“Miracle - Matisyahu Hanukkah Song Music Video” LESSON PLAN

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LESSON AT A GLANCE

Students explore what it means to believe in miracles through watching Matisyahu’s music video and studying Jewish texts. To culminate the lesson, students write their own original songs about belief in miracles.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will discuss what it means to believe in miracles.
- Students will analyze whether it is possible to believe in miracles without relying on them.
- Students will write original songs about miracles.

ACTIVITY

1. ***Class Discussion:*** Discuss with the class: Have you or someone you know ever experienced what you would call a miracle? What was the miracle?
   Explain that, in the daily *Amidah* prayer, we thank God, “for Your miracles that are with us every day.” What “miracles” is this prayer referring to? Do you see these experiences as miracles? Why or why not?

2. ***Music Video:*** Watch together Matisyahu’s video, Miracle, at http://www.behrmanhouse.com/resource-libraries. Matisyahu sings: “Bound to stumble and fall, but my strength comes not from man at all. Do you believe in miracles?” Ask students: What do you think Matisyahu means by believing in miracles? How would a person act who believes in miracles?

3. ***Jewish Texts:*** Read the following texts together and answer the questions below:

Babylonian Talmud, Kiddushin 39a We don’t rely on miracles.	קידושין דף לט עמוד א אֵין סוֹמְכִין עַל הַנֵּס.

   What does it mean not to rely on miracles?
   How do we live our lives if we know we cannot rely on miracles?

Zechariah 4:6 “Not by might, and not by power, but by My spirit,” says the Lord of Hosts.	זכריה ד:ו לֹא בְחַיִל וְלֹא בְכֹחַ כִּי אִם בְּרוּחִי אָמַר ה׳ צְבָאוֹת:

   This verse is from the *haftarah* on Hannukah. What is God saying here? What does it mean that what happens in the world is not because of might or power but because of God’s spirit?
   How do we live our lives if we believe that what happens in the world is because of God’s spirit alone?
   Would Matisyahu agree with this verse? Why or why not?
   Does this verse contradict the saying from the Talmud? Why or why not? How can one live according to both principles?

4. ***Write Songs:*** To culminate the lesson, break the class into small groups to compose original Hanukkah songs about miracles. Take a familiar Hanukkah melody (such as “Dreidel, Dreidel, “*Ma’oz Tzur*,” or “*Mi Yimalel*”) and write new words that explore belief in miracles and the presence of miracles in our lives. In order to accomplish this, students will need to think about meter and rhythm as well as rhyme scheme. If students produce anything really good, consider recording them singing their original songs and sending the recording to parents as a Hanukkah gift.

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