

# Manual for Facilitators



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The content for this manual comes from the brains of Chantal Suissa – Runne & Yair van der Wieken who worked with Anne-Maria during November and December of 2022.

Then we have the reviewers in a number of the communities who were so kind to assist with the reviews of the translations of the guide.

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**2023**




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This guide is dedicated to the loving memory of  
Madelon Bino-Meijers   
1960 - 2023

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# Introduction

The purpose of this manual is to give guidance to potential group leaders of the Neighbours programme. It includes a little background information to the project, helpful resources, but above all a step-by-step roadmap on how to conduct a session. Chapters 3 and 4 are key to holding a successful Neighbours programme session. The other chapters will help you prepare better and further your knowledge.

We are aware that every different community faces different challenges. Although this manual is written from the experience in Amsterdam, we try to keep in mind what is going on in other communities. Feedback is always welcome and (local) adaptations can always be made. The various partners (EU<sup>1</sup>, EUPJF<sup>2</sup>, HIAS Europe<sup>3</sup>) are available for more help or resources.

Hopefully, this manual will give group leaders the basis for a wonderful exchange on Judaism and diversity, which will lead to better understanding.

<sup>1</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/working-group-combating-antisemitism\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/working-group-combating-antisemitism_en)

<sup>2</sup> <https://eupj.org>

<sup>3</sup> <https://hias.org/hias-eu/>

# 2

## Main Content of the Neighbours Programme



## 2.1 Background

The Liberal Jewish Community of Amsterdam<sup>4</sup> moved into a modern, new synagogue in the southern part of the city in 2011, shortly after a rise in tensions between Dutch Jews and Muslims. The September 11 attacks and the murder of a Dutch Islam critical writer and documentary maker, Theo van Gogh, by a Muslim had polarized the debate. The continuous conflicts and wars in the Middle East, especially between Israelis and Palestinians, also had a very negative impact.

The new synagogue was positioned next to a school, of which a majority of students came from various immigrant backgrounds. As a general safety measure, the synagogue had already installed a security fence and, together with the surrounding water, it looked as much a fortress as it did a synagogue. Tensions with the neighbouring school were on the rise, as knowledge about Jews was limited to what was heard on the news, social media, from friends, at home and sometimes at school. The director at the time, Madelon Bino, decided this had to change. The only way to build a bridge between us and the youngsters was to invite them in, but how? She called upon a young

team within the community that had experience in the field of teaching, training, theatre, art and pedagogy. These people were Yair van der Wieken, Chantal Suissa-Runne, Jair Stranders and Gita Hacham. They were asked to build a programme that was inviting, diverse, relevant, fun and welcoming.

*"The real human-to-human encounter, where you look someone in the eye to gauge each other for a moment - nothing else can beat that, nothing can compare to that. That's what we want to facilitate: as broadly as possible and at all levels."*

**Milou**, senior group leader,  
Amsterdam



View of the new Liberal synagogue of Amsterdam

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.ljgamsterdam.nl>



After many creative sessions, the Neighbours project was born. At the time, this programme literally concerned our neighbours at the school next door. Little did we know that we would extend it to the entire city and two other cities as well. The board of the synagogue was very supportive and the municipality decided to provide financial support.

One of the strengths of the programme is its diversity. The fact that we have two people leading the session guarantees two different opinions of Jewish identity, culture and religion. Often we agree, but sometimes we respectfully disagree and share our different views. This invites the students to do the same and shows that pluriformity is a good thing.

*"It's important that they know what's real, that we're all different. First, it's not about us-versus-them. Even within the Jewish community it's not about us-versus-them either. We are all different, profess our faith in a different way, all do different things."*

**Naomi**, senior group leader,  
Amsterdam



Neighbours European training Meeting on education, November 2022, Brussels, Belgium

## 2.2 Guideline

Each visit lasts around one and a half hours. It is much more than a tour through a synagogue; it is an immersion into Jewish culture, history, religion and lifestyle. Students are welcomed at the door. We have to break the ice as they have to pass security first, which is something that most of them have never experienced. Then, we start by watching a short compilation film of Jewish subjects, from comedy to tradition, religion, music,

etc. Some of these fragments (such as South Park and Family Guy) mock Jews and Judaism. The at times crazy, funny and even insulting content helps to break the tension. We show them we are aware of what is out there, and some things are humorous for us, too. This means they do not have to worry about walking on eggshells. For younger students, we use a different animation film that we have produced ourselves.





Neighbours European training Meeting on education, Amsterdam, Netherlands

Afterwards, students receive a blank piece of paper. Anonymously, they write down or draw the associations they have with the word Jew. Sometimes we use an online tool such as Jamboard<sup>5</sup> or a Kahoot<sup>6</sup> quiz for online sessions. We encourage them to be honest. The associations are sometimes sweet, smart or ignorant, and quite often anti-Semitic, even if they are not intended as such. They give us insight into how that particular group perceives Jews, and we use that as a starting point. For example, some decry Jews for money-grabbing. Others accuse them of terrorizing Palestinians. Some even accuse Israel of creating ISIS to make Muslims look bad. Jews are also singled out for a disproportional role they are claimed to have had in colonial slavery. On the other hand, they talk about the holocaust, holidays, the way Orthodox Jews look and religious aspects. For most, this is the first time they meet a Jew in person. In Amsterdam, that chance is slightly higher than in other cities because, in the

Netherlands, 20,000 of the 40,000 Jews (out of 17 million inhabitants) live in and around Amsterdam.

After the assignment, we have a conversation in a roundtable discussion about their associations and other topics that come up. There are (almost) no limits in terms of the direction of the conversation and it depends greatly on the interest of the group. Sometimes, it is very “theoretical”; sometimes it is more about sharing common perceptions.

The conversation is followed up by a visit to the synagogue. For most people, it is their first such visit. We let them experience the room, talk about their expectations and the differences/common factors with their own place of worship.

The visit ends with a cup of coffee/tea and some traditional Jewish sweets (Boterkoek)<sup>7</sup>. This gives students the chance to ask any final questions, more often than not about things they were afraid to ask in the group.

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.mural.co/>

<sup>6</sup> <https://kahoot.it>

<sup>7</sup> To be substituted by local Jewish products

## 2.3 Goal

The main goal of the Neighbours programme is to improve understanding between the Jewish community, different (religious) groups and their fellow countrymen/women. Showing the diversity that exists within the Jewish community shows that there is not one single kind of Jew.

The initiative invites groups of different ages from local schools and/or various clubs, such as sports clubs or music schools, into the synagogue for a morning or an afternoon of exchange. Most attend secondary (vocational) education. The aim is for young people of all different faiths and world views to get to know each other in a relaxed and personal way and to confront prejudices and stereotypes.

*“The purpose of Neighbours is to make the idea of the unknown known. I think from the unknown comes prejudice, discrimination, hatred, etcetera. And when, on the contrary, you are open and engage in conversation, dialogue, you make that unknown known and therefore prejudice, hatred or misunderstanding can be taken away to a large extent.”*

**Nina**, senior group leader, Amsterdam



Neighbours European training meeting on Education, Brussels, Belgium

There is a large difference between a lesson and a Neighbours session. First, we have built our programme on trust and on creating a safe space. There is room for humour, every question conceivable and every topic on the student's mind. There is structure to the sessions, but no particular agenda. The goal is to learn from each other and get an insight into each other's ideas, customs, traditions, convictions, views, hopes and fears. We seek to find a place of mutual understanding. We are not trying to convince students of our ideas or opinions; instead we are inviting them to engage with us.

## 2.4 Methods

Different methods of communication were used to develop the Neighbours programme. The key point in all these methods is to be aware of your own role as a group leader. You have to make sure you achieve the correct balance between emotion and reason. You are there as a person with your own background and history. Some comments will affect you more than others. Awareness and openness are key. Below are a few outlines of the methods that can be used during sessions.

### 2.4.1 Non-Violent Communication by Marshall Rosenberg

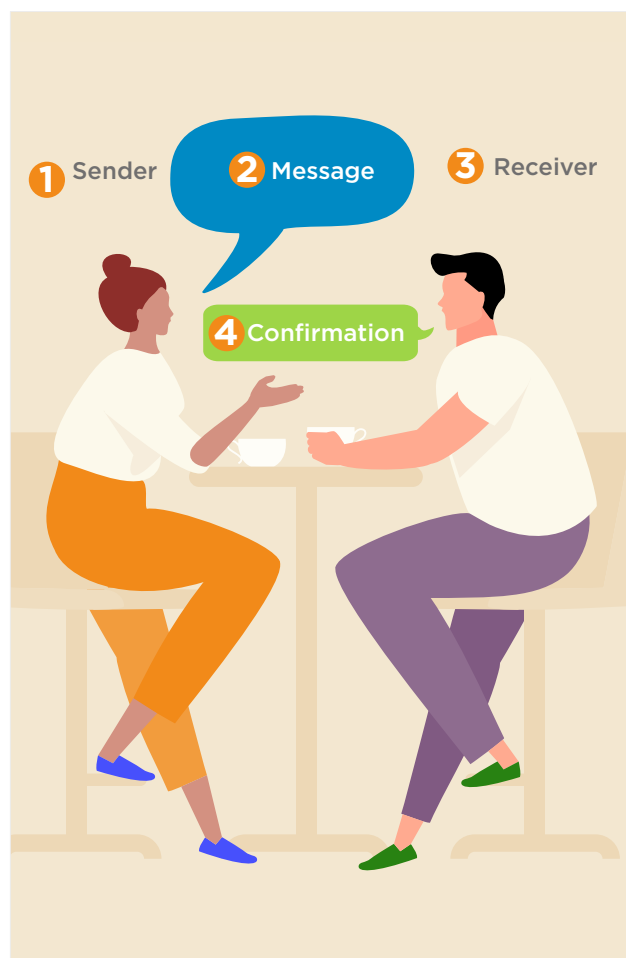
This is based on the principles of nonviolence. NVC begins by assuming that we are all compassionate by nature and that violent strategies, whether verbal or physical, are learned behaviours taught and supported by the prevailing culture.

NVC also assumes that we all share the same, basic human needs, and that all actions are a strategy to meet one or more of these needs. People who practice NVC have found greater authenticity in their communication, increased understanding, deepening connection and conflict resolution<sup>8</sup>.

### 2.4.2 Deep listening

Deep listening is an important skill that allows us to connect, empathize, and truly hear someone; what they mean, what they are feeling and what they need. When we listen deeply, we are in a better position to take action, the people we are listening to feel valued, and positive things usually happen.

If you want to apply deep listening, here are a few tips: look people in the eyes, process what they say, do not interrupt them, ask thoughtful questions, take notes, listen to learn not to flatter, and affirm what they have told you rather than telling them your opinion<sup>9</sup>.



*"I once experienced a girl telling me: I hate Jews. But she dared to say it, very outspoken. And then you can have a conversation about that. Why is that? And after the session she came to us and said: I hate Jews a little less now."*

**Alex, senior group leader, Amsterdam**

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.cnvc.org/node/6856>

<sup>9</sup> <https://waltrakowich.com/use-deep-listening-skills-effective-leadership/>

### 2.4.3 Deep Democracy, Myrna Lewis

Deep Democracy is a practical method to start dialogue together. It actively looks for the view of the minority and enables them to participate in the process at hand. In dialogue, alternative points of views are heard, explored and brought into the decision-making process. This results in widely supported decisions and optimal use of the potential of the group. Deep Democracy offers ways to facilitate dialogue and participatory decision-making, which leads to group dynamics enabling co-creation<sup>10</sup>.

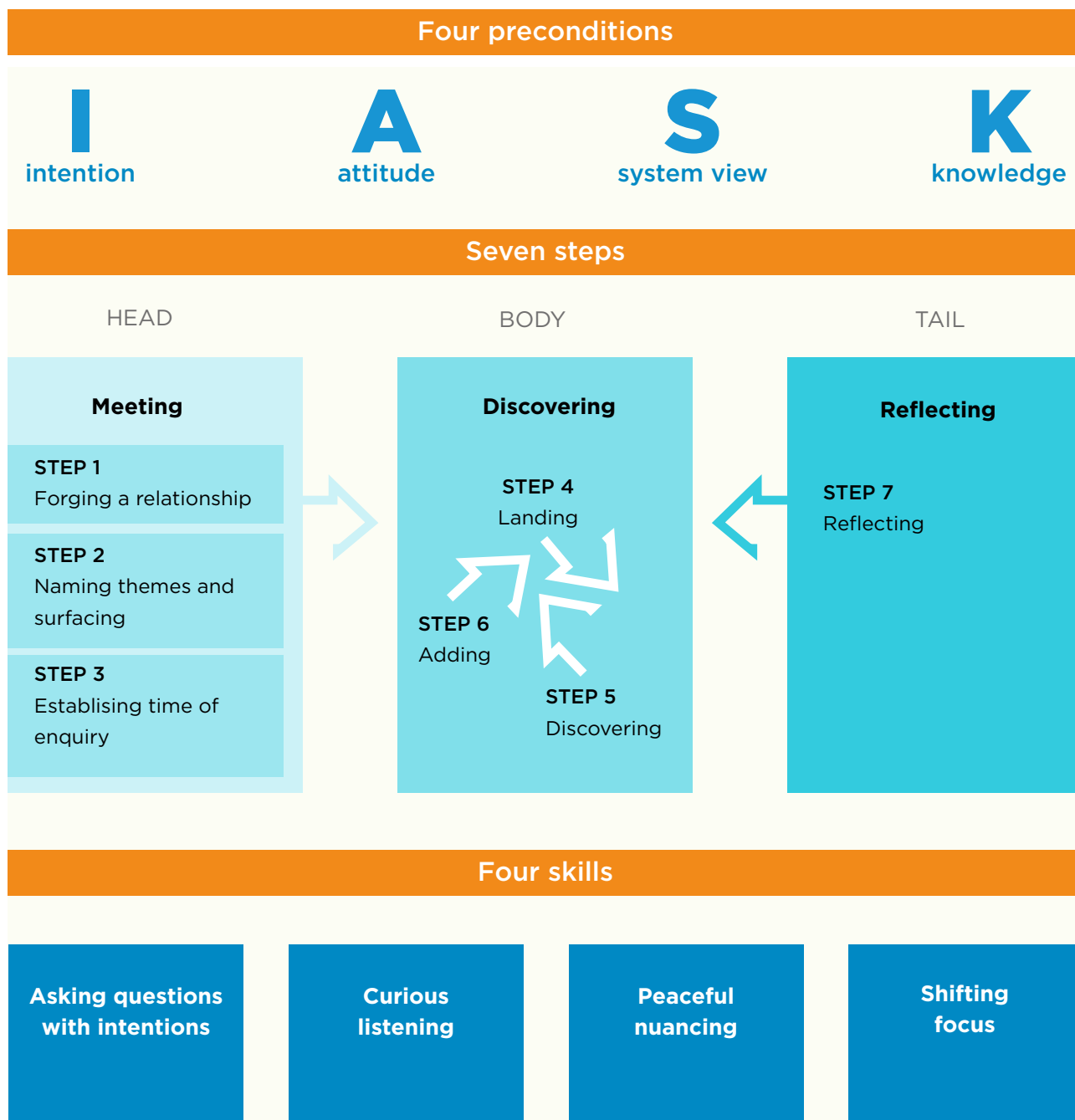


Neighbours European training meeting on Education, Amsterdam, Netherlands

*“In a group of mostly atheistic Dutch students there were a few Muslim students who really wanted to talk about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. The rest of the group seemed annoyed by their questions and tuned out. I asked what they wanted to talk about. From the answers on the writing assignment, I saw that they were really interested in why our local soccer team, Ajax, was called a Jewish group. I asked if they were okay if I first answered some questions about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict for a maximum of five minutes if we then moved on to the subject of soccer. Because I took them seriously and included them in the decision-making, they agreed and participated.”*

**Rachel**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

<sup>10</sup> <https://www.lewisdeepdemocracy.com>



#### 2.4.4 I ASK

Method by the Jewish Historical Museum in Amsterdam to get visitors to open up and encourage them to be curious. The base of this method is openness, not only as a goal but also as a way. Openness from both the facilitator and the group is the only way to learn and nuance the way of thinking. Through openness you can provoke curiosity. I Ask is a practical method to actively open up a group for new knowledge, experiences and notions.<sup>11</sup>

In contrary to the name, it is not just about asking questions but about creating a relationship with the “other”, in our case the visiting group, trying to be aware of their prior knowledge and finding out what they want to learn more about. After experiencing together, we reflect on our process. Is there anything missing? What will they take home?

<sup>11</sup> <https://www.levievandermeer.nl/project/i-ask/>



*“When walking into the synagogue, one group of female students wearing a hijab refused to enter. According to them, visiting another place or worship during Ramadan was forbidden by their imam. Instead of getting angry or forcing them, one of us walked inside with the rest of the group. The other stayed outside with the group of girls. I asked: can you explain to me why you feel uncomfortable? According to them, their Moroccan imam said it was really not allowed. I listened to their arguments and made sure to show my interest in their opinions. After letting them speak, I said I knew the imam from the biggest Moroccan mosque and was surprised to hear this rule. Together, we decided to call him up and ask. He explained that there was a miscommunication and the girls felt more comfortable. Because they were not dismissed, but heard and listened to, they were able to go inside and experience the synagogue.”*

**Rachel**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

### 2.4.5 Transactional Analysis

Transactional Analysis (TA) is a psychoanalytic theory and method of therapy wherein social interactions (or “transactions”) are analysed to determine the ego state of the communicator (whether parent-like, childlike, or adult-like) as a basis for understanding behaviour.

In the Neighbours programme, it is mostly about recognizing your own role and position in communicating with the group. If you act like the parent, the group/student will start acting like the child. The goal is for you to treat them like an adult, so they will act like an adult.



Neighbours school visit , International Jewish Centre, Brussels, Belgium

## 2.4.6 Socratic dialogue

Participants talk from their own life experiences and analyse them (telling stories from real life) to find a general answer on a chosen question, to find the principles which are behind the experience. Participants focus on mutual understanding: with

the help of a facilitator, in our case the group leader, they try to really understand each other and express themselves clearly and honestly. The aim of dialogue is to find a common truth, not only to share various ideas without a consensus.<sup>12</sup>

### The Socratic method: simplified

1. Ask a challenging, open-ended question.
2. Build on the first question by asking why?
3. Come up with ideas based on these questions.
4. Interrogate your ideas with continual questions.
5. Repeat steps 2-4 to get closer to a better solution.

It is ideal that you ask these questions with a group of people to get different perspectives.

Created by Lyn Chen



*“During the group talk, one student was sitting very laid back, looking disinterested and even annoyed. His posture, sighing and eyerolling really started to annoy me and my first instinct was to start acting like a teacher or parent to tell him to sit up straight and behave. Fighting this instinct, I tried talking to him like an adult: I feel that you are annoyed, can you tell me what is going on? Maybe I can help.” At first, he reacted defensively, telling me I didn’t want to hear what he had to say. I kept persisting, saying I was really interested and was taking him seriously. After repeating myself a few times, he sat up straight, talked for a few minutes about being angry about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict and looked expectantly at how I would respond. I thanked him for giving his opinion. I told him I didn’t agree with everything that he was saying, but I was impressed and happy he spoke his mind. Because I addressed him as an adult, he relaxed, sat up and engaged in the conversation about the conflict. He saw that I took him seriously. Afterwards, he came up to me and he said that he really enjoyed himself and I knew how to do a project like this for his mosque.”*

**Daniel**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

<sup>12</sup> <https://www.socraticdialogue.org/en/neo-socratic-dialogue/>



# 3

## Practical Section



## 3.1 Before the visit

### 3.1.1 Contact with schools<sup>13</sup>

Make sure the school knows what the goal of the project is. It is not a lesson on Judaism, but a way of improving understanding between different (religious) groups<sup>14</sup>. Schools could also use it as part of their civic education.

Schools should be aware that they should always bring at least one teacher/group leader. Their role is NOT to lead the conversation, but to ensure a safe environment (both physical and mental). Make sure that the group leaders are aware of what is expected of them.

It may be useful to inform the students and parents beforehand that they will be visiting a synagogue. They can prepare by bringing a head covering if they are not comfortable wearing a *kippah*. Let them know that they will not be asked to pray, but that the *kippah* is a sign of respect.



Muslim scouts and Generation Gagnante  
at Keren Or, France

Ask if there are any sensitive topics in the group that we should consider. Sometimes there are Jewish students in the group who do not want to be “outed” as Jews. Other sensitive subjects may be homosexuality or bullying.

Be aware that, in every form of communication with the school, you are seen as an ambassador of the synagogue. Always use the logo, the contact details and a link to the project website<sup>15</sup>.

Make sure you are aware of who the national coordinator against anti-Semitism is in your country. They may be able to help with coordination and questions about funding and security.

The approach can differ widely from country to country. In some countries, it may be wiser to work top-down (the Ministry of Education); in other countries it is more efficient to contact individual schools or other groups. Be aware of your local customs and ask the EUPJF or the national coordinator against anti-Semitism for help!

When contacting schools, the EU and the KYN logo should always be used!

### 3.1.2 Suitable calendar days

There are a number of things a planner should keep in mind. First, the different religious or national holidays. Do not plan school visits with schools with a high number of Muslim students during Ramadan. Also keep in mind that most Muslims prefer not to have visits on a Friday. Sites such as QPPstudio<sup>16</sup> are always useful to check if there is a holiday coming up.

<sup>13</sup> See sample letter to schools in the attachments

<sup>14</sup> See goal

<sup>15</sup> <https://www.neighbours-europe.org>

<sup>16</sup> <https://www.qppstudio.net/public-holidays/europe.htm>

## 3.2 During visits

We are aware that not every congregation is able to carry out all these steps. Some congregations do not have the budget for security, for example, or a movie in their native language. The core of the programme is the open conversation with the “other” and (if possible) the visit to the synagogue. In Amsterdam, we have noticed that the coffee with sweets afterwards works really well to open up less confident students and to have a conversation in a more relaxed setting. Therefore, we would recommend trying that, even on a budget.

*“One of the things that is very important in the project is to convey things in a more playful way, not to stand in front of the class as a teacher, but more as a peer educator.”*

**Nina**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

### 3.2.2 Preparation

#### Objects

- Paper
- Pencils
- Digital board/television
- Table/seats
- Drinks/snacks

#### People

- Volunteers of the synagogue to lead the programme with a working knowledge of Judaism and a flexible mind. Not a teacher or a tour guide! It takes a particular mindset to be able to guide a programme like ours.

You have to be open-minded, genuinely interested in young people and their hopes, fears and aspirations. You need to have patience and a sense of humour. It helps not to take yourself too seriously. You have to be able to sense the dynamics of a group and to work together with a partner.

- You need to have some level of knowledge about Jewish life, community, culture, religion and history<sup>17</sup>. Last, but not least, you are not there as a preacher or even a teacher. You are there to engage them in a heart-to-heart meeting in a free and safe space. You are not there to convince them of your ideas, but rather to invite them into hearing new perspectives they can reflect on. That is the essence of the Neighbours programme.
- A guard, see IV security



Asking students to write anonymously the questions they don't want to ask in front of their colleagues or they did not have the time to ask yet. School visit, Or Chadash synagogue, Vienna, Austria

<sup>17</sup> See prior knowledge

## Logistics

Make sure you have access to the synagogue and a room in which a large group can sit. In the synagogue, you need to have access to the Aron haKodesh to show the Torah scrolls.

## Security

In Amsterdam, we always have a security guard present. This is not only to protect us from people visiting, but also to make sure that visitors know the location is protected.

You need to coordinate with the guard on how active/present you want them to be. For example, do you want them to be in the room during the sessions? Most of the time in Amsterdam they play a background role, checking bags, etc. With some

groups or in times of heightened tension, their role needs to be more active.

We are aware that not every congregation has this luxury. It might be an idea to double check with the national anti-Semitism coordinator or the EUPJF about possibilities for your country.

## Coordination with the teacher/group leader

Make sure you talk to the teacher/group leader about whether there are limits to what can be said. Also, make sure you know who is responsible for safety within the group. The teacher should have an active role (not being on their phone), but without taking over. The students should feel free to speak their mind.

## 3.3 Introduction (5 min)

Explanation of

1. History of the programme:<sup>18</sup> start in Amsterdam, synagogue being built right next to \*MBO, anti-Semitism. Discrimination often due to lack of knowledge. Either build higher fences or try to understand each other. To have contact with each other.
2. The goal of the programme: get to know each other. See each other as human beings. Have an open conversation. All questions and comments are welcome. There are no taboos, the focus is on their wishes and interests.



Always an exciting moment for the visiting school students when Rabbi Brian Doyle-Dubreuil takes the Torah scroll from the ark and explains its centrality in Jewish life. IJC, school visit, Brussels, Belgium

<sup>18</sup> See part about background

## 3.4 Beginning (15 min)

### 3.4.1 Movie/humour

There is already a Dutch, French<sup>19</sup> and an English<sup>20</sup> version of the movie. The idea behind this movie is to break the ice and show, in a humorous way, some of the prejudices against Jews. The Dutch version of the movie can be quite shocking to some, but it is a way of opening up a conversation about what kind of ideas there are about Jews. In the experience of the Amsterdam trainers, most of the jokes and scenes portrayed in the movie are known by the students, so no “new” prejudice is being introduced. It does give the trainers a hook for a conversation. Also, it shows the students that during the session we are able to talk about everything and that there are no taboo subjects.



Demonstration of a putting on a Talit

*"We wanted it to contain humour, to connect people, to be challenging, flexible, taboo-breaking. On the one hand, to give an image of Jews and Judaism, and what kind of weird animal species we actually are, and yet at the same time to show that we are just like other people. And we wanted them to be able to share their concerns, their feelings. Not only related to Jews, although of course it does take place in our place of worship so it often becomes the capstone, but we also wanted them to be able to talk about racism, Muslim discrimination, homophobia and sexism."*

**Sophie**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

### 3.4.2 Assignment

There is already a Dutch, French<sup>19</sup> and an English<sup>20</sup> version of the movie. The idea behind this movie is to break the ice and show, in a humorous way, some of the prejudices against Jews. The Dutch version of the movie can be quite shocking to some, but it is a way of opening up a conversation about what kind of ideas there are about Jews.

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<sup>19</sup> Compilation draft 2.mp4 - [Compilation draft 2.mp4 - Frame.io](#)

<sup>20</sup> Know your neighbours draft 4.m4v - [Know your neighbours draft 4.m4v - Frame.io](#)



## 3.5 Middle (45 min)

### 3.5.1 Group chat (30 min)

Invite everyone to sit in a circle, take in the papers and look at what their main thoughts are. Start by asking the group what their (religious) background is and let them explain a bit. Then ask: do you think I am Jewish? How can they know? What makes someone Jewish? If, after that, questions do not come up naturally, work with the papers. What are their interests? Can they elaborate on it? If something shocking is said, try to go back to the rest of the group. What does the rest of the group think about the comment?



Group talk in the dialogue room of the Liberal Synagogue of Amsterdam, Netherlands

*"I think it is such an important hook to start the conversation on prejudice in the Netherlands. I'm really afraid that doesn't happen enough in the Netherlands. The more mixed a class is, the better. I also think it's important not only to discuss Judaism. Sure, that's the hook, that's what they are there for, that's the goal. But when I see there are tensions in a class among the students, sometimes I broaden the topic."*

**Milou**, senior group leader, Amsterdam



Tour of synagogue of the Liberal Jewish community, Amsterdam, Netherlands

### 3.5.2 Tour of synagogue (15 min)

Invite them into the actual synagogue (usually we start in another room). We ask the male students to wear a kippah or their baseball hat and explain why. However, it is not something we demand. We show them the building, the Torah scrolls, the *Bima*, *Ner Tamid*, *Tallit*, *Sidur*<sup>21</sup>, etc. We explain the structure of a service and answer all of their questions. For many people it is their first time in a synagogue, so we also give them time to "land".

<sup>21</sup> See chapter "prior knowledge"

## 3.6 Conclusion (20 min)

### 3.6.1 Coffee/reflection

What will you tell your family when you get home about what you experienced? In particular, the quieter students will usually come forward at this point, or visitors who want to ask more delicate questions.



Showing students around the synagogue. Opening a Torah scroll to let them see the handwriting, Or Chadasch Synagogue, Austria

*"I sometimes have a group that I met in the synagogue, and when I meet them again later in another place, they recognize me: oh, you were that nice woman from the synagogue. If they have a positive association with Jews and with Judaism, that's already a win for me. Because they remember that. They remember that even ten years later. What they don't remember is that you're not allowed to light a fire on Sabbath."*

**Naomi**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

*"I was very surprised by the visit. I was expecting something much more religious and I found that it was a beautiful discovery. I didn't imagine that one could be so open in the different religions and I learned a lot about Judaism."*

**Visitor**, Brussels



# 4

## Prior Knowledge/ Basic Knowledge



There are a number of topics that always come up during a session. Most of these are often written down during the assignment. In order for you to be able to keep up the conversation or answer questions, you should at least have a basic knowledge of the following subjects.

## 4.1 10 commandments / Mitzvot<sup>22</sup>

1. אֲנִי ה' אֱלֹהֶיךָ אֲשֶׁר הוֹצֵאתִיךָ מֵאֶרֶץ מִצְרָיִם.	1. I am the Eternal One your G-d who brought you out of the Land of Egypt.
2. לֹא יִהְיֶה לְךָ אֱלֹהִים אֲחֵרִים. לֹא תַעֲשֶׂה לְךָ פֶסֶל.	2. You shall have no other gods besides me. You shall not make for yourself a graven image or any likeness of what is in the heavens above.
3. לֹא תִשָּׁא אֶת-שֵׁם אֱלֹהֶיךָ לְשׁוּא.	3. You shall not swear falsely by the name of the Eternal One your G-d.
4. זָכוֹר אֶת-יוֹם הַשַּׁבָּת לְקַדְּשׁוֹ.	4. Remember the Sabbath day and keep it holy.
5. כְּבֹד אֶת-אָבִיךָ וְ אֶת-אִמְךָ.	5. Honor your father and mother.
6. לֹא תִרְצַח.	6. You shall not murder.
7. לֹא תִנָּאֵף.	7. You shall not commit adultery.
8. לֹא תִגְנוֹב.	8. You shall not steal.
9. לֹא-תַעֲנֶה בְרַעַד עֵד שָׁקֵר.	9. You shall not bear false witness against anyone.
10. לֹא תַחְמֹד.	10. You shall not covet.

Overview of the 10 commandments by Sefaria<sup>23</sup>

In the *Torah*, 613 *mitzvot* are named. The 10 commandments are often seen as the basic rules for a good life. Some are about our relationship with God while others are about our relationships

to one another. All 613 mitzvot can be summarized by “*Ahavta le’reacha kamocha*”, meaning “*love your neighbour as yourself*”. This is often interpreted as “treat others as you wish to be treated yourself.”

## 4.2 Shabbat<sup>24</sup>

Day of rest. The *Torah* says that the world was created by God in six days and on the seventh day, God rested. To commemorate this, we rest for 25 hours from Friday sundown to Saturday sundown.<sup>25</sup> How this period of rest is interpreted differs from person to person. More orthodox people will not use electricity or their car, some just do not do any work. We welcome the Shabbat by

lighting candles, and blessing the bread and wine (the *Kiddush*). *Shabbat* ends on Saturday evening with *Havdalah*, where we say goodbye to *Shabbat* and start the new week of work. Christians believe that *Shabbat* or *sabbath* is celebrated on Sunday. For Muslims, the most important day of the week is Friday.

<sup>22</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-ten-commandments/>

<sup>23</sup> <https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/247850?lang=bi>

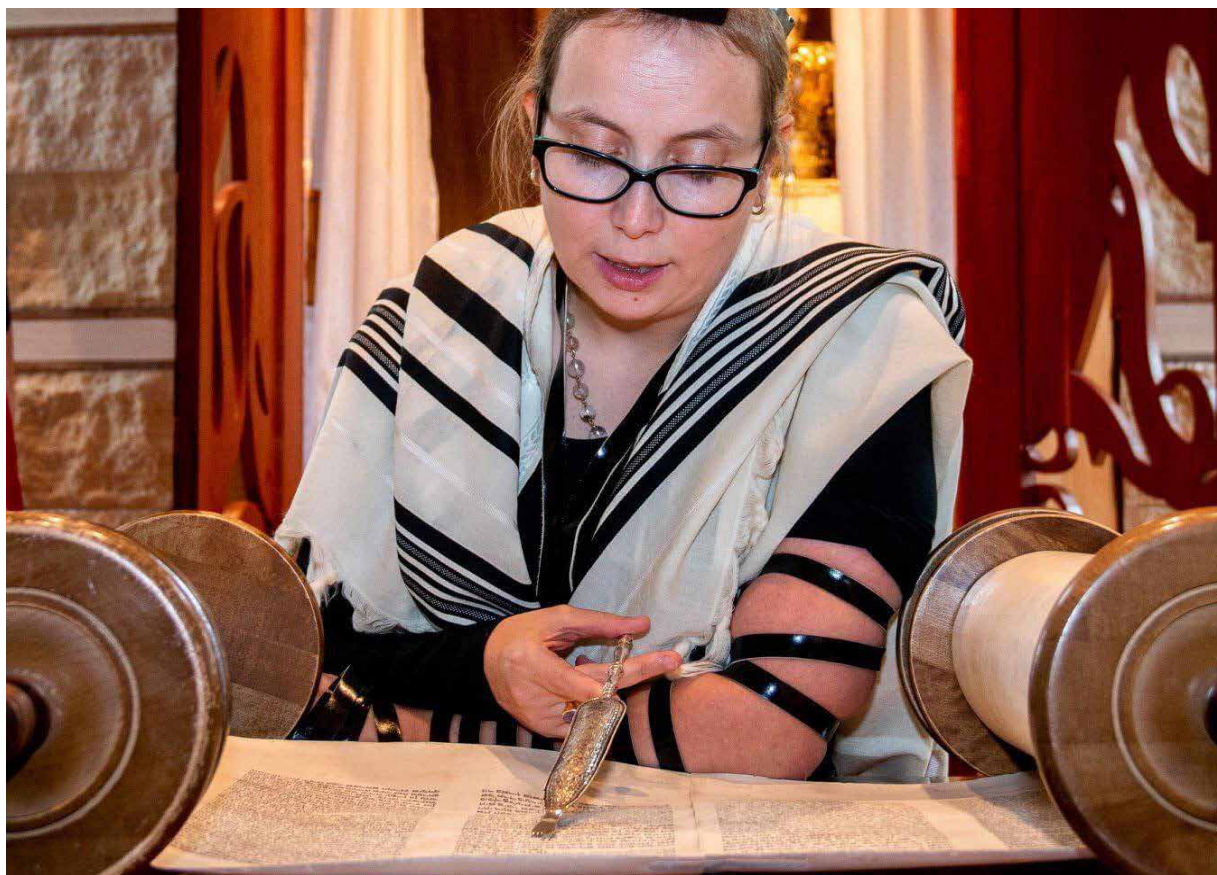
<sup>24</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-101/>

<sup>25</sup> Because the Jewish calendar is a moon calendar, all holidays start the day before with sundown.

### 4.3 Torah<sup>26</sup>

The *Torah* is the first five books of the *Tanach*, or Hebrew Bible, given by God to Moses on Mount Sinai. It is also known as the written law.<sup>27</sup> The law is written down in 613 *mitzvot*<sup>28</sup> in the form of the story of the origin of the Jewish people. The *Torah* is traditionally handwritten on parchment and can never be touched by hand to make sure it is

preserved. It can only be read with a *Yad*, a rod with a hand attached to it. In the synagogue, it is preserved in the *Aron HaKodesh*. The same text can be found in the first five books of the Bible. Most of the story is also told in the *Quran*, though a little differently.



Rabbi Esther Hugenholtz reading Torah & wearing Tefillin

### 4.4 Talmud/oral law<sup>29</sup>

It is believed that, together with the written *Torah*, Moshe/Moses was given an oral *Torah*. Some of the 613 *mitzvot* are difficult to understand and need explanation. Many Jewish scholars have studied the *Torah* from the beginning to try to understand it. This discussion was first written down in the Mishna (2<sup>nd</sup> century CE) and later with more

comments in the *Talmud* (5<sup>th</sup> century CE). These texts do not give one conclusive answer, but show the debate and different points of views. The oral tradition never stopped and was continued after the *Talmud* by scholars such as Maimonides<sup>30</sup> and Rashi<sup>31</sup>. Since the world is always changing, this is a never-ending process.

<sup>26</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-written-law-torah>

<sup>27</sup> In contrast to the oral law, see Talmud/oral law

<sup>28</sup> See mitzvot

<sup>29</sup> <https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11750-oral-law>

<sup>30</sup> <https://www.britannica.com/biography/Moses-Maimonides>

<sup>31</sup> <https://www.jpost.com/blogs/torah-commentaries/metaphors-in-the-torah-cooking-a-young-goat-in-its-mothers-milk-450264>

## 4.5 Jewish/kosher food

There are a number of “basic” kosher laws you should be aware of. Make sure you tell the group that not all Jews follow these rules, especially in the Reform community.

1. A mammal must have split hooves and ruminates. Kosher animals are, for example, cows, sheep, goats, etc. The animal also has to be butchered in a “*kosher way*”, which means all blood should be removed and certain prayers are said. Another name for this is *shechita*.
2. Fish should have scales and fins, so creatures such as shrimps are forbidden. Salmon, tuna, etc. are permitted.
3. Any form of bird that does not hunt can be eaten. Chicken, turkey and duck are all *kosher*.
4. Since it says in the Torah that “you may not cook a young goat in its mother’s milk” most observant Jews will not eat milk and meat together.<sup>32</sup>

5. *Kosher* and *Halal* are similar - sanctifying eating. An observant Muslim can eat at an observant Jewish home.

6. Jews from North Africa (*Sephardim*) cook couscous and tagine. Jews from Eastern Europe favour *rugelach* and other Eastern European specialities. Find out what some popular dishes are in your community.

7. Jews sometimes had an influence on local food in other countries. In Suriname (a Dutch colony) a lot of stews are eaten, such as pom, that are cooked in the oven before *shabbat*. Another example is pork in many Spanish dishes that came from the *marranos* (forced converts) who put pork in the food to distract the inquisition. Try to find out if there is a local story like that in your community.

In some EU countries, such as Belgium, there is a ban on kosher and halal butchering. In other countries, there is a debate on banning it.



Traditional Hanukkah Potato Latkes

<sup>32</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/who-was-rashi/>

## 4.6 (Role of) God<sup>33</sup>

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Although God plays an important role in the texts of our tradition (*Torah, Talmud*), in everyday life God is not always actively present. Many Jews, especially in Reform Judaism, consider themselves agnostic or even atheistic. Because Judaism is a combination of religion, lifestyle, philosophy, tradition, etc., you do not need to believe in God to be considered a (good) Jew.


God (or prophets) can never be portrayed. Even His “real” name (*YHWH*) cannot be uttered. This is also because we are not sure how to pronounce it. We therefore mostly say *Adonai* (my lord) or *HaShem* (the name).

## 4.7 Reform Judaism<sup>34</sup>

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Reform Judaism tries to help Jews embrace Jewish tradition by innovation. The basis continues to be the *Halakhah* (Jewish Law, literally “the Way”), but seen through modern eyes. Our sacred texts are considered through both a religious and academic perspective. We see them as living texts that move with the times.

Every congregation makes their own decisions about how they want to implement this. Most Reform synagogues have equality for men and women, (the option of) female rabbis and support LGBTQ+ rights.



*"They think that all Jews are actually Orthodox Jews. That there is only one kind of Jew. You know, when you think of a Jew, you think of an Orthodox Jew and not someone with a piercing through his nose and a rainbow flag on his T-shirt."*

**Lars**, Junior group leader, Amsterdam

<sup>33</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/about-god-in-judaism/>

<sup>34</sup> <https://www.reformjudaism.org>



## 4.8 Organ donation<sup>35</sup>

Organ donation has been a matter of debate for decades. On the one hand, we see our body as *Betzelem Elohim*, in the image of God. We cannot change it. That means, among other things, we must not get tattoos, piercings or use drugs. Our body has to be buried intact and (if possible)

within a day. There are reasons to change this. Being able to save a life is more important than (almost) anything. In most congregations (also orthodox) it is said that the possibility of saving a life by organ donation is more important than adhering to the rule of keeping our body intact.

## 4.9 Circumcision/*Brit Milah*

Translation: covenant of circumcision. Ritual where male Jewish babies have their foreskin removed on the eighth day of their life, indicating

a bond between God and the Jewish people. The first person who performed the *Brit Milah* was Abraham, who did it to himself and his son Isaac.



Circumcision ceremony

<sup>35</sup> <https://reformjudaism.org/organ-donation-heaven-knows-we-need-them-here>

## 4.10 Jewish “race”

You are Jewish if your mother is Jewish<sup>36</sup> or if you converted to Judaism. In some Reform congregations, you are also considered Jewish if your father is Jewish. Since Jews spread out all over the world after the diaspora, there are many kinds of Jews. The majority of European Jews have an Ashkenazi (Eastern-European) background, but

there are also Sephardic (from Spain/Portugal) and Mizrahi (Middle Eastern) Jews. There are also Jews of African or Arabic descent. This can be a very good way to connect with the immigrant communities in your own country. Most people are not aware of the Jews in their parents' countries.

## 4.11 Gender

Because gender (in)equality is one of the spearpoints in the EU, teachers should be aware of the EU vision.

*The EU Gender Equality Strategy delivers on the von der Leyen Commission's commitment to achieving a Union of Equality. The Strategy presents policy objectives and actions to make significant progress by **2025 TOWARDS A GENDER-EQUAL EUROPE**. The goal is a Union where women and men, girls and boys, in all their diversity, are **FREE** to pursue their chosen path in life, have equal opportunities to **THRIVE**, and can equally participate in and **LEAD** our European society.*

*The **KEY OBJECTIVES** are ending gender-based violence; challenging gender stereotypes; closing gender gaps in the labour market; achieving equal participation across different sectors of the economy; addressing the gender pay and pension gaps; closing the gender care gap and achieving gender balance in decision-making and in politics. The Strategy pursues a dual approach of gender **MAINSTREAMING** combined with targeted actions, and **INTERSECTIONALITY** is a horizontal principle for its implementation. While the Strategy focuses on actions within the EU, it is coherent with the EU's external policy on gender equality and women's empowerment.<sup>37</sup>*

<sup>36</sup> Is it also the case in other Reform communities in Europe?

<sup>37</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025)



## 4.12 Sexuality/gender in judaism specifically

### 4.12.1 Role of women

People often think that women have a lesser role in Judaism, as in most religions. This is a huge misconception. In the *Talmud*, it is said that a “man” was created with both female and male attributes and later separated.<sup>38</sup>

In Jewish tradition, women are exempt from positive mitzvot (the dos, like *Tefillin* or blowing the *Shofar*) that are bound to a specific time. This does not mean they are not allowed to perform those tasks.<sup>39</sup>

### 4.12.2 Sex (before marriage)

Traditionally, a sexual relationship occurs within a married couple. Within marriage, sexuality is celebrated and not just a means to procreate. Sexual pleasure for a woman is even officially compulsory within a marriage. If a man does not “perform”, a woman can ask for divorce. “Inventiveness” is encouraged, and there are even kosher sex shops.<sup>40</sup>

In most Jewish communities, sex before marriage is not a taboo.

### 4.12.3 LGBTQ+

In the Reform tradition, we respect LGBTQ+ rights and we also have members of the LGBTQ+ community as part of our clergy<sup>41</sup>. In the orthodox community this can be a problem, especially on

*“I was positively surprised; I didn't expect such a warm and relaxed welcome. We could talk about anything that came to mind, so that's clearly a plus. I was also surprised that women are at the same level as men. I learned a lot of things.”*

**Visitor, Brussels**

the “official” level, although this depends on the level of orthodoxy. It is interesting to note that the Talmud recognizes the existence of eight different sexes and genders, going beyond the simple male/female dichotomy. These eight categories are described in the Talmud as “androgynos”, “tumtum”, “ay'lonit”, “saris”, “saris adam”, “aisha”, “ish” and “tumtum v'ay'lonit”. This recognition of the diversity of sex and gender in the Talmud shows that Judaism has a potential basis for addressing the inclusion of LGBTQ+ people.

<sup>38</sup> [https://www.jewfaq.org/role\\_of\\_women](https://www.jewfaq.org/role_of_women)

<sup>39</sup> [https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4407982/jewish/Why-Are-Women-Exempt-From-Certain-Mitzvahs.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4407982/jewish/Why-Are-Women-Exempt-From-Certain-Mitzvahs.htm)

<sup>40</sup> <https://kosher.sex>

<sup>41</sup> <https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/homosexuality-in-jewish-thought/> Jewish Views on Homosexuality | My Jewish Learning

## 4.13 Main objects in the synagogue

### 4.13.1 Ner Tamid

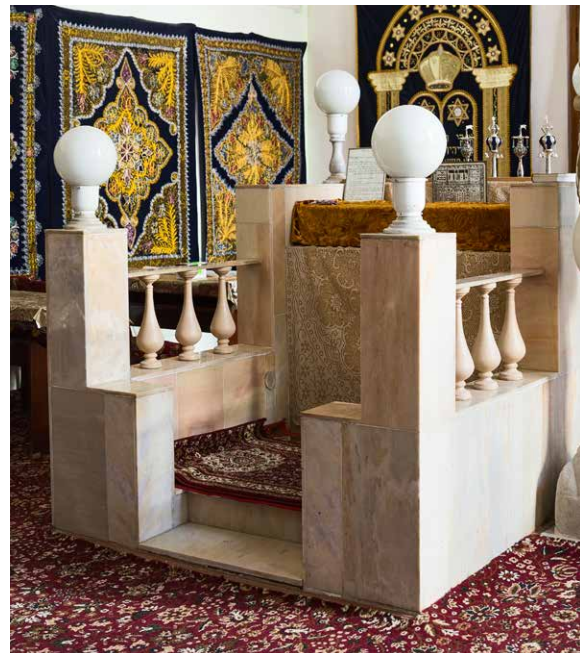
The perpetually burning light that hangs in front of or next to the *Aron Hakodesh*. As long as this light is on, the synagogue counts as a working synagogue. It is a replacement for the *menorah* in the Second Temple in Jerusalem and also stands for the presence of God.



Ner Tamid

### 4.13.2 Bima

Literally: platform. A raised place inside the synagogue where the *Torah* and the *Haftarah* – a selected reading from the books of the Prophets or other writings, such as the book of Proverbs, usually with a connection to that week's Torah portion is read during a service.



Bima

### 4.13.3 Aron Hakodesh

Literally: Holy Arc. Cabinet where the *Torah* Scrolls are kept. An *Aron Hakodesh* always faces towards Jerusalem, which in Europe is east-facing. The name comes from the Arc of the Covenant in the Second Temple, the place which held the Holy of Holies. It is often closed with a *Parochet*, a curtain, which is nicely decorated. Also known as *Heichal* in the *Sephardic* communities.



Aron Hakodesh

## 4.14 Anti-Semitic stereotypes/conspiracy theories

There has been wide discussion about what anti-Semitism exactly entails. Within this project, as in the European Union, we follow the IHRA (International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance) Definition:

“Anti-Semitism is a certain perception of Jews, which may be expressed as hatred toward Jews. Rhetorical and physical manifestations of anti-Semitism are directed toward Jewish or non-Jewish individuals and/or their property, toward Jewish community institutions and religious facilities.”

To guide IHRA in its work, the following examples may serve as illustrations:

Manifestations might include the targeting of the state of Israel, conceived as a Jewish collectivity. However, criticism of Israel similar to that levelled against any other country cannot be regarded as anti-Semitic. Anti-Semitism frequently charges Jews with conspiring to harm humanity, and it is often used to blame Jews for “why things go wrong.” It is expressed in speech, writing, visual forms and action, and employs sinister stereotypes and negative character traits.

Contemporary examples of anti-Semitism in public life, the media, schools, the workplace, and in the religious sphere could, taking into account the overall context, include, but are not limited to:

- Calling for, aiding, or justifying the killing or harming of Jews in the name of a radical ideology or an extremist view of religion.
- Making mendacious, dehumanizing, demonizing, or stereotypical allegations about Jews as such or the power of Jews as collective — such as, especially but not exclusively, the myth about a world Jewish conspiracy or of Jews controlling the media,

economy, government or other societal institutions.

- Accusing Jews as a people of being responsible for real or imagined wrongdoing committed by a single Jewish person or group, or even for acts committed by non-Jews.
- Denying the fact, scope, mechanisms (e.g. gas chambers) or intentionality of the genocide of the Jewish people at the hands of National Socialist Germany and its supporters and accomplices during World War II (the Holocaust).
- Accusing the Jews as a people, or Israel as a state, of inventing or exaggerating the Holocaust.
- Accusing Jewish citizens of being more loyal to Israel, or to the alleged priorities of Jews worldwide, than to the interests of their own nations.
- Denying the Jewish people their right to self-determination, e.g., by claiming that the existence of a State of Israel is a racist endeavour.
- Applying double standards by requiring of it a behaviour not expected or demanded of any other democratic nation.
- Using the symbols and images associated with classic anti-Semitism (e.g., claims of Jews killing Jesus or blood libel) to characterize Israel or Israelis.
- Drawing comparisons of contemporary Israeli policy to that of the Nazis.
- Holding Jews collectively responsible for actions of the state of Israel.

**Anti-Semitic acts are criminal** when they are so defined by law (for example, denial of the Holocaust or distribution of anti-Semitic materials in some countries).

**Criminal acts are anti-Semitic** when the targets of attacks, whether they are people or property

– such as buildings, schools, places of worship and cemeteries – are selected because they are, or are perceived to be, Jewish or linked to Jews.

**Anti-Semitic discrimination** is the denial to Jews of opportunities or services available to others and is illegal in many countries.<sup>42</sup>

Below are some common anti-Semitic stereotypes and what you should know about them to be able to tackle them.

#### 4.14.1 Money/banking

Jews, on average, are no richer or poorer than the general public. Throughout history, Jews were forced into professions like banking, because other professions were closed off to them.

#### 4.14.2 Protocols of the elders of Zion

A fabricated anti-Semitic text about Jewish plans to control the world. The origins lay in Russia in the beginning of the 1900s, but it is now translated into many other languages. The protocols are the basis for most of the anti-Semitic conspiracy theories.

#### 4.14.3 Soros

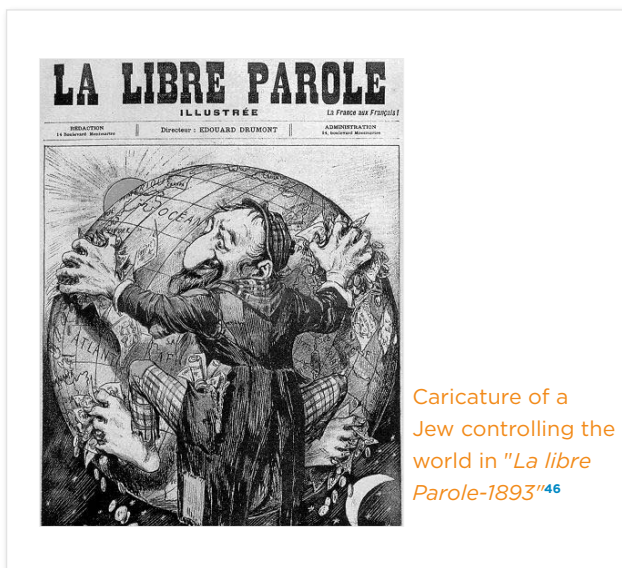
George Soros is a Jewish businessman of Hungarian-American descent. As a billionaire, he gave away more than 60% of his money in goodwill. Most of his donated money goes to liberal/progressive politics. There are many conspiracy theories about him controlling the world. Due to his Jewish background, many of these theories have an anti-Semitic undertone.

#### 4.14.4 Corona virus

Covid originated in China, where there are virtually no Jews. A Greek Jewish Pfizer CEO collaborated with a German Muslim scientist to produce the first Covid vaccine.<sup>43</sup>

#### 4.14.5 Rothschilds

A prominent Ashkenazi family that played an important role in European trade from the start of



Caricature of a Jew controlling the world in "La libre Parole-1893"<sup>46</sup>

the 18<sup>th</sup> century. As a banking family, some people accuse them of funding multiple wars.

#### 4.14.6 Caricatures<sup>44</sup>

Throughout history, multiple Jewish caricatures have emerged. Most of the caricatures we encounter focus on physical features (large nose, dark hair, orthodox attire). If someone makes reference to this, you can talk about what makes someone Jewish and that Jews live all over the world, so there is not a single Jewish appearance.<sup>45</sup>

Other Jewish caricatures concern anti-Semitic stereotypes such as world domination. Here you can have a conversation about where that idea comes from (*Protocols of Zion*, Jews and banking, etc.).

<sup>42</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/definition-antisemitism\\_bg](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/definition-antisemitism_bg)

<sup>43</sup> <https://cst.org.uk/data/file/d/9/Coronavirus%20and%20the%20plague%20of%20antisemitism.1586276450.pdf>

<sup>44</sup> <https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/500-years-of-antisemitic-propaganda-the-katz-ehrenthal-collection>

<sup>45</sup> See part about Jewish Race

<sup>46</sup> Front page of Edouard Drumont's *La Libre Parole* with a caricature of a Jew grasping the whole world.  
Caption: "Their Homeland" (1893)



## 4.15 Shoah

The history of the Shoah differs according to country/community. Try to look up the history in your community. It is important to explain how the Shoah came to be, that it did not suddenly

appear, but there was a process of exclusion and propaganda. Also, after the Shoah, most communities did not welcome back the Jews and instead continued to discriminate them.

## 4.16 (The history of/relation with) Israel<sup>47</sup>

Most of the stories of the *Tanach* take place in and around what is now called Israel. Our holiest place, the Temple, stood in Jerusalem until it was destroyed in the year 70CE. The remnants, the Western Wall, still attract many Jewish visitors on a daily basis. Throughout the centuries the region has played an important role in Jewish life.

From the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century, with the rise of Zionism<sup>48</sup>, Israel became a safe space for Jews fleeing anti-Semitism<sup>49</sup>. This resulted in the establishment of the state of Israel in 1948.

The history of the modern state of Israel is a complicated one, which leads to much debate inside and outside the Jewish community, both as a source of anti-Semitism, but also as a sort of ultimate “security bond” for us. It is the last place we can go to, should anti-Semitism get worse. Usually this is a hot topic within the Neighbours programme and also between the group leaders. Show that diversity is a bonus, but try to be respectful of each other.

*"Students think Zionists are bad Jews and religious Jews are good Jews. There is a language barrier here. And I always discuss that. Then I say: guys, what do you think of when you think of a Zionist? Then suddenly I get terrible images. I like to stir things up a bit, so I say: I am a Zionist. Then it gets very quiet. Some people's mouths fall open. Then I say: I'll tell you why I am a Zionist. I believe in the right of the State of Israel to exist and that makes me a Zionist."*

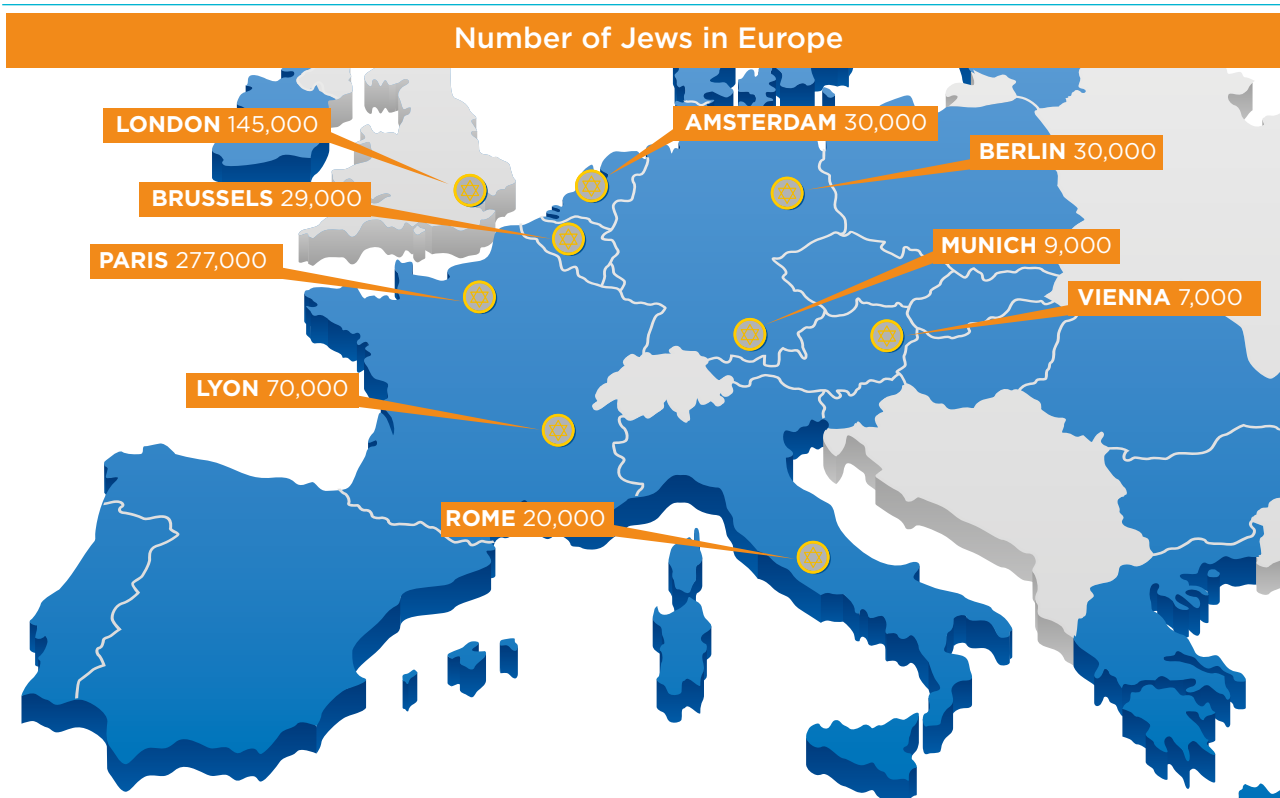
**Sophie**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

<sup>47</sup> <https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/a-definition-of-zionism>

<sup>48</sup> The desire to have an independent Jewish state.

<sup>49</sup> See part about anti-Semitism, IHRA definition

## 4.17 Number of Jews in our communities:<sup>50</sup>



Groups are generally very surprised about how small the Jewish community is in different countries. It is by far the smallest monotheistic religion. The numbers below are estimates, as most Jews are not registered because of fears of anti-Semitism. Also, the accounts of who is considered Jewish can differ. In this manual, the numbers are provided by the research paper, *Jews in Europe at the turn of the Millenium. Population trends and estimates* from 2020 are followed.

### 4.17.1 Amsterdam

In the Netherlands, there are approximately 30,000 Jews, the majority of whom live in Amsterdam. This includes everyone, from the very orthodox to those having a Jewish mother but not being active in Jewish life. All the Jews in the Netherlands would not fill the Ajax stadium. About 2,000 people are members of the Liberal Jewish Synagogue.

### 4.17.2 Brussels

There are about 29,000 Jews in Belgium. Before the war, there were 60,000. After the Holocaust, around 20,000 were left, evenly divided between Antwerp and Brussels. This number would not fill

up Stade Roi Baudouin which has a capacity of 50,000.

### 4.17.3 Paris

The biggest community of about 450,000 Jews outside Israel and the United States is in France, with the majority living in Paris. There are about 277,000 Jews in Paris.

### 4.17.4 Lyon

See Paris. In Lyon there are about 70,000 Jews.

### 4.17.5 Vienna

In Austria, there are around 10,000 Jews, with the majority living in Vienna (7,000). Vienna has the only Reform community in Austria.

### 4.17.6 Rome

Italy has about 27,000 Jews, with about 20,000 living in Rome.

### 4.17.7 Munich

The number of Jews in Germany varies from 116,000 to 225,000. It is one of the larger communities in Europe. Munich is, after Berlin, the city with the highest number of Jews. About 9,000 Jews live in Munich.

<sup>50</sup> *Jews in Europe at the turn of the Millenium. Population trends and estimates* – Sergio DellaPergola and Daniel Staetsky. JPR European Jewish Demography Unit, October 2020



## 4.18 Other monotheistic religions

### 4.18.1 Islam

Although some people view Muslims and Jews as enemies, in many ways both communities have a lot in common. In Islam there are five pillars of faith: *Shahada* (Faith in God and Muhammed as His final prophet), *Salat* (five prayers each day), *Zakat*<sup>51</sup> (goodwill), *Ramadan* (period of fasting) and *Hadj* (pilgrimage to Mecca). The language of the Quran and most of the prayers is Arabic, which is a sister language to Hebrew.

During a session with many Muslim students, we try to emphasize the common factors, such as *kosher-*

*halal*, *Ramadan*-fasting in Judaism, Hebrew-Arabic words<sup>52</sup>, counting, etc. This is often unknown, so it makes for a good conversation and bonding. Most of the important people in Islam (Ibrahim, Musa, etc. ) are also important in Judaism.

### 4.18.2 Christianity

With students with a Christian background, we can talk about our joint history in the First Testament and the fact that Jesus was actually Jewish. He had a Jewish mother and a Jewish upbringing.



Inter Religious Coalition Rome event in cooperation with Istituto Tevere, Associazione Amici Deir Marmusa, Religions for Peace Italy and Beth Hillel Rome. Discussing as Scriptural Reasoning group, Jewish, Islamic and Christian texts: Love your Neighbor

<sup>51</sup> Similar to *tsedaka*

<sup>52</sup> Beit-bait (house), Jid-jad (hand), etc.

# 5

## Potential Stumbling Blocks



During the sessions, it is possible that you will encounter some stumbling blocks. Sometimes a session will go easily, sometimes a group will be more resistant. These stumbling blocks and their solutions will differ per country/city, but it is good to be aware of things that might happen and some ideas for dealing with them.

## 5.1 Safety within a group

Sometimes you will encounter a group that does not create a safe space. This may be because of bullying in a classroom or other reasons. The students should feel safe to speak their mind without being judged for it. The main problem here is that you only see the group for a short amount

of time. It can definitely help to get the teacher/group leader on board. Make sure you repeat that within the programme everything can be said (if you are comfortable with that), but that bullying in any way is not acceptable. If you notice bullying, you can also address the teacher in private.

## 5.2 Dealing with extreme opinions/remarks

The Neighbours programme is a place where everything can be said, to a limit. This can be tricky because the group leaders are also people with their own opinions and weaknesses. It is important to show the students that although everything can be said, this does not mean that people should intentionally hurt or threaten people. Try to explain the difference. You can show the group that certain remarks hurt you, but try not to react angrily.

If, for example, someone says “I think Hitler did a good job” or something along those lines, it is perfectly acceptable to show that you are shocked. Tell them you are shocked, ask them if they understand why you are shocked and try to ask the rest of the group what they think about it. Do they think the comment is acceptable?

*"I had some really good conversations regarding my feelings on that. You have to show that it affects you, but without letting it get to you. It's important to be sincere and open. Also, it might trigger something in them, it might really touch them. I think unconsciously you start thinking about what you say. It is not instrumental for me, but the moment I feel it, I show it. That is also a signal of: oh yes, what did I actually say? That was pretty spicy."*

**Ruben**, senior group leader, Amsterdam

## 5.3 Refusing to visit the synagogue or to wear a *kippah*

Once in a while, you will encounter a student who either will not wear a *kippah* or who does not want to enter the synagogue at all. If you encounter this, it is important to not get emotional or angry, but to try to find out where this comes from. Are they afraid they will have to convert? Do they feel that

their religion does not allow it? In Amsterdam, we allow students to go in with different head coverings if they are not comfortable wearing a *kippah*. Try to explain that it is not about becoming Jewish but about showing respect. It can help if they are prepared beforehand by their teacher<sup>53</sup>.

*"I liked the fact that I was immersed in this place, their open-mindedness was nice and it broke the prejudices. However, being an atheist, I felt very embarrassed to have to wear a yarmulke. I didn't hesitate to do it out of respect for their religion, but I really didn't feel comfortable about it."*

**Student, Brussels**

## 5.4 Freedom of speech

A big part of this programme is based on having an open conversation with students being able to say or ask (almost) anything. If it is put on the table, you have a chance to talk about it and to deal with the ideas. There are some limits though and those limits can differ per person, although (threats of) violence is a limit to everyone. If a student crosses your limits, it is perfectly fine to tell them. Do not

get angry, but tell them outright that it shocks you and you feel uncomfortable. If possible, let the other group leader take over. You can ask the group what they think about the comment. Can they understand why it is shocking? Most of the time, if you show yourself as a person with feelings, they understand why you do not want to talk about it.

## 5.5 Lack of interest from the group

Some groups are uninterested from the start. It is a compulsory activity by the school and they have zero interest in it. Some might actually be annoyed. Pushing your story will have no effect at all. One way to get through this is to use humour.

In Amsterdam, we once had a group of sports teachers in training. After numerous attempts to engage them in the subject, we asked them to make the worst joke they could about their own group. It could be horrible and offensive, as long as it was about their own group. One of our group leaders started off with a joke about Jews: what happens when a Jewish guy who is turned on walks into a wall? He breaks his nose. The group laughed out loud and then started to tell jokes about themselves.

After sharing jokes, we turned the conversation back, asking them why we asked them to only joke about their own group. That turned into a conversation about in-group/out-group, and humour and religion.

*"What I notice is that if I say something about myself that is personal, maybe people are also more willing to say personal things. The atmosphere you can create really varies per group. By telling personal things, people are more engaged."*

**Student, Brussels**

<sup>53</sup> It is also mentioned in the sample letter to the teacher

# 6

## EU Strategy



On 2 June 2021, the EU gave out recommendations for combatting anti-Semitism in Europe. The amount of Jewish Europeans who perceive anti-Semitism to be a serious problem is 75%, as Jews are the target of verbal and physical attacks, threats, harassment, property damage and hate speech both on- and off-line. Anti-Semitism is found across society, manifesting itself in the most pernicious forms on the far right, the far left, and among Islamist extremists. Age-old anti-Semitic tropes, conspiracy ideologies, Nazi symbols and modern-day Israel-related anti-Semitism often intersect, forming new and vile depictions of Jews that lead to real world physical manifestations.

Despite all this, Jewish Europeans hold strong attachments to the EU and their respective countries. The rich Jewish cultural footprint of

Europe is not just a matter of heritage, but a living contribution to the EU's diversity today.

To combat anti-Semitism and to secure a Jewish presence in Europe, the EU wants to take action on three different dimensions: tackling anti-Semitism, fostering Jewish life and preserving Shoah memories. The EU is proud to support the Neighbours project to further these goals.<sup>54</sup>

The EU fights against all kinds of discrimination and exclusion, whether it is based on race or on gender. Non-discrimination based on race and ethnic origin, sexual orientation, age or disability is an important component of the agenda of the EU on equality and should also be referred to as it provides a human rights perspective engrained in the values that the EU stands for.

As said in the EU treaty:

***EU Charter of Fundamental Rights-Article 21- Non-discrimination***

***Any discrimination based on any ground such as sex, race, colour, ethnic or social origin, genetic features, language, religion or belief, political or any other opinion, membership of a national minority, property, birth, disability, age or sexual orientation shall be prohibited.***

The EU Treaty has introduced non-discrimination law for specific protected grounds (gender, racial or ethnic origin, religion or belief, disability, age and sexual orientation).

This project should help fight all kinds of inequalities. Project leaders should be aware of the view of the EU on both Antisemitism and Gender equality.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> Towards an EU free from Antisemitism. EU strategy on Combatting Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030) – European Union, 2021

<sup>55</sup> [https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025)



# 7

## Resources



Multiple resources were used for this manual. the EUPJF. Those resources are available in the Books, websites, research papers but also sections below.  
feedback from partners such as HIAS Europe or

## 7.1 Books

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*Kosher sex, a recipe for passion and intimacy* – Rabbi Shmuley Boteach

## 7.2 Websites

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### 7.2.1 General information

<https://www.ljgamsterdam.nl> (homepage of Liberal Jewish Community in Amsterdam)

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/working-group-combating-antisemitism\\_en](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/working-group-combating-antisemitism_en) (EU working group Antisemitism)

<https://eupj.org> (homepage of European Union for Progressive Judaism)

<https://hias.org/hias-eu/> (HIAS Europe)

<https://www.neighbours-europe.org> (homepage of Neighbours programme in Europe)

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/definition-antisemitism\\_bg](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/combating-discrimination-0/racism-and-xenophobia/combating-antisemitism/definition-antisemitism_bg) (IHRA definition of anti-Semitism)

[https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy\\_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025](https://commission.europa.eu/strategy-and-policy/policies/justice-and-fundamental-rights/gender-equality/gender-equality-strategy_en#gender-equality-strategy-2020-2025) (gender and equality strategy)

## 7.2.2 Amsterdam Project

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

<https://nos.nl/nieuwsuur/artikel/2317440-bruggenbouwers-leer-je-buren-kennen-bestrijdt-antisemitisme>

<https://www.gids.tv/video/329529/ajouad-jongeren-vertellen-wat-het-betekent-om-joods-te-zijn>

<https://eupj.org/getting-to-know-your-neighbours-in-amsterdam/>

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/joodse-gemeente-opent-de-deuren-bf917ce2/>

<https://www.volkskrant.nl/nieuws-achtergrond/aandachtig-luisterend-vragen-de-scholieren-waarom-anne-frank-zo-bekend-geworden-is-b8def1cd/>

[‘Getting to Know Your Neighbors’ in Amsterdam | William Echikson | The Blogs \(timesofisrael.com\)](#)

<https://www.trouw.nl/nieuws/minder-getier-over-joden-dankzij-haar-ba1d82f1/>

<https://www.ljgamsterdam.nl/sites/all/files/users/admin%20ljga/nettievanzwanenbergprijs2011.pdf>

<https://www.cidi.nl/respect-award-naar-emre-unver-en-leer-je-buren-kennen/>

<https://www.parool.nl/cs-b1c7b16f>

<https://www.at5.nl/artikelen/175353/liberaal-joodse-gemeente-wint-100000-euro-voor-initiatief-bij-rocs>

<https://khw.nl/eerste-brouwer-prijs-naar-liberaal-joodse-gemeente-amsterdam/>

## 7.2.3 Other cities

<https://blogs.timesofisrael.com/meeting-our-brussels-neighbors/> (Brussels)

## 7.2.4 Methods

<https://www.cnvc.org/node/6856> (non-violent communication)

<https://waltrakowich.com/use-deep-listening-skills-effective-leadership/> (Deep listening)

<https://www.lewisdeepdemocracy.com> (Deep democracy)

<https://www.levievandermeer.nl/project/i-ask/> (Iask)

<https://www.socraticdialogue.org/en/neo-socratic-dialogue/> (Socratic Dialogue)

## 7.2.5 Jewish knowledge

<https://www.jpost.com/blogs/torah-commentaries/metaphors-in-the-torah-cooking-a-young-goat-in-its-mothers-milk-450264> (Separation of milk and meat)

<https://kosher.sex> (Jewish sexuality)

<https://www.ushmm.org/collections/the-museums-collections/collections-highlights/500-years-of-antisemitic-propaganda-the-katz-ehrental-collection> (Anti-Semitic stereotypes)

[https://www.chabad.org/library/article\\_cdo/aid/4407982/jewish/Why-Are-Women-Exempt-From-Certain-Mitzvahs.htm](https://www.chabad.org/library/article_cdo/aid/4407982/jewish/Why-Are-Women-Exempt-From-Certain-Mitzvahs.htm) (Role of women)

[https://www.jewfaq.org/role\\_of\\_women](https://www.jewfaq.org/role_of_women) (Role of women)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/about-god-in-judaism/> (Role of God)

<https://www.reformjudaism.org> (Reform Judaism)

<https://reformjudaism.org/organ-donation-heaven-knows-we-need-them-here> (Organ donation)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-ten-commandments/> (10 commandments)

<https://www.sefaria.org/sheets/247850?lang=bi> (10 commandments)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/shabbat-101/> (Shabbat)

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/the-written-law-torah> (Torah)

<https://www.jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/11750-oral-law> (Oral law)

<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Moses-Maimonides> (Maimonides)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/who-was-rashi/> (rashi)

<https://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/a-definition-of-zionism> (Zionism)

[The Secret Relationship Between Blacks and Jews - Wikipedia](#) (Slavery)

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/the-eight-genders-in-the-talmud/> The Eight Genders in the Talmud | My Jewish Learning

<https://www.crconline.org.uk/resources/articles/reading-leviticus-1822-prohibition-male-male-incestuous-rape> Reading Leviticus 18:22 as a prohibition of male-on-male incestuous rape | CRConline

<https://www.myjewishlearning.com/article/homosexuality-in-jewish-thought/> Jewish Views on Homosexuality | My Jewish Learning

## 7.3 Research papers and documents from the European Union

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*Towards an EU free from Antisemitism. EU strategy on Combatting Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030)* – European Union, 2021

*EU strategy on Combatting Antisemitism and Fostering Jewish Life (2021-2030). One year in Action* – European Union 2022

*EU Anti-Racism Action Plan 2020-2025. Stepping up for action for a Union of Equality* – European Union September 2020

*“Leer je buren kennen”. Theoretische en kwalitatieve studie naar een contactinterventie* – Simon de Jong, Tobias Stark, Fenella Fleishmann – Universiteit Utrecht 2020

*Coronavirus and the plague of Antisemitism* – Community Security Trust 2021

*Jews in Europe at the turn of the Millenium. Population trends and estimates* – Sergio DellaPergola and Daniel Staetsky. JPR European Jewish Demography Unit, October 2020

8

# Attachments





## 8.1 Evaluation

It is recommended that students are surveyed after the visit. These surveys should aim to give feedback on the effectiveness of the visit in terms of attitude changes. It also allows participating communities to increase the effectiveness of visits.

The students are asked to give an answer to a series of statements in relation to attitudes they held before and after the visit.

Answer choices being:

**Yes** = I agree with the statement

**No** = I disagree with the statement

**N/A** = I don't know.

The questions asked are:

\* 5. Please Indicate your agreement with each of the following statements before and after the synagogue visit

	Before	After			
Jews tell the truth about what happened during the Holocaust	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jews have big families.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish women can be leaders of the congregation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jews can have sex before marriage.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish men make the final decision in the household.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	You can be LGBTQ+ and Jewish.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jewish women can read from the holy books.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	All Jews believe in God.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
A Jewish person has a big nose, Dark, curly hair, white skin, lots of money	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jews, Christians, and Muslims have the same God	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Jews run the world.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Jews and Muslims get along.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
			I have talked to Jewish people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

## 8.2 Useful tools:

### 8.2.1 Preparation

<https://www.qppstudio.net/public-holidays/europe.htm> (Site for public holidays in Europe to determine suitable dates for visits)

**Letter to schools:** see page 35

### 8.2.2 During the lessons

<https://www.mural.co/> (Digital whiteboard)

<https://kahoot.it> (Making quizzes about Judaism/anti-Semitism to check prior knowledge. Also option to send this to class before visit)

[Compilation draft 2.mp4 - Compilation draft 2.mp4 - Frame.io](#) (French Neighbours movie)

[Know your neighbours draft 4.m4v - Know your neighbours draft 4.m4v - Frame.io](#) (English Neighbours movie)



# Neighbours

<insert location>, <insert date>

Dear Teacher of <insert school>,

In a few weeks, you will be visiting our synagogue as part of the Neighbours programme. We are happy that your school has chosen to take part in this wonderful programme. This letter will give you some background information about what to expect and how to prepare.

The session will last about 1.5 hours. As the synagogue is kept kosher, it is not possible to bring food. Some lemonade/tea and a small snack will be provided by us.

You will be welcomed into the reception room of the synagogue by our group leaders and a guard<sup>56</sup>. Unfortunately, because of the high levels of anti-Semitism, our building is highly guarded. This might be scary or unfriendly for some students, so it might be a good idea to prepare them beforehand. They will have to leave their bags and coats in the cloakroom.

After a short introduction, which will involve a movie and a small assignment, we will have an informal circle discussion. Students are free to ask and talk about whatever they want, hopefully related to the topic. You are asked to help to make sure all students have an active role. We therefore ask you to bring at least one teacher to help us. The group leaders will try to make sure the students feel free to speak their mind, even if what they say can sometimes be shocking. They will let you know if certain lines are crossed (such as violence or threats).

After the informal circle discussion, the group will go to the synagogue and look around. More questions can be asked there. The male students will be asked to wear a kippah. Students can also bring their own head covering. Make sure they are prepared for this. This will not make the students Jewish; it is a sign of respect, similar to taking off your shoes in a mosque. We do not ask the students to pray here or to take part in a religious service.

We will end the session with a drink and a small snack. Here the students will have the opportunity to ask the group leaders their final questions in an informal setting.

Should there be any sensitive issues we need to be aware of beforehand, let us know! The group leaders can take this into account.

We are looking forward to your visit!

Sincerely,

<insert name>

<https://www.neighbours-europe.org>



# Neighbours



Funded by the  
European Union

**BETH SHALOM**  
LIBERALE JÜDISCHE GEMEINDE MÜNCHEN

**Beth  
Hillel  
Roma**  
Comunità ebraica progressiva



Jüdische Gemeinde «haKochav»  
für den Kreis Unna K.d.ö.R.

**אור חדש  
Or Chadash**  
Jüdische Liberale Gemeinde Wien  
Liberal Jewish Community Vienna

**KEREN OR**



**EUROPEAN  
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**HIAS**  
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