel: (Circle all that apply)

I'm feeling...

 Calm	 Happy	 Silly	 Relaxed
 Nervous	 Annoyed	 Sad	 Shy
 Surprised	 Hungry	 Angry	 Confused
 Sleepy	 Sick	 Hurt	 Hot

Option B - Written Reflection:

After learning about chosenness, here's what I think:

Option C - Question Format:

The biggest question I still have about chosenness is:

My Understanding Now

Complete this sentence:

Being a "chosen people" means we are _____ but not _____.

True or False - Final Check:

- ☐ True ☐ False: Jewish people think they are better than everyone else
- ☐ True ☐ False: Being chosen means having a special relationship with God
- ☐ True ☐ False: Being chosen means having special responsibilities
- ☐ True ☐ False: It's normal to feel uncomfortable about this concept sometimes

Wrap-Up Activity



One Thing I Want to Remember

From today's lesson, the most important thing I learned or want to remember is:

? One Question I Still Have

Something I'm still wondering about:

Completion Checklist:

- ☐ I reviewed what I learned in the previous lesson
- ☐ I shared my opinions on the four statements
- ☐ I analyzed the Torah texts about our mission
- ☐ I thought about how others might feel about chosenness
- ☐ I learned about Heschel's and Kaplan's views
- ☐ I reflected on my own feelings about chosenness
- ☐ I identified what I want to remember and what I still wonder about

Personal Reflection

Instructions: Take a few quiet moments to think about what comes to mind when you hear or see the word "God." There are no right or wrong answers - this is just about your own thoughts.

Choose your response style:

Option A - Words and Phrases:

When I think of God, these words come to mind:

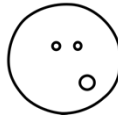
- _____
- _____
- _____

Option B - Drawing:

I can draw or sketch what comes to mind when I think of God:

Option C - Feelings:

When I think about God, I feel: (Circle all that apply and write the word the faces show)

					1. _____
					2. _____
					3. _____

What is Theology?

Definition: Theology = The study of the nature of God and religious beliefs

Think about it: Just like your math skills grow as you get older, your ideas about God can grow too!

True or False:

- ☐ True ☐ False: It's okay for my understanding of God to change as I grow up
- ☐ True ☐ False: I should think about God the same way I did when I was little
- ☐ True ☐ False: It's normal to have questions about God

Torah Text: Genesis 32:25-31

"Jacob was left alone. And a man wrestled with him until the break of dawn... Said he, 'Your name shall no longer be Jacob, but Israel, for you have striven with beings divine and human, and have prevailed.'"

Understanding the Story:

Question	My Answer
Who did Jacob wrestle with?	
What was Jacob's new name?	
What does this story teach us about questioning and struggling with faith?	

Personal Connection:

Jacob "wrestled" with God, which means he struggled with difficult questions about faith. It's okay to do this too!

What questions do you have about God or faith? (It's okay to write "I don't know" or leave this blank)

God Has Many Names

Instructions: Look at these different names/descriptions of God. Check the ones that speak to you or seem interesting:

Name/Attribute	What It Means	Speaks to Me
Hashem	"The Name" - too holy to say directly	☐
Adonai	"My Lord"	☐
El Shaddai	"God Almighty"	☐
Rachamana	"The Merciful One"	☐
Melech HaOlam	"Ruler of the Universe"	☐
Shechina	"Divine Presence"	☐

Why do you think God has so many different names?

- ☐ Because God is too big for just one name
- ☐ Because people experience God in different ways
- ☐ Because different names help us understand different aspects of God
- ☐ Other: _____

The Big Question - Reward and Punishment

Think of examples when:

Good things happen to good people:

Personal example: _____

Example for all people: _____

Bad things happen to bad people:

Personal example: _____

Example for all people: _____

Sometimes life doesn't seem fair:

Good things DON'T happen to good people:

Example: _____

Bad things DON'T happen to bad people:

Example: _____

👤 ♀ How Does This Make You Feel?

When I think about unfairness in the world, I feel: (Circle all that apply and write the word the faces show).

					1. _____
					2. _____
					3. _____

Jewish ancestors noticed the same unfairness we see today. Here's what they believed:

Sometimes good people don't get rewarded in this life, and bad people don't get punished in this life. But rewards and punishments happen in the afterlife (after we die).

Understanding This Belief:

Scenario	What Happens in This Life	What Ancestors Believed Happens After
A very good person has a hard life	No reward, lots of suffering	Gets rewarded in the afterlife
A bad person seems to have everything	No punishment, easy life	Gets punished in the afterlife

Thinking About This Belief

If someone good was having a really hard time, how might believing in afterlife rewards help them feel?

- ☐ More hopeful
 ☐ Comforted
 ☐ Like their suffering has meaning
☐ That justice will eventually happen
 ☐ Other: _____

What makes this concept easy to understand or relate to?

What makes this concept difficult or hard to accept?

Choose what you'd like to reflect on:

Option A - Wrestling with God:

Something I want to "wrestle" with or question about God is:

Option B - Names of God:

The name or attribute of God that interests me most is _____ because:

Option C - Reward and Punishment:

What I think about the idea that rewards/punishments happen in the afterlife:

It's perfectly normal to have questions! Write any you have:

Remember: This is just ONE way to think about why bad things happen to good people. We'll learn more perspectives in future lessons!

Wrap-Up Reflection

What I Want to Remember

The most important thing I learned today:

How My Thinking Might Be Growing

One way my understanding of God or faith might be different from when I was younger:

Completion Checklist:

- ☐ I reflected on my own ideas about God
- ☐ I learned what theology means
- ☐ I read about Jacob wrestling with God
- ☐ I explored different names and attributes of God
- ☐ I thought about examples of reward and punishment
- ☐ I learned one Jewish perspective on afterlife rewards/punishments
- ☐ I reflected on my thoughts and wrote down questions

Great job exploring these deep and important questions!

Important Reminders:

- • It's okay to have questions about God and faith
- • Your understanding can grow and change as you grow
- • There are many different ways to think about difficult questions
- • Wrestling with these ideas, like Jacob did, is part of being Jewish

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Opinion Activity - Where Do You Stand?

Instructions: For each statement, circle where you agree or disagree. There are no wrong answers!

Statement 1: "Deep dish pizza is the best kind of pizza"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Statement 2: "I enjoy going to school"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Statement 3: "I understand why it's important for me to try my best and do well in school for my future"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Statement 4: "When my parents tell me I can't hang out with my friends, even though I've finished my schoolwork, it makes me really upset"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Statement 5: "There are times when I study really hard on a test and don't do well, and it makes me feel like trying less on the next one"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Statement 6: "Sometimes I think my friends' parents let them do more things (or they get away with doing more things)"

Strongly Disagree $\longleftrightarrow$ Disagree $\leftarrow$ Neutral $\rightarrow$ Agree $\longleftrightarrow$ Strongly Agree

Reflection on the Activity

How did these statements make you feel? (Circle all that apply)



What was it like to think about these situations?

Part 2: Learning About the TaNaKh

Background Information

The story of Job comes from the Ketuvim (Writings), which is part of the TaNaKh.

Fill in the blanks to show what makes up the TaNaKh:

1. T = _____ (Torah)
2. N = _____ (Nevi'im - Prophets)
3. Kh = _____ (Ketuvim - Writings)

The Ketuvim includes these books: (Check off the ones you recognize)

- ☐ Psalms ☐ Proverbs ☐ Song of Songs ☐ Ruth ☐ Esther ☐ Other books
- ☐ Job ← (This is what we're studying today!)

The Story of Job

The main characters in Job's story are:

Character	Role in the Story
Job	A good person who suffers
Hashem (God)	
The Adversary	
Job's Wife	

The Two Parts of Job's Story

Chapters 1-2; The Test - An "Adversary" wants to test Job. Job's suffering is presented as just a test.

What happens to Job in the test?

- ☐ He loses his wealth ☐ He loses his family ☐ He becomes sick ☐ All of the above

How does Job respond to his suffering?

Chapters 3-8: God's Response - God responds to Job out of a "tempest" (storm). God's response is all about the "big picture" - that we can't always see what's happening on a larger scale when we are only looking at the up-close details of our own lives.

What is God's main message to Job?

- ☐ "You deserved this suffering" ☐ "There's a bigger picture you can't see"
- ☐ "Life is always fair" ☐ "You should complain more"

Reflection Questions

Choose the response style that works best for you for each question:

Question 1: Did Job have the right to not blaspheme (speak badly) against God?

- ☐ Yes, because: _____
- ☐ No, because: _____
- ☐ I'm not sure, because: _____

Question 2: What did you think about the ending of Job's story?

Alternative Ending:

If I could rewrite the ending, I would: _____

Question 3: Do you think that sometimes God tests us with suffering?

My Answer	Why I Think This	How This Idea Makes Me Feel
☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Maybe ☐ I don't know		☐ Comfortable ☐ Uncomfortable ☐ Curious ☐ Worried ☐ Other: _____

The "Bigger Picture" Idea

The story suggests that sometimes our suffering might be part of a bigger picture we can't see.

Examples to Consider:

Example 1: A person suffers from cancer, but the treatment they receive helps doctors find a cure that saves many others.

Example 2: A person experiences a violent crime, but learns from that experience how to protect and help others.

Analyzing the "Bigger Picture" Idea:

Strengths of This Idea	Weaknesses of This Idea
1. _____	1. _____
2. _____	2. _____
3. _____	3. _____

Is this idea comforting to you?

☐ Yes, because: _____

☐ No, because: _____

☐ Sometimes, because: _____

Part 6: Personal Reflection

Choose your preferred way to reflect:

Option A - Structured Questions:

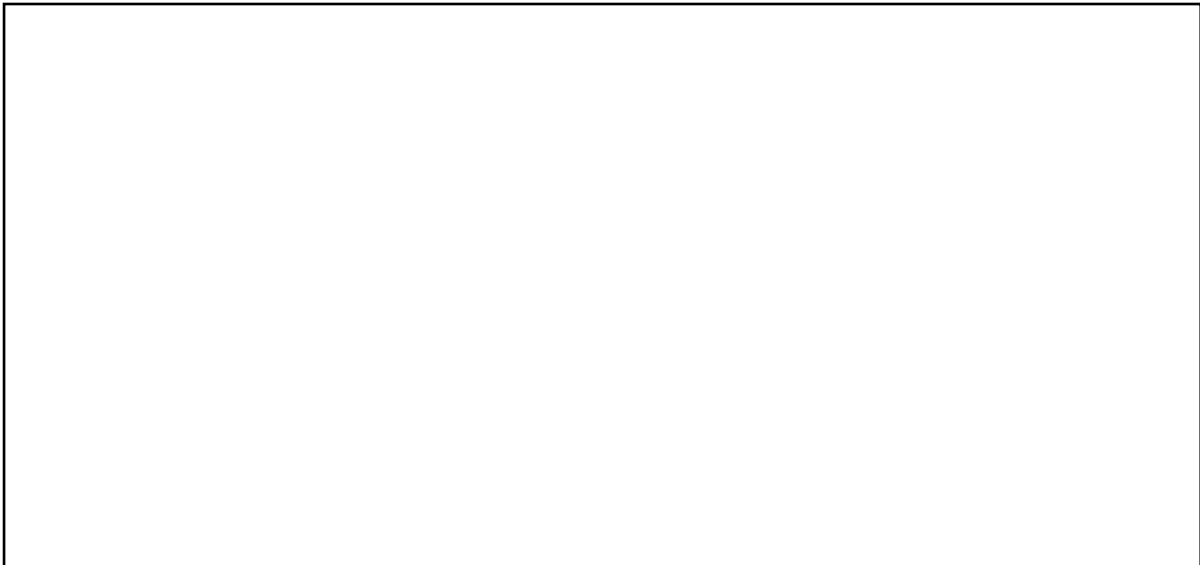
The most important thing I learned from Job's story is:

When bad things happen to me or people I care about, this story makes me think:

One question I still have about suffering and fairness is:

Option B - Visual Response:

Draw a picture or diagram that shows your understanding of the "bigger picture" idea:



Questions I Want to Explore More:



Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Express Your Thoughts in Six Words

Instructions: Create a six-word memoir (exactly 6 words) about one of these topics. Choose the topic that feels most comfortable to you.

Topic Options:

- ☐ God
- ☐ Suffering
- ☐ Good and Evil
- ☐ Job's story (if you know it)

Example Six-Word Memoirs:

- "Sometimes life feels unfair and confusing."
- "Good people deserve happiness, not pain."
- "Questions about God make me curious."

My Six-Word Memoir:

1. _____ 2. _____ 3. _____
4. _____ 5. _____ 6. _____

Why I chose this topic:

Why Do Bad Things Happen to Good People?

Before we explore different perspectives, write down your current thoughts:

Question	My Current Thinking
Why do you think bad things happen to good people?	
How does it make you feel when you see good people suffering?	
Do you think there's always a reason for suffering?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Sometimes ☐ I don't know

Comfort Check: How comfortable do you feel discussing this topic?

Very Uncomfortable $\longleftrightarrow$ Uncomfortable $\longleftrightarrow$ Neutral $\longleftrightarrow$ Comfortable $\longleftrightarrow$ Very Comfortable

Exploring Different Perspectives

Partner Discussion Preparation: You'll be discussing texts with a partner. Here's how to prepare:

Discussion Guidelines:

- ✓ It's okay to disagree respectfully
- ✓ It's okay to say "I don't understand this"
- ✓ It's okay to feel uncomfortable with some ideas
- ✓ Listen to your partner's thoughts
- ✓ Share your own thoughts when you're ready

Text Analysis Framework: For each text you read with your partner, use this framework:

Question:	Text 1:	Text 2:
What is the main idea of this text?		
How does this text explain suffering?		
What role does God play according to this text?		
How does this text make me feel?		
Do I agree with this perspective?	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially ☐ Unsure	☐ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially ☐ Unsure

Understanding the Key Perspective

Today's main learning focus is one Jewish perspective: "God isn't pulling the strings" when it comes to human suffering.

What do you think this means? (Check all that might apply)

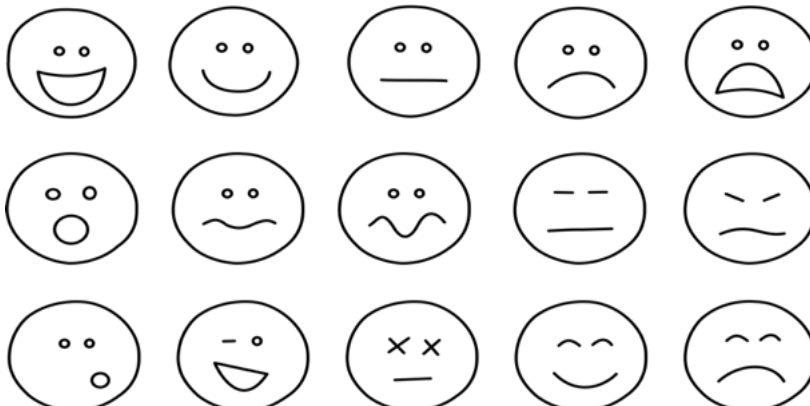
- ☐ God doesn't cause every bad thing that happens
- ☐ Some suffering happens because of natural causes
- ☐ Some suffering happens because of human choices
- ☐ God doesn't control every detail of our lives
- ☐ Bad things can happen randomly, not as punishment
- ☐ Other: _____

🤔 Thinking About This Perspective

If "God isn't pulling the strings," then:

Scenario	How might this perspective explain it?
A good person gets sick	
Someone loses their job unfairly	
A natural disaster hurts innocent people	

How does this perspective make you feel?



Questions for the Clergy Member

Question Categories - Check what you're most curious about:

- ☐ How God works in the world ☐ Why suffering exists ☐ What happens after we die
- ☐ How to help people who are suffering ☐ How to deal with unfairness
- ☐ Other: _____

My Questions:

1. _____
2. _____
3. _____

If I feel too shy to ask out loud, I can:

- Write my question on a piece of paper
- Ask a friend to ask for me
- Talk to the clergy member privately after class
- Ask the teacher to ask for me

Part 6: Personal Reflection

Processing My Thoughts and Feelings

Choose the reflection style that works best for you:

Option A - Structured Reflection:

Prompt	My Response
The most interesting idea I learned today was:	
Something that surprised me was:	
Something that made me uncomfortable was:	
A question I still have is:	

Option B - Emotion Mapping:

Circle the emotions you felt during today's lesson:

Curious | Confused | Sad | Angry | Peaceful | Worried | Hopeful | Frustrated | Interested |
Overwhelmed | Comforted | Other: _____

The emotion I felt most strongly was: _____

I felt this way because:

After today's lesson, my thoughts about "Why do bad things happen to good people?" have:

- ☐ Stayed the same
- ☐ Changed completely
- ☐ Become more complex
- ☐ Become clearer
- ☐ Become more confusing
- ☐ Made me want to learn more

One thing I want to remember from today:

One thing I want to explore more:

How I might use this learning to help others:
