

18. What should a good society provide for free, and for whom?

INTRODUCTION

Explain to children that Jewish people celebrate Pesach where they remember the Israelites' freedom from slavery and their exodus from Egypt, which happened around 3000 years ago, as told in the Haggadah. One of the things the festival does is allow Jews to celebrate their freedom from slavery.

Ask the children a question: *I wonder if we are free today?* and get a few responses.

Show this video of the story from Exodus 23:15 in the medium of dance: www.youtube.com/watch?v=00JhY1A_Plc&safe=active [or Search YouTube "Attraction Black Light Theatre Passover Pesach in Cancun 2011 the story of Exodus"] and ask the children to respond to such questions as:

- What can I see that is bought?
- What can I see that had to be earned?
- What can I see that is freely given?

Allow children time to share their answers. Bring out points about valuable things that are free for all living things, such as sunlight / natural warmth, air – all of which may be in shorter supply if we abuse the planet. Also some human things like love and other gifts – that may be freely given without expecting any reward.

Introduce the idea of [human rights](#) and freedoms, such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom from slavery, the right to receive a free education, and to have work, food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

Ask the children for their opinions on:

- how 'free' education and health care are paid for;
- why some people might not be able to pay for education or health care;
- why some people want to or would like to pay for education or health care;
- why some people might be reluctant to share their wealth and good fortune;
- what human rights are and where they come from;
- whether human rights are 'paid for' in any way;
- whether rights always need to be accompanied by responsibilities.

ACTIVITY

Explain that in this session they will get chance to develop their ideas on freedom by debating, "Education and health care should be provided for free for everyone."

Ask them for their initial thoughts.

Split the children into two groups, one for and one against the statement and ask them to come up with as many reasons as they can to support that point of view and persuade the other side that they are right.

Hold a debate.

After the debate ask such questions as:

- Is there anything that we all agree on?
- Did you find it difficult to argue the side you were given? Why?

CONCLUSION

Remind children of the debate: "Education and health care should be provided for free for everyone" and of the story of the Jewish people's escape from slavery. Ask them whether they think there is any connection between freedom from slavery and free education and health care. Bring out points about people not being forced to live their lives under the control of others and about freedom from the factors that prevent them from the opportunity of living a fulfilling life. Remind them again about human rights and freedoms, such as freedom of thought, conscience and religion, freedom from slavery, the right to receive an education, and to have work, food, clothing, housing, medical care and necessary social services.

Finally, ask the children to stand on an imaginary line that stretches across the classroom; standing at one end if they agree strongly with the debate statement, at the other end if they strongly disagree, or somewhere in between according to their view.

Ask a selection of the children to explain why they are standing where they are, perhaps using some of the arguments used in the debate.