



ACTIVITY

The Tribe

Materials Needed

- Video clip, screening device and internet connection
- Paper
- Pens/ Pencils
- Poster paper
- Material for exhibit

Time Needed

1 hour or over several sessions

Goal

To explore the essential features of the Jewish collective through the lens of anthropologists studying a tribe. When looking from the outside in, what are the core features of the Jewish tribe? Across all of our 'sub-tribes' what are our common values?

Before You Get Started

Look at the list of enduring understandings. Which one would you like to emphasize through this activity?

1. Judaism is not (only) a religion. It is also a People and the national component of Jewish civilization is central to understanding Jewish texts, practices and culture.
2. Many of Judaism's norms, laws and mitzvot are articulated and relevant through the Jewish collective.
3. The Jewish People (and not its constituent individuals) is the carrier of Jewish religion and civilization. Sustaining the People and continuing its legacy is therefore a core Jewish value.
4. "The Jewish People are bound by a shared past (the covenant of fate) and a shared future (the covenant of destiny)" – Soloveitchik.

Directions for Activity

1. Write the word "Tribe" on a board. What does it evoke for participants? What are the main features of a tribe?
2. Watch clip from film "The Tribe" (cue through 5:06) or watch the short film in its entirety.
3. Ask for participants to share their general reactions. What was surprising, funny or thought-provoking about the clip or film?
4. Ask participants to complete the sentence "The Jewish Tribe is..." From the list try to see if a pattern emerges of common values that transcend different 'sub-tribes'.
5. Ask participants to become anthropologists for a day and "study" the Jewish tribe. If they were neutral observers looking in, what would they discover about this tribe and the values that are central to it? Choose a holiday (like Shabbat, Passover or Sukkot) and have them observe the ways Jews prepare for this sacred time (in a home, synagogue, bakery or deli, be creative!) Have them develop questions to ask key informants around what they are doing and why. Take pictures or videos and then assemble and analyze all of the raw data they collect in an exhibit for their school or community.

Note to Educator

Did the enduring understanding that you set out to teach surface during this activity?