

Value: אִמְצַ לֵב Ometz Lev

Caregiving Principle: Encouraging a sense of calm

The Hebrew phrase, אִמְצַ לֵב (*ometz lev*), translates to “**strength (אִמְצַ ometz) of the heart (לֵב lev)**” and often is translated as “courage” in colloquial English. Throughout this module, we are using אִמְצַ לֵב (*ometz lev*) to mean one’s “inner strength.” This phrase is found in Psalm 27, reminding us to look to God for strength.

קוּה אֶל־יְהוָה חֲזַק וַיֵּאֲמַץ לִבִּי וְקוּה אֶל־יְהוָה

Kaveh el-Adonai hazak v'ya'amez libecha v'kaveh el-Adonai

“Look to God. Be strong and strengthen your heart. Look to God!”

There are two action-oriented elements in the phrase, אִמְצַ לֵב (*ometz lev*):

- **Ometz means strength, so we first have to strengthen ourselves** – In order to use the power of *ometz lev*, we have to realize we have untapped reserves that can help us when our emotions run high – whether of anger, excitement, happiness or fright. Engaging our inner strength allows us to pause and take control of the behavioral choices we make next.
- **Lev means heart, so we then have to reach inward into our heart** – We must intentionally choose to use our inner strength. This means facing the things in life that may frighten us and, using appropriate coping mechanisms, to help calm ourselves and others. Genesis *Rabbah* (an ancient collection of *midrash*) tells a powerful story of how a person engaged their *ometz lev* in the face of perceived danger. The text says, “A person walking on the road saw a pack of dogs and felt afraid of them, so he sat down in their midst.” It is that inner strength that is at the heart of *ometz lev*.

Ometz lev is anchored in the second principle for caregivers working with people who have faced trauma - **calming**. To regulate one’s emotionality, one needs to have inner strength, i.e., strength of the heart, to recognize when big feelings are taking over and to identify the appropriate coping tools to help return to a regulated state. Referencing Maslow’s hierarchy of needs,¹ once a person’s physiological needs (food, water, air, shelter) are met, then safety needs must be taken care of, including one’s personal security, especially the ability to recognize and calm one’s big feelings.

Our module connects to the Enduring Understanding in clear ways:

- **If I am not for myself, who will be for me?** – We want to empower children to recognize when they are experiencing “Big Feelings” and to access tools/techniques that can facilitate a return to a state of calm using their own power of *ometz lev*. While all feelings are valid, all behaviors are not.
- **If I am only for myself, what am I?** – We want to empower children to look beyond themselves, to notice when others are dysregulated and may need support in remembering their own *ometz lev*. Empathy also plays a role here.
- **If not now, when?** – We want to empower children to take action for calming themselves in the moment, for regulating their emotions.

Throughout this module, learners discover different aspects of what *ometz lev* is and what it means to engage one’s *ometz lev*. They will define it, consider when to engage their *ometz lev*, discover tools and create plans!

¹ <https://www.thoughtco.com/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs-4582571>

Note that there are five distinct weeks of learning offered in the overview chart, below (page 3). Depending on the timing of holidays and synagogue-related events, an educational program might choose to introduce only four of the sessions. While an ideal calendar would allow for the scheduling of each module without interruption, the scheduling choices are up to each director.

For a two-minute overview of this module
that orients teachers and parents to the learning,
click on this link:
<https://tinyurl.com/y6m5tobf>



OVERVIEW GRID

<p>Weekly Focusing Question</p>	<p>Mifgash (the session in which a <i>k'vutzah</i> of learners "meet" the week's focus)</p>	<p>Grades K-3 Activities (introduced via a subscription-type box)</p> <p>NOTE: Each of the five weeks stand on their own, but build on each other towards an understanding of Big Feelings and how they can be managed using <i>ometz lev</i>, one's inner strength.</p>	<p>Grades 4-6 Challenges (introduced via a challenge video)</p> <p>NOTE: Over the course of the five weeks, learners consider how one uses <i>ometz lev</i> to calm Big Feelings. Each week builds upon the last. During the first three weeks, learners create character and <i>ometz lev</i> cards to be used in a game. In the fourth and fifth weeks, they practice the skill of matching <i>ometz lev</i> tools to Big Feeling moments in their own lives.</p>
<p>Session 1: Why do we need <i>ometz Lev</i>?</p>	<p>Explore the concept of Big Feelings and begin to consider our ability to control our behavioral reactions to them.</p>	<p><i>In the mifgash, learners are introduced to a Jack-in-the-Box as an illustration of our reactions to Big Feeling moments – we can explode outwards, we can choose not to do anything, or we can be intentional and careful about our next steps. This week, the youngest learners create a pop-up-box.</i></p> <p><u>In the box:</u> Small box; ribbon; wire; stickers; small finger puppet; small blank pieces of paper.</p> <p><u>The task:</u> Create a personal pop-out-box. Decorate it with different Big Feelings on the outside. Throughout the week, observe and identify 3 big feelings to write on the pieces of paper and put inside their box to pop out in different ways whenever it is opened.</p>	<p>Identify examples of Jewish people – literary and historical – who faced Big Feeling moments that either did (or could) benefit from engaging their <i>ometz lev</i>. Then, create gaming "character cards" for 2-3 of them.</p>

<p>Session 2: What is a Big Feelings moment? What is <i>ometz lev</i>?</p>	<p>Consider specific examples of Jewish leaders who faced “Big Feeling moments” that led to their use of <i>ometz lev</i> to make a good behavior choice.</p>	<p><u>In the box:</u> Large craft stick; a piece of cardstock on which one side has “אִמְצַלֵּב” printed on it, the other has a selection of emojis; glue dots.</p> <p><u>The task:</u> The learners fold the <i>ometz lev</i>/Big Feelings emoji sign in half – one side with the phrase <i>ometz lev</i> and the other side with emojis. Using the craft stick as a sign holder, they wrap the folded sign around the stick and attach the two with the glue dots.</p> <p>They then identify a time in the past week where they had BIG FEELINGS and create a short video. At the point in the story when Big Feelings are getting ready to boil over, they freeze and hold up the sign to illustrate stopping to tap into their <i>ometz lev</i> and also to consider the Big Feeling that has been engaged.</p>	<p>Practice identifying Big Feeling moments with the character cards created earlier – What choices would the characters have if they find themselves at a Big Feelings moment? Create a toolbox of <i>ometz lev</i> choices and non-<i>ometz lev</i> choices for at least one of the characters, using the provided card template. These choice cards will be used for game play at the next session.</p>
<p>Session 3: What are some <i>ometz lev</i> tools other people use? How do I use my <i>ometz lev</i> to identify the correct tool(s) to bring myself to a regulated state?</p>	<p>Introduce learners to different <i>ometz lev</i> tools they may access when facing a Big Feelings moment.</p>	<p><u>In the box:</u> Origami fortune teller template; <i>ometz lev</i> toolkit stickers.</p> <p><u>The task:</u> Create an <i>ometz lev</i> tool in the form of an origami fortune teller. Use the fortune teller to help pick a tool for various Big Feelings moments.</p>	<p>Play the game! Choose one of your character cards, select a randomized scenario, and shuffle to pick one of your choice cards. What happens to the character if they make this choice? Did the character make the right choice? Go back and choose a different choice card to play the scene out differently, or select a new scenario. Repeat as many times as desired.</p>

<p>Session 4: When do we need <i>ometz lev</i>?</p>	<p>Expand upon learners' understandings of when we need to use our <i>ometz lev</i> and the various <i>ometz lev</i> tools available.</p>	<p><u>In the box:</u> Glue stick; QR code to a photo editing website that will allow them to decorate/illustrate photos.</p> <p><u>The task:</u> Identify a personal Big Feelings moment and illustrate comic-book-style >> the moment and the choosing of an <i>ometz lev</i> tool.</p>	<p>Consider Big Feelings moments in relation to an <i>ometz lev</i> toolbox. Learners make a character card of themselves, along with <i>ometz lev</i> choice cards (3 <i>ometz lev</i> choices and 3 non-<i>ometz lev</i> choices).</p>
<p>Session 5: What will my <i>ometz Lev</i> plan be?</p>	<p>Teacher guides the learners through practicing an <i>ometz lev</i> plan to help them apply these skills in the future.</p>	<p>In the box: Clear plastic jar; bottle of "Softsoap;" liquid watercolor; glitter and/or large shaped confetti; permanent markers; "אִמֶּץ לֵב <i>ometz lev</i>" label.</p> <p>The task: Create and decorate an "Ometz Lev Jar" (a.k.a., a glitter jar). Explore different ways to use the jar throughout the week to help identify Big Feelings moments and then pick appropriate <i>ometz lev</i> tools.</p>	<p>Describe a scenario you've experienced or one you can imagine in which you needed <i>ometz lev</i>. Make a video similar to week 3 in which you tell the story, explaining the scenario and your choices - how would/did you use <i>ometz lev</i> (or not)?</p>

The Mifgash

The *mifgash* (מִפְגָּשׁ - meeting or gathering) is a 20-30 minute weekly synchronous session with the teacher and learners, plus any teaching assistants (*madrich* and/or *madrichah*; the plural is *madrichim*). During each *mifgash*, there is the opportunity to: check-in with the students; build community; celebrate and share some of the activities/challenges the students accomplished the previous week; and, introduce new content for the upcoming week. Each *mifgash* follows the same format to create a sense of consistency and routine:

- **Greetings/Check-In (3 minutes)**

These are hellos to every individual as they enter the meeting and a quick check-in or activity. Examples include:

- Pass the greeting – Call on someone and ask how they are feeling today and they call on another person in the group.
- Finding each other – Everyone is asked to reach to the people on either side of them and then above and below.
- Etc.

- **Reflection/Community Building (4-7 minutes)**

This is a reminder of what happened the last session and the activity or challenge that children worked on. The Flipgrid uploads are referenced and 2-3 children's postings are spotlighted each week (over the course of a number of weeks, everyone has a chance to be in the spotlight). The teacher might also do a 3-4 minute community-building activity that fits the theme.

- **New Content (15 minutes)**

This week's learning is introduced and the main activity is accomplished together.

- **Launching At-Home Learning (5 minutes)**

The lower elementary and upper elementary learners are introduced to their activities or challenges for the upcoming week. Ideally, these are done in breakout rooms so that each age group is offered a focused (and exciting) introduction and explanation of their task. A teen assistant, prepped for the task, could meet with one group and the teacher with another.

That said, if the entire educational program meets as a whole and then *k'utzot* or classes are divided into breakout rooms, it will be impossible for a *k'utzah* to use the breakout rooms for this "launch." Zoom offers only one layer of breakout rooms.

If you do not have the option of breakout rooms, you may make modifications to how you handle the lesson. For example, consider asking any children working with the upper elementary challenges to take a few minute break while you orient the younger learners to this week's activity box instructions; however, the older children should stay in earshot. Introduce the activity box to the lower elementary age children, then send them off. Call back the older children and launch their learning for the week. Note that this option will increase the launch to 10 minutes time.

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Follow-Up – Whether or not teachers will be scheduling call-in/“Ask Me” times during the week, children should receive work-reminders and additional resources (links to books online with complementary themes, songs, etc.). Families should be sent or linked to the weekly Family Schmooze questions, designed for casual conversation around the dinner table, while in the car or any other appropriate time.

Session 1: Why do we need *ometz lev*?

The focus:

Learners explore BIG FEELINGS by learning the metaphor of a Jack-in-the-Box exploding out of its container. Then, learners are introduced to the concept of *ometz lev* (strength of the heart, i.e., inner strength), and how people use *ometz lev* to help them control their behaviors when facing a Big Feelings moment.

Note to the teacher – The phrase *ometz lev* is usually translated as “courage” in colloquial English. However, throughout this module, *ometz lev* is used more literally as “strength of the heart,” which is then colloquially translated as “inner strength.” Additionally, this module uses the phrase “big feelings” to mean big intense emotions, positive and negative.

Teacher preparation:

Open on your computer:

- Jack-in-the-Box² Video – <https://tinyurl.com/y5lczann>
An option is for the teacher to obtain a Jack-in-the-box and offer the demonstration and explanation yourself, “live action”
- RESOURCE SHEET A: Big Feelings Photographs

Preview for yourself (all of these are posted to the *La-bri'ut* website)

- The challenge video for upper elementary and complementary challenge card
- The “how-to” video for the lower elementary box supplies
- This week’s Family Schmooze

Printed and ready to hold up (available on the *La-bri'ut* website)

- RESOURCE SHEET B: Jack-in-the-Box Image

FOR LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING:

- Open on your computer (available on the *La-bri'ut* website)
 - Lower Elementary Box Instructions Video
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Video

The session:

1) GREETINGS/CHECK-IN (3 min)

Teacher’s choice

2) REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING (7 min)

OPTION: [*A madrich/madrichah could lead this*]

Tell your learners that just this week you were feeling (pick an emotion) and then freeze your face into an expression that matches how you felt. Ask everyone to freeze their face to match yours for just 3 seconds (count out the time). In this game, their task is to think of a Big Feeling or emotion they felt recently and when called upon, to first name it and then freeze their face into that look for three seconds. This will go around the group – one person names a feeling, freezes their face and

² In the last number of years, some children (and even adults) are triggered by clowns. As a result, the curriculum planning team spent a lot of time talking about the clowns that pop out of many Jack-in-the-Boxes. In the end we concluded that the metaphor was the right one for *ometz lev* and thus worked to find a Jack-in-the-Box that was the least offensive or scary. Just be aware of the clown-challenge as you work with this unit.

then calls on someone else to share their feeling and face. If this goes fast enough, and you have an extra two minutes for this section, you could time the first round and then challenge the children to share their feelings/faces at least 20 seconds faster than the first round of the Face Game. Tell them that this week, they'll be spending time on Big Feelings – this was just a start.

3) NEW CONTENT (15 min)

a) INITIAL INTRODUCTION: Explain to the *k'vutzah* that you are starting a new module today that is based on a Hebrew phrase, *ometz lev* (אִמְצָ לֵב).

- i) Ask if anyone recognizes any of the Hebrew words in the phrase *ometz lev*. Some learners may respond that they've heard the phrase, and it means "courage." Others may be familiar with the word *lev*, meaning "heart." Many will have no idea of its meaning.
- ii) Explain that *ometz lev* is something that is helpful to use when suddenly are faced with Big Feelings, big emotions. *Ometz* means "strength" and *lev* means "heart," so the phrase means strength of the heart, or an inner strength.

Ask for examples of some big feelings. Some responses may include: anger, big sadness, fear, great excitement or happiness. Make sure the learners identify positive "big feelings," as well as more negative ones.

- iii) The question for today, in addition to thinking about some big feelings, is:
"Why do we need *ometz lev*, inner strength?"

b) EXPLORING WHAT "BIG FEELINGS" ARE AND WHY WE NEED *OMETZ LEV*:

- i) Introduce the Jack-in-the-Box metaphor (*note, most children will not yet know the meaning of metaphor, but they should get the idea*). Either show the JEC video (see: <https://tinyurl.com/y5lczann>), or attain a Jack-in-the-box and do a live demonstration with a parallel explanation to what the video portrays.

If you (or a *madrich/madrichah*) do the live demonstration, you need to talk through the three options for the Jack-in-the-Box:

- #1 – *The latch is fully and quickly released*: He explodes out of his box, not in control of his feelings
- #2 – *The latch doesn't open*: He does nothing, stays in his box and stew in his feelings
- #3 – *The latch is carefully open in a controlled way*: He engages his *ometz lev* and slowly comes out of his box, expressing his feelings and making good choices, slowly and carefully

If you show the JEC Jack-in-the-Box video, feel free to pause at each option and discuss, or continue until the end and review the three choices.

- ii) Explain to the learners that they will explore some Big Feelings. Introduce the images on RESOURCE SHEET A, telling learners that each picture is an example of someone having a Big Feeling.

For each image, ask learners:

- (1) To identify and name the Big Feeling.
Why do they think this person has the specific Big Feeling?
What do they think will happen next? What might this person do?
- (2) Consider how this person might stop and control their behavior choices in response to this Big Feeling.

Tell the students: All feelings are valid; all behaviors are not. Ask for ideas of what that means. Explain that it is ok to be angry, but it's not ok to be mean to someone, hit, or hurt their feelings "just because." Big feelings are okay, inappropriate behavior is not.

Guide students to understand that to help make good choices, everyone needs *ometz lev* to keep from exploding out of our boxes.

c) QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT:

- i) How hard is it to calm oneself down from a Big Feeling Moment?
- ii) If one is very sad, angry, happy or excited – why might it be good to stop and find one's inner strength (one's *ometz lev*) and make a best-as-one-can behavior choice?

4) LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (5 min) – Ideally, this section is done in breakout rooms, one for the lower elementary learners and one for the upper elementary ones. *Madrichim* may be tapped to help lead one of these conversations. Please read the more detailed information on page five for "Launching At-Home Learning."

- a) **Lower elementary** (those with the activity box) – They have materials to create their own pop-out-box, along with 3 small pieces of blank paper. After they complete their pop-out-box, throughout the week they will look for three more examples of Big Feelings, each to be written or illustrated on one of the small pieces of paper and then folded (if necessary) to fit inside the box on the top of their pop-out. Their challenge (and fun) is to open their pop-out-box in different ways to see what happens to the Big Feelings when the springy-thing (1) explodes out of the box, (2) stays shut inside the box, or (3) engages *ometz lev* (inner strength) and is slowly let out of the box. They should post a video on Flipgrid of what happens with different big feelings as they open their box.
- b) **Upper elementary** (those with the video challenge) - Share the video that introduces the first at-home challenge, or ask learners to watch it on their own at home. Consider showing it all the way through and then returning to one of the embedded questions (your choice) to discuss as a group for a few minutes. Using screen-share, introduce learners to the *Ometz Lev Challenge Card #1*.

Make sure they see and understand the challenge of the week: to identify 2-3 Jewish characters who have been in a situation with Big Feelings, where they used (or could have used) their *ometz lev*, their inner strength. The character could be from Torah stories, prophets, rabbis, historical figures, or anyone else. Their task is to create 2-3 character cards (use the template provided on the Challenge Card, or copy something similar onto index cards or slips of paper) to introduce their character. Afterwards ask them to post photos of their card(s) to Flipgrid. See Challenge Card #1 for full instructions.

FAMILY SCHMOOZE: *The card to send home is on the Learner's page of the La-bri'ut website.*

This is either an idea or behavior that parents can reinforce in the coming week, or a set of open-ended questions that families may discuss around the dinner table, in the car, or anywhere they are together. If there is more than one child in the family, the Schmooze will bridge the learning and thinking between younger and older, older and younger.

Our module focuses on the Jewish concept of *ometz lev*, inner strength. We are using the term in the sense of using our inner strength to make better behavior decisions when faced with Big Feelings.

This week, the children were introduced to the metaphor of a Jack-in-the-Box as a way to see that Big Feelings (anger, excitement, sadness, happiness, anxiety) can explode. They learned that Jack popping out of his box illustrates three behavior choices – an explosion (he and his emotions pop out), nothing (he just stays in the box and stew in his feelings), or through a controlled opening he emerges with a bit of care. So, when faced with Big Feelings we can use our *ometz lev* (our inner strength) to determine what our next behaviors will be. Additionally, children were told: all feelings are valid, all behaviors are not. You may wish to pick up on the Jack-in-the-Box metaphor as you and your child encounter various Big Feelings as the week unfolds. To see the Jack-in-the-Box metaphor in action, check out: <https://tinyurl.com/y5lczann>

Looking for a book for your child? Consider any of these that touch on our theme:

- [*Sadie's Almost Marvelous Menorah*](#), by Jamie Korngold (for ages 5-6), a 2019 PJ Library book
- [*Terrible, Terrible*](#), by Robin Bernstein (for ages 5-9), a 2011 PJ Library book
- [*The Koufax Dilemma*](#), by Steven Schnur (for ages 5-9), available on Amazon
- [*Life, After*](#), by Sara Littman (for ages 11-13), available on Amazon

FOLLOW-UP DURING THE WEEK

- Immediately after the session send upper elementary children and parents a link to the challenge video so they may watch it again AND send lower elementary parents a link to the box instructions video to share with their child.
- Send a check-in note to the families; include the Family Schmooze page which has a link to the Jack-in-the-Box video, if they choose to watch it.
- Remind students to share their work on Flipgrid ("I can't wait to see what you post!")
- Respond to children's postings
 - To encourage students for future sessions
 - To choose what to share in the spotlight section of the next session.

RESOURCE SHEET A: BIG FEELINGS PHOTOGRAPHS

















RESOURCE SHEET B – JACK-IN-THE-BOX IMAGE

Note: this is a picture of the same box used in the intro video



Session 2:
What is *ometz lev*, and what is a Big Feelings moment?

The focus (“If I am not for myself, what am I?”)

Learners explore stories from the Torah to identify “Big Feelings moments” and consider how they recognize they are having Big Feelings.

Teacher preparation:

Ready in front of you

- Jack-in-the-Box (a real toy or the image opened up on your computer, ready to share) – RESOURCE SHEET B (previous lesson)
- Story of Moses at the burning bush – in the curriculum guide
- Story of Miriam and the women dancing at the Sea of Reeds – in the curriculum guide
 - OPTIONAL: a tambourine

Preview for yourself: All of these are available on the *La-bri'ut* website

- The challenge video for upper elementary and complementary challenge card
- The “how-to” video for the lower elementary box supplies
- This week’s Family Schmooze

FOR LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING:

- Open on your computer (available on the *La-bri'ut* website):
 - Lower Elementary Box Instructions Video
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Video

The session:

1) GREETINGS/CHECK-IN (3 min)

Teacher’s choice

2) REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING (7 min)

OPTION: If successful, repeat (or adapt) the Big Feelings activity from last week. Otherwise, teacher’s choice.

Spotlight several children and their work from the past week:

- a) For lower elementary, ask about the Big Feelings identified this week. Share 1-2 pictures of pop-out-boxes made by the children and ask any relevant follow up questions.
- b) For upper elementary, ask about the character cards created and share 1-2 on your screen. Ask any relevant follow-up questions.

3) NEW CONTENT (15 min)

a) JACK-IN-THE-BOX REFRESHER

- i) Show learners the Jack-in-the-Box (either RESOURCE SHEET B or a real one).
- ii) Ask for a volunteer to explain how the Jack-in-the-Box relates to Big Feelings and *ometz lev*. Emphasize that when we open the lid slowly, it is as if Jack engages his *ometz lev*.

b) WHAT IS A BIG FEELING MOMENT?

- i) Explain that today the group will focus on recognizing times when someone needs to use their *ometz lev*, their inner strength.
- ii) In your own words, tell the story of Moses encountering God at the burning bush (note, this is a great job for a *madrich* or *madrichah*). The Torah text (Exodus 3:1-6) says (*note, there are a few word changes from the original to help make the point of the story for us*):

Now Moses, tending the flock of his father-in-law Jethro ... drove the flock into the wilderness, and came to Horeb, the mountain of God. An angel of God appeared to Moses in a blazing fire out of a bush. Moses looked - there was a bush on fire, yet the bush did not burn up. Moses said, "I must turn to look at this marvelous sight - why doesn't the bush burn up?"

When God saw that Moses had turned aside to look, God called to him out of the bush:

"Moses! Moses!"

Moses answered,

"Here I am."

And God said, "Do not come closer. Remove your sandals from your feet, for the place on which you stand is holy ground.

God continued speaking, "I am the God of your ancestors, your family - the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." And **Moses was afraid to look at God** [he had Big uncontrollable Feelings – so he used his *ometz lev*] **and hid his face.**

After the story, ask the learners:

(a) What were the Big Feelings that Moses may have felt?

(b) When do they think he realized he was having Big Feelings?

Explain that this was a Big Feelings moment. Moses realized he was overwhelmed, and he needed to do something about it. His box was about to explode open (feel free to share the Jack-in-the-Box to remind them of the metaphor), and like the Jack-in-the-Box, he needed to make a choice about how to "come out of his box."

(c) What did he decide to do?

Moses needed to do something in the face of his Big Feelings. By covering his face, he used his *ometz lev* to give himself some personal space. This way he could address his Big Feelings appropriately.

Remind students: All feelings are valid; all behaviors are not.

iii) The teacher or a *madrich/madrichah* could tell this story:

After Moses convinced Pharaoh to let the Israelites leave Egypt, they left quickly, in a bit of a panic and travelled for days until they reached the Sea of Reeds. They became frightened when they saw the Egyptian soldiers coming after them **and** when, miracle of miracles, they stepped into the water, it parted and they could cross on dry land. They were scared, they were excited. And, according to the Torah, once they were safely across the sea, the water

closed in behind them. The Torah says in Exodus 15:20-21 (*feel free to shake a tambourine at appropriate parts of the story telling*) ...

Then Miriam, sister of Moses and Aaron, **took a tambourine in her hand**, and all the **women went out after her and danced** with tambourines.

And **Miriam sang** (a happy song), “Sing to God...”

- iv) Miriam was so excited she needed to do something, so she used her *ometz lev* to make a good behavior choice – she picked up her tambourine and danced.

After the story, ask the learners:

(a) What was Miriam’s Big Feeling?

(b) When did she realize she was having a Big Feeling?

Miriam realized she had a Big Feeling after she was safely across the Sea of Reeds and needed to use her *ometz lev* (inner strength) to address it. Her “box” was about to pop open (feel free to show the Jack-in-the-Box as a reminder of the metaphor) and she had to decide what would happen next – would she explode or make a better behavior choice?

(c) What did she decide to do?

Help children understand that by choosing to play the tambourine and dance Miriam engaged her *ometz lev*. In other words, in her Big Feelings moment, Miriam was able to use her *ometz lev* to make a good behavior choice. She was able to remember that all feelings are valid, but all behaviors are not; Miriam made a good choice that channeled her energy. Think about times when a Jack-in-the-Box is slowly opened – in the same way, Miriam realized she could engage her *ometz lev*, allowing her to express herself in a positive way.

- v) QUESTIONS FOR THOUGHT

Ask learners:

(a) How do you recognize when you’re having Big Feelings?

(b) How does stopping when you are overwhelmed with Big Feelings - when you use your inner strength to pause and think about next steps – help you and those around you?

(c) How might you, like Moses and Miriam, use your *ometz lev* in your own life?

4) LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (5 min, ideally in breakout rooms)

Please read the more detailed information on page five for “Launching At-Home Learning.”

- a) **Lower elementary** (those with the activity box) – Learners will find the materials to create an *ometz lev* sign - one side says, “אִמְצַ לֵב” *Ometz lev*” and the other side has a collection of emojis to represent different big feelings. Then, learners create a short video that shares a story about a Big Feelings moment where they **are** (or were) able to engage their *ometz lev* to help them stop and consider what choice that would lead to more appropriate behavior. Give an example or two of what this could look like.

To indicate the actual *ometz lev* moment in the story-telling, learners will hold up the “אִמְץ לֵב” *Ometz Lev*” side as if to say “stop action.” Then, they will flip the sign and point to the Big Feeling they felt. Once their video is created, learners post it on Flipgrid for everyone to watch and learn from.

- b) **Upper elementary** (those with the video challenge) – Share the video that introduces the at-home challenge or ask learners to watch it on their own at home. Consider showing it all the way through and then returning to one of the embedded questions (your choice) to discuss as a group for a few minutes.

Then, using screen-share, introduce learners to the *Ometz Lev* Challenge #2: Practice identifying Big Feeling moments with the character cards created earlier. They pick one at least one character, and consider what might happen when that person encounters a Big Feelings moment. Then, they post on the group’s Flipgrid. See Challenge Card #2 for full instructions.

FAMILY SCHMOOZE:

Last week, your child was introduced to Big Feelings. This week we explored how Moses and Miriam both used *ometz lev* (inner strength) to use the moment to make a good behavior choice. This week, you might help your child realize when a Big Feelings Moment has arisen and identify it as a time to use their *ometz lev* to stop and think about next steps, just as Moses and Miriam did. Consider discussing:

- How do you know when you’re having a Big Feeling?
- How can I (the parent/caregiver/adult) help you in a Big Feeling Moment to use your *ometz lev* to make a good behavior decision?

A bonus: You may be familiar with “Miriam’s Song,” by Debbie Friedman, which catches the exuberance of Miriam and the women dancing once they crossed safely over the Sea of Reeds. This link is of Debbie singing the song at a summer camp almost 30 years ago:

<https://tinyurl.com/y5879smy>. Enjoy!

FOLLOW-UP DURING THE WEEK

- Immediately after the session send upper elementary children and parents a link to the challenge video so they may watch it again AND send lower elementary parents a link to the box instructions video to share with their child.
- Send a check-in note to parents.
- Remind students to share their work on Flipgrid (“I can’t wait to see what you post!”)
- Respond to children’s postings

Session 3:

What are some *ometz lev* tools others use?

How do I use my *ometz lev* to identify the correct tool(s) to bring myself to a regulated state?

The focus (“If I am not for myself, what am I?”)

Learners will begin building their own *ometz lev* “toolbox.” They will explore different tools/strategies that help other people when faced with Big Feelings and begin thinking about what tools might help them, personally.

Teacher preparation:

Have ready in front of you:

- A toolbox (or just a box) and 2-3 tools inside
- Story of Miriam at the Sea of Reeds (from Session 2; in this curriculum guide)
- Story of Moses at the burning bush (from Session 2; also in this curriculum guide)
- Story of Moses with the Tablets of the Ten Commandments (noted, below)

Open on the computer:

- A Jack-in-the-Box image (RESOURCE SHEET B, previous session) ready to show on your computer (or a physical Jack-in-the-Box)
- Illustrations of *ometz lev* Tools (RESOURCE SHEET C)

Preview for yourself (all are available on the *La-bri'ut* website)

- The challenge video for upper elementary and complementary challenge card
- The “how-to” video for the lower elementary box supplies
- This week’s Family Schmooze

FOR LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING:

- Open on your computer (available on the *La-bri'ut* website)
 - Lower Elementary Box Instructions Video
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Video

The session:

1) GREETINGS/CHECK-IN (3 min)

Teacher’s Choice

2) REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING (7 min)

- a) OPTION: Have a dance party! Last week, the biblical character, Miriam was highlighted as a person who used her *ometz lev* to handle the big feelings that resulted from safely crossing the Sea of Reeds. Share this video of Debbie Friedman (composer and songleader) singing “Miriam’s Song” with a large group of campers: <https://tinyurl.com/y5879smv>. Get everyone out of their chairs to dance!!

OPTION: Play 20 Questions with “What is in my toolbox?” To introduce the idea of tools and toolbox (both are part of this lesson) tell children you have a tool in your toolbox and their challenge is to guess what it is with twenty yes/no (or כן/לא) questions. Rotate around the group with each child asking a question (e.g., Can I hold it in my hand? Is it sharp?). A child who guesses the first tool can have the honor of calling on the other children when they play again

with the second and/or third tool. Tell children that in today's session, they will spend some time looking at *ometz lev* tools.

OPTION: Teacher's choice

- b) Spotlight children's work from the past week: share 1-2 lower elementary videos and 1-2 upper elementary *ometz lev* tool cards (all from Flipgrid). Ask any relevant follow up questions about the video(s).

Ask learners about any other Big Feelings moments where they engaged their *ometz lev*, but did not make videos or a tool card.

3) NEW CONTENT (15 min)

a) OMETZ LEV REVIEW

- i) Ask for someone to remind the *k'vutzah* what a Big Feelings moment is. Then ask how *ometz lev* can help calm Big Feelings.
- ii) Show the Jack-in-the-Box
- (1) Ask if anyone remembers the three options Jack has when his big feelings wind up:
 - (a) Explode
 - (b) Keeping his lid shut
 - (c) Allowing the lid to open slowly
 - (2) Ask: When does a Jack-in-the-Box have an *ometz lev* moment? (Right before he comes out of his box – that is when there is a choice to make about what will happen to his lid.)

b) INTRODUCING SOME OMETZ LEV TOOLS

- i) Explain that when one faces an *ometz lev* moment, there are a number of tools that can help a person figure out what steps to take next. Some of the tools help with calming and other tools help with choice-making, for example:
- Taking deep breaths (ask children to put their hands on their belly and take deep breaths)
 - Closing one's eyes (ask children to close their eyes and put a hand over them)
 - Finding a quiet space (ask children to sit on the floor, yes, out of camera range!)
 - Asking for advice (ask children to turn their head and pretend they are talking to someone on the side)
 - Praying to God (ask children to just sit as if praying, eyes open or not; explain that Jews do not usually fold our hands in front of us – we often have a *siddur*/prayerbook in them)
 - Making a list of three good choices (ask children to mime writing a list)
 - Thinking about the problem (ask children to point to their brain with a thinking face)
- [Note that all of these are illustrated on RESOURCE SHEET C.]
- ii) Tell the learners that you will share some Big Feelings stories/scenes with them –
- (1) The learners' task is to think about which tool they think would help the character to engage their *ometz lev*, their inner strength, and calm themselves from their Big Feeling, slowly opening their lid, as with a Jack-in-the-Box.
 - (2) Screen-share RESOURCE SHEET C with its illustrations of the seven different tools. Practice each of the actions again with the children.

Offer some of the short stories/scenes from the Bible, below. Have children act out the tool that they think would work best in that situation.

SCENE ONE: The Torah tells us about Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. Jacob falls in love with Rachel. After many years they are ready to marry, but at the wedding, it's Leah's sister who is brought to Jacob. She is covered head-to-toe so that Jacob did not know it was Leah he married, not Rachel. Yikes, wrong wife!!

- When he learns that he married Rachel's sister, what big feelings would Jacob have? How about Rachel?
- Which *ometz lev* tool(s) do you think would help them both calm down?

SCENE TWO: The Torah tells us that Joseph's brothers became upset that their father, Jacob, seemed to like their young brother best. When the brothers are all taking care of the family's sheep, far far from home, they decide to sell Joseph to some traders who were passing by. Joseph is taken to Egypt.

- What big feelings would Joseph have?
- Which *ometz lev* tool do you think would help Joseph calm himself?

[Maybe also consider the big feelings of the brothers since they thought they got rid of Joseph!]

SCENE THREE: In Egypt, Joseph is first a servant, then a prisoner, and finally the person who helps Pharaoh save the people from a famine (there was not enough food for everyone). Joseph's brothers come to Egypt to buy some food for their family. Joseph recognizes them, but since he is much older than when they last saw him AND he's dressed as an Egyptian leader, not as a shepherd, they have no idea that they are talking to their brother. Finally, after a bit of time, in a dramatic moment, Joseph tells him that he is their brother.

- What big feelings would the brothers have?
- Which *ometz lev* tool do you think would help them calm themselves?

[Consider also thinking about Joseph's feelings.]

- c) WHAT TOOLS DID MOSES AND MIRIAM USE? Introduce this section by telling the learners that Joseph's entire family moved to Egypt after they reunited with him. The Torah tells us that life was good for the Jewish people for hundreds of years, but then a new pharaoh, a new leader, came to power and he enslaved the Jews. It's at this point in the Torah story that Moses and Miriam appear.
- i) Remind students of the story of Moses at the Burning Bush. Ask:
What tool(s) did Moses choose? Is it on our list yet? [if yes, act it out.]
 - ii) Remind students of the story of Miriam at the Sea of Reeds. Ask:
What tool(s) did Miriam choose? Is it on our list yet? [If yes, act it out.]
 - iii) Introduce one final story – that of Moses smashing the tablets when seeing the Israelites with the Golden Calf. The Torah tells us that Moses spent so much time on the top of Mt. Sinai that the people asked Aaron to be their leader AND to make them a god. Melting down everyone's jewelry, Aaron made an idol of a calf from all the gold jewelry.

God told Moses what was happening at the foot of Sinai and was so angry (had so many Big Feelings) that God wanted to destroy the people, one and all! Moses convinced God to use *ometz lev* to calm down and not kill everyone in anger.

However, when Moses came down off the mountain, he saw the golden calf and the dancing. Yes, he became extremely angry and threw down the tablets of the Ten Commandments, shattering them at the bottom of the mountain.

Ask: What tool(s) did Moses choose? Is it on our list yet?

SURPRISE – Moses didn't pick a tool! But, what Jack-in-the-Box *ometz lev* option did Moses show? (like Jack, he exploded out of his box)

What tool do you think could have helped Moses in this *ometz lev* moment? Ask students to mime an *ometz lev* tool from the list or offer a new tool idea.

4) **LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (5 min, ideally in breakout rooms)**

- a) **Lower elementary** (those with the activity box) – The box contains the materials for children to create an *ometz lev* choosing-tool in the form of an origami fortune teller. They use stickers, writing and/or drawing to illustrate which tools they find most helpful when faced with a Big Feelings moment. During the week, they are challenged to use the fortune teller to help pick a tool to use when faced with a Big Feelings moment. Then, each learner posts a photo on Flipgrid of their use of an *ometz lev* tool during the week.
- b) **Upper elementary** (those with the video challenge) – Share the video that introduces the third at-home challenge, or ask learners to watch on their own at home. Then, using screen-share, introduce learners to the *Ometz Lev* Challenge Card #3.

Make sure they see and understand the challenge of the week: Choose one of your character cards, select a randomized scenario (by visiting the website link on Challenge Card), and shuffle to pick one of your *ometz lev* tool cards. What Big Feeling might someone feel if this happened to them? What happens to the character if they make this choice? Do you think this would be the character's correct choice?

Then, choose a different choice card to play, or select a new scenario. Repeat as many times as desired. Make a video explaining the combination that demonstrates the character's best use of their *ometz lev* in a specific scenario. Post the video to Flipgrid. See Challenge Card #3 for full instructions.

FAMILY SCHMOOZE:

This week, we spent time exploring a variety of tools that anyone can use when faced with a Big Feelings moment. We saw that both Moses at the burning bush and Miriam after crossing the Sea of Reeds used their *ometz lev* to choose a tool. On the other hand, Moses smashed the Ten Commandments in anger when he saw the golden calf; he did not use his *ometz lev* when faced with a Big Feeling moment.

Here are the tools we specifically talked about – half are to help one calm down and half help someone make a good choice.

- Taking deep breaths
- Closing one's eyes
- Finding a quiet space
- Asking for advice
- Praying to God
- Making a list of three good choices
- Thinking about the problem

Which would be helpful to your child? What other ones would you add to the list? When might you refer to the *ometz lev* tools this week?

For those of you with older children, ask to see the game they have been playing.

FOLLOW-UP DURING THE WEEK

- Immediately after the session send upper elementary children and parents a link to the challenge video so they may watch it again AND send lower elementary parents a link to the box instructions video to share with their child.
- Send a check-in note to families; include the Family Schmooze page. Feel free to send parents a link to either or both of these:
 - This Shaboom episode on Ometz Lev (for younger children) - <https://youtu.be/7aETP4nG5ZI>
 - "A Shabbat Prayer for Healing in the Era of Coronavirus," by Rabbi Leah Doberne-Schor, which includes the lines:
Be with us O God.
Help us to find the inner strength
to be patient when our nerves are tested.

Be our Still Waters
when we are surrounded by fear
and anxiety.

Be our Rock, to Whom we can turn
and give our worry and fears.
<https://tinyurl.com/y5qzhar9>
- Remind students to share their work on Flipgrid
- Respond to children's postings

RESOURCE SHEET C – Ometz Lev Tools



Take deep breaths



Shut eyes



Find a quiet space



Pray to God



Make a list of choices



Think about it



Ask for advice

Session 4: When do we need *ometz lev*?

The focus (“If not now, when?”)

Through a telling of the *Hanukkah* story that took place in Billings, Montana, learners explore a real-life example of when *ometz lev* was needed and think about which tools may have been helpful.

Teacher preparation:

OPTIONAL: Open on your computer

Google Earth set to “fly” from your city to Billings, Montana (see if a *madrich* or *madrichah* could set it up before the session begins; if this is too complicated or you do not think you will have much time, don’t fuss with it). The goal in doing this activity is to show how isolated Billings is, as compared to most cities the children using this curriculum live in.

Preview for yourself (all available on the *La-bri’ut* website)

- The challenge video for upper elementary and complementary challenge card
- The “how-to” video for the lower elementary box supplies
- This week’s Family Schmooze

FOR LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (available on the website)

- Open on your computer:
 - Lower Elementary Box Instructions Video
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Video

The session:

1) GREETINGS/CHECK-IN (3 min)

Teacher’s choice

2) REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING (7 min)

- a) OPTION: Play the “How Many Game.” First ask learners to make up motion for “a lot” (like lifting their hands up over their heads and then spreading them wide); practice it together. Then, ask learners to make up a motion for “a little;” practice together. Test out their signals by asking some opening questions like:

How many stars are there in the sky?
How many scoops of ice cream have you eaten in the last month?
How many rabbis work in your synagogue?
How many pets live in your house?

Then ask:

How many Jewish people live in big city like New York City?
How many Jewish people live in Israel?
How many Jewish people live in our city?
How many Jewish people live in a small city like Billings, Montana?

Tell learners that in just a bit they will hear an amazing story that took place in the very small town of Billings, Montana during *Hanukkah*, years ago (maybe when their parents were their age).

- b) Spotlight children and their work from the past week:
 - i) For lower elementary – Who used their *ometz lev* choosing tool when they had Big Feelings?
 - ii) For upper elementary – While playing their game, what was their best combination of a Big Feelings scenario and *ometz lev* tool?
- c) Ask if any learners could share some other tools they saw people use this week to make a good behavior choice when faced with a Big Feelings moment.
- d) Who thought of other tools not discussed the last week? What are they?

3) NEW CONTENT (15 min)

a) HANUKKAH IN BILLINGS, MONTANA, 1992

- i) Explain that today you'll be exploring a true story of people in Billings, Montana who had Big Feelings and used their *ometz lev* "for good" during Hanukkah many years ago.

- ii) Ask children to **briefly** remind the group:

(1) Why we celebrate Hanukkah

(2) How we celebrate Hanukkah

Then ask if anyone has ever heard of Billings, Montana? [If set up, ask a *madrach* or *madrichah* to screen-share and show where your city is on Google Earth and then "fly" to Billings, Montana.] It's a small town in Montana and has only a small number of Jews – at the time of the story, there were just 150 (if possible, make a comparison to something they can relate to – the number of Jews in their city or synagogue).

- iii) Tell the Hanukkah in Billings, Montana story that took place in 1994. Note, the storytelling task is a great job for a *madrach* or *madrichah*, with advance warning and time to practice.

Note that the story, below, was altered to help children catch the big feelings of those involved and the use of ometz lev tools. For an accurate telling, see

<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/not-our-town-0>.

Our story starts with a *hanukkiyah* that stood proudly in the window of the Schnitzers, a Jewish family living in Billings, a small town in Montana. There were not many other Jews in that town which may be why on a cold December night, someone threw a rock through the window, breaking the glass into hundreds of little pieces and knocking a *hanukkiyah* to the ground.

The Schnitzer family felt many big feelings – they were very angry that their house had been damaged. They were also scared and concerned for the safety of themselves and others who lived in Billings, Montana. But Tammie Schnitzer, the mom whose window was broken, used her *ometz lev* to calm her anger and fear. Rather than exploding like a Jack-in-the-Box, she asked others what they thought her family should do. Some told her to take down the Hanukkah decorations because it would be safer – no one would know the family was Jewish. But, the Schnitzers really wanted their Hanukkah decorations to stay up.

The mom, Tammie, shared the story with a local newspaper. She explained that the *hanukkiyah* symbolized the importance of people celebrating their religions as they wanted. Others in Billings read the newspaper story and learned what happened to their Jewish neighbors.

Margaret MacDonald was one of the people who read the story – she was angry that there were people in her town that hated others just because of their religion. She closed her eyes and imagined the sadness her own children living in a Christian home would feel if they were told it wasn't safe to have a Christmas tree. So, Margaret made a list of different things she could do to help the Schnitzers, and she came up with a great plan. She drew a picture of a *hanukkiyah* and made many copies. Then, she asked the children of her church to color them in and then give them away to relatives, neighbors and friends. The minister of Margaret's church called around and asked other churches to make copies to put in the windows of more townspeople.

The Billings Gazette also helped out – it printed a full page picture of a *hanukkiyah* in the newspaper and suggested that everyone tape it to a window at home. A local business set up a large sign that said, "Not in Our Town! No Hate, No Violence. Peace on Earth."

Pretty soon thousands of Billings, Montana homes had a picture of a *hanukkiyah* in their window. The big feelings of fear and anger changed to friendliness and concern, all because people stopped and used their *ometz lev* to think of helpful solutions to a big problem. No, not in our town!

- (1) Throughout the story, feel free to stop to discuss Big Feelings and *ometz lev*.
- (2) At the end of the story, ask the learners:
 - (a) Was someone in this story like Moses at the burning bush – so overwhelmed that they needed to turn away and find personal space?
Margaret MacDonald needed to close her eyes to be able to think.
 - (b) Was someone in the story like Moses on Mt Sinai when he heard that the Israelites made a golden calf – so angry that they threw something or couldn't control their reaction?
Perhaps, the person who threw the rock was like this. They were prejudiced against Jews and hated that some lived in their town. Rather than using ometz lev to learn more, they threw a rock through the window of a Jewish family.
 - (c) Was someone in the story like Miriam – so excited that they danced or sang in front of everyone?
Not exactly, though at the end, the people were friendlier to each other.
 - (d) What other *ometz lev* tools did people use in Billings, Montana?
Tammie asked other people what she could do.
Margaret closed her eyes then made a list. She also asked for help from others.

b) PROACTIVE VS REACTIVE (if time)

- i) Explain that many people get into a situation and just react. But it can be really helpful to think ahead when you might need *ometz lev* before being in a situation where you might make a bad behavior choice. This can help you prepare to use your *ometz lev* and slowly open your lid if/when those moments happen in the future. By thinking about a difficult situation ahead of time:
 - (1) You will be prepared to face Big Feelings.
 - (2) You will be able to think of solutions in advance, which can help.

When we think of a solution in advance, we say we are being “proactive” – we take care of a situation before it happens.

- ii) The people in Billings, Montana first found themselves in a situation in which they reacted – a bad thing happened to a Jewish neighbor and they faced big feelings. But then, a person decided to do something before another rock was thrown – children of their church were asked to color pictures of *hanukkiyot* to put in their own windows. They were proactive – they planned ahead.
- iii) Ask the learners:
What are times you think someone might be able to plan ahead for a Big Feelings moment, when they might have to use their *ometz lev*? (This can be a moment we’ve seen already in the stories we’ve talked about or a different kind of moment, like excitement when it is your birthday.)

5) LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (5 min, ideally in breakout rooms)

- a) **Lower elementary** (those with the activity box) – Learners create a short *ometz lev* comic strip that shows a successful use of an *ometz lev* tool. To create this comic strip, they will take a photo of themselves acting out a Big Feelings moment and then digitally decorate/illustrate it to look like a comic-book character or cartoon character having that big feeling (steam coming out of the ears, speech bubbles, etc.). Then, they will take another photo of themselves using an *ometz lev* tool; they will also decorate/illustrate that photo in the style of a comic. Once both photos are illustrated, they will share them on Flipgrid and tell the story of that *ometz lev* moment and their choice of tools.
- b) **Upper elementary** (those with the video challenge) – Share the video that introduces the fourth at-home challenge, or ask learners to watch on their own at home. Then, using screen-share, introduce learners to the *Ometz Lev* Challenge Card #4.

Make sure they see and understand the challenge of the week: Consider personal Big Feelings moments and what would be needed in an *ometz lev* toolbox. Similarly to what was done for your characters, make a card of yourself, along with *ometz lev* tool cards (3 *ometz lev* choices and 3 non-*ometz lev* choices). Take photos of your cards and share on Flipgrid. See Challenge Card #4 for full instructions.

FAMILY SCHMOOZE:

This week we learned how the people in Billings, Montana used their *ometz lev* to deal with Big Feelings that arose when a Jewish family found a brick thrown through a window at *Hanukkah* time. The citizens of Billings joined together as a community and showed that they would not let hate happen in their town (ask your child what amazing thing people from Billings did!). We looked at the different tools the people used when faced with Big Feelings. However, know that in the version told your children, some details were added to help them catch the Big Feelings and learn some additional *ometz lev* tools; “taking deep breaths” or “making a list” were not part of the real occurrence.

- How can your child plan ahead to use their *ometz lev* tools? Check last week’s Family Schmooze for a list.
- How can you help your child choose an appropriate tool for the situation?

FOLLOW-UP DURING THE WEEK

- Immediately after the session send upper elementary children and parents a link to the challenge video so they may watch it again AND send lower elementary parents a link to the box instructions video to share with their child.
- Send a check-in note to parents; include the Family Schmooze page. Feel free to send parents a link to:
 - *The Christmas Menorahs: How a Town Fought Hate*, by Janice Cohn (children's book)
<https://tinyurl.com/yxbcjdh8>
 - *Not in Our Town*, the full story for adults with a film excerpt:
<https://www.facinghistory.org/resource-library/not-our-town-0>.
- Remind students to share their work on Flipgrid
- Respond to children's postings

Session 5: What will my *ometz lev* plan be?

The focus (“If not now, when?)

Learners will further contemplate times when they may need *ometz lev*, as well as strategies to help them return to a calm state when feeling Big Feelings.

Teacher preparation:

Have ready in front of you:

An *Ometz lev* Jar (aka a Glitter Jar - see instructions: <https://mamainstincts.com/foolproof-calm-bottle/>)

Upbeat Israeli music cued up and ready to play on your device.

Preview for yourself (all are available on the *La-bri'ut* website)

- The challenge video for upper elementary and complementary challenge card
- The “how-to” video for the lower elementary box supplies
- This week’s Family Schmooze

FOR LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING:

- Open on your computer (available on the *La-bri'ut* website)
 - Lower Elementary Box Instructions Video
 - Upper Elementary Challenge Video

The session:

1) GREETINGS/CHECK-IN (3 min)

Teacher’s choice

2) REFLECTION/COMMUNITY-BUILDING (7 min)

- a) OPTION: Turn on some upbeat Israeli music (see above for some suggestions) and have a short dance party, with learners going a bit “wild” when the volume is up, and settling/calming down when the volume is lowered. Tell them that they will see in a bit how this dancing will help them understand a really great *ometz lev* tool.
- b) Spotlight children and their work from the past week:
 - i) Lower elementary learners created comics showing a Big Feelings moment and the results of using *ometz lev*.
 - ii) Upper elementary learners created character cards of themselves and *ometz lev* tool choice cards.
- c) Discuss:
 - i) What does it look like before/after someone is in a Big Feelings moment and then uses an *ometz lev* tool?
 - ii) What are some new situations you found/saw/imagined in which someone really needed an *ometz lev* tool?

3) NEW CONTENT (15 min)

a) QUICK REVIEW

Ask the learners to identify some examples of instances when a person (themselves or others) may need their *ometz lev*.

b) OMETZ LEV JAR – ACTIVE WATCHING

i) Show learners the “*Ometz Lev Jar*.”

ii) Tell learners that you’ll be using this jar to explore what happens inside our brains when we engage our *ometz lev*.

iii) A first shaking of the jar:

(1) Make sure the glitter is fairly calm at the bottom of the jar. Then, shake the jar and place it in front of the camera for learners to watch. Give the jar little shakes during the first part of the discussion so that children keep seeing the swirls of glitter moving.

Tell learners that this is what happens to our brain when we encounter Big Feelings (though make sure that the younger children understand that there is no glitter floating around in our brains!). Ask them how what they see in the jar is like our brains when we are very upset or very excited.

(2) Tell learners that you will stop shaking the jar, just as if you were using your *ometz lev* to help settle your brain and deal with your Big Feelings. Be dramatic in your stopping of your shakes (you could be even more dramatic like a magician and say, “*OMETZ LEV*”). Ask them to watch what happens in the jar for a few moments.

(3) Once the glitter settles, start a new discussion:

When the jar is shaken, it represents all the Big Feelings swirling inside of us, out of control. But when we use *ometz lev*, what happens to our Big Feelings (the swirling glitter)?

Guide learners to note that by using our *ometz lev*, the glitter (aka Big Feelings) settles down until it is all calm at the bottom of the jar once again; we have control. Help them make the connection to their dancing to upbeat music and their slowing down when the volume was lowered. It’s a similar idea.

iv) Prepare learners for a second shaking of the *Ometz Lev Jar*.

(1) This time, as they are watching the glitter, ask them to think of three *ometz lev* tools they could use to help them settle their own emotional glitter. These tools could be chosen from all of the stories talked about as a group, or work and discussions at home. Let them know that you will ask those who wish, to share their *ometz lev* tools when the glitter is calm.

(2) Make sure the glitter in the jar is fairly calm at the bottom of the jar, then shake the jar and place it in front of the camera for learners to watch.

(3) Once the glitter settles, ask individual learners to share the *ometz lev* tools they thought of. Older children could type in the chat box if you have it active.

4) LAUNCHING AT-HOME LEARNING (5 min, ideally in breakout rooms)

- a) **Lower elementary** (those with the activity box) – Learners create their own *Ometz Lev* Jar. They will practice using it in different ways throughout the week, and post on Flipgrid about how it may have helped them.
- b) **Upper elementary** (those with the video challenge) – Share the video that introduces the fifth at-home challenge, or ask learners to watch on their own at home. Then, using screen-share, introduce learners to the *Ometz Lev* Challenge Card #5.

Make sure they see and understand the challenge of the week: Consider your own Big Feelings moments and *ometz lev* toolbox. Describe a situation you have experienced, or one you can imagine, in which you needed *ometz lev*. Make a video like the one you did in week three – tell your story, explain the situation, and the *ometz lev* tool you choose (or not!). See Challenge Card #5 for full instructions.

FAMILY SCHMOOZE:

You know those popular glitter jars? The ones that have glitter, confetti and sometimes other small items that swirl when shaken? Today, we used a glitter jar as a way to explain how our brains behave when impacted by Big Feelings. It is near-to-impossible to make choices or move ahead when one's glitter is swirling, but, by tapping into one's *ometz lev*, one's inner strength, the glitter has an opportunity to calm itself. Younger children will be making a glitter jar this week to use as a tool when Big Feelings arise. For those of you with older children, you can find a foolproof recipe here: <https://mamainstincts.com/foolproof-calm-bottle/>

Hopefully, now that we're at the end of the *Ometz Lev* module your child has the ability to recognize Big Feeling moments and even identify the times when Jewish heroes from our past became highly emotional. Indeed, Jews past and present have handled their Big Feelings well and not so well – it is hard to make good decisions all the time. But both your child and you have been gifted an *ometz lev* toolbox to help in times of high emotionality. Your child could find a quiet space like Moses when overwhelmed by all he saw at the burning bush, or dance like Miriam when "beyond-excited."

Ideally, your family schmoozes this week will help you family tap into this new toolbox.

FOLLOW-UP DURING THE WEEK

- Immediately after the session send upper elementary children and parents a link to the challenge video so they may watch it again AND send lower elementary parents a link to the box instructions video to share with their child.
- Send a check-in note to families; include the Family Schmooze page. Feel free to send parents a link to this which was also mentioned in Session #3:
 - "A Shabbat Prayer for Healing in the Era of Coronavirus," by Rabbi Leah Doberne-Schor, which includes the lines:
Be with us O God.
Help us to find the inner strength
to be patient when our nerves are tested.

Be our Still Waters
when we are surrounded by fear
and anxiety.

Be our Rock, to Whom we can turn
and give our worry and fears.

<https://tinyurl.com/y5qzhar9>

- Remind students to share their work on Flipgrid (“I can’t wait to see what you post!”)
- Respond to children’s postings