



## ACTIVITY

# Responsible for Whom?

### Materials Needed

- Video clip, screening device and internet connection
- List of value statements for Barometer Activity
- Text from Just Action ([www.justaction.org/torahstudy/universalism-text2.htm](http://www.justaction.org/torahstudy/universalism-text2.htm))

### Time Needed

45 minutes-1 hour

### Goal

- To consider what special responsibilities Jews have toward other Jews.
- To consider the tension between our responsibility toward other Jews and our universal desire to help all people

## Before You Get Started

Look at the list of enduring understandings. Which one would you like to emphasize through this activity?

1. Jewish tradition and texts are concerned with particular and universal values. There are debates about questions of responsibility (for example, the debate of “*aniyei ircha kodmim*”) and the role of the Jewish People to improve the world as a whole (for example, the concept of “*Tikkun Olam*”).
2. In the 21st century, a commitment to Jewish Peoplehood can exist fruitfully with tension between particularistic values that ensure the existence and well-being of the Jewish People and a universalistic commitment to general causes.
3. The two agendas can conflict but the solution has to be in the form of a compromise.
4. A People which only cares about itself lacks soul and purpose.
5. A People that neglects developing its own identity and strength risks losing the power to do good all together.

## Directions for Activity

1. Ask participants to respond to the following set of value-centered questions through the “barometer” activity. One end of the room represents “yes” the other end represents “no” and everywhere in between those two extremes represents a position somewhere in the middle. When you read each statement, ask participants to stand somewhere along the barometer (e.g. somewhere in the room that reflects their position in favor or against the statement being read.) Once they have answered one question, ask a few people to quickly share why they chose to stand where they did to get a sense of the different opinions in the room. (This game works well if you have several “warm up” statements like “I love chocolate ice cream” or “The Fourth of July is my favorite American holiday” or “Sunbathing is not fun.”)
  - I love my family more than I love other people.
  - I will help anyone who asks for help.
  - I love hosting people at my home.
  - If a Jew needs a place to go for a holiday or Shabbat meal, I want them to come to my house.
  - I only like to host people who are my friends.
  - I feel responsible for all people.
  - I feel a special responsibility for other Jews, even if I don’t know them.

2. Conclude the game by asking participants to share what they noticed, and if their reactions to any of the statements surprised them.
3. Watch the clip from the award winning Israeli film Ushpizin (2004). Cue: 30:42-36:50 ([/www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgiCDDGdvn4](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UgiCDDGdvn4))
4. Facilitate a discussion around questions of responsibility for other Jews through the text produced by Hillel and Panim ([www.justaction.org/torahstudy/universalism-text2.htm](http://www.justaction.org/torahstudy/universalism-text2.htm)). In particular, ask participants to reflect on the questions – who do we define as our brothers, and what does it mean for us to be responsible for them?
5. Sum up the discussion and ask participants to share a question or idea they are left with.

### Note to Educator

Did the enduring understanding that you set out to teach surface during this activity?