

This is a sample lesson plan from ShalomLearning's fifth grade curriculum for the 2019-2020 academic year. Please contact ShalomLearning for the related materials at 301-660-3800 or info@shalomlearning.org

5.3.2 *Gevurah* גְבוּרָה Online and In-Person Class

Being of good courage in peer situations requires a thoughtful process of weighing choices, being deliberate in one's actions, and taking risks to stand up for others.

Learning Goals

- Students will become more aware of how peer pressure affects their choices.
- Students will understand the interplay between spiritual courage and physical courage.
- Students will be able to analyze the social costs of a situation requiring a courageous intervention—and still follow through.
- Students will share strategies to minimize the social costs and to heighten their leverage to act with courage.

Activities and Guiding Questions

*Peer Pressure Definition and Activity**

Time Allotment: 20 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

Peer pressure is social pressure by members of one's peer group to take a certain action, adopt certain values, or otherwise conform to be accepted. (Source: dictionary.com). Peer pressure can also be thought of as a way others influence us. Bear in mind, being pressured to do something is different than to be encouraged and influenced positively to do something. Take something seemingly positive – getting good grades, winning sports team, giving *tzedakah* צְדָקָה. When there is peer pressure to do these things, when people feel they must succeed at all costs, it can create an environment of anxiety and stress and perhaps one can go beyond their abilities and hurt themselves just to fit in or meet perceived expectations.

Discussion Questions

- What is peer pressure? Is a peer always a friend? Do adults have peers?
- Sometimes friends can be a bad influence on each other, like when they talk each other into doing things like cheating or lying. Other times, they can be a good influence, like when they encourage each other to work hard or be kind.
- Name some examples of good, or positive, peer pressure.
- Name some examples of bad, or negative, peer pressure.
- Have you ever experienced peer pressure? How did it feel?
- Is it easy or hard for kids to go against what their friends are doing? Why?

Silent Signals

Materials needed: Markers and white paper

In this activity, students will participate in a classroom experiment about peer pressure and discuss the nonverbal communication of peer pressure.

Note to instructor: To begin, send two helpers out of the room on a quick errand. Be sure to choose less sensitive students who won't mind being singled out later.

While those students are out of the classroom, tell the rest of the students that they're going to participate in an experiment about peer pressure. Have the students clear their desks, then hand out the markers and paper. Leave markers and paper on the helpers' desks as well. Ask each student to write the word APPLE in large letters and display the paper on their desk. Tell the class they are not to talk to the returning students, even if they ask what's going on. No giggling either!

Now wait for the helpers. What will they do when they return? Will they ask for an explanation? Will they ignore the signs because they make no sense? Or will they pick up their markers and write the word APPLE because everyone else has?

In an online class, this can be done with a discussion tool like Answer Garden, Today's Meet, or the whiteboard in your classroom. You can private chat all students but one or two to write the word APPLE in the discussion board and then see how the other two students react.

Afterward, ask the helpers why they did what they did. What made them follow along—or not? How was this an example of peer influence?

http://classroom.kidshealth.org/3to5/personal/growing/peer_pressure.pdf (5.3.2 Classroom Kidshealth)

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Discussion Questions

- How does standing up to peer pressure show *gevurah* גְבוּרָה?
- Do you confront a lot of peer pressure in your daily life?
- What are some ways that negative peer pressure affects you?
- Which types of pressure are hard for you to resist?
- What are some strategies for avoiding negative peer pressure?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, valuing others

Tags: peer pressure, discussion, activity

Bullying Clip and Discussion* (For shorter lessons choose this activity OR choose the [Red video and the Vayikra text study](#))

Time Allotment: 20 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

One common manifestation of negative peer pressure is to watch other students do something wrong and not to join in. There is also peer pressure not to say anything to stop the events. Sometimes holding a mirror up to reality or showing something “ripped from the headlines” can help students understand the seriousness of a topic. This video is a shocking case of bullying that took place on a school bus—between young students and an older woman acting as bus monitor. Part of the shock was the age of the students, but even greater was seeing that no one had the courage to stop the bullying.

Teachers: Frame the video for the students by talking about the quote “The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is that good men do nothing.” This quote is attributed to Edmund Burke, 1729-1797, who was an Irish political philosopher, Whig politician, and statesman. He is often regarded as the father of modern conservatism.

Prior to the video ask students what the above quote may mean. After the video, ask students to apply the quote to the situation they witnessed.

Karen Klein, an elderly school bus attendant in Greece, NY, was caught on video enduring a brazenly profane storm of insults from a group of middle school students. Show the video *Karen Klein: Bus Monitor Bullied By Students* <https://safesha.re/1xf> (5.3.2 Ms. Klein being Bullied)

Note to teacher: These anti-bullying websites are good resources:

- <http://www.stopbullying.gov>,
 - <http://www.pacerkidsagainstabullying.org/kab/>
- (5.3.2 Anti-Bullying Websites)

Discussion Questions

- What was your reaction to watching this video?
- Do you know what the words bystander and upstander mean? (A bystander watches an incident and doesn't do anything, while an upstander stands up to stop what is happening).
- Write a possible statement that you could have made to be an upstander during this incident. Share with the class. Teacher should write down all the suggestions. (If this is an online class, have students “chat” their answers.)
- What would have been the positive effects of doing each strategy? What might have been the negative effects?
- How could joining with another person or people make an even more positive impact?
- How does it feel to be an upstander?
- Why is it important to be an upstander even if it can be scary?
- What are some examples of times when you spoke up or wished you had spoken up?
- Did anyone ever take a risk speak up for you? How did that feel?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, valuing others, inspiring others, difficult decisions

Tags: bullying, bystander, upstander, video, discussion

Brain Break!

Time Allotment: 3 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

- How fast can you write down the English alphabet from Z to A?
- How fast can you write down the Hebrew alphabet from ך to א?

Yosef and His Brothers

Time Allotment: 15 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

Show student Yosef's edited family tree to give them a context that Yosef is Abraham's great grandson. Remind them that we learned about Avraham in our Teshuvah תשובה unit and the story of his welcoming of guests.

Show G-dcast video of *Vayeshev* <http://www.g-dcast.com/vayeshev/> <https://safesha.re/1xg>
(5.3.2 Yosef and His Brothers G-dcast)

Study together the story of Yosef and his brothers, focusing on Reuven's failed attempt to save Joseph. Use one of the following resources depending on the level of the students.

- Perform a skit using this script from *Experiencing the Torah* (5.3.2 Joseph Sold into Slavery–Torah Aura)
- Read together or perform a skit using these comics (5.3.2 Joseph Comics)
- Read together through *Bereishit*/Genesis 37, especially verses 18-30 (5.3.2 Joseph Story)

Discussion Questions

- How did Reuven show *gevurah* גבורה?
- How did Reuven stand up to peer pressure?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, valuing others, difficult decisions

Tags: Reuven, Yosef, peer pressure, innocence, guilt, debate, video, discussion

Standing Up: *Vayikra/Leviticus* Text Study

Time Allotment: 10 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

Study together what the Torah and *Midrash* say about helping others in distress. Pair students in *hevruta* pairs and ask them to read *Vayikra/Leviticus* 19:16 and the Sifra's commentary¹ and explain what it has to do with peer pressure and bullying.

Discussion Questions

- What does this verse from the Torah mean to you? What is it teaching?
- How can you help someone who is being bullied or hurt?
- The Sifra interprets the verse to say that you are not allowed to stay silent if you could say something that would help someone else. Can you give an example of this from your own life?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, valuing others

Tags: Midrash, text study, *hevruta*, discussion

Red: Video and Discussion

Time Allocation: 10 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

¹ Sifra (ספרא) is the [halachic midrash](#) to [Vayikra/Leviticus](#). It is frequently quoted in the [Talmud](#), and the study of it followed that of the [Mishnah](#). (5.3.2 Footnote Links)

When someone is bullied or picked on, they are made to look different. One way to show *gevurah* גְבוּרָה is to show that we identify with the person who is being mistreated, and that if someone “messes with” them they are messing with us too.

Watch *Red* <https://safesha.re/1xh> (5.3.2 Red)

A boy who is harassed by bullies receives support from a new friend who demonstrates in a novel way that he stands with him.

Discussion Questions

- What message do you think the older teen gave to the bullies in *Red*?
- How do bullies hope that other people will react? (Look away, think that this is happening to someone else but that they are different)
- What *gevurah* גְבוּרָה did you see in this story?
- How can you apply this message to your own life?

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, valuing others, inspiring others, difficult decisions

Tags: *Red*, solidarity, bullying, video, discussion

Chanukah and Dreidel Game

Time Allotment: 20 minutes

Class: In-Person and Online

This G-dcast video <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=G40SIkmZkqU>
<https://safesha.re/1xi>

(5.3.2 G-dcast Chanukah Spins) shows the pressure the Jewish people were facing by how the Syrio-Greeks tried to spread their Hellenism and outlawed Jewish practices, causing the Jews to revolt against them. See how many types of *gevurah* גְבוּרָה you can find.

Additionally, David Brooks' article, [The Hanukkah Story²](#), (5.3.2 The Hanukkah Story) has a nuanced description of the story. Consider this as an attachment with your weekly email to parents.

Discussion Questions

- What kind of pressure did the Jews face in the Chanukah story?
- What gave the Jews the strength to resist the pressure from the Greeks? In what way are the Jews of the Chanukah story like Theodor Herzl. In what way are they different?
- What do you think gave the Jews the strength to fight against the Greeks, the most powerful army in the world at that time?
- Do you ever feel negative pressure about your Jewish identity and practices? Do you ever feel negative pressure about Israel? Give an example.
- What was the purpose of the dreidel game? How was the dreidel game a way of showing *gevurah* גְבוּרָה?

Activity: According to legend, Jews at the time of Chanukah would grab a *dreidel* and start to play in order to warn those engaged in the prohibited activities of Torah study and prayer that

²There is no one “correct” spelling for the word Chanukah (or Hanukkah or Chanukkah) because it is a phonetic version of the Hebrew.

the Syrio-Greek soldiers were approaching. Role play: Split students into three groups—the group who is praying/studying Torah, the group who is outside keeping watch, and the Syrio-Greek soldiers. Give out *dreidels* and teach the *dreidel* game to use as a warning about soldiers approaching. Ask students to imagine how each group would react and feel in the situation.

Online classroom: Have each student try this game, <http://bigtentjudaism.org/celebrate-jewish-life/jewish-holiday/hanukkah/traditions/dreidels/> (5.3.2 Dreidel Game) Set a time limit of five minutes.

How This Activity Connects to the Enduring Understandings: standing up, being persistent, inspiring others

Tags: video, peer pressure, Chanukah, Maccabees, dreidel, game, discussion

Think About It

When you disagree with another person's behavior or point of view, what can you do? What are some strategies for arguing productively and with respect?

Wrap Up

What kind of *gevurah* גְבוּרָה did we speak about this week? Standing up to peer pressure is difficult but can make you a very strong person!

Next Week: Being a good friend sometimes requires *gevurah* גְבוּרָה.

Car Talk

When is a time you stood up to peer pressure?

MyShalomLearning Activity

Watch two videos that have to do with friendship on myshalomlearning.org, in *Gevurah* גְבוּרָה week 3.

- Maccabeats *Smart Ways to Live*
The Maccabeats suggest some ideas in this video about "smart ways to live." Add your own two suggestions to the discussion board below on how to be a good friend.
- Bike 4 Friendship
In Bike 4 Friendship, Jewish students bike cross-country to raise money for programs for children with special needs. What is the most YOU have ever done for friendship?