

Build Community

Grades 4–12

Objective

Students will use reflective practices and their own life experiences to write personal narratives that describe their core values. Then, build community as a class by agreeing upon a set of shared values.

Materials — [Worksheets available on Google Slides](#)

- “Defining My Values” vocabulary and worksheets
- “Classroom Community Values” worksheet
- “Self-Reflection” worksheet (optional)
- Timer

Class Activity

1. If you haven’t already, review the “[Welcome to the Skirball](#)” introduction, which features collection items that relate to this lesson, as well as information about the Skirball and its permanent exhibition, *Visions and Values: Jewish Life from Antiquity to America*.
2. Review the “Defining My Values” vocabulary page.
3. Using the “Defining My Values” worksheets:
 - Lead students through a close-looking activity using an image of artifacts from the Skirball Cultural Center’s permanent collection of ceremonial and everyday objects of Jewish life.
 - Read about the person who owned the artifacts and lead a discussion about how everyday items can reflect one’s values. More objects for study can be found in the “[Welcome to the Skirball](#)” introduction.
 - Select three prompts from the list below (or create your own!). Give students two minutes per prompt to free write as much as they can. Encourage them to write anything that comes to mind and to keep writing until the time is up.

Who is important to you? Why? Share qualities you admire.

What inspires you and/or gives you hope for the future?

What do you want to change about the world? Why?

What special occasions or events are significant to you? Why?

What character traits are important in a friend? A teacher? A leader?

What are essential truths you live by?

5. After students finish responding to the three prompts, invite them to individually reflect on what they wrote. Students will then highlight or circle two words or phrases from each answer to help identify six personal values. These will help inform the “Classroom Community Values” worksheet, which will be completed in the Share Out.

Student Instructions

Through close looking and interpretation, learn about a person from the past and what they valued. Then, identify six of your personal values using the “Defining My Values” worksheets.

Share Out

Ask students to share their values in pairs or as a class, considering the following questions:

- What did they learn about themselves or their classmates?
- What values did the students hold in common with one another?

Based on student responses, create a list of six agreed upon Classroom Community Values. Display and follow them this school year!

Curriculum Connections

CCSS.ELA-LITERACY.CCRA: SL.1, 4; R.1, 2; W.3, 9

Resources

Learn more about Jewish culture and tradition by reading the article “[Judaism](#)” from the organization **My Jewish Learning**.

Learn about diversity within the Jewish community by reading the following articles:

- “[Sephardic, Ashkenazic, Mizrahi and Ethiopian Jews](#)” from **My Jewish Learning**.
- “[Types of Jews: The Many Ethnic and Racial Subgroups within the Jewish Community](#)” from **My Jewish Learning**.
- “[Beyond the Count: Perspectives and Lived Experiences of Jews of Color](#)” from the **Jews of Color** Initiative.

Connect with Us

Our educators are here to help! If you have questions about this curriculum or would like to share your students’ writing or artwork with us, please email teacherprograms@skirball.org.