

CONNECTIONS ISRAEL

Bringing the Jewish People Together

The Morality of the IDF

Goal:

Explaining the moral code of the IDF.

Target audience:

Grades 4-8

Length of activity:

90 minutes

Part I:

The teacher writes IDF on the board and asks the children what this abbreviation stands for, eventually writing:

Israel Defense Forces

Follow up questions:

- 1) What is the American army called?
United States Armed Forces
- 2) Are there any significant differences between these two names?
- 3) Why would Israel have chosen to highlight Defense and America Armed?
- 4) Are there other examples of army names?

The purpose of this part of the exercise is to sensitize the students to the Israeli army having been established to defend the Jewish people from attacking enemies, not as a conquering force. Some pre-state and army history could be shared at this point.

Part II:

- 1) Discussion on symbols.
- 2) Ask the students to design a symbol if they were creating an army and explain what their symbol represents
- 3) Show the students the IDF symbol and ask them to list each element of it and what each might represent.



A sword.

A leaf wrapped around the sword. (Ask the students to identify the type of leaf. It is an Olive leaf).

Hebrew words that mean "The Israeli Defense Force"

The Shield of David

These parts make up the IDF symbol - What does each one mean?

Sword - symbolizes the readiness to fight, the personal weapon of the soldier.

Olive leaf - symbolizes the call for peace and the effort to prevent war.

After the flood that expressed destruction - Noah sent the dove and asked for peace, life and growth to return to the world.



Then he sent out the dove from him to see whether the waters had subsided from the face of the ground. But the dove could not find a resting place for the sole of its foot, and it returned to him, to the ark, for water was upon the face of the whole earth; and he put forth his hand, and took it, and brought it to him into the ark. He waited again another seven days; and again he sent out the dove from the ark.

And the dove came back to him in the evening - and behold! an olive leaf it had plucked with its bill! So Noah knew that the waters had subsided from upon the earth.

(Genesis 8:8)

Shield of David symbolizes our right or even our duty to defend our selves. The shield reminds us of King David and connects us with the chain of Jewish history in which Jews overcame wars not only by military force but by their belief in God.

Looking at these parts that make up the IDF Symbol - what can one learn about the main principles of the IDF?

Part III:

Compare and contrast the IDF symbol and its symbolic meaning to the insignia and implied symbolic meaning of other armies.