



# The Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium of Greater Philadelphia

Presents

## Jewish Disability Awareness & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) Lesson Plans



## INTRODUCTION

Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM) is a unified national initiative during the month of February that aims to raise disability awareness and foster inclusion in Jewish communities worldwide.

In the Philadelphia area, the Jewish Special Needs/Disability Inclusion Consortium works to expand opportunities for families of students with disabilities. The Consortium is excited to share these comprehensive lesson plans with schools, youth groups, and early childhood centers in our area. We hope that the children in our classrooms and youth groups will eventually become Jewish leaders and we hope that thinking about disability awareness and inclusion will become a natural part of their Jewish experience.

We appreciate you making time for teachers to use these lessons during February—or whenever it's convenient for you. For additional resources, please email me at [gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org](mailto:gkaplan-mayer@jewishlearningventure.org) or call me at 215-320-0376.

Thank you to Rabbi Michelle Greenfield for her hard work on this project and to Alanna Raffel for help with editing.

Sincerely,  
Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer,  
Director, Whole Community Inclusion

## NOTES FOR EDUCATORS

- We hope that you can make these lessons as inclusive as possible for all kinds of learners and for students with different kinds of disabilities. If you need any help in adapting these lesson plans, just get in touch!
- There are other ways to generate response besides verbal. For example in the preK and grades 1-3 lesson, there is an activity that asks students to identify accessible features on playgrounds. Students could point rather than name those items. Similarly, if you have a student who is blind or has vision loss, you could invite children to imagine features on an accessible playground.
- You may have students in your classroom who would like the opportunity to speak personally about their disabilities. Give students a heads up that you'll be doing this lesson so students have a chance to think about whether they might like to share. Similarly, you may have students whom you know have an invisible disability but they may prefer not to share with the class.

You may also want to consider how you present the materials in this lesson. All of the videos referenced in these lessons have captions, and the stories can be accessed visually or by a teacher reading aloud.

## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: PreK and Kindergarten (This lesson is designed for 4-5-year-olds)

**Created By:** Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer

### **Objectives:**

- Students will name ways that they can treat friends and peers with kindness and dignity, whether they see that a person has a disability or not.
- Students will name ways that they are unique and special.
- Students will share ideas about how a play space can be accessible for everyone.

### **Jewish Value:**

*Adam yechidi nivra*: every person is a unique creation.

### **Materials:**

- [Daniel's New Friend](#) book and/or [video](#)
- Paper
- Whole Community Inclusion coloring book
- Coloring materials including crayons, markers, dot paints, etc.
- Photos of accessible playgrounds (attached)

### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- Introduce JDAIM to the students
  - **SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community raises awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. We're going to read a fun story (or watch a fun video) about a character you will recognize: Daniel Tiger. We're going to use this story to help us think about the ways that each one of us is a unique creation and how we can learn to act with respect and kindness to each other. We'll also identify ways that we can make the places where we play accessible for everyone.

### **Reading Activity and Discussion (15 minutes):**

1. **SHOW** the students the cover of the book.
2. **SAY:** I want to tell you about this really fun book! Do you recognize this character? That's right--Daniel Tiger. Today we're going to hear a story about one of Daniel's new friends--Chrissie. Here's a little about about the story: Daniel and Miss Elaina are visiting Prince Wednesday's castle for a play date. When they arrive they are so excited to meet a new friend—Prince Wednesday's cousin, Chrissie. Daniel has so much fun playing with his new friend... and then he notices that Chrissie wears braces on her legs to help her walk. Even though Chrissie may walk differently than Daniel, she is able to play and participate in the best way for her. Let's learn about what Chrissie needs so that she can play with everyone.
3. **READ** the book.

4. **SHARE** these discussion questions with your students:
  - Walking with crutches is only one of the things that makes Chrissie unique. Can you name something else that's special about her? What does she have in common with her friends?
  - When Daniel realizes that Chrissie wears braces on her legs, he doesn't just touch them...he asks if he can touch them. Can you explain why that was an important thing to do? What are other ways that we can be respectful when we see a person who has a disability? (For example, don't just push a wheelchair; ask someone if they need help.)
  - When the other children are running, Chrissie stands and is the guard. Daniel says "We have to go fast to catch the dragon!" What does Daniel learn about how Chrissie plays? Was it kind and respectful to ask her to run faster? What are some ways that you can imagine the kids can support her when they play together in the future?
  - In our Jewish tradition, we learn that every person is created as a unique creation. What is something that makes you a unique?

#### **Every person is a Unique Creation Art (10 minutes)**

1. **SAY:** It was great to hear about how Chrissie is unique...and your ideas about what makes YOU unique. When someone has a disability, that is only one part of who they are. We are unique because of how we look on the outside--and because of the special things about who we are on the inside. Today you'll make a picture that shows you do something that makes you unique--what you love to play, how you love to help your friends or family, or where you love to go!
2. **GIVE** students paper and coloring materials. You may want to play this great song in the background while they do art.
3. **BRING** students together for a sharing circle so each student can share about their unique self!

#### **Accessibility and Accommodations Activity (10 minutes)**

1. **SAY:** In the book, we learn ways that Chrissie is able to play with her friends. People who have different kinds of disabilities may need accommodations--that means when something is adapted or adjusted. For example, a person in a wheelchair may need an accommodation like a ramp instead of using stairs. We are going to look at some really cool pictures of playgrounds and parks--even a water park. I am going to hold up the picture and show it to the whole group. If you see an example of something that might help a person with a disability in the picture, put up your hand and I'll call on you to share it!
2. **SHOW** the pictures to the students. Ask them "What do you see that could help children with disabilities play here? What is helping everyone be able to use the park?" Teachers: You will notice that the accommodations focus on different kinds of needs--ramps for wheelchair users; tactile elements for children who are blind; swings with extra support for children with motor issues; spaces to be quiet for children who are overwhelmed by noise.

#### **Wrap-Up: Whole Community Inclusion Coloring Book (5-10 minutes--can also be a take home activity)**

**SAY:** Today we have learned a lot about being a kind and respectful friend. We've learned about ways that we can make sure that everyone can be part of our communities! We want you to remember about what we've learned today so we have a coloring book that you can work on and take home with pictures to remind you! Thank you for all of your energy and ideas today.

















## JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 1st-3rd Grade

**Created By:** Gabrielle Kaplan-Mayer

### **Objectives:**

- Students will name ways that they can treat friends and peers with kindness and dignity, whether they see that a person has a disability or not.
- Students will learn the terms “accessibility” and “accommodation” and name some kinds of accommodations for people with disabilities.

### **Jewish Value:**

*Adam yehidi nivra*: every person is a unique creation.

### **Materials:**

- [Daniel's New Friend](#) book and/or [video](#)
- Whole Community Inclusion coloring book
- Coloring materials including crayons, markers, dot paints, etc.
- Photos of accessible playgrounds (attached)

### **INTRODUCTION (5 minutes):**

- Introduce JDAIM to the students
  - **SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community raises awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. We're going to read a fun story (or watch a fun video) about a character you will recognize: Daniel Tiger. We're going to use this story to help us think about the ways that each one of us is a unique creation and how we can learn to act with respect and kindness to each other. We'll also identify ways that we can make the places where we play accessible for everyone.

### **Reading Activity and Discussion (15 minutes):**

1. **SHOW** the students the cover of the book and point to Daniel's friend, Chrissie.
2. **SAY:** I want to tell you about this really fun book! Daniel and Miss Elaina are visiting Prince Wednesday's castle for a play date. When they arrive they are so excited to meet a new friend—Prince Wednesday's cousin, Chrissie. Daniel has so much fun playing with his new friend... and then he notices that Chrissie wears braces on her legs to help her walk. Even though Chrissie may walk differently than Daniel, she is able to play and participate in the best way for her. Let's learn about what Chrissie needs so that she can play with everyone.
3. **READ** the book.
4. **SHARE** these discussion questions with your students:
  - Walking with crutches is only one of the things that makes Chrissie unique. Can you name something else that's special about her? What does she have in common with her friends?
  - When Daniel realizes that Chrissie wears braces on her legs, he doesn't just touch them...he asks if he can touch them. Can you explain why that was an important and respectful thing to

do? What are other ways that we can be respectful when we see a person who has a disability? (For example, don't just push a wheelchair; ask someone if they need help.)

- When the other children are running, Chrissie stands and is the guard. Daniel says "We have to go fast to catch the dragon!" What does Daniel learn about how Chrissie plays? Was it kind and respectful to ask her to run faster? What are some ways that you can imagine the kids can support her when they play together in the future?
- Chrissie uses braces and crutches because she has a physical disability, a condition that limits her movement. We are able to see some kinds of disabilities and sometimes people may have disabilities that we can't see. We are going to talk about accessibility--how we can make sure that people with different kinds of disabilities can enter and experience places we go.

### **Accessibility and Accommodations Activity (15 minutes)**

1. **SAY:** In the book, we learn ways that Chrissie is able to play with her friends. People who have different kinds of disabilities may need accommodations--that means when something is adapted or adjusted. For example, a person in a wheelchair may need an accommodation like a ramp instead of using stairs. Another accommodation example is that a person who gets overwhelmed by lots of noise may need to have a quiet place to go when they are in loud places or may wear noise-cancelling headphones. When we create accommodations, we are making sure that a place is accessible--and everyone can use it.
2. **SAY:** We are going to look at some really cool pictures of playgrounds and parks--even a water park. I am going to hold up the picture and show it to the whole group. If you see an example of an accommodation in the picture, put up your hand and I'll call on you to share it!
3. **SHOW** the pictures to the students. Ask them "What kind of accommodations do you see? What is helping everyone be able to use the park?" You will notice that the accommodations focus on different kinds of needs--ramps for wheelchair users; tactile elements for children who are blind; swings with extra support for children with motor issues; spaces to be quiet for children who are overwhelmed by noise.

### **Wrap-Up: Whole Community Inclusion Coloring Book (5-10 minutes--can also be a take home activity)**

**SAY:** Today we have learned a lot about being a kind and respectful friend. We've learned about creating accommodations so that everyone can be part of our communities! We want you to remember about what we've learned today so we have a coloring book that you can work on and take home with pictures to remind you! Thank you for all of your energy and ideas today.

















## **JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 4th and 6th Grade**

**Created By:** Rabbi Michelle Greenfield

**Objectives:**

- Students will identify Disability Rights a type of civil right, and will begin to examine the history of this moment.
- Through story, text, and art, students will connect Jewish values with this civil rights movement

**Jewish Value:**

Tzedek-Justice צדק

**Materials:**

- Story from [God's Mailbox \(Marc Gellman, 1996\)](#): "Gluing the Broken Commandments Back Together," pp 68-72
- Copies of the discussion guide
- Devices with videos or written description of the Capitol Crawl
- Paper and drawing supplies

**Introduction:**

**SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community raises awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. There is a long history of people with disabilities fighting for their rights, sometimes with support from other advocates and allies.

**ASK:** Can you think of other people who have fought for their own civil and human rights?

Students will likely know about Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, and they may know that Rabbi AJ Heschel marched with him in Selma

**SAY:** Today we are going to share a Jewish story (a modern midrash) and learn about some moments in the Disability Rights movement in the United States. You will be encouraged to think about your roles in the struggle for equal rights for people with disabilities.

**Process**

**SAY:** The Torah often tells stories without all of the details. For many years, Rabbis and other Jewish thinkers have been creating new stories to fill in the gaps in the stories. This story fills in a gap in a specific moment in the Torah. Moses broke the first set of tablets that he got on Mount Sinai, and we know that he will get a new set. The Torah tells us that the first broken set was kept in the ark with new ones. This story imagines how they got there!

**READ:** Read the story. Or invite kids to read the story or to act it out!

**ASK:**

- How would you describe Moses' role in connection to the 'go slow people?' Does it matter that Moses has power? (Introduce the words 'ally' and 'advocate'.)
- How does Moses use his privilege and power?
- Who are the go slow people and go fast people in your life/family/community?

- Are there times when you have been a go-slow person?
- Are there times in your life when you have been asked to be an ally or an advocate?

Introduce the idea of disability rights:

- Sometimes the 'go slow people' who are ignored or left behind are people with physical, intellectual, developmental, or emotional disabilities
- What rights do people with disabilities have?
  - Answer: The same rights as everybody else!

**ASK:** Whose job is it to make sure that everybody has equal rights?

**SAY:** Until about 30 years ago, it was legal in the United States to discriminate against people with disabilities. 30 years ago, there was a law proposed to give rights to people with disabilities, but Senators and Congresspeople did not pay enough attention. We are going to watch a video (or read a description) of a moment when people with physical disabilities crawled up the steps of the Capitol building to get attention.

(You may want to invite kids to read the Capitol Crawl information attached below)

Watch: [This video of Jennifer Keelan](#) talking about her experience.

**SAY:** Hillel was a Jewish leader who lived almost 2,000 years ago, but we still learn his words often. I'm going to read you a quote that has 3 parts. First, just listen to all 3 parts. Then we will think about each part and how it connects to Jennifer's story.

If I am not for myself, who is for me?	<i>Im ein ani li mi li</i>	אם אין אני לי, מי לי?
And when I am only for myself, what am I?	<i>Uk'she'ani l'atzmi mah ani</i>	וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני?
And if not now, when?	<i>V'im lo achshav eimatai</i>	ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?

Give students a piece of paper and drawing supplies.

**SAY:** We are all a part of creating justice and speaking out for the disability rights movement. Some of us in the room may have disabilities or may help care for people who have disabilities. Some of us are advocates or allies. Pick on part of this quote and either draw or write something you can do or something somebody else has done to help create justice for people with disabilities.

**WRAP-UP (Closing activity):**

Invite groups to join back together and share their learning and their art

### Capitol Crawl

In March of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was stuck. Congress was not paying attention to the bill, and the needs of people with disabilities were being ignored. The Americans with Disabilities Act was the first law giving many basic rights to people with disabilities and requiring accessibility in businesses, government buildings, schools, and other institutions. On March 12th, a large group of people with disabilities gathered at the bottom of the stone steps of the Capitol building.



More than 60 activists with physical disabilities left behind their wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility aids and began to climb the 83 steps to the Capitol. This attracted media coverage and forced congress to pay attention to the barriers that were in place. Jennifer Keelan was 8 years old and had Cerebral Palsy. She left her wheelchair and pulled herself up by her arms and legs saying, “I’ll take all night if I have to.”



**JDAIM 2018 Lesson Plan: 7th grade+ (Middle and High School)**

**Created By:** Rabbi Michelle Greenfield

**Objectives:**

- Students will identify Disability Rights a type of civil right, and will begin to examine the history of this moment.
- Through story, text, and art, students will connect Jewish values with this civil rights movement

**Jewish Value:**

Tzedek-Justice תְּדֵק

**Materials:**

- Story from [God's Mailbox \(Marc Gellman, 1996\)](#): "Gluing the Broken Commandments Back Together," pp 68-72
- Copies of the discussion guide
- Devices with videos OR copies of information for breakout groups
- Paper and drawing supplies

**Introduction:**

**SAY:** February is Jewish Disability Awareness, Acceptance & Inclusion Month (JDAIM for short). During February, the Jewish community raises awareness about how we can all support people with disabilities. There is a long history of people with disabilities fighting for their rights, sometimes with support from other advocates and allies.

**ASK:** Can you think of other people who have fought for their own civil and human rights?

Students will likely know about Rev Dr Martin Luther King, Jr, and they may know that Rabbi AJ Heschel marched with him in Selma

**SAY:** Today we are going to share a Jewish story (a modern midrash) and learn about some moments in the Disability Rights movement in the United States. You will be encouraged to think about your roles in the struggle for equal rights for people with disabilities.

**Process (Include books/video/art activities):**

**SAY:** The Torah often tells stories without all of the details. For many years, Rabbis and other Jewish thinkers have been creating new stories to fill in the gaps in the stories. This story fills in a gap in a specific moment in the Torah. Moses broke the first set of tablets that he got on Mount Sinai, and we know that he will get a new set. The Torah tells us that the first broken set was kept in the ark with new ones. This story imagines how they got there!

**READ:** Read the story. Or invite kids to read the story or to act it out!

**ASK:**

- How would you describe Moses' role in connection to the 'go slow people?' Does it matter that Moses has power? (Introduce the words 'ally' and 'advocate'.)



- How does Moses use his privilege and power?
- Who are the go slow people and go fast people in your life/family/community?
- Are there times when you have been a go-slow person?
- Are there times in your life when you have been asked to be an ally or an advocate?

Introduce the idea of disability rights:

- Sometimes the 'go slow people' who are ignored or left behind are people with physical, intellectual, developmental, or emotional disabilities
- What rights do people with disabilities have?
  - The same rights as everybody else!

**SAY:** Unfortunately, people with disabilities don't always have the same legal access to education, care, housing, and jobs that other people do.

Until about 30 years ago, some people with disabilities didn't have the legal right to education in the United States! Some people worked really hard to fight for they needed to help create the level of protection and equality that people with disabilities have now. There's still a long way to go, but a lot of work has been done. You're going to work in groups to learn about significant moments in the disability rights movement and to think about how a few Jewish quotes are connected to those moments.

Divide students into 2 or more groups, giving each group a moment or group within the Disability Rights Movement:

Group 1: Ed Roberts

- Give the students a device with this video about [Ed Roberts](#) or copies of the Ed Roberts sheet as well as copies of the discussion guide, paper, and drawing supplies.
- As students to watch or read together and then discuss.
- Following this part of the activity, use the discussion guide for a follow-up text/art activity.

Group 2: The Capital Crawl

- Give students a device with [this video of the Capitol Crawl](#) or copies of the Capitol Crawl sheet as well as copies of the discussion guide, paper, and drawing supplies.
- Ask students to watch or read together and then discuss.
- Following this part of the activity, use the discussion guide for a follow-up text/art activity.

**WRAP-UP (Closing activity):**

Invite groups to join back together and share their learning and their art.

### Capitol Crawl

In March of 1990, the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) was stuck. Congress was not paying attention to the bill, and the needs of people with disabilities were being ignored. The Americans with Disabilities Act was the first law giving many basic rights to people with disabilities and requiring accessibility in businesses, government buildings, schools, and other institutions. On March 12th, a large group of people with disabilities gathered at the bottom of the stone steps of the Capitol building.



More than 60 activists with physical disabilities left behind their wheelchairs, crutches, and other mobility aids and began to climb the 83 steps to the Capitol. This attracted media coverage and forced congress to pay attention to the barriers that were in place. Jennifer Keelan was 8 years old and had Cerebral Palsy. She left her wheelchair and pulled herself up by her arms and legs saying, “I’ll take all night if I have to.”



The ADA became a law within 4th months.

### Ed Roberts

Ed Roberts was born in 1939. When he was 14, he became sick from Polio. He survived, but was almost entirely paralyzed from the neck down. He was the first student with significant physical disabilities to attend the University of California, Berkeley, and he had to fight for his place there. Because there were no rooms that could accommodate his medical equipment, he had to live in the campus hospital instead of a dorm. While he was there, he created a program for other students with physical disabilities. The students became known as the Rolling Quads. Deborah Kaplan, another member of the Rolling Quads explained that in addition to the physical barriers the students faced, they also had to deal with attitudes from others who thought that “having a disability is a fate worse than death. That we should be pitied. That if we do *anything* we are brave, and yet [we’re] really not real people.”



Ed Roberts and the Rolling Quads fought to make Berkeley a more accessible city and they also fought for the rights of people with disabilities to make their own decisions about their lives.



Discussion Guide:

Hillel was a famous Jewish leader who lived almost 2,000 years ago. One of his famous quotes has three parts

If I am not for myself, who is for me?	<i>Im ein ani li mi li</i>	אם אין אני לי, מי לי?
And when I am only for myself, what am I?	<i>Uk'she'ani l'atzmi mah ani</i>	וכשאני לעצמי, מה אני?
And if not now, when?	<i>V'im lo achshav eimatai</i>	ואם לא עכשיו, אימתי?

How does each of these parts apply to the moment in disability history that you learned about?

Who has to take responsibility for the rights of people with disabilities?

The image below is based on this quote and was created by artist Daniel Bennett Schwartz for PJ Library. Based on this discussion, create your own image for the quote.



