

A SPOTLIGHT ON THE ORTHODOX JEWISH AMERICAN COMMUNITY -A 30 MINUTE LESSON-

Like a sprawling tree, Judaism boasts numerous branches, each blossoming with distinct expressions of faith, from the deeply traditional to the unconventional, all united by a shared root system.

This lesson explores one of these branches: the Orthodox Jewish American Community. But this isn't a single, monolithic limb; it's a vibrant network of sub-branches, from the Modern Orthodox, who blend tradition with the contemporary world, to the deeply rooted Haredi communities, each with their own internal nuances.

By understanding these distinctions, students will gain a deeper appreciation for the rich tapestry of Jewish American life and experiences. This knowledge is particularly relevant for students in New York City, a hub of Orthodox Jewish American culture, where these communities coexist and contribute to the city's vibrant Jewish community.

Essential Questions

- How do the different groups of Orthodox Jews approach religious observance and daily life?
- What values or key beliefs do different Orthodox groups have in common?
- How does the presence of diverse Orthodox communities contribute to the cultural richness and vibrancy of New York?
- How can understanding the diversity within Orthodox Judaism help us combat stereotypes and foster greater respect and appreciation for different religious perspectives?

Learning Outcomes

Students will be able to:

- Identify some of the major Orthodox groups that live in New York and the ways in which they are similar and different from one another
- Appreciate the diversity that exists among the Orthodox Jewish American community
- Challenge stereotypes, understand the danger of a single story, and gain appreciation for differences

Materials Needed

- [Pre-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#) (you will be instructed to make a copy)
- [Orthodox Judaism Fact Sheet](#)
- [Orthodox Jewish Americans in New York](#) (a digital activity)
- [Check Your Knowledge](#)
- [Post-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#) (you will be instructed to make a copy)

Lesson Plan

1. PRE-LEARNING STUDENT SELF-ASSESSMENT

Have students complete the [Pre-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#).

2. INTERACTIVE ACTIVITY

1. **Option 1:** Distribute copies of the [Orthodox Judaism Fact Sheet](#). Assign students to read OR guide a read-aloud.

Option 2: Assign students to explore the [interactive mini-site](#) featuring Orthodox Jewish Americans in New York.

 - Facilitate a class discussion, using the essential questions as a guide:
 - How do the different groups of Orthodox Jews approach religious observance and daily life?
 - What values or key beliefs do different Orthodox groups have in common?
 - How does the presence of diverse Orthodox communities contribute to the cultural richness and vibrancy of New York?
 - How can understanding the diversity within Orthodox Judaism help us combat stereotypes and foster greater respect and appreciation for different religious perspectives?

3. LEARNING ASSESSMENTS

- Have students complete the [Post-Instruction Student Self-Assessment](#).
- Ask students to complete the [Check Your Knowledge](#) questions. You can ask students to do this individually or you can do this as a large group. The answer key is on page two of the document. Note: This can also be used as an activator or as a student engagement activity.