

## Text Study on Social Action & Judaism Lesson Plan

### Introduction

What does political activism have to do with Jewish tradition? With Jewish history? With Jewish identity? Look at the sources that inform and shape this Jewish value.

### Objectives

Through the lens of Soviet Jews' activism, students will be able to summarize the foundational ideas behind activism in the Jewish religion.

<b>Big Ideas</b>	Jews are responsible for one another (solidarity).
	You can make a difference.
<b>Content</b>	To explain the Jewish values that led Soviet Jews to fight for their rights.
<b>Skills</b>	Analyze Text
<b>Meaning</b>	To reflect on your obligation to help (Jewish/all) people in need.

**Essential Questions:** Is Activism a Jewish value?

**Duration:** 1 hour text study, 1 hour discussion

**Materials:** Source Sheet and Guided Questions, included



## Procedure

Use the video clip as a trigger to get students talking about priorities in following Jewish law, and how our responsibility to others fits in with this.

Once you have discussed the clip, introduce the textual sources, referring to the suggested questions to guide further discussion and to draw connections to the Refuseniks and their struggle.

**Trigger:** <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q481vlmVuSc> (3:47 - 4:58)

## Ask the students

- What is your reaction? Do you agree that we emphasize some laws over the ones about caring for others?
- Why are we saving lives anyways? Why do we care so much about our brethren to save them in other lands?

## Learn Through the Sources & Discuss

- How do the first four sources from the Torah lay the groundwork for us to understand what God expects of us?
- The sources from Isaiah and Micah are very well known, yet we know neither of them have never been completely realized by people throughout time. (There are always wars somewhere in the world. People are not always perfect. We make mistakes.) So, how can we read these texts and not brush them off as unrealistic?
- How does *Pirkei Avot* 2:16 help us approach the huge task of taking on responsibility for others?
- How do these sources relate to the story of Soviet Refuseniks? Who stood up for them and how? How did they stand up for their own rights and what happened as a result?
- Which of these sources may have spoken most to those Soviets who demanded justice? If you were in their position, which source or sources would speak to you? Why?