

## **Program Title: The Development of Morals via Childhood Entertainment**

**Category:** Jewish Learning

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### **Goals:**

- To show how morals can develop through childhood stories, poems, and movies.
- To understand how the morals are applied today.
- To see how the morals evolve over time.

### **Objectives:**

- PP's will gain a better understanding of their own set of morals and how that set of morals has developed and transformed throughout their lives.
- PP's will learn how the media influences our minds and lifestyles.
- PP's will be able to make their own stories, poems, and skits that demonstrate common morals of today.

### **Materials:**

- Paper
- Markers
- Poems
- Golf Pencils
- Video tape/disc with video clips
- VCR/Laptop that can play DVD's
- Laptop projector
- Printed packets with stories
- Stickers... like the ones that 1<sup>st</sup> grade teachers give out that say "I'm special!" or "A+ Student!"

### **Timeline:**

00:00-00:10 – Intro

00:10-00:15 – Get into groups

00:15-00:40 – Rotation 1

00:40-00:45 – Rotate

00:45-01:10 – Rotation 2

01:10-01:15 – Rotate

01:15-01:40 – Rotation 3

01:40-01:45 – Regroup

01:45-01:55 – Present skits/stories/poems

01:55-02:00 – Rabbi Wrap-Up

### **Procedure:**

1. PP's will enter the room. As they enter, they will have a sticker put on them. These stickers will be used to separate them into groups.
2. Two of the program writers will act out the following as the third program writer reads it.  
"Okay, NFTY-MAR, it's time for STORY TIME!!! Once upon a time, there were two lovely Jewish teenagers. One Jewish teenager's name was Rachel and the other's name was Ben. One

day, Ben and Rachel were in the store buying some Manischewitz, when all of a sudden, Ben starts yelling at an old lady in the Bath Products aisle. Rachel, astounded at Ben's inconsiderate manners apologizes quickly to the old lady, who was very taken aback by Ben's assault on Mrs. Goldbergowitzsteinman. Rachel asks Ben what came over him and he promptly replied, "Why should I care about some stupid old lady?" Clearly, Ben's morals are a little screwed up. In this program, we are going to learn how Rachel's good manners came to be and how Ben's bad manners did. So, strap on your seatbelts and put on your thinking caps, NFTY-MAR, 'cause you're about to go on a smacktabulous voyage through childhood entertainment and morals!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!"

3. Go through rotations.

### Rotation 1:

- 1) After the group has settled into a circle GL begins the name game
  - a. Go around and as everyone to state their name, temple, and...
    - i. Favorite poet
    - ii. Favorite poem
    - iii. Favorite childhood memory (tell them to be BRIEF)
    - iv. Something else to the GL's fancy
- 2) Introduction to this rotation (GL reads aloud)
  - a. *When we were little, back before we had a firm command of the English language, we often expressed ourselves through pictures and drawings. In this rotation, you are going to revert back to your childhood, and draw what the poems I will read make you feel and think. Try and go back to how poems made you feel when you were a child, and then use your picture to depict your emotions and thoughts. Don't over think! As I read the poems aloud, draw what the poem makes you feel.*
- 3) GL passes out paper to the PP's (there are markers in the center of the circle)
- 4) GL Reads the first Poem and PP's draw their reaction while listening
  - a. See attached sheet for poem 1
- 5) GL gives no more then 2 minutes for the PP's to finish their drawings
- 6) GL reads the second poem and PP's draw their reactions while listening
  - a. See attached sheet for poem 2
- 7) GL gives no more then 2 minutes for the PP's to finish their drawings
- 8) Discussion Questions for poems 1 and 2 – to be used after both of the poems have been read to the PP's (be sure to have PP's specify which poem they are talking about)
  - a. In no more then 3 words, describe how the poem made you feel. Does your drawing reflect this reaction?
  - b. Do you think the author was trying to send a specific message to the readers? If so what?
  - c. How does your drawing reflect the message?
  - d. You did your drawing from the perspective of a child. Do you think that this poem has the same impact on you now as it did when you were young? Why or why not?
  - e. Looking at this poem from the perspective you now have, what does this poem mean?
  - f. Do you think that the morals you picked up in poems like this as little kids carried into your current life and age? Why or why not?
  - g. How do the morals of these poems related to Judaism?

- h. Overall, if you had to compile a book of poems that have good morals/meanings, would you include one of these? Why or why not?

## Poems!!

### Poem 1

#### “Me and My Giant”

I have a friend who is a giant,  
And eh lives where the tall weeds grow.  
He’s high as a mountain and wide as a barn,  
And I only come up to his toe, you know,  
I only come up to his toe.

When the daylight grows dim I talk with him  
Way down in the marshy sands,  
And his ear is too far away to hear,  
But still he understands, he ‘stands,  
I know he understands.

For we have a cod called the “scratch-tap cod,”  
And here is what we do—  
I scratch his toe...once means, “Hello”  
And twice means, “How are you?”  
Three means, “Does it look like rain?”  
Four times means, “Don’t cry.”  
Five times means, “I’ll scratch you a joke.”  
And six times means, “Goodbye,” “Goodbye,”  
Six times means, “Goodbye.”

And he answers me by tapping his toe—  
Once means, “Hello, friend.”  
Two taps means, “It’s very nice to feel you scratch again.”  
Tree taps means, “It’s lonely here  
With my head in the top of the sky.”  
Four taps means, “Today an eagle smiled as she flew by.”  
Five taps means, “Oops, I just bumped  
My head against the moon.”  
Six means, “Sigh” and seven means, “Bye”  
And eight means, “Come back soon, soon, soon,”  
Eight means, “Come back soon.”

And then I scratch a thousand times,  
And he taps with a bappity-bimm,  
And he laughs so hard he shakes the sky—  
That means I’m tickling him!

~Shel Silverstein (*Where the Sidewalk Ends*)

## Poem 2

### “Sensible Questions”

“Suppose the land turned into the sea?”  
“Don’t be stupid! It couldn’t be!”

“Suppose the sea turned into the land?”  
“It wouldn’t happen. You don’t understand!”

“Suppose I waved this grassy stalk,  
And Max the dog began to talk?”

“Your fancy’s foolish. Your ways are wild!  
I often think you’re a silly child!”

But Marigold waved her stalk of grass  
And all she had asked about came to pass.

The land rolled up and the sea rolled over  
The waves were covered with grass and clover,

While Marigold and her reproofing aunt  
Who’d kept on saying “Don’t!” and “Can’t!”

Were up to their necks in wild green sea—  
And Max the dog said, “Fiddle dee dee!”

~ Margaret Mahy (*Nonstop Nonsense*)

### Rotation 2:

1. Do very quick name game with PPs. Then, introduce the rotation.  
GL reads: *We are taught morals from a very early age in a number of different ways. One of the most popular ways to do so is through children's stories. In this rotation, we're going to read a story that teaches important lessons.*
2. Hand out story packets to PPs.
3. Have PPs read aloud *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss (attached)
4. Have PPs briefly summarize the story.
5. Discuss the story with PPs using some, all, or none of the following questions:
  1. What issue is Dr. Seuss trying to address in this story?
  2. How would you feel about what was going on in this story if you were a Star-Belly Sneetch? What about if you were a Plain Belly?
  3. Was McBean (the Fix-it-Up Chappie) doing the right thing by changing who had stars and who didn't? Why or why not?
    1. If not, what could he have done differently to make his actions more morally correct?
  4. When the Plain Belly Sneetches first went through McBean's Star-On machine, how did that help solve or contribute to the discrimination?
  5. Did the constant adding and removing of stars help or hurt the Sneetches? Why?
  6. If you were Sylvester McMonkey McBean, would you try to help the Sneetches?
    1. What would you have done differently?
    2. How could you make your actions more appropriate than McBean's?
  7. Consider the problems in our society that are similar to the ones in this story (e.g. bigotry and discrimination). What can we do to combat them?
6. Divide PPs into partners or, if necessary, groups of three.
7. Hand out paper and golf pencils to each group and instruct them to each write their own story. Their stories should teach some value and/or have some sort of moral dilemma in them. If PPs can't think of ideas, some examples could be:
  1. A person who is very stubborn and refuses to do anything she doesn't want to do.
  2. Someone who is rude to everyone around him but gets upset when nobody wants to be his friend.
  3. A very dishonest person whose lies come back to haunt him.
8. If there is extra time in the rotation, ask some PPs to read their stories. PPs should keep their stories since there will be time at the end of the program for them to read them to the whole region.

**The story is on the attached pages. Every other PP should receive a copy.**

## *The Sneetches* by Dr. Seuss

Now, the Star-Belly Sneetches  
Had bellies with stars.  
The Plain-Belly Sneetches  
Had none upon thars.  
Those stars weren't so big. They were really so small  
You might think such a thing wouldn't matter at all.

But because they had stars, all the Star-Belly Sneetches  
Would brag, "We're the best kind of Sneetch on the beaches."  
With their snoots in the air, they would sniff and they'd snort  
"We'll have nothing to do with the Plain-Belly sort!"  
And whenever they met some, when they were out walking,  
They'd hike right on past them without even talking.

When the Star-Belly children went out to play ball,  
Could a Plain Belly get in the game...? Not at all.  
You could only play if your bellies had stars  
And the Plain Belly children had none upon thars.

When the Star-Belly Sneetches had frankfurter roasts  
Or picnics or parties or marshmallow toasts,  
They never invited the Plain-Belly Sneetches.  
They left them out cold, in the dark of the beaches.  
They kept them away. Never let them come near.  
And that's how they treated them year after year.

Then ONE day, it seems...while the Plain-Belly Sneetches  
Were moping and doping alone on the beaches,  
Just sitting there wishing their bellies had stars...  
A stranger zipped up in the strangest of cars!

"My friends," he announced in a voice clear and keen,  
"My name is Sylvester McMonkey McBean.  
And I've heard of your troubles. I've heard you're unhappy.  
But I can fix that. I'm the Fix-it-Up Chappie.  
I've come here to help you. I have what you need.  
And my prices are low. And I work at great speed.  
And my work is one hundred per cent guaranteed!"

Then, quickly, Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
Put together a very peculiar machine.  
And he said, "You want stars like a Star-Belly Sneetch...?  
My friends, you can have them for three dollars each!"

"Just pay me your money and hop right aboard!"  
So they clambered inside. Then the big machine roared  
And it klonked. And it bonked. And it jerked. And it berked  
And it bopped them about. But the thing really worked!  
When the Plain-Belly Sneetches popped out, they had stars!  
They actually did. They had stars upon thars!

Then they yelled at the ones who had stars at the start,  
“We’re exactly like you! You can’t tell us apart.  
We’re all just the same, now, you snooty old smarties!  
And now we can go to your frankfurter parties.”

“Good grief!” groaned the ones who had stars at the first.  
“We’re *still* the best Sneetches and they are the worst.  
But, now, how in the world will we know,” they all frowned,  
“If which kind is what, or the other way around?”

Then up came McBean with a very sly wink  
And he said, “Things are not quite as bad as you think.  
So you don’t know who’s who. That is perfectly true.  
But come with me, friends. Do you know what I’ll do?  
I’ll make you, again, the best Sneetches on the beaches  
And all it will cost you is ten dollars eaches!”

“Belly stars are no longer in style,” said McBean.  
“What you need is a trip through my Star-Off Machine.  
This wondrous contraption will take *off* your stars  
So you won’t look like Sneetches who have them on thars.”  
And that handy machine, working very precisely,  
Removed all the stars from their tummies quite nicely.

Then, with snoots in the air, they paraded about  
And they opened their beaks and they let out a shout,  
“We know who is who! Now there isn’t a doubt.  
The best kind of Sneetches are Sneetches without!”

The, of course, those with stars all got frightfully mad.  
To be wearing a star now was frightfully bad.  
Then, of course, old Sylvester McMonkey McBean  
Invited *them* into his Star-Off Machine.  
Then, of course from THEN on, as you probably guess,  
Things really got into a horrible mess.

All the rest of that day, on those wild screaming beaches,  
The Fix-it-Up Chappie kept fixing up Sneetches.  
Off again! On again! In again! Out again!  
Through the machines they raced round and about again,  
Changing their stars every minute or two.  
They kept paying money. They kept running through  
Until neither the Plain nor the Star-Bellies knew  
Whether this one was that one...or that one was this one  
Or which one was what one...or what one was who.

Then when every last cent of their money was spent,  
The Fix-it-Up Chappie packed up and he went.  
And he laughed as he drove in his car up the beach,  
“They never will learn. No. You can’t teach a Sneetch!”

But McBean was quite wrong. I’m quite happy to say  
That the Sneetches got really quite smart on that day,  
The day they decided that Sneetches are Sneetches  
And no kind of Sneetch is the best on the beaches.



That day all the Sneetches forgot about stars  
And whether they had one, or not, upon thars.

## *What Was I Scared Of?* By Dr. Seuss

Well...

I was walking in the night and I saw nothing scary.  
For I have never been afraid of anything. Not very.  
Then I was deep within the woods when, suddenly, I spied them.  
I saw a pair of pale green pants with nobody inside them!  
I wasn't scared. But, yet, I stopped. What *could* those pants be there for?  
What *could* a pair of pants at night be standing in the air for?

And then they moved! Those empty pants! They kind of started jumping.  
And then my heart, I must admit, it kind of started thumping.  
So I got out. I got out fast as fast as I could go, sir.  
I wasn't scared. But pants like that I did not care for. No, sir.

After that a week went by. Then one dark night in Grin-itch  
(I had to do an errand there and fetch some Grin-itch spinach)...  
Well, I had fetched the spinach. I was starting back through town  
When those pants raced round a corner and they almost knocked me down!

I lost my Grin-itch spinach but I didn't even care.  
I ran for home! Believe me, I had really had a scare!  
Now, bicycles were never made for pale green pants to ride 'em,  
Especially spooky pale green pants with nobody inside 'em!

And the NEXT night, I was fishing for Doubt-trout on Roover River  
When those pants came rowing toward me! Well, I started into to shiver.  
And by now I was SO frightened that, I'll tell you, but I hate to...  
I screamed and rowed away and lost my hook and line and bait, too!

I ran and found a Brickel bush. I hid myself away.  
I got Brickels in my britches but I stayed there anyway.  
I stayed all night. The next night, too. I'd be there still no doubt,  
But I had to do an errand so, the *next* night, I went out.

I had to do an errand, had to pick a peck of Snide  
In a dark and gloomy Snide-field that was almost nine miles wide.  
I said, "I do not fear those pants with nobody inside them."  
I said, and said, and said those words. I said them. But I lied them.

Then I reached inside a Snide bush and the next think that I knew,  
I felt my hand touch someone! And I'll bet that you know who...  
And there I was! Caught in the Snide! And in that dreadful place  
Those spooky, empty pants and I were standing face to face!  
I yelled for help. I screamed. I shrieked. I howled. I yowled. I cried.  
"Oh, save me from these pale green pants with nobody inside!"

But then a strange thing happened. Why, those pants began to cry!  
Those pants began to tremble. They were just as scared as I!  
I never heard such whimpering and I began to see  
That I was just as strange to them as they were strange to me!

I put my arm around their waist and sat right down beside them.  
I calmed them down. Poor empty pants with nobody inside them.  
And now, we meet quite often, those empty pants and I,  
And we never shake or tremble. We both smile and say "Hi!"

### Rotation 3:

1. Quick name game... Name, Grade, Favorite childhood movie.
2. PP's will watch a video of movie clips from some classic childhood movies. Each clip contains a moral that that movie tries to teach.
3. PP's will break into smaller groups and will discuss the video clips.
  - Raise your hand if you have seen the majority of the movies in the video just shown. (Probably, the majority of hands will go up)
  - What morals, if any, were reflected through the movies in the video?
  - Do you think that you were able to learn these morals from the movies?
  - How do these morals affect you today?
  - Do you think that movies were important in creating a set of morals you can live by? If so, how has that set of morals changed?
4. GL says, "Now we will create our own skits that will teach the children of today morals that are important in Judaism, as well as our own lives."
5. Break into groups of 3 or 4.
6. Each group picks a piece of paper out of a hat. The piece of paper has one of the following morals written on it:
  - Love your neighbor as yourself
  - Help the needy
  - Respect your elders
  - All that glitters is not gold
  - If at first you don't succeed, try and try again
  - Try your best
  - It's funny until someone gets hurt
  - Treat others as you want to be treated
  - Don't be greedy
  - Two heads are better than one
7. PP's make skits and are told that they will be given the opportunity to present them later on (after the last rotation).