LESSON PLAN BY SARRA ALPERT

"All in the Family"

MAGAZINE PAGES 17–19

After reading the article "All in the Family" which profiles three families that face different challenges, students will explore a Biblical family that confronts challenges of having a very unconventional family structure. Students will expand upon the traditional template of a family tree to create a diagram to represent the complex structure of Yaakov's family. They will then consider how to depict their own family and its unique challenges.

OBJECTIVES

- **Students will diagram Yaakov's family after studying texts from *Bereishit* about the composition of his family unit.**
- **Students will relate episodes in Yaakov's family to their understanding of modern families.**
- **Students will identify a diagram that befits the unique structure and/or challenges of their own families.**

VOCABULARY

מִשְׁפָּחָה	family
אִילַן יִחֻסִין	family tree
בֵּן	son
בַּת	daughter

ACTIVITY: BRANCHING OUT THE FAMILY TREE

1. To begin the lesson, divide the class into three groups. Each group will study a different section of *Bereishit* that deals with an episode in the life of Yaakov and his family. The source sheets containing these selections with accompanying discussion questions are available online at www.babaganewz.com/teachers.

Group I will study about Yaakov, his wives Leah, Rachel, Bilhah, and Zilpah, and the births of his children.

Group II will study about Joseph and his relationship with his brothers.

Group III will study about the brothers' experience in Egypt and Judah's protection of Benjamin at that time.

TEACHING TIP

As an alternative to beginning class this way, you may assign the source study in advance so students come to class prepared and begin the lesson at step 2.

2. After the three groups have a chance to read through their given texts, regroup the students into triads, with each triad consisting of a student from each of the three initial groups. Instruct each member to share what he or she learned in the previous group.

Provide the triads with large pieces of paper or poster board and markers. Each triad will then be responsible for drawing a family tree for Yaakov, his wives, and children. Encourage students to consider how their trees can depict the complex family structure and how they can also include a way to show the challenging relationships and heightened emotions evident in the family.

3. Read the article on pages 17–19 of BabagaNewz.

Which family in the article does Yaakov's family most closely resemble? Why?

What challenges do the families in the article face? What other types of challenges might families face today?

What challenges did Yaakov's family face that any family in any time period might confront?

What issues did the Ollaniks describe in the article? How did they address those issues and develop such a positive family group?

How do the Linfields and the Rotters address the challenges that their families confront?

What traits do you think all three families have in common? Why?

4. To conclude the lesson, explain that every student will be creating a diagram of some sort to represent his or her family. This is not an activity aimed at tracing generations far back, but is instead meant to have students reflect on their immediate families—including extended relations who might have significance in a student's life. For some students the traditional family tree model might be uncomfortable; therefore, encourage all your students to think about a graphic that best depicts the uniqueness and complexity of their families. For example, someone may choose to draw a jigsaw puzzle with each piece representing a family member; a student may sketch a house in which each room stands for someone; or someone may feel that a series of overlapping circles (such as Venn diagrams) best suits his or her family. The goal is to get the students to think creatively and meaningfully about their family structures. Provide paper and markers for them to complete this activity.

5. As a follow up to the lesson, you can instruct students to choose one family relationship to research. They should ask their parents and other family members about that relationship, and write the story of those family members (for example, how grandparents met, how two half-siblings got along, how an adopted sibling joined the family, etc.).