

Interview a Refusenik or Activist

Introduction

Telling a personal story can often bridge the gap between generations and differing experiences. In this lesson, students connect with a former Refusenik or Soviet Jewry Activist to understand what issues people faced and what motivated people to stand up against injustice.

Objectives

At the end of the lesson, students will be able to:

- To document personal stories from the Soviet Jewry Movement, both Refuseniks, and Activists
- Develop research skills through documenting an oral history.

Big Ideas	You can make a difference.
Content	To relate the historical events that led to freedom for Soviet Jews.
Skills	To develop research skills
Meaning	To reflect on the power of a common Jewish voice.

Duration:

- **First Meeting** - Introduce the program and have the students and adult meet each other through ice-breakers. Fill out Part A of the Interview Worksheet.
- **Second meeting** - The adult will begin sharing his/her story with the student. Have the pair continue to investigate (unpack) the Refusenik's story. Use the guiding questions in Part B.
- **Third meeting** - In this class, the story will be transcribed and sent to the teacher. The final product could include a photo taken now or shared with the group.
- **Final meeting** - Pictures and stories will be exhibited and shared.

Materials: Interview Form

Procedure:

1. Have students fill out the information below.

Student Information-

First Name:

Last Name:

School:

Grade:

State:

Adult Information-

First Name:

Last Name:

Maiden Name / Previous last name, if changed:

Year of birth:

Country of birth:

City of birth:

Email Address:

2. Have your students conduct an interview using the following questions:

- Where were you and how old were you when your story took place? What happened leading up to it? How did you feel?
- Was there someone who helped you along the way? How did they help?
- What was the hardest or scariest part of the story for you? Are there things that are hard to remember?
- What is a fond memory that you have of that time that connects to your story? How was it significant? Does it affect your life today?
- Do you have a specific memory that has impacted your connection to the Jewish people. Why is this memory significant for you?
- When you see examples of injustice today, how does it make you feel? What do you do? Do you have ideas for what I could do?
- Do you have any questions you would like to ask me?
- Consider re-asking any questions you need repeated. Names of people, dates, details that were unclear.
- Is there a photographic documentation of the experience / memory? Scan the pictures. Send them to Mail, the WhatsApp group, or upload to the group site.

3. Students should read the topics listed on the chart below. They should highlight 1-3 words which best describe the central themes in their story.

Holidays	Community	Education	History
Identity	Love	Profession	Health
Arts and Culture	Children	Judaism	Home and Family
Names	Volunteering	Childhood	Other:

4. **Create a story:** Student's should write down their story. They should be careful to document as much of the story and mention as many details as possible. This includes: family names, places and dates, etc. If possible, they can include a picture of the person or a picture of the two of them together. They can consider including or highlighting a quote from them that was special or meaningful.