



"L'Dor V'Dor" - From Generation to Generation Shannon Rohlman

Subject Area: Jewish History & Culture, Values and Art

Single/Multi-unit lesson plan Multi-Unit lesson plans

Target Age: 4th-7th graders

Objectives: Students will define primary sources and gather a collection from family members or senior citizens from the Jewish community. They will conduct oral histories as one example of a primary source in order to learn more about their own Jewish identity. Students will write biographies based on the lives of these family members or senior citizens. These books, as well as the other primary sources and artifacts they gathered, will be put on display for a “family museum” exhibit titled **L’Dor V’dor, From Generation to Generation.** A family tree is also included in the museum. The most important piece from their exhibit will be the ceramic Kiddush cup they paint, symbolizing their family’s history. Family and community members are invited to attend the museum exhibit. Ultimately, the students learn and experience how their Jewish identity is built in each of us.

Procedure

Day 1, 60-90 minutes

- Class discussion primary sources-Begin a discussion by showing examples of sources such as the Declaration of Independence, old photographs, handwritten letters, and copies of newspapers. Discuss how these are examples of historical records. Introduce the term **Primary Sources** as actual records that have survived from the past. Contrast primary sources with secondary sources, which are created by people writing about events sometime after they happened.
- Brainstorm a list of other primary sources on chart paper (keep the list posted in the room for future activities). The list should include: personal papers, government documents, letters, oral accounts, diaries, maps, photographs, reports, artifacts, coins, stamps, and many other things.
- Tell students they will conduct an oral history with a partner. They will use this document as evidence to tell about the person’s life. Hand out the questionnaire template and discuss proper etiquette and tips when interviewing. (Eyes on the speaker, no responding other than nodding, resist the urge to share your own feelings, make sure there are as few extraneous

noises as possible, arrange a space so there are as few other students as possible in one area, don't be afraid of pauses or silences, do not read questions word for word, etc.).

- Allow time for pairs to interview one another. Ask each pair to share one thing they learned about their partner that they did not know before.

Day 2, 60 minutes

- Begin asking about the feelings the students had when they were both asking the questions and the ones being questioned.
- Ask students to think about their grandparents and how their lives have spanned the twentieth century. What types of changes have their grandparents seen? What opportunities have changed? Most importantly, how have their grandparents been involved in American Jewish life? The students will begin to share where their grandparents live and some of their family memories.
- **Tell students they will be conducting an oral history as evidence of their Jewish identities.** Hand out questionnaire templates and give students a chance to add to the list of questions. The teacher may want to modify the list of questions based on the current age group he or she is working with. Prompt students to think about what they always wanted to know? Students must decide on one grandparent to interview, and preferably, one that lives nearby. Telephone interviews can be difficult, and do not yield the same results as a face to face interview. If no grandparents or older family members live nearby, students may choose to interview a Jewish senior citizen from their synagogue or go to the local assisted living facility. A field trip can be arranged for the group to meet in a conference room to conduct and record oral histories. Another possibility is to prolong the project until the student can meet with their family member during a school vacation. For educators who teach children of interfaith families and can extend the project, students might be able to conduct multiple oral histories to compare and contrast.
- Post a due date for students to complete the oral histories. One month is ample time for students to arrange a meeting with their family member.
- Ask students to again define primary sources. Tell them they should also be collecting such examples from their grandparents to use in a family museum exhibit. Along with their recorded oral histories, students should gather copies of photos from holiday celebrations, letters, Tallit, Kippot, family heirlooms, and other Judaica, from their family members. They should not bring in the artifacts until the day of the exhibit, and artifacts should remain in a locked room or cabinet if the exhibit is displayed for multiple days. The educator may want to use the attached **interview and artifact release form** from the families who share their artifacts.

Allow time for students to collect artifacts as well as record audio interviews.

Day 3 of instruction, 60 minutes

- Students write thank you notes to send to their grandparents for the interview.

- Students share oral histories and artifacts from their grandparents. After each presentation, all students should brainstorm a list of adjectives or character traits that describe this person's personality. Examples may include brave, a cook, funny, religious.
- Students will now play back tape recorders and transcribe the information as best they can.

Day 4-5, 60 minute periods

- Students use their notes to write a typed biography of their family member. The teacher decides if illustrations should be included and how long biographies should be and review the writing process before publishing.
- Parent volunteers and support staff should help with transcribing.
- Teachers may assign the written portion as homework to conserve class time.
- Teachers should laminate covers and bind the books.

The Outcome

Day 6, 60-90 minutes

- Tell students they will create a Family Museum, titled "**L'Dor V'Dor**" **From Generation to Generation** They will creatively display the collected photos on poster board and artifacts will be arranged on tables with captions. They will place their biographies in their exhibit. Allow students to brainstorm or sketch designs for their poster boards and display. Discuss how museum displays look and what captures audience attention. Provide table clothes and ways for artifacts to stand out, such as cake stands and wooden boxes.

Day 7, 90 minutes

- They will create one unique art piece to add to their personal displays. They will each receive a clay **Kiddush cup** to paint. A class field trip to the local pottery studio may be in order. Calling a "pottery painting" studio to reserve the time and the correct amount of cups. The design and decorations should represent their family in some way. For example, they might paint the cup red to show courage, they may paint their grandparent's as well as each family member's initials on the cup, or they may paint their favorite family foods or Shabbat candles. Discuss symbols for each of their grandparent's character traits listed above. They may sketch their design on paper before painting their cup. Cups should be fired and ready for display before the presentation of the museum. When students finish painting, be sure to bring an activity for them to work on while others are working. This is a great time for students to make their **family trees**.

Day 8, 60 minutes

- As a final piece of each child's exhibit, the children should create family trees to frame and display. Provide each child with sample of a tree and guide students to chart names of family

members on leaves of a tree. The students should be creative and only use the sample as one way to design the tree. The final copy should be hand drawn or created out of construction paper cut-outs before mounted and framed.

- As a class, create invitations to send to their entire family, community members, and other classrooms. Arrange an exhibit date convenient to the school calendar. Grandparents Day is a wonderful time to arrange the event.

Day 9, 60-90 minutes

- On the day of the exhibit, be sure to provide refreshments for the guests. At the “museum opening,” invite students to stand by their exhibit to explain what is displayed at their table. Teachers may choose to have the students read their biography in the beginning of the event, or toward the end. As the Emcee, the teacher should culminate the presentations by asking the audience and students, “If future archaeologists had the materials above, what could they conclude about your family, community, region, and/or nation?”
- Be sure to invite the local media to this special event.

Extension Ideas:

- Students may go to the same interviewee and ask about various types of topics, such as being a parent, participating in community service, immigration, education, and their homes. These interviews can also be added to the biographies and museum exhibits.

Materials needed

audio recording devices and headphones to share
extra batteries for audio recorders
computers with internet access and word processing
poster boards
8 ½ by 11 picture frame for each student
clay Kiddush cups for painting (found at local pottery studio)
family tree example (see below)
art supplies and construction paper for family tree
interview questionnaire (see below)
interview and artifact release form (see below)
reference and picture books (see resources)
museum exhibit-tables, table cloths, cake stands, wooden boxes

Resources

- Guberman, Jane, ed. In Our Own Voices, A Guide to Conducting Life History Interviews with American Jewish Women, Brookline, MA: Jewish Women’s Archive, 2005
- Jewish Women’s Archive, 138 Harvard Street, Brookline, MA 02446, 617-232-2258
www.jwa.org

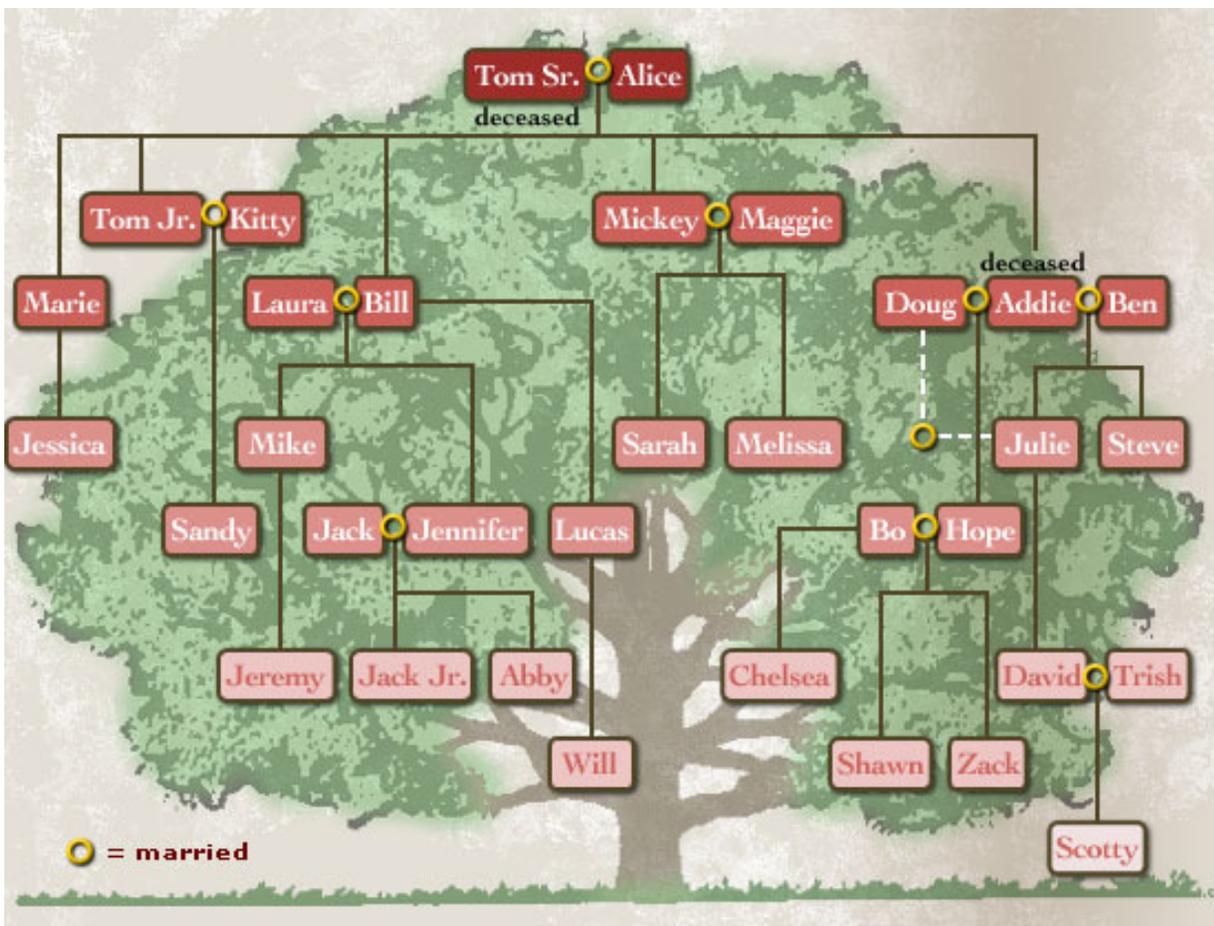
- The Library of Congress, Guide to using primary sources <http://memory.loc.gov/learn/>
- Color Me Mine, Boulder CO *www.colormemine.com*
1938 Pearl St # 100, Boulder, CO 80302 (303) 443-3469
- Jewish Family Services WWW.jewishfamilyservice.org for coordinating interviews with local senior citizens.
- Scholastic, Inc. for an online list of children's picture books related to immigration and family traditions. www.scholastic.com

Questions to Ask the Important Family Member

1. Where were you and your parents born? What do you know about their childhood?
2. Where did you grow up? Describe your neighborhood and your household.
3. Who were your role models?
4. What was your Jewish education like?
5. What languages were spoken in your home?
6. What did you do for fun as a teenager?
7. How would you describe yourself in terms of your Jewish identity?
8. How important is your Jewish identity to you?
9. Have your feelings about being Jewish changed over time?
10. What aspects of being Jewish are most important to you?
11. If you are married to a non-Jew, how has the experience affected you?
12. Growing up, did your family belong to a synagogue?
13. If you are currently a member of a synagogue, what is your involvement in the community?
14. Did you raise your children similar or different to the way you grew up?
15. Can you recall any milestones or turning points in your religious life?
16. In your childhood home, did your family keep kosher?
17. Who prepared food in your family? Did you help in the kitchen?
18. Do you have any special family recipes?
19. What Jewish holidays did your family celebrate? Which were the most important?
20. Did your family observe Shabbat? If so, describe how it was observed.
21. What preparations were made to observe Passover? Describe your family Seder.

22. What specific roles did you and other women in your family play in preparing for the holidays? What role did men play?
23. What were your family's attitudes towards observance of Christmas and other non-Jewish holidays?
24. What has been important to you as a grandparent?
25. What words of wisdom did your family share with you?
26. What in your life has brought or given you the greatest joy?

Family Tree Sample



Interview and Artifact Release Form

L'Dor V'Dor, From Generation to Generation

Name of Narrator: _____ Interview Date(s): _____

Location of Interview: _____

Home Address: _____

Telephone: _____

1. I, the Narrator, acknowledge that I have participated in an interview for _____ (name of child) oral history project and that the interview was recorded with my full and complete knowledge and consent.

2. I hereby give to _____ (name of child) the recordings of this interview, and I grant and assign all rights and information to _____ (name of child).

3. I hereby allow _____ (name of child) to use family artifacts for display and understand they will be returned after the culminating class exhibit.

4. I understand that my interview may be used by _____ (name of child), subject to any restrictions listed below. Such use may include, but is not limited to, publication in all media (print, graphic, film, electronic media, including web sites) currently in existence or yet to be developed in the future.

5. Any limitations that I wish to place on the use of the audio recording, transcripts, photographs, or artifacts are listed below:

Signature of

Narrator: _____ Date: _____