

UNIT SIX - What is a Jew? (Religion or Nation?)



LESSON PLAN 3 The Debate - What is a Jew?

OBJECTIVES:

- 1) Students will engage in a debate to explore whether Judaism is a religion or a nationality.

MATERIALS NEEDED:

Relevant sources from the [main sources packet](#) (sources 1-8)
[Debate framework handouts](#)

ACTIVITIES:

1) Introduction (5 minutes):

Introduce the debate topic: "*What is a Jew? Is Judaism a religion or a nationality?*"

Explain the importance of this question for understanding Zionism.

2) Definition and Criteria (15 minutes):

Pose the question: "What distinguishes a nation from a religion?" to the class.

As a class, brainstorm and define the terms "religion" and "nation."

Write the definitions and criteria on the whiteboard.

3) Research and Preparation (15 minutes):

Split the class into two or four groups (depending on class size).

Assign each group a side of the debate (Judaism as a religion or as a nationality).

Provide research materials and time for groups to gather prooftexts and develop arguments.

4) Debate Framework (5 minutes):

Explain the structure of the debate: opening statements, rebuttals, and closing remarks.

Distribute handouts with the debate framework.

5) Debate (10 minutes):

Conduct the debate, following the established framework.

Ensure each group presents their arguments and engages in rebuttals.

6) Conclusion (5 minutes):

Summarize the key arguments from both sides.

Reflect on how this debate informs the understanding of Zionism.

7) Assessments:

List two main arguments presented by the side arguing that Judaism is a religion and two main arguments presented by the side arguing that Judaism is a nationality.

After participating in the debate, has your perspective on whether Judaism is a religion or a nationality changed? Why or why not? Use specific points from the debate to support your answer.

Further Learning: UED videos and educational resources

1. [Is Judaism a race or a religion?](#)