



# MISHPACHAH minute

Dear Parents,

As you read in Temple's email, [Standing up for Justice](#), the death of George Floyd is the latest in a too-long Kaddish list of people of color who have died in the context of police brutality. We affirm every day our gratitude for members of the police force who keep our building and our community safe. And we are painfully aware of the long and lacerating experience of communities of color in experiencing injustice and violence at the hands of the criminal justice system.

The details of this injustice and violence are hard for us to hear and process, and even harder to talk about with our children and teens. As parents, our natural instinct is to protect our children from the evils of the world, and we know all too well that sheltering our children will not help them, nor will it improve our world. We must talk about this, and we must do so now. And it is important to treat this topic according to the age and stage of our children and teens, as well as our own instincts about the conversations with which they are prepared to engage.

The [URJ's Statement](#), *Witnessing Protests, Rage, and Our Torah's Unbending Demand for Justice*, says, "Our country simply cannot achieve the values of 'justice for all' to which it aspires until we address ongoing racism in all sectors and at all levels of society." We cannot stand idly by. We need to educate ourselves and our children. We need to listen, and we need to do our part every single day to be actively anti-racist.

Within this special edition of the Mishpachah Minute, you will find resources to guide your own thinking and action, as well as to begin these discussions with your children. As always, our clergy and pastoral care team are here to help. Please don't hesitate to reach out to discuss this further. In the meantime, we hope you find some helpful tips and information in the resources provided.

With hope for a better future and strength to move through this challenging time,  
Rabbi Ross and the YL+E Team

## Educate Yourself

With the systemic racism present in our society, it can be overwhelming to consider our own feelings, much less those of our children and teens. As with any tough issue, the first step is to prepare and educate ourselves. There is a plethora of resources available online that can be accessed with a simple Google search. [This webpage from the Religious Action Center](#) is one resource to help you reflect on the systemic root causes of racial inequality and the ways we are implicit in and impacted by racism.

For some, music can be a powerful tool to help us process our feelings and gain perspective on the big issues in our world. Though there are many, here are three songs selected by our song leader,

## Educate Your Children

As mentioned previously, talking about race with our children and teens can be a daunting task. It is not a conversation that can happen once and the changes our world needs will not take place overnight. We best serve our children and teens by engaging in continuous, ongoing conversations. Our focus in these conversations should be on addressing areas that help our children and teens to expand their perspectives on the world.

Here are a few tools and resources for starting conversations with your child or teen through books, media, and music:

- For general guidance on starting

Ian Simpson, that speak to themes of race, injustice, and freedom in America, as poignant today as on their release dates. As you listen, think about the message the song is trying to convey and how it relates to what is happening in the world today. If you have an older child, listen with them and talk about how the lyrics make each of you feel.

- [Marvin Gaye "What's Going On" Official Video 2019](#)
- [Sam Cooke "A Change is Gonna Come" 2016 Lyric Video](#)
- [Leon Bridges "River"](#)

Another way to help our children and teens process the reality of racism is to take concrete steps within our families and community to respond. Here are a few resources that contain suggestions for concrete actions:

- [If you are white and asking, "What Can I Do?"](#) by Rabbi Judith Schindler
- [10 Rules for Engagement for White Jews Joining the #BlackLivesMatter Movement](#), from T'ruah, The Rabbinical Call for Human Rights
- [Ways Your Congregation Can Act Now for Racial Justice](#), from the URJ Blog, by Rabbi Jonah Pesner

a conversation, check out the book [Beyond the Golden Rule](#), which provides tips and advice from experts. Also read through [this general advice](#) about talking to kids about race from National Geographic.

- [This article from the ADL](#) provides context for addressing current events and provides questions and conversation starters for kids ages 11 and up.
- For younger children, check out this resource from [PJ Library](#) that offers suggestions of books, videos, actions and more.

One way to work on understanding and open avenues for conversation with children and teens is through music. Listen to these two songs about freedom with your child or teen and discuss what you heard. Remind them that as Jews, it is of utmost importance that we understand the meaning of freedom, particularly because our people were once slaves in the land of Egypt. Reflect on the idea of freedom with these questions: What does it mean to be 'free'? How do people experience freedom differently in America? What are some of the freedoms that we ourselves experience, that others might not?

- [Nina Simone "I Wish I Knew How it Would Feel to be Free", 1976:](#)
- [Beyonce feat. Kendrick Lamar "Freedom", 2016:](#)

Join our grade level Facebook groups!



## Speaking to This Moment in Time

There are many resources out there to talk to your kids about race, here are some resources that include Jewish text, community members, and/or content:

[The Jewish Multiracial Network](#) has a plethora of suggested books, kids' books, movies, and articles that are great resources.

The Religious Action Center (RAC) has [Resources for Embracing Racial Diversity in Our Communities](#).

The Union for Reform Judaism put together a [Jews of Color Educational Resource Model](#).

[Raising Race Conscious Children](#) has workshops, strategies, and more.

You can acquire books from a list of 31 [Children's Books to Support Conversations on Race, Racism, and Resistance](#).