
PRAYING WITH LIOR STUDY GUIDE

Thank you for sharing *Praying with Lior* with your community, school, or family! We hope you'll continue discussing the themes of the film after the lights come up, and take action to change *perceptions* about people with disabilities and their *reception* in communities.

A fuller, multi-faith study guide is on its way, but here are some resources, activities, and discussion questions to get you started.

What does Judaism say about inclusion and disability? *There are a wealth of Jewish references and writings promoting inclusion, education and tolerance. Here are some places to start your study:*

Jewish texts promoting inclusion

- “And God created people in God’s Image.”
Genesis 1:27

- “You shall not insult the deaf, or place a stumbling block before the blind.”
Leviticus: 19:14

- “God’s house shall be called a house of prayer for all peoples.”
Isaiah 56:7

- “Educate each child according to their way.”
Prov. 22:6

- “Do not separate yourself from the community.”
Pirkei Avot 2:5

- “All Israel is responsible for one another.”
Shavuot 39a

- “Blessed are you, Eternal God, who makes your creations different.”
Traditional Liturgy

- “Every member of the people of Israel is obligated to study Torah – whether one is rich or poor, physically able or with physical disability.”
Maimonides, Mishne Torah, Hilchot Talmud Torah, Chapter 10

**Divrei torah by Rabbi Brad Artson about
Judaism and disabilities and his son Jacob**
www.judaism.ajula.edu **Divrei torah ideas from Yesodot**
www.yesodot.org **Jewish Readings on Inclusion**
www.uscj.org **Lenore Layman**
[Opening the Gates of Torah: Including People
with Disabilities in the Jewish Community](#)

What are our own experiences with inclusion in faith communities?

Foster discussion on every person's experiences of being excluded and of belonging, exploring the places of comfort and the conditions leading to discomfort.

Activities and tools

How can our community look more like Lior's, and how can we experience the gift of holiness that wholeness brings?

50+ Programming and Action Ideas

[Click Here](#) **How to do an inclusion assessment audit**
www.bje.org **How to communicate respectfully**
www.acils.com **More communication guidelines on disability**
www.adl.org **Planning a Special Bar/Bat Mitzvah**
www.jewishfamily.com **R-Word pledge**
www.r-word.org

Some questions for discussion:

- In genesis, it says that man was created “b'tselem elohim” or “in the image of G-d.” What does that mean?
- If people come in all shapes and sizes and abilities and colors, and all are created in the “image of G-d,” what does that say about our understanding of G-d?
 - What are the theological/psychological reasons for the blessing we say when we see people who are different, “Blessed are you Barukh ata [adonai](#) elohaynu melekh ha-olam m'shaneh habriyot.” (Translated as: "Praised are you, Lord our G-d, who makes different creatures," or "Blessed are you, Lord our G-d, King of the universe, who makes people different.") How does saying this blessing affect our experience of disability?
- During Selichot, we traditionally recite the Thirteen Attributes of G-d's mercy. We say the passage from Exodus that is translated as: "The Lord! The Lord! A God compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, rich in steadfast kindness, extending kindness to the thousandth generation, forgiving iniquity, transgression, and sin; yet He does not remit all punishment..." (Exodus 34:67). What does this passage mean in light of disability, and in light of Lior?
 - Identify the elements in Lior's life that help him to succeed.

- Identify the elements in Lior's community that allow them to benefit from Lior.
 - What does it mean for a building or a situation to be inclusive or accessible?
 - What could inclusion look like in a family? In a school? In a professional setting? In a social setting?
 - How was Lior's Bar Mitzvah like or unlike the B'nai Mitzvah of "typical" children?
 - What kinds of adaptations in your services or synagogue would make them more accessible? What kinds of departures from a traditional service or a traditional synagogue does your community already practice?
 - Why do you think Lior loves to daven so much?
 - Why do you think people in Lior's community call him a "hassidic master" or "spiritual genius?" What is the contribution that Lior makes to his community?
 - What is the relationship between prayer and intelligence?
 - One of the boys in Lior's class says that Lior's Down syndrome is a "test," both for Lior, and for his classmates. What does that mean? How would someone pass or fail this test? How about a community?
 - Who or what inspires your prayers? What can your community do to help your praying feel more inspired?
 - Lior's name means "My light." How is Lior a light to his family, his class, his community? What are the ways that each of us is a light?
-