

Mahloket Matters Teens:

Navigating Inner Challenges and Societal Discord through Jewish Text and Social-Emotional Learning

The Pardes Center for Jewish Educators (PCJE) believes that the integration of a constructive disagreement mindset, Jewish text study, and social-emotional learning is a powerful combination. Together, these ingredients can effectively help equip students with the cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills they need to better manage internal and external conflicts. Therefore, PCJE has created three educational units that weave together these three components. This new curriculum is called ***Mahloket Matters Teens: Navigating Inner Challenges and Societal Discord through Jewish Text and Social-Emotional Learning***.

Unit 1

Introduction to Mahloket Matters

- Lesson 1:**
Setting the Tone
- Lesson 2:**
49/49 - The Value of Multiple Perspectives
- Lesson 3:**
Two Types of *Mahloket*
- Lesson 4:**
Understanding Ourselves and Others

Unit 2

Showin' Up!

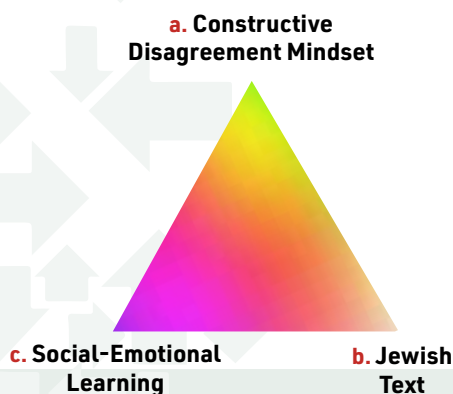
- Lesson 1:**
The Conversation that Never Happened
- Lesson 2:**
Internal Conditions - It Starts with Me!
- Lesson 3:**
Interpersonal Conditions - Between You and Me
- Lesson 4:**
External Conditions - Setting the Stage

Unit 3

Constructive Conversations

- Lesson 1:**
Effective Listening and Speaking
- Lesson 2:**
The Sanhedrin Way - Apply Your Constructive Disagreement Skills!
- Lesson 3:**
Harm Happens - How Do We Meet It?
- Lesson 4:**
Coming Full Circle

The Mahloket Matters Triangle



a. Constructive Disagreement Mindset reflects the understanding that **disagreements can be a positive opportunity for growth and deepening of relationships**. This mindset is cultivated by developing the values of intellectual humility, intellectual curiosity, and empathy.

Jewish tradition venerates the concept of *mahloket le-shem shamayim* (constructive disagreement) as is reflected by the thousands of *mahloket* (disagreements) recorded in the Mishnah and Talmud, wherein even the minority opinions are preserved. Furthermore, the way that Jews have studied their texts for centuries via *havrutot* (study partners) is a style of learning that invites discussion and debate. We don't just read the texts, *we engage the texts through our engagement with each other*.

b. Jewish Texts ground students in their **ancient tradition** as they draw upon those texts to better understand themselves, consider social values, assess current events, form their own opinions, and learn how to relate to others with whom they disagree in the spirit of *mahloket le-shem shamayim* (constructive disagreement). **The texts offer framing and rich source material leading to meaningful discussion and debate about contemporary issues.** The texts also give students an opportunity to draw connections to other Judaic Studies learning.

c. Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) is an experiential process through which students **acquire and apply the knowledge, skills and attitudes necessary to develop healthy identities, manage emotions, achieve personal and collective goals, and cultivate relationships.** Valuing social and emotional intelligence alongside intellectual processing, SEL is concerned with making classrooms supportive, welcoming, and growthful environments where relationships can deepen and thrive. SEL is not another task to include in a curriculum; rather, it is a lens through which all tasks can be viewed.

The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning (CASEL)

[The Collaborative for Academic, Social, and Emotional Learning \(CASEL\)](#) lists five core competencies of Social-Emotional Learning.

These core competencies are interrelated and build upon one another. A foundation of **self-awareness** builds towards **self-management** as we learn to effectively manage our emotions and behavior. When we have established **social awareness**, we can put **relationship skills** into practice. With awareness and management skills for both self and other, we are more prepared for **responsible decision-making** at large.



Each **competency** contains principles and **practical skills** that easily align with **Jewish values**. Therefore, SEL and Jewish values can be mutually reinforcing.

Examples:

Social Awareness → **Deep Listening** → Jewish value of '*mahloket le-shem shamayim*'

Relationship Skills → **Constructive Feedback** → Jewish value of '*tokhekha*'

Each of the three components of the Mahloket Matters triangle – constructive disagreement mindset, Jewish text, SEL – features prominently in this curriculum. By weaving these components together via text study, discussion questions, and an array of activities, we aim to maximize the impact of each component by creating a cohesive and skill-building experience for our students.

Each curricular unit includes an educator's guide, accompanying slides, and a digital student workbook that may also be printed. The slides and the student workbook are in an editable format so that you may adjust them as you see fit. We welcome and encourage you to make this curriculum your own!

For more details, please contact Sefi Kraut, Director of the Mahloket Matters Project. Sefi can be reached at sefik@pardes.org.il.

