



Which One of the Four Children Are You?

Topic

Exploring the text of the Four Children through contemporary movies and pop culture

Grade Level(s)

4th grade and up

Goals for the Lesson/Activity

Students will

- Learn about the meaning of the text of the four children
- Explore the characteristics of the four children through modern pop culture

Materials needed

- At least one *haggadah*

Technology needed

Computer or smart board

Prepare in Advance

- Review the text of the Four Children (traditionally, the Four Sons) in the *haggadah*. Make enough copies, or collect enough *haggadot*, so that each student has the text in front of them.
- Review the trailer for the movie, "Inside Out":
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1HFv47QHWJU>

Background for Teachers

- The Four Children in the *haggadah* are categorized as follows: *Chacham* (wise), *Rasha* (wicked), *Ta'am* (pure or simple), and *She'Ayno Yodeah Lishol* (the one who doesn't know how to ask).
- One way to look at the text is very literally; in our life, there are people that we know who embody each of these four attributes, or display them with some regularity.
- Another explanation of the text is that the four children could be perceived as four personalities within one person. One could be "wicked" at a time when he or she gossips, one could be "simple" in the presence of someone more accomplished, and one could find it difficult to know where to begin when the topic he or she is listening to is foreign to him or her. Finally, one could be "wise" when he or she is being a good student and doing *Mitzvot*.



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Description of Activities

1. Read and discuss the text of the four children in class.
2. Discuss both explanations found in the "background for teachers" section of this lesson. As a reminder, the first one is that we all know people who embody each of the attributes in our family, school, and community. The second explanation is that we could have all those attributes within ourselves. Ask students to describe situations in their life when they experienced someone with each of the personality traits. Remind them to do so without using names.
3. Use the movie "Inside Out" as an illustration of the text. Show the students the trailer. Let them know that this movie comes from scientific research which supports the theory that each of us has part of each of the four children inside of us. Ask the students to connect each of the movie characters to each of the four children, for example: Anger could be the wicked child and Joy could be the simple child.
4. Ask the students to think about situations in which they behaved like each of the four children. Once they have the situation in mind, ask what emotion motivated them to behave in this way. Invite a few students to share with the class, reminding them not to use names.

Show them the clip below from the end of the movie and tell them that, according to the movie, one needs sadness and joy to be complete and become a wise child.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=r04NHUOwZkU>

Ask if they agree. Ask what they might do to take on the role of the wise child at the Seder. Ask what emotions motivate them to do so.

Optional Extension

- Put the students in groups of three or four and ask them to think of a favorite children's movie. It can be animated or live action, contemporary or classic. You might also have them list a number of movies as a group, with a volunteer making a list on the board or a large sheet of paper and have them form groups around a shared interest in the same title. They could form groups according to



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the movie they have chosen. The movies should have at least 4-6 characters with identifiable traits.

Ideas for movies include: *Star Wars*, *Inside Out*, *Harry Potter*, *Frozen*, *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves*, *The Wizard of Oz*, *The Karate Kid*, *Mary Poppins*, etc.

- Groupthink 1. After the students have chosen their movie, have them choose the four characters who they think match the four children. For example, in *Star Wars*, Luke could be the simple one and Darth Vader the wicked one. Tell them to be ready to share their decisions.
- Groupthink 2. The students can focus on one character from a movie and explore his or her personality traits as they correspond to the different traits exemplified by the four children in the *haggadah*.