



The Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education

## SAMPLE LESSON PLAN FOR THE HIGH HOLIDAYS: *TEFILLAH*

### HOW THE *ALEINU* PRAYER TEACHES THE CONCEPT OF *TIKKUN OLAM* For Grades Six - Eight

Linda Kallin NESS School Temple Judea of Bucks County 2005

**FORMAT:** Lens: Language, Social, Meaning, Human

#### BEFORE

- Ask: Who has heard of the Hebrew words "*Tikkun Olam*"?
- Students have 21 seconds with a partner to think about what *Tikkun Olam* means. Discuss/share as a class. (Expect at least some of the students to know the term. If not, explain that it means "repairing the world" - the idea that God can't or won't fix the world alone.)
- Students give some examples of ways we can help fix the world.
- Explain that *Tikkun Olam* is a concept found in many of our prayers. Today I want you to be thinking about how the prayer we'll be studying - *Aleinu* - suggest the idea of *Tikkun Olam*.

#### DURING

- Write "*Aleinu*" in Hebrew on the board.
- Students stand and chant the prayer (which they know).
- I write *al* (*ayin-lamed*) and *nu* (*nun-vov*) with three dots separating them.
- Ask if students know what "*al*" and "*nu*" mean in Hebrew. Take some guesses. If no one knows, explain that "*al*" means "on" and the suffix "*nu*" means "us/our."
- Ask: Putting "*al*" and "*nu*" together, what is the meaning of this word? ("On us")

- Ask: If I say something is "on you" ("That's on you!") what do think that means? (I have a responsibility or duty of some kind.) So, what do you think this prayer is about? (Something is "on us" to do - we're responsible for doing something; we have a duty to do something.)
- What are some things you're responsible for doing in your everyday life? (List them on the board.)
- How does the idea of being responsible or having a duty tie in with the concept of *Tikkun Olam*? (We have a responsibility to help repair the world - make it a better place. I might point to one or two of the items on the board and ask how doing them helps make the world better.)
- We read the English translation of *Aleinu* (alternating one half of the room reading a line followed by the other half responding with the next line - **CHORAL READING**) from our text in order to consider what the prayer says is "on us" to do ("worship God"). Ask for other words to replace "worship." Suggest that all the words indicate that we're responsible (it's "on us") for having some kind of relationship with God.
- Students stand and reread the *Aleinu* prayer in Hebrew (**WHOLE-PART-WHOLE**).

## AFTER

- At the beginning of class, I asked you to be thinking about how the *Aleinu* prayer suggests the idea of *Tikkun Olam*.
- In four minutes, with a partner, discuss and write a joint response to: How does the concept of *Tikkun Olam* relate to the High Holidays? (What does our relationship with God have to do with *Tikkun Olam*?) (Write the question on the board).
- Share responses with the class.

