Overview..................................................................................................................viii–xii

1. Names: Meaning and Memory
Names are words we use — for ourselves and for others — to demonstrate the nature of our relationships and how we view the world. We will look at texts that explore how names connect us with meanings and memories.
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..........................................................1
   ☑ Sourcesheet for Participants .............................................9

2. Moses: Not a Man of Words?
Moses is remembered for his many teachings, but did you know that Moses did not consider himself a man of words? We will take a closer look at the tension between Moses’ actions and his words, and what this teaches us about leadership.
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide .....................................................12
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3. The Silence of Aaron
Silence can be a kind of speech, and what is unsaid is often as important as what is said. In the Bible, Aaron’s response to tragedy is summed up in two words: “Vayidom Aharon — and Aaron was silent”. What meanings does his silence hold?
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................24
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4. Hurling Words Towards Heaven: Hannah’s Prayer
The Talmud holds up Hannah as a model for how to pray. Though she appears in the Bible only briefly, she makes a lasting impression. What can we learn from Hannah’s prayer about how we converse with the Divine?
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................35
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5. Hurtful Words
What can Jewish texts teach us about the ways our words can cause harm? In this unit, we will explore how the words we choose and use can affect those around us, whether or not we intend for those words to wound.
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................43
   ☑ Sourcesheet for Participants .....................................51

6. Not One Empty Word
The Bible is a book that speaks volumes, through the ongoing act of interpretation known as midrash. How do those interpretations affect our understanding of the source texts, and what is our role in that tradition?
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................55
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FOR MIDDLE SCHOOL AND ELEMENTARY SCHOOL STUDENTS:
The Names We Call Each Other (Middle School)
Names are words we use to identify ourselves and each other. How do our names, what we call each other, and the intentions behind our words affect our relationships? How can words hurt? Do our intentions matter when we speak?
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................65
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Moses: Words or Actions (Elementary School)
Moses was famous for being a great leader who could speak directly to God, but Moses wasn’t confident about speaking to people. What can we learn from Moses about using words and taking action?
   ☑ Facilitator’s Guide ..................................................75
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FOR EARLY CHILDHOOD:
PJ LIBRARY PROGRAMMING UNITS
Book List .................................................................................83
The First Gift ...............................................................84
A Sack Full of Feathers ...................................................90
And There Was Evening, And There Was Morning ...91

SUPPLEMENTAL READING:
“Words” from Simple Words .........................................92
Babylonian Talmud Bava Metzia 84a .........................96
**Introduction (2 minutes)**

Welcome to the Global Day of Jewish Learning!

What can Jewish texts teach us about the ways in which our words can cause harm? Today we’ll use a unique story in the Talmud to explore the Jewish understanding of different ways we can wound others with words.

**Part One: Biblical Origins of Mistreatment (10 minutes)**

The traditions and laws around hurtful words extend from the laws regarding fairness in financial dealings. In the Book of Leviticus, we encounter the instructions for the Jubilee — the seventh shmita year (in which the shmita is a “sabbath” year in a cycle of seven years). Within the details of how to calculate the value of land during the Jubilee year, there are specific prohibitions against charging an unfair price.

> Read Text #1 aloud.


In this Jubilee Year you shall return each man to his ancestral portion. If you sell a sale item to your counterpart, or acquire from the hand of your counterpart, you shall not exploit one another. On the basis of the number of years after the Jubilee you shall acquire from your counterpart. According to the abundance of years, you shall increase its price, and according to the paucity of the years you shall decrease its price, as it is the number of crops he is selling to you. You shall not wrong one another, and you shall fear your God; for I am the Lord your God.

Both verses 14 and 17 use the word *tonu* (חוטה), translated here as both “to exploit” and “to wrong”. *Tonu* comes from *ona’a* (:number), which means to mistreat or wrong another.

**Ask:**

1. Verse 14 says “you shall not exploit one another”, referring to financial exploitation. What are some ways this form of exploitation can hurt others?
2. Verse 17 says “you shall not wrong one another”. How might the types of “wrong” expressed in verses 14 and 17 differ?
3. What might be the significance of “and you shall fear your God”?
Introduction: Aaron the Speaker


10 Moses said to the Lord: Please, my Lord, I am not a man of words. Neither yesterday nor the day before, nor since you have spoken to your servant as I am cumbrous of speech and cumbrous of tongue. 11 The Lord said to him: Who gives a mouth to a person? Or who renders one mute or deaf, or sighted or blind? Is it not I, the Lord? 12 Now, go, and I will be with your mouth and I will instruct you that which you shall say. 13 He said: Please, my Lord, please send by means of whom You will send. 14 The wrath of the Lord was enflamed against Moses and He said: Is not Aaron the Levite your brother? I know that he can speak. And also, here he is going out to meet you; he will see you, and he will rejoice in his heart. 15 You shall speak to him, and you shall place the words in his mouth; and I will be with your mouth and with his mouth, and I will instruct you that which you shall do. 16 He shall speak to the people for you, and he shall be a mouth to speak for you, and you shall be a leader for him.

Part One: The Death of Aaron’s Sons


9:22 Aaron raised his hands toward the people and blessed them. And he descended from performing the sin offering, the burnt offering, and the peace offerings. 23 Moses and Aaron came into the Tent of Meeting and emerged and blessed the people; and the glory of the Lord appeared to the entire people. 24 Fire emerged from before the Lord and consumed upon the altar the burnt offering and the fats; all the people saw it and sang praise, and fell upon their faces.

10:1 Each of the sons of Aaron, Nadav and Avihu, took his fire-pan and placed it in fire, and placed incense upon, and they offered before the Lord strange fire that He had not commanded them. 2 Fire emerged from before the Lord and consumed them. And they died before the Lord. 3 Moses said to Aaron: This is that which the Lord spoke, saying: Through those who are near to Me I will be sanctified. And before all the people I will be glorified; and Aaron was silent.
Facilitator’s Note: This unit can be used to open up a discussion with students about bullying. The unit is focused on the ways words can hurt, and looks at the role of intent behind our words, but does not address bullying directly.

Introduction (8 minutes)

Welcome to the Global Day of Jewish Learning!

Names are words we use to identify ourselves and each other. In life we have more than just the names our parents give us — we acquire other names through the relationships we build. What someone calls us can define or even change how we view ourselves. Sometimes the words and names we choose to use can push the boundaries of those relationships.

Today we’ll look closely at how our names, what we call each other, and the intentions behind our words are connected to the relationships we have with people around us. What do the names we use say about our relationships? How can words hurt? Do our intentions matter when we speak? And what do Jewish texts have to say about all of this?

ACTIVITY #1: WHAT’S MY NAME?

Let’s begin by looking at our own names. Names are outward-facing, and we use them to distinguish ourselves from others, or be distinguished by others.

- Hand out the Activity Sheet (included at the end of this unit) for students to complete. When they have finished, ask a few students to share their answers.

Names can have an impact on us, and different names can change how we feel in the moment. Names can have meanings that change, depending on who says the name.

- Ask the group:

  1. Who calls you by your full name? When does that happen? How does that make you feel?
  2. What do you call your parents? Your teachers? How do those names reflect your relationship with them?
  3. Do you act differently when people call you by different names? How?
  4. Do you have different nicknames for your friends? When do you switch between names?

Keep these names and ideas in mind as we explore the significance of names and words in our relationships.

Part One: A Talmudic Tale of Two Best Friends (30 minutes)

Two central figures in the Talmud are Rabbi Yohanan and Rabbi Shimon ben Lakish, who is also called Reish Lakish. They appear throughout the Talmud, usually in the middle of a disagreement, but they are great friends nonetheless. In fact they’re family: Reish Lakish is married to Rabbi Yohanan’s sister. Their good-natured arguments are always in the context of studying, and because they disagree they push each other to be better scholars. They question each other constantly, which forces them both to clarify and think again about what they say.

...“Who gives man the powers of speech” is God’s way of saying that the loss of abilities of speech isn’t a purely natural occurrence, but rather happened under God’s supervision...

Ask:

1. What do you think God is saying when he asks Moses, “Who gives a mouth to a person?”
2. Why do you think God didn’t just turn Moses into a better speaker?

Bring the group back together and ask a few chavruta pairs to share their answers.

Moses may be afraid of what others will think of him if he messes up his speech, or if he sounds weird, or if they don’t believe what he says. We can all understand why Moses might be worried about being judged by others.

What would you say to Moses, to encourage him? Let’s write a message to Moses.

ACTIVITY #1: WRITE A MESSAGE TO MOSES

You will need:

- Paper for folding and decorating as a greeting card
- Pens, markers, crayons, pencils, other decorating materials, etc.
- A whiteboard and markers for brainstorming
- (Optional) Pre-fold the paper into greeting card sizes, print card templates, or use blank greeting cards

Steps:

1. As a group, brainstorm a few encouraging phrases that would be nice on a card.
2. Write the phrases or words on the board, and let the participants pick their favorites to write on the greeting cards.
3. Address the cards to Moses, encouraging him not to be afraid to speak up, or not to be embarrassed.
4. Bring the group back together and ask them to share some of their messages of encouragement.

Part Two: Listening Carefully (20 minutes)

Eventually, Moses does what God commands and the Book of Exodus continues with Moses leading the Children of Israel out of Egypt. Moses can perform miracles with his staff, and he uses it to part the Red Sea, taking his people into the desert on the way to the Promised Land. As the leader, Moses is in charge of everyone’s safety, even when things get difficult. How is a leader supposed to address the concerns of his people? How does Moses manage?

Let’s keep this in mind as we read Text #3. After 40 years of wandering in the desert, God tells Moses to speak to a rock to bring out water.
Teaching it to our children means also making them partners in what is so very important.

— Rabbi Steinsaltz
“The best way to build a solid and creative Jewish continuity is through a community of learning and practice. The Global Jewish learning day is a concrete expression of this conception and of a sincere feeling of Klal Israel, of a great global Jewish family.”
The main result of the day was the strengthening of Jewish unity, the spiritual enrichment of the individual through the expansion of individual Jewish knowledge, as well as the possibility of mutual exchange of experience.

[Maccabi, in Zaporozhye, Ukraine]
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The Global Day furthers the mission of Rabbi Adin Even-Israel Steinsaltz, to “Let My People Know”

NOV. 17. 19

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