"THE LAND OF EXTREMES" LESSON PLAN

LESSON AT A GLANCE
In this article, students learn about some extreme sports that are popular in Israel. In this lesson, students study a map of Israel to understand why Israel is rich with extreme opportunities. Students also explore themes of courage, fear, and beauty in discussing whether extreme sports are for everyone.

OBJECTIVES
- Students will locate places in Israel on a map.
- Students will study Jewish texts and discuss whether fear is good or bad.
- Students will invent their own extreme sport and design a flyer to advertise it.

ACTIVITY
1. List of Sports
Ask students to name sports. Then ask students to name extreme sports.
What makes a sport "extreme"? [danger]
Have you ever tried an extreme sport? Do you know anyone who has tried an extreme sport?

2. Read the Article
Make sure there's a map of Israel posted in the classroom. Have students read the article as a class. One student is assigned the job of map marker. Whenever the readers come to a reference to a place in Israel, the map marker finds the place on the map and marks it with a sticker or thumbtack. Another student is assigned the job of note taker. Whenever we learn information about an extreme sport, the note taker writes it on the board in a chart.

3. Quotes and Questions
After reading the article, refer back to the quote from the mayor of Beersheva: *"I'm convinced that participating in extreme sports builds strength and character."*
Do you think your parents would agree with this statement?
How might extreme sports build character?
Do you think extreme sports are for everyone? Why or why not?
Is it good to be an "adrenaline junkie"? Why or why not?
Is it good to put oneself in a dangerous situation? Why or why not?
Which of the sports on the board do you think you would like to try when you grow up? Why?

Also discuss this quote from the article: *"In the world of extreme sports, few places surpass Israel in the richness of extreme opportunities."*

What makes Israel a country rich with extreme sport opportunities? Have students refer back to the map when answering this question.

4. Jewish Text Study

Study the following Jewish texts.

Rabbi Nahman of Bratzlav The entire world is a very narrow bridge, but the main thing is not to fear at all.	רבי נחמן דברסלב כָּל הָעוֹלָם כֻּלּוֹ גֶּשֶׁר צַר מְאֹד וְהָעִקָּר לֹא לְפַחֵד כְּלָל:
Psalms 2:11 Serve God with fear and rejoice when there is trembling.	תהלים ב:יא עִבְדוּ אֶת ה' בְּיִרְאָה וְגִילוּ בִּרְעָדָה:

According to each text, is fear a good or a bad thing? Explain.
Is it easy (or even possible) to control fear? Why or why not?
Is an adrenaline rush a spiritual experience? Does it mean you've overcome your fears? Explain.
Is courage jumping off of mountains? If not, then what is real courage?

Psalms 50:2 Out of Zion, the perfection of beauty, God has shined forth.	תהלים נ:ב מִצִּיּוֹן מִכְלַל יֹפִי אֱלֹקִים הוֹפִיעַ:

What do you think beauty means in this verse?
In your imagination, what would the "perfection of beauty" look like? How does Israel differ from this image?
How does gliding above the earth or diving into the sea help us recognize and appreciate God's presence?

5. New Extreme Sport

Conclude the lesson with the following assignment: Refer back to the map of Israel one more time. Choose a location on the map and invent your own extreme sport in that location (for example, scuba diving in the salty Dead Sea or extreme skiing on Mount Hermon). Using markers and other art supplies, create a flyer for your sport. Include on the flyer reasons people should try your sport and cautions for those who shouldn't try it.

To wrap up the lesson, ask students:
What can you learn from extreme sports, whether you participate in them or read about them?
How can you apply this to your own life?