

TEXT-BASED TORAH SESSIONS



THE POWER OF QUESTIONING

What could be better than a good answer? A good question! This session will explain that one of the best ways to learn is through questioning. It illustrates the importance of being inquisitive and curious. Work through this session to teach that questions can be more important than answers.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/LYbxOPfOOI/the-power-of-questioning/>



BELIEF IN GOD

This session addresses the challenging issue that we are unable to see God, and discusses how to live a life based on faith.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/6fV3JPUlpj/belief-in-god/>



IDENTITY

Do we know who we really are? This session works through a philosophical question and asks us to deeply analyze what makes the self and what makes identity. Use this session to challenge teens about their beliefs about themselves and to re-examine their own identities.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/r1LLaeEQt/identity/>



DO YOU BELIEVE?

What does it mean to believe in God? How can we access this belief in a personal way? This session examines 3 different approaches to Emunah (through nature, tradition, and intellect). Use this session to introduce belief as a concept and how to personalize it. The text of this session is to kick-start a conversation – use videos and articles to bring it to life and facilitate the conversation.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/f4QPPA3YqP/do-you-believe/>



IS GOD STILL TALKING TO US?

If you and God have grown apart, who moved? This session provokes us to think about our relationships with God and His hidden qualities. Does God communicate with us? How does God reveal Himself to us? Use this session to discuss all these questions and talk about our personal connection with God.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/n1jrbSFQQ7/is-god-still-talking-to-us/>

ACTIVITIES



TRUST FALL

This is an active session. You will fall on to your partner and see if you can trust them and believe in them. Use the discussion questions to talk about how important trust is.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/JrWizjwGzq/trust-fall/>



BUCKET SESSION

How sure are you? This is a group activity to facilitate working together to discuss what we know and how we know it. Use this session to promote a discussion about HOW we know what we know, and how confident we can be in our knowledge. This activity works well with the text-based session entitled "Identity."

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/gxXgmLfnP2/the-bucket-session/>



CONVICTIONS LIST

This session asks teens to work through a list of statements, decide if they are true or false, and evaluate how certain they are of their decisions. Use this session to spark a conversation about knowledge and belief, and about how confident you need to be in order to KNOW that something is true.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/MzIDv1JwqO/evaluating-your-convictions-how-sure-are-you/>



RUNNING FREE

This activity allows teens to explore their trust levels in peer groups. A great activity to run in conjunction with a Torah session on Belief/Trust.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/6XP1n6YabA/running-free/>

ARTICLES & IMAGES



ELIE WEISEL PRAYER

This is a prayer written by the famous holocaust survivor, Elie Weisel, in which he reveals his struggle with faith in God. This honest and powerful prayer raises many questions and discussion topics. Use this article to spark a discussion about what “pure belief” is and what ideal faith should look like.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/KCqUdLIYbD/a-prayer-for-the-days-of-awe---by-elie-wiesel/>



ARE YOU THERE, PEOPLE? IT'S ME, GOD

This article is written from God's perspective. How much faith does God have in us? Take a look at this article and source material to think about belief and faith from the reverse perspective - God's faith in us.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/o1kTS6i9al/are-you-there,-people/?-it%27s-me,-god>



DEAR HUMAN

This is a thought-provoking comic strip about what we believe humanity is and what God is. Use this comic strip and attached questions to talk about the nature of humanity. What are our core beliefs about mankind's powers and limitations? What is God's role?

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/37TU1BAhU5/dear-human/>



EMPOWERING BELIEFS

This is an article that asks you to think about the power of your beliefs. Do your beliefs empower you or limit you? Use this article and discussion questions to think about our values and if we can change them.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/mSpchTF9Qi/empowering-beliefs/>

VIDEOS



CONTACT MOVIE

Are there any experiences that only YOU can feel? If no one else experiences it – is it real? If it can't be verified, can it be true? Watch this clip to see an example of this type of experience, and then use the discussion questions to explore the issue further.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/Qs4YHGcQTH/contact:-can-you-prove-an-experience/>



TED: ALAIN DE BOTTON: ATHEISM 2.0

This is a selection of clips from a TED talk. Alain de Botton describes a new form of Atheism, called Atheism 2.0. He suggests that the secular world has many holes to fill and that Atheism can learn many lessons from religion. This clip and discussion questions will help you re-examine some of the huge benefits of religion from a unique perspective.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/IUkq9E4MGC/atheism-2.0/>



TED: AJ JACOBS: THE YEAR OF LIVING BIBLICALLY

This is a selection of clips from a TED talk. Having spent a year living biblically, Jacobs, a self-described reverent agnostic, talks about what he learned. One of the questions he raises is what is sacredness, and can it exist without God. Watch the clip and use the discussion questions to think about the concept of sacredness and what place it has in our lives.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/fAxyID2qPh/a-year-of-living-biblically/>



I NEED HELP

Little blind Ray begs his mother to help him. She watches him, but doesn't help! Why? What possible reason could she have for not helping her son? Use this session to think about why we sometimes feel like no one is helping us.

[https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/Pkub45LSVQ/ray-\(2004\)/](https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/Pkub45LSVQ/ray-(2004)/)



TRUST FALL FAIL

A clip that shows a trust fall that goes wrong. Use this clip as a trigger to talk about trust and what happens when trust fails. It can also be done as an activity (see the “Activities” section for a variation).

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/ToXFFJYWIG/trust-fall-fail/>



UNKNOWN TRAILER

This trailer is about an identity theft. Use this clip to trigger a discussion about how you know who you are, and can you prove it? Should you have to? This is a great session to couple with the text-based session on Identity, or it can be a stand-alone discussion.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/ceR8qq6RJT/unknown-trailer/>



OUR DEEPEST FEAR

This is a clip from the film Coach Carter about what it means to believe in yourself. This can work well with the article “Are You There, People? It's Me, God.”

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/sPx9eKJNBI/our-deepest-fear/>



BRAINWASHED? POETRY SLAM

Have you ever been accused of being brainwashed? This kid has! Watch his amazing response and consider what brainwashing really means.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/noPtW6sVE0/brainwashed/?-poetry-slam>



BLIND DEVOTION

Watch a video about a husband who loves his wife through her loss of sight and helps her without her knowing. It is an effective example of how God watches and protects us even though we can't see it.

<https://staff.ncsy.org/education/material/EVI9RDFRGv/blind-devotion/>