

Program Title: G-d Grows In Genesis with Every Decision

Category: Jewish Learning

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Touchstone Text: Experience is more forceful than logic. ~ *Isaac Abravanel*

Goals:

- To explore how G-d grows throughout the Genesis.
- To make PP's realize they grow through experiences.

Objectives:

- PP's will read Torah stories that show G-d's growth
- PP's will be forced to redo and improve artwork

Timed Procedure:

1. Trigger/Skit.....3 minutes
2. Break into groups..... 5 minutes
3. Name Game..... 5 minutes
4. Discussion on Skit.....3 minutes
5. Drawings.....12 minutes
6. Torah Stories Part I.....14 minutes
7. Perfect Paradise.....8 minutes
8. Torah Stories Part II..... 17 minutes
9. RESOLUTIONS!!!.....2 minutes
10. Cleanup..... 4 minutes
11. Regroup 3 minutes
12. Closing skit.....2 minutes

Total time.....78 minutes

Materials:

- Pencils – 1 per PP
- Crayons – enough for a group to share
- Markers – “ “ “
- Water Colors – 30 trays (3 per group)
- Brushes – 1 per PP
- Cups for water – 30 (3 per group)
- ½ of 8.5x11 paper – 3 per PP
- ¼ of 8.5x11 paper – 1 per PP
- Handout 1 and 2 (double sided)

People:

- PP = Program Participant
- PL = Program Leader, writer of the program
- GL = Group Leader - 10
- Rovers - 2

Location: Normal

Background Information:

Throughout Genesis G-d faces situations where he has to hand out punishments to humans for disobeying his decree or for just being corrupt. Each time, G-d learns and becomes more reasonable. . G-d matures through these situations.

Detailed Procedure:

1. Skit.....3 minutes

Student: Mr. Goldman, you wanted to see me?

Teacher: Yes it's about your essay. It wasn't well written.

Student: Well, maybe not, but I worked really hard on it.

Teacher: I would still like a new copy from you on my desk in the morning.

Student: But Mr. Goldman, I worked really hard on it. Can't we compromise? Perhaps, extra credit?

Teacher: No I expect a new copy on my desk in the morning, no excuses.

2. Break into Groups.....5 minutes

3. Name Game.....5 minutes

GL: "Hey everyone what's up?! We are going to start with the always-amazing name game! Say your name, your TYG, and your favorite CD or album."

(I'm Brad from Tidy and my favorite album is Revolver by The Beatles)

4. Discussion of Skit..... 3 minutes

GL: "So what just happened in the skit we just witnessed?"

(Two people were examining a paper.)

(A teacher was telling his student that his work was not sufficient and that the student should start over.)

5. Drawings.....12 minutes

GL: "On a different note we are now going to get creative! We are each going to create a drawing of our perfect world or in other words our paradise. All you'll need are pencils and crayons."

[GL hands out half sheets of paper and pencils and crayons to the group]

[GL stops the group 2 minutes later]

GL: "All right guys, stop! [GL Scans drawings and is not very happy with the products] Hmmmm this drawing is just ok. I don't think you did a good job. I'll give you guys another chance to make a drawing of your paradise. Now this time, try a little bit harder and do it a little differently. Do not use the pencils or crayons."

[GL hands out half sheets of paper, water color sets and markers]

[GL stops the group 3 minutes later]

GL: "All right lets see what we have here. [GL scans group's drawings] These are better than before but they still are not satisfactory.

GL: Do you guys think you did a good job with these drawings? Are the drawings as good as they could have been? Did you all put your utmost effort into the drawings of paradise?"

(No we were absolutely horrendous. Yes we did we tried really hard. I don't think we could have done any better on our drawings)

(Yes. Well our drawing was good but it probably could have been better. We didn't devote all our time and effort to making our paradise perfect.)

GL: "Was it all that bad that you had to start all over again? I mean could there have been at least something that could have been saved from the first drawing to have been used in your revised painting?"

(Well it was okay. I think starting over kind of motivated us to do better. There really wasn't anything that if we had saved could have made our second drawing better.)

(It really wasn't that bad, I'm not saying it was perfect but there were some aspects of the first drawing that I liked, which could have been used in the second drawing.)

6. Torah Stories Part I..... 14 minutes

GL: "Those are great points! Now its time for some HANDOUTS from the Torah!!!! Can I have someone volunteer to read?"

[Pass out Handout 1 – Adam and Eve; PP's read the handout]

GL: "Excellent job. In this story, what did G-d do to Adam and Eve? Was it too harsh? Was it justified?"

(Well, G-d exiled Adam and Eve after they ate from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. It was justified because they had disobeyed G-d.)

(G-d exiled Adam and Eve from paradise because they had disobeyed him. The actions that G-d took were not justified; they were too harsh. Adam and Eve had been duped by the snake and tempted by G-d's forbidding it. G-d shouldn't have acted immediately but should have first evaluated the situation and dealt out a fairer punishment.)

GL: "So are we right to say that G-d could have looked at the situation differently?"

(No because G-d is G-d and G-d always makes the right decisions.)

(Well in retrospect yes, but in that moment G-d had no knowledge of the repercussions it would make.)

(Yes because even though G-d was upset about how events unfolded G-d could have waited and thought about an accommodating punishment.)

GL: "Let's look at another situation where G-d dealt out a punishment. Again we are going to read popcorn style. Can I have another volunteer to start reading?"

[PP's read handout 1 – Noah's Ark]

GL: "Are there any similarities between the stories of Adam and Eve and Noah's Ark?"

(Yes because they both show that G-d severely punishes Humans for doing the wrong thing.)

GL: "Did G-d grow in the decisions in the punishments he made for humans?"

(Yes. G-d's decision in Noah's Ark showed growth on G-d's part because he didn't act immediately, evaluated the situation, and acted out of necessity instead of anger (acted fairly). G-d decided not to destroy all he had created but kept some elements of the world, such as Noah and his family and two of each kind.)

7. Perfect Paradise.....8 minutes

GL: "Excellent Point! Now I'm going to give you ladies and gentlemen one more opportunity to create some artwork that I will find sufficient as representations of paradise. Remember I only expect the best."

[GL hands out last half pieces of paper, pencils, crayons, markers, water colors, and glitter glue.]

[GL stops the group after 6 minutes]

GL: "These are fabulous. You guys are amazing. Do you think your artistic vision and overall product grew throughout your different drafts of Paradise?"

(Yes as we thought more and more about what is paradise what is the perfect world, so our skills became more focused and became better over time.)

8. Torah Stories Part II.....17 minutes

GL: "Stupendous job! All right, this is our last hand out. Can I have a volunteer to read?"

[GL flips to handout 2; PP's read the handout]

GL: "What is really different about the story about Sodom Gomorrah between the other two stories?"

(Abraham was allowed to reason with him unlike before when G-d acted rashly and without evaluating the situation. It allowed g-d to make a rational decision.)

GL: "Does G-d mature throughout the book of Genesis?"

(Yes because G-d approaches each situation with more and more experience and reason than in the previous situations.)

GL: "Right on the money. What are some personal examples of growth through experience?"

[PP's share experiences]

Example: *(I fought with a friend and didn't handle the situation well, but when I fought with another friend later; I knew how to handle the situation better.)*

GL: "How do you react when you think about this: G-d, who is the ubiquitous, omnipotent, creator-of-the-world figure of the Torah grows and matures with experience; but as you know, maturing because of experience is such a natural and important aspect of *human* life?"

[PP's share reactions... "it's really cool", "g-d is more like us"...something deep and insightful like (and more expanded than) that]

GL: "How does one use experiences to grow?"

(Well one grows through experiences by taking anything that happened in the past and apply it to the present and future.)

GL: "In the stories we read G-d takes his past experiences of dealing with evil cities and apply them to the present situation. We as human go through this process too, however, we also take past experiences and instead use them to change ourselves for the future. How and why do we do this in our lives?"

(We do this to make ourselves more aware and prepared for what may come our way.)...(Any other good responses are ok.)

9. RESOLUTIONS!!!.....2 minutes

GL: "Especially for this time of the year how do we take past experiences and the future?" apply them to

(Resolutions!!!!!!)

GL: "Can someone give me a specific example of how we use our past experiences to make resolutions?" experiences to

[GL chooses only one PP to answer]

(Example: When I wasn't exercising I wasn't feeling self confident so I made a resolution to go to the gym more often.)

GL: "Great example!!! Now let's take a moment to reflect on our experiences from this year and create a resolution for the upcoming year."

[GL hands out paper to PP's for resolutions; Make sure NAME AND TYG are on the paper. Then collect resolutions]

10. Cleanup.....4 minutes

GL: "Now since you guys did a great job on all your depictions of paradise I am now going to collect them to hang up throughout manor house. Now in an orderly fashion could everyone please help cleanup the drawing materials."

11. Regroup..... 3 minutes

12. Closing skit..... 2 minutes

Student 1: I stayed up real late last night just so I could finish this paper for you. I hope you are happy because I now have influenza and pneumonia.

[Student 1 exit Student 2 enter]

Student 2: Mr. Goldman, you wanted to see me after class?

Teacher: Yes it's about your essay. It wasn't well written.

Student 2: Well, maybe not, but I worked really hard on it.

Teacher: Well what if we work on it together?

Student 2: Mr. Goldman, I really appreciate that! Thank you!

PL: "All right guys you actually did do a great job on your pictures of paradise and because you guys did such a great job, we are going to display your artwork so everyone can see what a beautiful job you did."

Handout 1

Eric Matulsky

Peulah 1, Tuesday P.M., December Institute 2005

Adam and Eve

Adam and Eve lived in the Garden of Eden; they were naked, but they felt no shame. A clever and deceitful serpent enticed Eve to eat an apple from the Tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil. Eve ate some of the fruit and then gave some to her husband to eat as well. However, G-d had said, "You shall not eat of it or touch it, lest you die" (Genesis 3:3). Well, they didn't die, but their eyes were opened to good and evil; they realized they were naked.

Later, G-d was roaming about the Garden and looking for Adam and Eve. They told G-d they were hiding because they heard the sound of G-d in the Garden and were afraid because they were naked. G-d realized that they had broken the only rule of living in the Garden, to not eat from tree. G-d immediately began to give out punishments.

First, G-d punished the serpent: "because you did this, more cursed shall you be than all the cattle and all the wild beasts: on your belly shall you crawl and dirt shall you eat all the days of your life" (Genesis 3:14). Then G-d punishes Eve: "I will make most severe your pangs in childbearing; in pain you shall bear children. Yet your urge shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you" (Genesis 3:16). And finally, G-d punishes Adam: "Because you did as your wife said and ate the tree about which I commanded you, 'You shall not eat of it,' cursed be the ground because of you; by toil shall you eat of it all the days of your life: thorns and thistles shall it sprout for you. But your food shall be the grasses of the field: by the sweat of your brow shall you get bread to eat, until you return to the ground – for from it you were taken. For dust you are, and to dust you shall return" (Genesis 3:17-19).

Noah's Ark

"The Lord saw how great was man's wickedness on Earth, and how every plan devised by his mind was nothing but Evil at the time" (Genesis 6:5). G-d was upset by the evil path that man had taken and decided that action was necessary. G-d regretted creating everything on Earth and wanted to destroy it, but Noah, a righteous man, found favor with G-d. G-d decided to flood the earth but save Noah, his family, and a male and a female of each type of animal, and Noah built an ark.

"All the fountains of the great-deep burst apart, all flood-gates of the sky broke open. The rain fell on the earth 40 days and 40 nights" (Genesis 7:11-12). The Earth was flooded; water rose higher than the mountains. After 150 days, the waters began to recede and Noah sent out a dove to see if the waters had decreased from the surface of the ground. Noah sent out a dove to scout the land; the 2nd time, it returned with an olive leaf in its bill. The Earth was dry again!

Noah, his family, and the animals returned to land and were blessed by G-d. And G-d resolved, " 'Never again will I doom the Earth because of man...nor will I ever again destroy every living being, as I have done'" (Genesis 8:21).

Handout 2
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Sodom and Gomorrah

G-d recognizes the evil of Sodom and Gomorroah and contemplates whether to tell Abraham about the plan to destroy them. Because of their covenant, G-d decides to inform Abraham. Abraham worries that in doing this, G-d would kill innocent, good people too. He convinces G-d that if he can find 50 innocent inhabitants, G-d won't destroy the cities. When he can't find 50 good people, he tries to find 45, then 40, then 30, then 20, then 10.

G-d sends angels disguised as men to Lot, cousin of Abraham, who lives in Sodom. Lot treats them with the utmost respect. When Abraham can't even find 10 righteous people in Sodom and Gomorrah, G-d destroys the cities of Sodom and Gomorrah but saves Lot, his wife, and two daughters because of their kind treatment to the Angels. However, as they flee, G-d instructs them not to look back; unfortunately, Lot's wife does, and she's turned into a pillar of salt.