

Jewish Responsibility to the Sudan Crisis Appropriate for Day Schools and Religious/Hebrew Schools Grades 3 and up

1. Lesson Plan
2. *The Jewish Responsibility* handout
3. *It's Not My Problem* Feinstein Story
4. Explanation of a Broken World
5. Informal Educational Opportunities/Activities

Jewish World Watch has prepared this curriculum with the input of teachers and administrators who work in Conservative and Reform Hebrew/Religious Schools, Community Day Schools, Public Schools, and Jewish Summer Camps. Special thanks to: Maika Tasoff (Los Angeles Unified School District and member, Valley Beth Shalom Jewish World Watch Committee), Beverley Kamenir (Camp Ramah, Ojai, CA. and New Community Jewish High School, West Hills, CA.), and Jackie Simons (Temple Israel of Hollywood, CA.). For more information or for electronic transmittal of these curricula, contact Janice Kamenir-Reznik, President, Jewish World Watch at info@iewishworldwatch.org.

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**SAVE
DARFUR**

Lesson Plan, Jewish Responsibility

Student Objectives:

1. To identify the four different text references to Jewish responsibility to the rest of the world a.
Tikkun O'am - our obligation to fix brokenness
 - b. Adam and Eve - We are all part of the same family
 - c. We are all made in the Image of God. We are all precious.
 - d. "We have been there," - in Egypt and in the Holocaust.
2. To explain the Jewish concept of a broken world
3. To determine personal obligation to **Tikkun O'am**
4. To participate in an activity to raise awareness about the crisis in the Sudan.

Materials:

The Jewish Responsibility: Helping Others handout for each student
It's Not My Problem - read aloud
Explanation of a Broken World
Informal Educational Opportunities/Activities

Lesson:

1. Distribute and discuss **The Jewish Responsibility: Helping Others** handout. Explain the significance of each textual reference. Ask students to share their personal understanding of Jewish responsibility. Many students may not be ready to share. Introduce the story to help students reach a better understanding.
2. Read "It's Not My Problem." Copies can be distributed and read as a script with the class.
3. Pose the following discussion questions:
 - a. What is the moral of the story?
 - b. After hearing the story, who do you agree with, the king or the prince? Why?
 - c. Why do you think the story is called "It's Not My Problem?"
 - d. Why is it important to help other people? Is it still important to help when the other people are on the other side of the world?
 - e. Why should we help people in the Sudan? Out of all the causes why is the Sudan so important to us? As Jews? f. Do we owe anything to people who are not Jewish? g. When I asked my friend to give tzedakah to help Darfurian refugees, her response was "How is my few dollars really going to help anyone?"
 - What would your response have been to my friend?
 - Why is it important for everyone to give, even if it is a little bit?
 - h. Judaism believes that saving a life is the equivalent to saving the whole world. Do you think that's a fair belief?

4. Ask the students to explain the Jewish obligation to **Tikkun Olam**. Refer to The Jewish Responsibility handout and to the Broken World handout.

- What does it mean to "repair the world?"

5. Move the discussion towards the idea of "broken pieces." Explain that the world is like something made of glass and if you drop it, it becomes a bunch of broken pieces. That is what the world is, a bunch of broken pieces. What does it mean to put broken pieces back together?

6. In small groups, ask students to use magazines and a large piece of poster board to create a collage of their understanding of Jewish Responsibility, including **Tikkun Olam**.

7. After students have been informed about the crisis in Sudan, share the list of suggested informal educational opportunities and activities for them to complete individually or as a class activity. (refer to the informal Educational Opportunities handout).

The Jewish Responsibility: Helping Others

We are all made in the Image of God:

"And God said, Let US (plural) make man in OUR (plural) likeness: and let them (plural) have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. "

(Gen. 1 :26). So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them (plural). (Gen. 1 :27).

We are all part of the same family: (Adam and Eve)

Furthermore [the first person was created alone] for the sake of peace among men, so that no one could say to another, "My ancestor was greater than yours" (Mishnah, Sanhedrin 4:5)

We have been there:

"You shall not oppress a stranger for you know the feelings of the stranger having yourselves been strangers in the land of Egypt. "
(Ex. 23:5)

We believe in our obligation to do *Tikkun O/am*:

When God created the first man, God showed him all the trees in the Garden of Eden and said, "See how beautiful and perfect are My creations! All that I have created, I created for you. Therefore, do not abuse or destroy My world. For if you abuse or destroy it, there is no one to repair it after you. (Midrash Kohelet Rabbah)

Lesson Plan: Jewish Responsibility

Handout #2: Story by Rabbi Ed Feinstein: *"It's not My Problem"*

IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM.

Rabbi Ed Feinstein

Once there was a kingdom everyone called Paradise. Not because it was any more beautiful than any other place; and not because it was any richer than any other place; and not because the sun shined there more than any other place. Actually, it looked just like any other place, and had the same resources and sunshine of any other place.

It was Paradise because of the way the people cared for one another. You see, in this kingdom, if a mend needed anything from a mend, the mend always stepped forward to help ... without even being asked! If neighbor needed anything the neighbor, the neighbor would respond cheerfully and graciously without ever asking anything in return. And even strangers. If a stranger needed anything, people came to help with hospitality, generosity and kindness. All this because of the wise king.

The King knew that the way he treated his subjects would inevitably be reflected in the way they treated one another. So he was always careful, and attentive, and sympathetic, and helpful. And even if he couldn't help someone, he would at least listen and offer his concern.

Then the King became old, and the time for his retirement came near. He appointed his son, the Prince, to rule in his place. But the Prince was not wise like his father, and he treated people very differently

The royal ministers came to the Prince: "Your majesty, we have a terrible problem. There is a famine in a certain corner of the land, and people there are starving. We must do something!"

"They are starving?" asked the Prince. On his face was the look of someone who had just been bothered with something silly.

"Yes, starving. They have no food to eat or feed their children. Starvation in our land!"

"But I have plenty of food," responded the Prince. "If they are starving, I'm sorry, but IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

"But, Your Majesty, perhaps you didn't understand. People are suffering. They haven't any food. They'll die if we do nothing."

"Well I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

The ministers shook their heads in disbelief and walked slowly away.

Just then, another group of royal messengers approached the throne.

"Your Majesty, we have a terrible situation. A river has become poisoned, and the people who live along the river, they have no water to drink! We must help them!"

"No water?" asked the Prince. Again, he looked bothered by silly things.

"No water! A poisoned river! People dying of thirst!"

"But I have plenty of water! " responded the Prince, holding up a glassful. "I'm sorry, but IT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

"Majesty, people are dying of thirst, in your kingdom!" the messengers shouted in exasperation.

"I'm sorry. But THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

The messengers, the ministers, in fact, no one in the royal court, could understand the Prince. The old king would listen to everyone. But the Prince was quite the opposite: Whatever problem was brought to him, whatever the matter - large or small - it received the same bothered look, and the same response:

"I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

It seemed that it was the Prince's motto, what he said to everything.

"I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

As the old king understood, as the ruler treats his people, so wiD people treat one another. And soon, everyone in the kingdom was saying it. When a friend needed help from a friend, the friend would look bothered and respond: "You need help? Well I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!" And when neighbor turned to neighbor for a hand, the neighbor would simply look bothered and answer: "You need a hand? Well I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!" And of course, when it came to strangers, EVERYONE responded the same way: "Help you? Lend a hand? Well I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

Before they knew it, the kingdom changed. It was no longer Paradise where friend helped friend without being asked, and neighbor lent a hand to neighbor cheerfully, and everyone treated strangers with kindness. Instead ... it became a wilderness. Whenever anyone needed anything from anyone, they were greeted with that same bothered look, and those words, now everyone's motto: "I'm sorry, but THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!"

Did this concern anyone? Well yes. "But what can we do?" people asked. "It's just human nature. You can't fix it. You can't change it. It's the way things are. It's the way things always were and the way things always will be... you just get used to it, that's all!"

No one remembered. No one remembered the way things were, when friend helped friend, and neighbor helped neighbor, and everyone helped strangers. No one remembered the Paradise that the kingdom once was. No one but Fishennan. Fishennan remembered. He remembered the old king, and the way things used to be. And it hurt him that the whole kingdom had become as selfish as their young Prince. If only he could remind them! Teach them that it needn't be this way! But, what was one old fishennan to do to change the mind of a whole kingdom? What indeed?

Then one day, he realized a way to do it. At least he knew he had to try. He went to the bank and withdrew all his savings - all the money he'd saved up for his retirement. He went to the marine store and bought tools and paint and materials. And he set to work fixing up his old fishing boat. He would turn it into a yacht, the most beautiful yacht at the harbor.

Fishennan worked hard. And each day, his old boat came closer to becoming a luxury yacht. People came by and admired his work. "Hey Fishennan, when you're done, will you take us for a ride on your yacht?"

"Sure! Everyone will be invited!"

It took him a year to finish the yacht. In the course of that year, almost everyone in the kingdom had come down to admire the new yacht and ask for a ride. Fisherman made up a huge sign and posted it in the town square:

"Fisherman's New Yacht is Finished!
Everyone is invited for a Ride on the Lake!
Come Sunday Morning! Bring a Picnic!
Come Celebrate with Fisherman!"

And come they did! Everyone came that Sunday morning. The whole kingdom. Even the Prince! It was a splendid clear day. The sun shined and the lake was calm, as Fisherman guided his new yacht out onto the lake. When they reached the middle, far from land, he dropped anchor, and invited everyone to enjoy the party. They brought out picnic baskets and fishing poles and sailors' hats, and had a wonderful day on the lake.

And then, late in the afternoon, the wind began to pick up, and waves began to rock the boat. "Fisherman, what do you say, we head home now?" they asked.

"Sure. Just one more thing I need to do for my new boat." And with that, he went to his tool box and brought out a large hand-powered drill. Then he reached in again, took out a huge bit, and slipped the bit into the chuck of the drill. He walked slowly to the exact center of the boat, set the bit in the floor of the boat, and began to drill a hole.

"Say, Fisherman," people asked, trying to remain nonchalant, "what are you doing?"

"What am I doing? I'm drilling a hole."

"But why are you drilling a hole?"

"Why? Because it's a nice day for drilling holes!"

"But, Fisherman, if you drill a hole in the boat, the water will rush in, the boat will sink in the lake, and we'll all drown!" they asked, finally grasping the gravity of the situation.

"Yep, could be," he answered, as he continued drilling.

"But, Fisherman, why would you do such a thing?"

"Because I feel like it, that's why."

"But what gives you the right to do such a thing?"

"Well," he thought a moment, "It is my boat. And it is my drill. I therefore have a right to drill my hole in wish." I

With this, they lost it. Fisherman continued to turn the drill methodically. The bit cut quickly through the boat's hull. As the hole became larger, people began to beg, to cry, and to scream at Fisherman.

"Fisherman, please! Please stop! You must stop!"

"Nope. It's my boat. It's my drill. And I'm going to drill this hole."

The Prince swaggered over. No lowly fishennan was going to ruin his afternoon. He stood over Fishennan in his royal robes as a hush came over the frightened crowd.

"Fishennan, what are you doing?" he addressed Fishennan in his deepest commanding voice.

"I'm drilling a hole, as you can see," responded Fishennan moving the drill around and around and never taking his eyes off the widening hole.

"Why are you doing this?" asked the Prince in his deep princely tone.

"Because I feel like it," responded Fishennan matter-of-factly.

"Fishennan, if you make a hole in the boat, the boat will sink, and we will all drown," the Prince reasoned aloud.

"Uh huh," acknowledged Fishennan.

Small beads of sweat began to appear on the brow of the Prince, as his voice lost its commanding tone and took on that of a man sincerely worried. "Fishennan, I command you to stop!"

"I don't want to stop. It's a nice day for drilling, don't you think?" He continued to drill.

The Prince was definitely losing it now. Gone was all the royal tone and trappings. Instead, he was just another very frightened man. "But Fishennan, what gives you the right to do this?"

Fishennan sighed. He'd answered this question before, and so he offered the explanation one last time slowly. "It's my boat. It's my drill. And I'm going to make a hole. Now please get out of my light!" He pulled the drill out of the hole and blew away the shavings. And then he continued to drill.

The Prince could see just how close he was to certain death. And now he cried and pleaded like everyone else. "Please, Fishennan, please. I'll do anything. I don't want to drown. I don't want to get eaten by a fish. I don't want to die. Please, Fishennan, please."

As the Prince began to cry and plead, Fishennan stopped drilling. A hush came over the crowd, as Fishennan looked up at the Prince for the first time.

"You don't want the boat to sink? You don't want to drown? You don't want to die?" Fishennan repeated the Prince's pleading, and then he repeated the terrible words that he hated more than anything else, "WELL I'M SORRY!! BUT THAT'S NOT MY PROBLEM!!"

The Prince lost it now. He began to scream hysterically at Fishennan, "What do you mean it's not your problem? Anyone can see, if I have a problem, you have a problem. And if you have a problem, I have a problem. If anyone has a problem, then everyone has a problem because we're all on the same boat!"

Suddenly, he stopped, as he heard what he had just said. If I have a problem, you have a problem. And if YOU have a problem, I have a problem. If anyone has a problem, then everyone has a problem because we're all on the same boat! Did he just say that?

"Yes," said Fishennan, looking the Prince squarely in the eye. "Anyone can see that!"

"Yes," answered the Prince, like a man who has suddenly figured out a great riddle. "Of course. "

"Yes," answered everyone on the boat, "Anyone can see that! If I have a problem, you have a problem. And if you have a problem, I have a problem. If anyone has a problem, then everyone has a problem. Because we're all on the same boat!"

Fishennan just shook his head. He pulled the bit up out of the hole, removed the bit from the chuck and returned the drill and the bit in the tool box. "And now we can go home." He turned the boat around, and brought the Prince and all his people safely back into the harbor.

Fishennan performed magic that day. The people who got off that boat weren't anything like the people who had gotten on. Never ever again would friend turn to friend, or neighbor to neighbor or anyone turn to a stranger and say those terrible words, "I'm sorry, but that's not MY problem." Instead, whenever a friend needed help from a friend, or a neighbor needed a hand from a neighbor, or a stranger needed some kindness, and whenever anyone came before the Prince with a problem, they would hear these magic words, "Please, let me help you. Because if I have a problem, you have a problem. And if you have a problem, I have a problem. If anyone has a problem, then everyone has a problem, because we're all on the same boat!"

And once again, the kingdom became Paradise.

Lesson Plan: Jewish Responsibility Handout

#3: Explanation of a Broken World

One Explanation of the Notion of a Broken World

Saying that the world is broken, or full of broken pieces does not mean that God made the world broken. We all know that the world is not perfect, in fact far from it. The broken pieces simply represent everything that is broken in the world and requires fixing. Tikkun Olam means fixing the world and if something needs fixing it usually suggests that it is broken. That is all we were going off of. To suggest that there are a lot of things wrong in the world, and all of those things are like pieces to puzzle and simply need to be put back together. You could say that God did make a perfect world but things like hatred and genocide broke it.

The Kabbalistic idea that God created the world through a series of "keylim" - vessels - that broke as He activated them and it's our job to repair them.

After each creation, "God saw that it was good." However, after the creation of man the Torah does not record that God saw it was good - because we need to put in effort, too to become partners with God - in order to complete and perfect the creation.

Lesson Plan: Jewish Responsibility

Handout #4: Informal Educational Opportunities/Activities

Informal Opportunities/Activities

Educational

Here are some suggestions of activities in which you can engage your students, after they no:~e. 'oe.e.l\ \n{ot'me.d o.'ou", ",ne. t.t\"S\S \n Sudo.n. ~|e.o.se. 'fee.\ 'fre.e. 'to use. o.n'(o'f our suggestions, or to come up with activities of your own. If you have any questions about resources, such as stories, articles, or questions to discuss with students during these activities; please contact info@jewishworldwatch.org.

*"Using magazines and a large piece of poster board, have students create a collage of their understanding of human rights, genocide, awaren~s, etc. Have each student talk about his/her contribution to the collage.

*"Using newspaper clippings, discuss current events, including the situation in Darfur, with your students. Articles on the subject are available on request.

""Read stories about the importance of helping others, followed by discussion of how this *relates to Darfur*.

""Read excerpts from the book They Poured Fire on Us From the Sky (memoirs of three Lost Boys of Sudan), or Elie Wiesel's speech on Darfur delivered at the Darfur Emergency Summit, convened at the Graduate Center of the City University of New York on July 14, 2004 (copy is attached).

*"Write letters or postcards to family members and/or government officials (if allowed by the camp), informing them of the situation in Darfur. Jewish World Watch can provide you with ready-made postcards to send.

*"Discuss the quote by Martin Miemoeller: "First they came for the socialists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a socialist. Then they came for the trade unionists, and I did not speak out, because I was not a trade unionist. Then they came for the Jews, and I did not speak out, because I was not a Jew. Then they came for me, and there was no one left

to speak for me." Relate this to the responsibilities of Jews to help others, and why we should care about what is happening in Sudan. Include in the discussion what happens when people turn a blind eye to those in distress-e.g. holocaust.

*"Have ~tudents sit in a circle and toss around a ball of string, each holding onto a piece as they throw, creating a web. Then, have one or two students drop their strings and see how the web collapses. Discuss how we are all interconnected. Another option is to have each

student say something that is common amongst all people as they throw the ball (i.e. we all need love, food, housing, etc.)

*"Have an activity talking about how kids live in different parts of the world (e.g. in Africa), and how this compares to how the students experience life.

****Have students imagine that they are Jews in the Holocaust, and have them talk about how they would expect others (both Jews and non-Jews) to help them. Relate this to why we should act to help those who are suffering in Darfur and around the world.**

****Watch all or parts of [Hotel Rwanda](#) with your students (if the film is appropriate for their age group), and discuss what happened there and how it is similar to or different from the current situation in Darfur (sample follow-up questions may be available) (fact sheet on Rwandan genocide is attached).**

****Have students examine the prayers that they say regularly at camp and find one that they think relates to injustice, Jews helping non-Jews, etc. As a follow-up, you can have one or two students talk about the prayer during services.**

****Have students write their own prayers based upon what they have studied and learned about the genocide in Darfur.**