

Ideas adapted from: *Teach Breathe Learn* by Meena Srinivasan

Greeting students: Greet each student as they enter and give him/her eye contact to show that you care.

Creating a safe space: Encourage students to be open to tefillah and mindfulness without it feeling forced upon them. They might not connect with it right now, but if they try it, they might find a way to may it work for them. Tefillah and mindfulness can help them focus, feel calmer and more positive, help them manage stress and connect with others.

Gratitude Journal—use the tefillah packet in Bet & Gimmel and Torah journals in other grades to have students write reflections of gratitude in connection with a tefillah.

When responding to conflict, ask the students involved:

1. What happened, and what were you thinking at the time of the incident?
2. What have you thought about since?
3. Who has been affected by what happened, and how?
4. What about this has been the hardest for you?
5. What do you think needs to be done to make things as right as possible?

These questions focus on the harm done instead of the rules with the goal of restoring relationships.

Strategies to increase student to student interaction during discussions

What do you want to ask Sara about her idea?

Can anyone respond to Adam's question?

What can you add to David's idea?

Have students call on each other. Encourage students to look the speaker in the eye and listen.

Give students sentence starters:

- My idea builds on _____'s idea because...
- While I see why you believe this, I see it differently. In my opinion,...
- I understand where you are coming from, but I see it a bit differently. From my perspective....

Watering helpful seeds in us and others

“A Cherokee elder told his grandson that there is a battle between two wolves inside us all. One wolf is hatred, greed, anger, and jealousy, and the other wolf is kindness, peace, love, and generosity. When the elder’s grandson asked, ‘Who wins?’ his grandfather replied, ‘Whichever one you feed.’”--p.133

Jewish connections:

יִצְרַר רָע, יִצְרַר טוֹב

מִצְוָה גּוֹרָרֶת מִצְוָה, עֵבֶרָה גּוֹרָרֶת עֵבֶרָה

Pursue even a minor mitzvah and flee from a sin, for one mitzvah leads to another and one sin leads to another. --Pirke Avot 4:2

Feeling stress can feel like you are a tree in a storm—the wind is our strong emotions when something happens, and by breathing deeply or praying we can calm ourselves down. Then we can make choices about how to respond to the stress—to water helpful or unhelpful seeds within us and others.

Mindful Speech, Lashon Hara, and the Power of our Words

“Sufi tradition instructs us to speak only after our words have passed through four gates. First we must ask if the words we are about to speak are ‘true,’ then we must ask if the words are ‘necessary,’ then ask if they are ‘beneficial,’ and finally ask if the words are ‘kind.’” If our words pass through these four gates, then we can share them. –p.140

A great way to check and see if you are gossiping is to reflect on whether you would say the same thing about the person if the person could hear what you are saying. –p.148

“Real integrity is doing the right thing, knowing that nobody’s going to know whether you did it or not.” –Oprah, p.144

How do we role model watering helpful seeds within ourselves and others?

At the end of class, ask students: what did you learn from someone else today?