"Zachary Gordon: The Wimpy Kid" Lesson Plan

LESSON AT A GLANCE

Diary of a Wimpy Kid and its sequel *Rodrick Rules* feature lots of pranks and jokes. In this lesson, students will watch movie trailers for both films, then discuss the difference between humor that embarrass and humor that entertain. Finally, students will write Purim *grammen* about Zachary Gordon, keeping this difference in mind.

OBJECTIVES

- Students will understand the difference between a joke that embarrasses and one that entertains.
- Students will learn about Purim *grammen* and write their own.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Movie trailers http://babaganewz.com/articles/zachary-gordon-the-wimpy-kid
- How to Write Purim Grammen http://babaganewz.com/activities/how-to-write-Purim-grammen

ACTIVITY

1) Movie Screening

Watch the movie trailers for both *Diary of a Wimpy Kid* and its sequel *Rodrick Rules* on BabagaNewz.com. Then ask the class:

What were some of the funny things that happened in the videos?

Write a list of student responses on the board. Choose one of the funny events to discuss more in-depth. For example, you might choose to discuss Greg's mother calling him "sweetie-pie" in the first video or the chocolate stain in the second video.

What about this event made it funny?
Would it have been funny if this had happened to you?
Why do you think it's funny when someone else gets embarrassed?

2) Read the Article

Read the interview with Zachary Gordon on BabagaNewz.com. Discuss:

What prank did Zachary try to play on Devon?
Why didn't it work?

Was anybody embarrassed by this prank?
What experiences have you had with pranks?
How do you feel about them? Why?
How do you think Zachary Gordon feels about pranks? Why?

3) Entertainment vs. Embarrassment
Hold up two pieces of paper for the class to see. One paper should have the word "prank" written on it, while the second paper should have the word "joke" written. Ask students:

What's the difference between these two words?

Study the following Jewish texts:

Ta'anit 22a	תענית דף כב עמוד א
[Elijah] came and said to [Rabbi Beroka], "These, too, are destined for the world to come." Rabbi Beroka went up to them, and said to them, "What do you do?" They said to him, "We are comedians and we go to cheer up those who are sad…"	אָתֵי אָמַר לֵיהּ: הַנָּךְ נַמִּי בְּנֵי עָלְמָא דְּאָתֵי נִינְהוּ. אָזַל לְגַבַּיְיהוּ, אָמַר לְהוּ מַאי עוֹבָדַיְיכוּ? אָמְרוּ לֵיהּ: אִינְשֵׁי בָּדוֹחֵי אֲנַן, מְבַדְּחִינָן עֲצִיבֵי...

What value is there to entertainment?
What does this text teach us about how to treat others?
How does this apply to humor and jokes?

Rashi on Vayikra 19:17	רש"י על ויקרא יט:יז
Do not cause a person's face to be whitened in public.	ל֑א תַלְבִּין אֶת פָּנָיו בָּרַבִּים.

What does it mean to "cause a person's face to be whitened"? [embarrass the person]
What does this text teach us about the way to treat others?
How does this apply to humor and jokes?

4) Purim Fun
Tell students that they will now write Purim *grammen* about Zachary Gordon, keeping in mind the difference between embarrassing and entertaining. Go to http://babaganewz.com/activities/how-to-write-Purim-grammen for an informative instructional video about how to write *grammen*. *Grammen* are songs/poems performed on Purim to a set tune with audience participation.