

WEEK 2

MEZUZAH AND TEFILLIN

MY PROUD IDENTITY



TAKE ACTION

YOUVE GOT THE POWER!

Supplies for the Opening Activities

DAY	PROVIDED	NOT PROVIDED
MONDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1 set of slips of paper with locations on it per bunk (dropbox) 	
TUESDAY		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Poster Boards + supplies for bunk to make giant 3D mezuzah
WEDNESDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Paper plane diagram sheets (dropbox) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Plain sheets of paper 1 per camper
THURSDAY	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Headbands 3 per bunk <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Photo of computer with wires & cables 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <input type="checkbox"/> Tape (to hold the headband)

MONDAY

MEZUZAH PRIDE



OPENING ACTIVITY

Supplies:

- Print out slips of paper with different locations listed (school cafeteria, bedroom, airport, mall, park etc.)

Hand out a slip of paper to each kid with the name of different locations.

Have each kid tell the group what it says on their piece of paper and how they can display Jewish pride there. If they can't come up with anything, have the other campers help. When one kid is finished, they choose another kid to go next.

Some ideas: Cafeteria: let your friends see that you're making a blessing on the food, Bedroom: say shema before you go to sleep, Mall: walk around with a Star of David necklace, etc.

ADJUST FOR ZOOM: Slips of paper can be provided in the box or sent digitally to the campers by the counselor. The activity can proceed as described above.



VIDEO SCRIPT

Hey guys! Remember that prayer we say as we cover our eyes with our right hand? What's it called?

That's right! The Shema. Now, besides for the Torah, there are 2 other places where the Shema prayer is written with a quill and ink on parchment.

Does anyone know where?

Yes! The mezuzah.

The other place is inside these little black boxes that men and boys above 13 wear...

You got it! The Tefillin!

Today we'll learn all about the mezuzah...and don't worry, because we'll get to Tefillin a little later this week.

The mezuzah is placed on basically every doorpost except for places where it would be inappropriate for Hashem's name to be said, like a bathroom. Rooms that are really super small, less than 6 ft, don't need a mezuzah, and rooms that don't have a doorpost also don't need one.

Now, imagine you're walking down the street in a random city, and you see a home with a mezuzah on the doorpost.

How would you feel?

"No way! Here's Jewish family!" You might think. It would probably be really exciting, and would make you super proud.

That's one of the great powers of the mezuzah, it tells everyone passing by: "We are Jewish, and we are proud!"

Sometimes you may feel like you want to blend into the crowd, and not stand out, or you're not comfortable to act differently than other kids in your class.

But the only reason we are all here today, is because for thousands of years, all of our grandparents and great-grandparents chose to remain Jewish and proud.

Imagine if all of our great-great-grandparents decided that they weren't comfortable showing that they were Jewish, if they didn't go to synagogue, or put a mezuzah on their door, or celebrate the holidays, or teach their kids that they were Jewish - there would be no Judaism left today! Isn't that crazy?!

So when we are proud of who we are, it's our biggest strength because we are keeping Judaism alive.

Now, where do you think it's more important to act Jewish? At home or in public?

Well, believe it or not, the mezuzah tells us the answer. A mezuzah on a door post is not positioned straight. Which direction is it pointing?

That's actually a trick question! The top points inside, but the bottom points outward.

The mezuzah's message is that both at home and outside, Hashem is always with us. No matter where we are, we remember who we are and how proud we feel to be Jewish. L'chaim!



STORY

Onkelos was a member of the Roman royal family. His mother was Hadrian's sister, and his father was called Klonikos.

Onkelos was a very educated man and was well-versed in Roman and Greek culture. He was blessed not only with a clear head and an exceptional brain, but also with a golden heart and a lofty soul. He soon realized that idolatry was foolish and that the Jewish religion was the real G-dly religion. On the quiet he began to serve G-d,

the Creator of heaven and earth, and he waited for the opportunity of formally accepting the Jewish religion.

Once, Onkelos came to his uncle Hadrian and said: "For many years I have been poring over books and manuscripts, studying until I have become familiar with all the languages and sciences. But what have I gained from it all? It is time for me to go out into the world and start doing business. You know that I am not familiar with worldly things,

whereas you, the great Roman emperor, are well-versed in worldly affairs. I have therefore come to ask your advice as to what kind of material I should buy and sell.”

Hadrian was greatly flattered that his wise nephew should ask his advice, and he said: “My imperial riches are at your disposal. Take as much money as you need for business. I would advise you to seek material that is extremely cheap due to the fact that people do not realize its worth, material that few people are seeking. You will be able to buy it cheaply, and after explaining its real value to people, you will be able to make a nice profit!”

Onkelos the Prince soon left the royal palace. He traveled from Rome and started out for Jerusalem, in the land of Judah. Once there, he took upon himself the religion of the persecuted Jews and converted. He became a disciple of Rabbi Eliezer ben Hyrcanus and Rabbi Yehoshua ben Chananyah, the great tannaim who were disciples of Rabbi Yochanan ben Zakkai. He gave himself over entirely to the study of the Torah. His perseverance and dedication were so great that his teachers became concerned about his health, but Onkelos continued learning day and night until he became well-versed in all the secrets of the Torah.

Onkelos took very much to heart the fact that many Jews had, during the Babylonian exile, forgotten their holy language, and had started speaking Babylonian, Ashdodic, Aramaic and various other dialects. When the Jews returned from the Babylonian exile, Ezra the Scribe translated the Torah into Aramaic so that everybody should be able to understand it, but this translation was lost. Onkelos now decided to translate the Torah into Aramaic once more, according to the explanations handed down from generation to generation, through Ezra the Scribe and back to Moses. This translation, that we still have, is called “Targum Onkelos.”

After a short time Hadrian found out that his nephew had accepted the Jewish religion and had become one of the foremost Jewish scholars. The emperor was beside himself with rage, and he sent a company of soldiers to arrest Onkelos and to bring him in chains to Rome.

When the Roman soldiers arrived, Onkelos greeted them in a friendly manner, and talked to them about religion and knowledge. His words impressed them so much that the soldiers threw themselves at his feet and begged him to convert them to the Jewish religion, as he had done himself.

When Hadrian saw that his soldiers did not return, he sent another company of brave warriors with instructions to bring Onkelos in chains.

This time he gave orders not to have any discussions with Onkelos, but to arrest him on the spot and bring him to Rome, because Hadrian had heard what had happened to his first messengers.

Onkelos again warmly received the royal messengers. “I know that the emperor forbade you to have any discussions with me. You must obey the royal command; I also obeyed him.

“I will therefore ask you one question. You know very well what goes on in the imperial court. The common soldier carries the torch for the officer; the officer carries it for the captain; the captain for the general and the general for the emperor. Tell me, for whom does the emperor carry the torch?”

“The emperor is not obliged to serve anyone,” they answered him. “He is the highest authority in the realm!”

“Take a look,” Onkelos answered them. “The G-d of Israel, the Creator of heaven and earth, who delivered the Jews from Egypt, the G-d over everything—in spite of His greatness, still deemed

it fit to lighten the way for His servants, the Jews, with a pillar of fire for forty complete years!”

These words made a great impression on the soldiers, and they immediately gave up their mission and became faithful disciples of Onkelos.

Once more, Hadrian sent a company of troops with high officers at the head, with express orders not to say one word to Onkelos and not to answer any questions, but to arrest him immediately.

The messengers arrived and started to carry out the emperor’s orders without delay. They led him out of his house. At the door Onkelos stopped and joyfully kissed the *mezuzah*.

The messengers gazed at him in wonder, and could not restrain themselves from asking him:

“What does that thing on the door symbolize, and why are you so happy at being taken to Rome, where your uncle will surely have your head chopped off?”

“I laugh at foolish people. A king sits in his palace and has guards around him to protect him from danger. But the Jewish King, the Lord of the world, allows his servants to sit quietly at home and He protects them from outside. That is the *mezuzah* on our door!”

The royal messengers fell entirely under the influence of Onkelos’ words, and it did not take long before they also became his faithful disciples.

When Hadrian saw that he would not be able to bring his nephew by force, he decided that there must be some special reason for all this. He had a strong desire to see his nephew, so he swore that he

would not harm him if he would come to visit him voluntarily.

Onkelos started out for Rome. When he presented himself to the emperor, the latter was surprised to see that Onkelos had lost much weight. Onkelos assured him that he had gained much Torah and wisdom instead. Hadrian then asked him why he had left his home and his religion, and accepted the religion of a small nation that was persecuted and ill-treated by all the other nations of the world?

“I listened to your good advice,” Onkelos answered him with a smile. “You advised me to buy a material for which there are few customers. I traveled throughout the world and I could not find anything that has fewer customers than the Jewish religion. I bought it, and I found that I had made a bargain. The holy Jewish prophets have promised that the poor, persecuted Jewish nation will become a nation of princes; that kings throughout the world will consider themselves honored to serve them; and that the Torah, which is now downtrodden, will be recognized by all nations, and Jerusalem will be the lighthouse of the whole world.”

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- **Why does Onkelos have so much Jewish pride?**
- **How does the mezuzah affect the soldiers?**
- **Why is it important to have a mezuzah on our doors?**

TUESDAY

GETTING INTO “JEWISH MODE”



OPENING ACTIVITY

GIANT MEZUZAH!

Provide the bunk with posters and lots of craft supplies (markers, stickers, glue, paper, scissors etc) and have them create a giant, creative 3D mezuzah case to hang on the wall of their bunk room.

ADJUSTMENT TO ZOOM: Have each camper create their own creative 3D mezuzah case and send in a picture



VIDEO SCRIPT

Today we're going to imagine that you are a Major League Baseball pitcher! Close your eyes for a minute and think about what you see as you walk into the stadium.

The court, the players, the coach, the uniforms... and some big screens that keep track of the score.

What do you think happens to you as soon as you walk into the stadium?

All the things that you're seeing and wearing and smelling help get your head in the game.

Now, remember those 2 voices that are constantly fighting to take control of our choices? We all have 2 different souls, one that cares about what

Hashem wants and another soul that just wants to feel good. Our entire lives we are on a mission to make sure our good soul wins.

Now, to help our good soul win, we need to get in the fighting spirit.

Remember when we talked about the Rebbe last week? The Rebbe wanted every single Jewish home to have a mezuzah on its door. He explained that the mezuzah reminds us, every time we walk in or out of the door, to get in “Jewish mode.”

Jewish mode means to constantly remember that there is a G-d Above Who is taking care of us, Who gave us life, and Who we want to connect with

through Torah and mitzvos. Hey, that's actually what it says inside the Mezuzah!

With this explanation, the Rebbe started the "Mezuzah Campaign." The goal was to encourage every single Jewish family to put a mezuzah on the front door of their home, and the doors inside too. A mezuzah helps us remember to always be in "Jewish mode."

Did you know the Mezuzah also serves as a protection to a home and to the people inside it? If something not good happens to someone, very

often the Rebbe would suggest they bring their mezuzah scroll to be checked by a professional scribe. Sometimes a letter might be missing or a word may be faded out, possibly from different weather conditions.

If the scribe finds that something is wrong with one of the letters, the mezuzah is considered to be not kosher, and needs to be fixed! We only want kosher mezuzos on our doors to give us the best protection from G-d possible!



STORY

Mrs. Schwartz was just sitting down for her morning cup of coffee when her phone rang.

"Hello?" she said into the receiver.

"Mrs. Schwartz, it's Dalia. Can I come over now? I must speak to you. It's important"

"Of course Dalia!" Mrs. Schwartz said warmly, trying to hide the concern in her voice. "Come on over."

Dalia and Richard Lexington had gotten married two years previously and joined Florida's Jewish Community. They had eaten Shabbat meals by the Schwartz' home plenty of times and the families were close friends.

Mrs. Schwartz was quite worried as she waited for Dalia to arrive. She had never heard Dalia sound so worried before. Dalia was always smiling and happy. What was wrong?

"How are you doing Dalia?" she asked the younger woman when she entered the house. "Can I make you a cup of coffee?"

"Oh, Mrs. Schwartz, I wish a cup of coffee could solve it all." Dalia burst into tears. "Ever since

Richard and I got married we've been waiting for a child. It's already been two years and nothing is happening! I'm still not pregnant. It's so hard."

Mrs. Schwartz put her arms around the sobbing woman and spoke soothingly to her. "That must be so difficult. Don't worry Dalia, we will help you and Richard." As she spoke, she remembered that the Lubavitcher Rebbe would tell childless couples to immediately check their mezuzos.

"Did you ever check your mezuzah?" Mrs. Schwartz asked Dalia.

Dalia looked at her strangely. "Mezuzah? What does that have to do with anything?"

"Mezuzos keep us safe. What's written in there can have a big affect on our health and safety," Mrs. Schwartz patiently explained. "It is okay if my husband goes over to your house and checks your mezuzos?"

Dalia agreed straight away. Mrs. Schwartz called her husband, who immediately stopped whatever he was doing to go to the Lexington household and check their mezuzos.

Opening up one of the mezuzos, Rabbi Schwartz was shocked to find the word “beneichem—your children ” was completely missing from the parchment!

“I’m going to send this mezuzah to a scribe and get it fixed up,” Rabbi Schwartz told the Lexingtons. They thanked him gratefully.

Nine months after the mezuzah was fixed, Dalia gave birth to their first child.

- **What message do you learn from this story?**
- **Why is a mezuzah important?**
- **Why did fixing the mezuzah help Dalia have a baby?**