



Lesson Plan (50 minutes)

Birthright Israel

Step 1: Start with the goals/questions

Goals: What are the goals of this lesson?

Affective – Students will appreciate the impact a trip to Israel can have on one’s Jewish identity.

Behavioral – Students will see the importance of visiting Israel on a program or with family.

Cognitive – Students will understand the goals of Birthright and how it promotes Jewish peoplehood..

Essential Questions/Big Ideas:

What deep questions and enduring understandings do we want students to be grappling with?

1. What does a program like Birthright Israel teach us about Jewish peoplehood?
 2. Is Birthright Israel (bringing non-Israeli Jews to Israel for free) a worthy investment for the State of Israel?
 3. Is it important for non-Israeli Jews to connect to Israel?
1. Israel is central to building Jewish identity for many young Jews.
 2. Birthright trips have been successful in creating strong ties between Diaspora Jews and the Land and State of Israel.

Step 2: Learning Plan

Hook/Trigger: (10 minutes)

Will I use a UED video, question, scenario...

Show the [UED Birthright video](#). Play the [Kahoot](#) to check for understanding. Ask students to list 5 questions they have about Birthright after watching the video.

Learning Activity: (25 minutes)

What am I using from UED resources (video, discussion question, game, debate)? Do these materials fit the unit goals/essential questions?

Reflection: (10 minutes)

How can I help students connect with the material on a deeper and personal level?

1. Discussion: (10 minutes)

a. Birthright and funding from the State of Israel

The State of Israel helps fund Birthright Israel. In essence, Israel is paying for mostly non-Israeli Jews from all over the world to come and experience Israel for free. Do you think this is a worthy investment for Israel? Why or why not? Do you think it is the Israeli government's role to bring Jews from around the world to Israel?

b. Israel as a Jewish identity building tool

The video explains that *"participants quickly learned that being in Israel meant Judaism was much more than just going to synagogue, observing Jewish holidays, or keeping kosher. Judaism wasn't some distant or abstract idea you learned about in Hebrew school – it was something real, something tangible"*.

Why do you think visiting Israel changes the way many young Jews from outside of Israel experience Judaism?

2. Debate: (15 minutes)

Have the students debate the goals of Birthright and whether or not it should be offering more of a complicated view of Israel on its trips (you can share with students how this was the subject of some [controversy](#) in 2018). Do this by creating a [mentimeter](#) where students can vote on what type of Birthright trip they would run. You can include the following questions:

- a. What should the goals of Birthright be? (open-ended question)
- b. The ideal Birthright trip:

- i. Should focus on providing a fun, positive Israel experience
- ii. Should introduce participants to some of Israel's challenges without impacting the overall positive vibe
- iii. Should present a complete picture of Israel - both the positive and the challenges - even if this leads to some difficult discussions on the trips.

Choose 1 question:

1. Reflections on visiting Israel

Have you ever been to Israel? If so, reflect on what that experience was like for you. What did you learn? How did it impact you? If you've never been to Israel before, what would you hope to get out of a trip like Birthright?

2. Visiting Israel vs learning about Israel in school

Why do you think experiencing Israel in person is so much more powerful than learning about it in an academic setting?

3. Should everyone visit?

As a Jew, do you feel obligated to visit/spend time in Israel? Do you think all Jews should visit Israel? Why or why not?

Step 3: Assessment

Checking for Understanding: (5 minutes)

Were my learning goals met?

Do a "whip around the room" or an "exit ticket", where students write their answer to the following prompt on a post-it note to stick up on their way out of class.

Prompt: It is 20 years from now and you are a wealthy businessperson and influential Jewish communal leader:

1. You are asked to make a significant donation to Birthright. Would you donate generously, give an average amount, or refuse to donate? Why?

You are asked to list one thing Birthright could do to improve their trip. Based on what you learned today, what would you suggest?

What to think about when lesson planning:

- Is my lesson being driven by the goals/essential questions?
- Is the UED video the hook or the learning activity?
- Do I have to adjust for the age levels of my students (excerpts, simplify the questions...)?