

JSU CLUB ACTIVITY



GUESS WHO

Time needed	30 minutes
Age range	Any teen
Background of teen	Any background
Set up	Space to walk around the room

Goals:

Fun way to think about Jewish people and Jewish things.

Relevance: It is a great way of building general Jewish literacy, learning about Jewish people and things and teaching about the importance of questioning.

Supplies needed:

1. index cards
2. pens
3. elastic headbands

Active Learning:

Essentially, all you do is write Jewish people, things, and concepts on the cards and then the kids attach them to their heads with the headbands without looking. They all walk around the room and have to ask yes or no questions to try and figure out what the card says. Based on game: <http://www.amazon.com/HedBanz-Game-Edition-may-vary/dp/B003AIM52A>

Step by step planning:

Time	Facilitator Activity	Teen activity
5 mins	Explain the game	
10 mins	Play the game	Play the game
10 mins	Facilitation questions and article	discussion

Facilitation Questions:

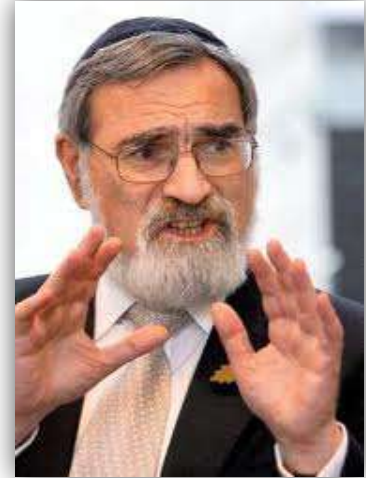
1. What questions did you ask to find out what was on your card?
2. Why is asking relevant questions important?
3. What is the best question you have ever been asked?
4. Is there such a thing as a bad question?
5. What is more important, a good question or a good answer?

Wrap up message and Torah thought:

Chief Rabbi Lord Jonathan Sacks writes about the importance of asking a good question:

WHAT QUESTION DID YOU ASK TODAY?

'Isidore Rabi, winner of a Nobel Prize for physics, was once asked why he became a scientist. He replied: "My mother made me a scientist without ever knowing it. Every other child would come back from school and be asked, 'What did you learn today?' But my mother used to say, 'Izzy, did you ask a good question today?' That made the difference. Asking good questions made me into a scientist.'"



Judaism is a religion of questions. The greatest prophets asked questions of G-d. The Book of Job, the most searching of all explorations of human suffering, is a book of questions asked by man, to which G-d replies with a string of questions of His own. The earliest sermons usually began with a question asked of the rabbi by a member of the congregation. Most famously, the seder service on Passover begins with four questions asked by the youngest child. So I can identify with Rabi's childhood memories.

When I left university and went to Israel to study in a rabbinical seminary, I was stunned by the sheer intensity with which the students grappled with texts. Once in a while the teacher's face would light up at a comment from the class. **"Du fregst a gutte kashe," he would say (you raise a good objection). This was his highest form of praise.** Abraham Twerski, an American psychiatrist, tells of how, when he was young, his instructor would relish challenges to his arguments. In his broken English he would say: "You right! You a hundred prozent right! Now I show you where you wrong." **Religious faith has suffered hugely in the modern world by being cast as naive, blind, unquestioning.**

The scientist asks, the believer just believes. Critical inquiry, so the stereotype runs, is what makes the difference between the pursuit of knowledge and the certainties of faith. One who believes in the fundamentals of a creed is derided as a fundamentalist. The word fundamentalist itself comes to mean a simplistic approach to complex issues. Religious belief is often seen as the suspension of critical intelligence.

As Wilson Mizner once put it: "I respect faith. But doubt is what gets you an education." To me, this is a caricature of faith, not faith itself. What is the asking of a question if not itself a profound expression of faith in the intelligibility of the universe and the meaningfulness of human life? **To ask is to believe that somewhere there is an answer.** The fact that throughout history people have devoted their lives to extending the frontiers of knowledge is a moving demonstration of the restlessness of the human spirit and its constant desire to transcend, to climb. Far from faith excluding questions, questions testify to faith - that the world is not random, the universe is not impervious to our understanding, life is not chance. That, I suspect, is why Judaism encourages questions. On the phrase: "Let us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness", Rashi, the 11th-century biblical commentator, says: "This means, with the power to understand and to discern." Critical intelligence is the gift G-d gave humanity. To use it in the cause of human dignity and insight is one of the great ways of serving G-d. When faith suppresses questions, it dies.

When it accepts superficial answers, it withers. Faith is not opposed to doubt. What it is opposed to is the shallow certainty that what we understand is all there is.