

# LEADERS GUIDE

Created by Dr. Eliezer Jones, Chief Innovation Officer of Southern NCSY  
Lesson adapted and inspired by Rabbi Sacks teaching resources on community:  
<https://www.rabbi-sacks.org/teaching-resources/community>

**Step 1: Introduce the lesson** by letting the students know that "we will be having a discussion about the importance of Jewish community with a unique opportunity to make a commitment to strengthen it in whatever way we can or want.

**Step 2: Read the first exercise** on page one asking the students close their eyes while you read the three questions listed. Note, you are not asking them to answer but to think about the answers for themselves.

**Step 3: Begin the discussion.** It is important to state that there are no wrong answers and all students should feel comfortable sharing whatever they want.

**Option 1:** You can have the students break up into Chavrusas or groups of threes and have them go over the questions and discuss their answers with each other. After ten minutes (time is up to you) refocus the class and ask students to share their answers (five minutes on this).

**Option 2:** You facilitate the discussion by asking each question to the class. You can do this in five minutes or longer if you have multiple students answer each question.

**Step 4: Source Discussion.** On Page two there are five sources to discuss (you can also mention who Rabbi Sacks is if you have time (<https://bit.ly/PledgeSacks>) and a series of questions related to the sources. You can do option 1 or 2 like for page one. If option 1, have the students read each source and discuss what it means to them as well as answer any questions listed. If Option 2 you read the source or have a student read it out loud and ask the students what they think it means and have them answer the questions listed. Wait to step five for the last question.

**Step 5: The Pledge.** Ask the final question, "Are you willing to take a pledge of commitment to the Jewish community?" Then say, "before you answer lets watch a video of Jews who took something called a Jewish Future Pledge to financially support the Jewish community" Play the video (Less than 3 Minutes and QR code is on top right of page two. If you don't have time you can skip video.

After the video (or if you did not play it) state "These (or "there" if did not play it) are adults who took a Jewish Future Pledge to give a significant financial gift to a Jewish cause when they pass which is amazing. However, you do not have to wait that long. You can make a difference right now! There are things that you can commit to now and in your lifetime to make a difference in your community. The first step is taking the "Jewish Youth Pledge" committing to the Jewish community. Then you can write yourself a letter about the impact Jewish experiences have had on you that will be sent to you in future years to inspire you.

Have them do the pledge and letter on page three and four or they can scan the QR code on page three and do it online.



**Overall Goal:** Students will discuss and understand the importance of community and specifically being a part of the Jewish community with the hope that they will be inspired to sign the Jewish Youth Pledge and do the Time Capsule.

**Essential Questions:** What is community? What is Jewish community? How can you be a part of strengthening the Jewish community?

**Leader Note:** Depending on the time you have, you can choose to use the entire lesson or a shortened version. An example of a shorter version is to just use the last two questions on page 1 and the final three questions on the bottom right of page 2 leading up to the pledge. Another option if time is short is to just do Step 5.

Also, make sure each student has a copy of the lesson (without this page) and a pen/pencil or their phone with cell or internet service to complete the pledge/time capsule.

# CONNECTIONS

**Close your eyes and consider the following questions:**

- How many followers/connections do you have on your social media accounts?
- How many of them have you met in person?
- How many can you rely on and call in an emergency?

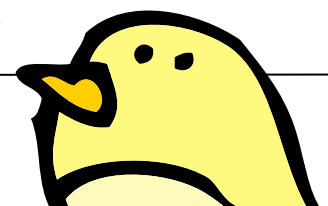


## Discussion Questions

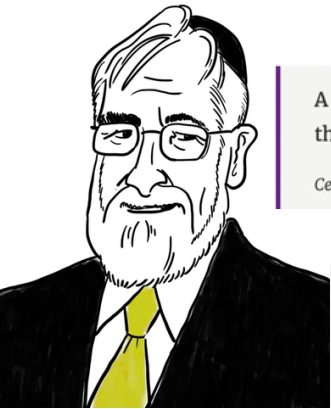
- What are the benefits of social media in our lives?
- What are the biggest challenges that we face from the impact of social media in our lives?
- Can social media create community in our life?
- Where else can we find community if not online?
- What can offline community give us that online forums cannot?
- Why is being part of a community important to you (or not)?

WHAT IS COMMUNITY?

WHAT IS JEWISH  
COMMUNITY?



# WHAT IS COMMUNITY?



Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z'L

A community is like the ark of Jewish tradition. We lift it and discover that it is lifting us.

*Celebrating Life, p. 141*

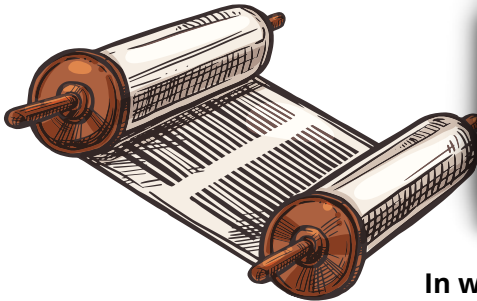
Community is society with a human face – the place where we know we're not alone.

*From Optimism to Hope, p. 14*



*Jewish Future Pledge Video*

**What do you think about the definitions Rabbi Sacks z'l gives for community?**



וַיֹּאמֶר ה' אֱלֹהִים לֹא-טוֹב הֵיְתִיב הָאָדָם לִבְדּוֹ אֶעֱשֶׂה-לּוֹ עֵזֶר כְּנֶגְדּוֹ:

God said, "It is not good for the Human to be alone; I will make a fitting counterpart for him."

**In what ways does the Jewish community create a sense of not being alone?**



A Torah scholar is not allowed to live in a city that does not have these 10 things: a court of Jewish law, a charity fund, a synagogue, a mikveh, a bathroom, a doctor; a craftsman, a butcher and a teacher of children." (*paraphrased from Sanhedrin 17b*)

In other words, a suitable place to live is a community that provides for the physical and spiritual needs of its inhabitants.

**What do you think constitutes a suitable community?**



Rabbi Jonathan Sacks Z'L

Morality achieves something almost miraculous, and fundamental to human achievement and liberty. It creates trust. It means that to the extent that we belong to the same moral community, we can work together without constantly being on guard against violence, betrayal, exploitation or deception. The stronger the bonds of community, the more powerful the force of trust, and the more we can achieve together.

*Morality, p. 13*

In what ways are you strengthening the bonds of the Jewish community?

In what ways can you do so in the future?

**Are you willing to take a pledge of commitment to your community?**





**TAKE THE PLEDGE >**



**I hereby pledge to act today and throughout my lifetime to strengthen the Jewish people and Israel. I make this commitment because I have a responsibility to ensure that my generation writes the next chapter of the Jewish story and remains a strong link in the chain of generations.**



First and Last Name:

Email:

Cell Phone #:

**Now it's time to write a letter to your future self. Think about the impact your Jewish experiences have had on you.**

**Every two years, you will get a text reminder about your letter. On the 5th, 10th, and 20th anniversaries of signing, you will receive the full text of your letter so you can remember this moment.**

**Make it meaningful and tell yourself what's truly important to YOU.**





Dear Future Self:

**Stay tuned to read your letter in 5 years.**

**By taking the Jewish Youth Pledge, we show our families, friends and communities that our passion for the Jewish people will carry on throughout our lifetimes. Share the pledge to inspire others to take pride in their Jewish identity and join the commitment to our people**

**[Jewishyouthpledge.org](http://Jewishyouthpledge.org)**