

Topic: Ma'amad Har Sinai Recall standing at Sinai Make Torah a part of your daily life

Enduring Understanding: Torah is a vital part of our lives as Jews.

Guiding Text: "But beware and watch yourself very well, lest you forget the things that your eyes saw, and lest these things depart from your heart, all the days of your life, and you shall make them known to your children and to your children's children—the day you stood before the L-rd your G-d at Horeb." (Deuteronomy 4:9–10)

Outline:

Part 1:

10-15 minutes-----Intro Activity- Journaling

20 minutes-----Fishbowl Discussion

20 minutes----- Text Study and Whole Group Discussion

5 minutes-----Wrap-up

Part 2:

20 minutes-----Torah Statements Activity

15-20 minutes----- Answering Questions

20 minutes----- TaNaKh time

5 minutes-----Wrap-up

Materials: Access to Exodus 19:1-25, copies of the TaNaKh (sharing might actually be useful to encourage discussion), print outs of Torah statements and of journaling questions, sticky notes, pens/pencils.

I. Part 1:

- a. Journal - in the sanctuary
  - i. USING reflection question sheet at the bottom of this page
- b. Fishbowl style discussion – speed dating style, students discuss each question for about 3minutes then move to the next person and the next question is announced
  - i. Share something from your reflection.
  - ii. How would you define Torah?
  - iii. Why do you think we learn Torah
  - iv. What questions do you have about Torah?
  - v. Why do you think Torah the thing we read at a Bar/Bat/Brit Mitzvah?
  - vi. At then end- time to share back as a group, and gather a list of the questions that students have
- c. Whole group Discussion:
  - i. Read Exodus 19:1-25
    1. Discuss:
    2. What are your reactions/immediate questions?
    3. How are the people preparing to receive the Torah at Sinai?
    4. Why receive the Torah in the "wilderness of Sinai?"
  - ii. We study Torah from a young age, but now that everyone is becoming a B'nei Mitzvah,

II. Wrap-up, plans for next class

### III. Part 2

- a. 20 minutes Torah vs torah- these statements are printed and put up around the room. Students should react or write sticky notes with questions or comments next to each statement
  - i. Afterwards, instruct students to stand next to the
- b. Statements:
  - i. Etz hayim hi- It, the Torah, is the tree of life to those that hold fast to it and all of its supporters are happy
  - ii. The Torah is a book with 613 commandments and literally translates to instruction
  - iii. Torah is a series of stories that teach us moral lessons
  - iv. The Torah is a holy text, written and given by God to the Jewish people
  - v. Torah is a book that contains our collective memory and narrative of who we are as a people
  - vi. There is capital T, TORAH, which is the physical scroll and text that we read and study. Then there is lowercase t, torah, the way in which we live our lives through a series of values (courage of the heart, loving kindness, patience, seeking wisdom, etc.)
  - vii. The retelling of the stories of Torah is what keeps us together as a people. The purpose of Torah and recalling its origins at Mount Sinai is to connect all Jewish people through unity. The content is not as important as the values of community and connection that Torah gives to the Jewish people.
  - viii. The Torah is about a line of tradition from generation to generation. Studying it and living by it has kept the Jewish people together and each of us in this room are the next in line to continue the tradition and keep us together as a people
- c. 20- minutes -Answering questions
  - i. Spend some time answering the questions that students asked during part 1. Time for discussion and lots of follow-up questions.
- d. 20minutes- Looking at the TaNaKh
  - i. Define TaNaKh, what are its contents and have copies for them to look them
    1. Note- some of them have not made the connection that Nevim and Ketuvim are actually where the Haftarah comes from. Make sure to emphasize this and maybe task them to share what portions they have
    2. Group Discussion?
      - a. Open to table of contents- what sorts of things to they notice?
      - b. What is familiar or unfamiliar?
      - c. What raises questions for you?
      - d. Seeing this, where we might information about things like Purim, or stories about King David, etc.?
      - e. Give them ample time to simply look and be engaged with the TaNaKh
  - ii. Wrap-up, plans for next class

**Reflection Questions:**

What feelings do you have in the sanctuary?

What makes this place feel different (from a classroom, from your house, even from the social hall)?

What does it feel like to stand in front of the Torah or to hold the Torah?

Take some time to sit, look around, you may quietly wander within the sanctuary, on the bima or stand near the Torah and Ark, write down some reflections.