

B"H

JLI Teen Club: Course Overview: Fall



MySpace/YourSpace - Is My Life any of your Business?

Lesson One, *Heroes and Hoodlums* begins with a dramatic real-life case caught on video, where a man who was struck by a hit-and-run driver was left to die on a city street in Hartford, Connecticut. This class explores Judaism's unique perspective on morality and how the Torah requires one to do more than just not harm others. It is part and parcel of our mission as Jews to come to the aid of our fellowman, to serve as G-d's partner in perfecting the world. The lesson discusses the concept of heroism and the case of the whistleblower Dr. Jeffery Wigand, which was made into a popular 1999 film "The Insider".

Lesson Two, *Collateral Damage* explores the value of life versus the value of material possessions. We discuss the enormous damage and destruction to property portrayed in Hollywood films – all carried out by the good guys! We examine a news story from Katrina where a man sues his neighbor for stealing his motorboat and rescuing over 100 people trapped in their homes. We also talk about the Ford Pinto scandal where engineers decided not to repair a problem that caused the car's gas tank to explode on impact. According to the bean-counters at Ford, it would cost them less to pay for the damages to victims of the accidents than to repair the problem itself. In this lesson, we discover Judaism's perspective on the value of life.

Lesson Three, *Living on the Edge* takes us to a very powerful discussion about suicide and self-harm. Do I not have the right to take my own life? Who, if not me, is the owner of my body? The government? My HMO? We discuss a recent news story about a \$50 million netting to be installed underneath the Golden Gate bridge to catch those who attempt suicide. We also talk about risking one's life by taking drugs or engaging in extreme sports and dangerous activities. We conclude with a discussion about selling bodily organs for transplantation.

Lesson Four, *Last Man Standing*, examines the conflict between the obligation to preserve the life of our fellow man, and the obligation to preserve one's own life. We address a real-life story where two men fight for one life preserver on a sinking fishing boat. We also explore the question whether one is required to risk one's own life to save another. At the end of the lesson we discuss terrorism and hostage-taking – does Judaism condone negotiating with terrorists?

Lesson Five, *Abortion on Demand?* addresses one of the most contentious moral issues in the world today: abortion. Does a woman have the right to end her pregnancy if she so wishes? Or, does the unborn baby have a "right to life"? We look at a news story about a woman expecting triplets who underwent a "reduction" to avoid damaging her career. We also discuss abortions performed in China and India on female fetuses because parents prefer a male child. The lesson contrasts two extreme positions on abortion and then presents Judaism's perspective on the sanctity of an unborn life.

Lesson Six, *Life Worth Living* looks at the value of a life that is unproductive. Many in society are supportive of "physician-assisted suicide" and "death with dignity" laws that give terminal patients the right to end their life at will. We look at a news story from Katrina where a doctor allegedly administered lethal doses of painkiller to prevent the suffering of four patients trapped in a flooded hospital. The lesson explores Judaism's approach that every moment of life has an absolute and infinite value - regardless of that person's productivity and contribution to society. We end the course talking about the human being's role in bettering the world, how each and every Jew is G-d's "ambassador" and can positively impact their surroundings.