“Compasses”

MAGAZINE PAGE 3

Students will read an article about compasses, the “Jerusalem Compass,” and the idea that everyone prays toward Jerusalem. With the help of various Jewish texts, students will explore different types of compasses (things that can show where to go) in their lives. This lesson will then continue into the next day as students will gather pictures at home to create a compass collage that they can use as book covers for their personal Siddurim.

OBJECTIVES
► Students will read about the directions in which compasses lead people and explain how a compass can serve as a metaphor for the forces that guide people in their pursuits.
► Students will describe Jerusalem’s role as a national compass for the Jewish People.
► Students will identify personal compasses to create a compass collage to adorn their own Siddurim.

VOCABULARY
דperor רוחני מזון מוסקביון כנסת קוהל
direction intention east compass collage

Send your students to babaganewz.com to view a movie about compasses.

QUOTES & QUESTIONS

“Long before GPS satellites were invented, humans relied on compasses to navigate on land. A compass’s needle always points north, so a traveler can easily figure out which way to go.”

Have you ever used a compass before? When? How did it help you?

What are other things you use to figure out which way to go?

“Since Biblical times, Jews have always prayed facing the direction of Jerusalem and the beit hamikdash.”

Why do you think it is important that Jews pray toward Jerusalem?

How does having a focal point for prayer help individuals focus their tefillah? What else might help people focus their tefillah appropriately?

Have you ever thought about the fact that all Jews face the same place when they pray? Do you feel that it unifies Jews in any way?

What would it look like if you could look down upon all the Jews in the world who were praying? Draw this aerial view on the board.

ACTIVITY: PERSONAL COMPASSES

1. Before class begins, hang up the following six Jewish texts around the room, but do not yet discuss them in any way.

   Text #1
   SHMOT 13:21
   And God went before them by day in a pillar of a cloud, to lead them on the way; and by night in a pillar of fire, to give them light; to go by day and night.

   Text #2
   PIRKEI AVOT 1:6
   Make for yourself a teacher.

   Text #3
   PIRKEI AVOT 1:6
   Acquire for yourself a friend.

   Text #4
   TALMUD BERAKHOT 30A
   If a person is standing outside Israel, he or she should turn toward Israel, as it says, “And pray unto You toward your land” (I Kings 8:48). If a person is standing in Israel, he or she should turn toward Jerusalem as it says, “And they will pray to God by way of the city You have chosen” (I Kings 8:43).

   Text #5
   SHMOT 20:12
   Honor your father and your mother; that your days may be long upon the land which God, your God, gives you.

   Text #6
   RABBI BUNIM, HASIDIC TALE
   Keep two truths in your pocket, and take them out according to the need of the moment. Let one be: “For my sake was the world created.” And the other: “I am dust and ashes.”

2. Read the article about compasses on page 3 of BABAGANEWZ. Use the Quotes & Questions provided above to help in the class discussion of the article.

   Look up the dictionary definition of a compass. Here is one definition: a device for determining direction by means of a magnetic needle pointing to the magnetic north; any of various other devices that indicate direction.

   Ask students to define the word “compass” in their own words.

3. Explain to students that they will now do an activity related to different compasses in their own lives. They will have to think metaphorically to consider what leads or directs them in their own lives.

   Their task is to go to each text that is hanging on the wall and try to figure out who or what acts as the compass in the text. Students should complete the compass worksheet shown on the facing page (also available to print at www.babaganewz.com/teachers) as they read each text.

4. Have a class discussion about the texts, focusing on each text individually as well as on all the texts collectively.

   QUESTIONS FOR EACH TEXT:
   What is the compass (something to show you where to go) this text is referring to?
   Is this compass a part of your life? Why or why not?

   QUESTIONS FOR THE ARTICLE:
   1. What are some things you use to figure out which way to go?
   2. Do you feel that it unifies all Jews in any way?
   3. What would it look like if you could look down upon all the Jews in the world who were praying? How would you draw this aerial view on the board?

   ENSURE ALL ELEMENTS ARE ACCURATE AND UP TO DATE.
Would you like this compass to be a part of your life? Why or why not?

GENERAL QUESTIONS ABOUT ALL THE TEXTS:

What were the compasses in each text? [God, teachers, friends, Israel/Jerusalem, parents, yourself]

Can any of these different compasses help you in services or when you pray privately? How?

Do you feel that any of these compasses helps to show you where to go in your life? Which ones? How do these compasses guide you?

Do you think that any of these texts should not have been included? Why or why not?

Are there any other compasses in your life that were not mentioned here?

5. Explain to students that at an upcoming lesson (such as the next time class meets) they will be creating a compass collage to use as a book cover for their Siddurim. Instruct them to search at home for pictures and/or sayings that represent the compasses—the entities that guide them—in their lives. You might also suggest that they use at least one of the texts in their collage.

For the activity, bring newspapers, scissors, glue sticks, rulers, pencils, and large flexible sheets of paper (such as grocery bags) that can form the basis of the collage. Instruct students to measure the paper carefully to be sure that it will fit their Siddurim and will have adequately-sized edges for folding over into a book cover. Students can then design their compass collages. Whenever they pray—either in services with a minyan or on their own—they can look to their collage to give them guidance.