

## **B'tzelem Elohim**

Created by Dan Nichols

### **Goals:**

1. To realize that a connection with God is made through our relationships with others.
2. To discuss the concept that our hopes and dreams can be realized through working together as a community.

### **Objectives:**

1. To write new song lyrics; which will make a connection with the image of "God as creator" to ourselves as creators.

### **Timeline:**

0:00-0:10	Play
0:10-0:20	Songleader teaches song to the whole group
0:25-0:28	Songleader explains task (to create new verses for B'tzelem Elohim)
0:28-0:30	Split into small groups
0:35-0:45	Small group discussions
0:45-1:00	Each group writes new verse
1:00-1:05	Re-assemble the groups in a large circle (Each group stays together)
1:05-1:20	Each group presents their new verse to the large group
1:20-1:30	Leader wraps up with large group discussion

### **Materials:**

Copies of the song lyrics  
Colored markers for each group  
2 pieces of poster board for each group  
1 group leader per group  
SONGLEADER who knows the song "B'tzelem Elohim"  
Actors and narrator for play

### **Detailed Procedure:**

#### **0:00-0:10 Play**

2 actors pantomime Creation while narrator reads Genesis 1:1-1:27.

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#### **0:10-0:20 Singing**

Songleader passes out song lyric and teaches song to entire group.

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#### **0:25-0:28 Explanation of Task**

Songleader explains that task is to create new verses for B'tzelem Elohim. In what other ways are we, as humans, *b'tzelem elohim*?

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#### **0:28-0:30 Split into Small groups**

#### **0:35-0:45 Small group discussions**

Each group is led by a group leader who uses the discussion questions to facilitate ideas about being in the image of G-d.

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#### **0:45-1:00 Each group writes new verse**

Note taker writes down verse.

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**1:00-1:05      Regroup**

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Re-assemble the groups in a large circle (Each group stays together)

**1:05-1:20      Singing time**

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Each group presents their new verse to the large group, accompanied by the Songleader

**1:20-1:30      Large group discussion**

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Leader wraps up with large group discussion about being *b'tzelem Elohim*.

**Small Group Discussion Questions:**

1. What does it mean to be created *B'tzelem Elohim*- in God's image?
2. How would you describe God's image?
3. Why do you think the Torah tells us God created us in God's image?
4. What are our responsibilities as Jewish people created in the image of God?
5. In the story of creation, why do you think God chose people and not plants or animals or land or water or darkness or light etc. to be created in God's image?
6. What are ways we should try to be like God?
7. Why do you think the story of creation exists?

## Text Worksheet: Genesis 1 :1 - 1:27

**1** When God began to create heaven and earth- **2** the earth being unformed and void, with darkness over the surface of the deep and a wind from God sweeping over the water- **3** God said, "Let there be light"; and there was light. **4** God saw that the light was good, and God separated the light from the darkness. **5** God called the light Day, and the darkness He called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, a first day. **6** God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the water, that it may separate water from water." **7** God made the expanse, and it separated the water which was below the expanse from the water which was above the expanse. And it was so. **8** God called the expanse Sky. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. **9** God said, "Let the water below the sky be gathered into one area, that the dry land may appear." And it was so. **10** God called the dry land Earth, and the gathering of waters He called Seas. And God saw that this was good. **11** And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation: seed-bearing plants, fruit trees of every kind on earth that bear fruit with the seed in it." And it was so. **12** The earth brought forth vegetation: seed-bearing plants of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it. And God saw that this was good. **13** And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. **14** God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate day from night; they shall serve as signs for the set times-the days and the years; **15** and they shall serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth." And it was so. **16** God made the two great lights, the greater light to dominate the day and the lesser light to dominate the night, and the stars. **17** And God set them in the expanse of the sky to shine upon the earth, **18** to dominate the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that this was good. **19** And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. **20** God said, "Let the waters bring forth swarms of living creatures, and birds that fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky." **21** God created the great sea monsters, and all the living creatures of every kind that creep, which the waters brought forth in swarms, and all the winged birds of every kind. And God saw that this was good. **22** God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile and increase, fill the waters in the seas, and let the birds increase on the earth." **23** And there was evening and there was morning, a fifth day. **24** God said, "Let the earth bring forth every kind of living creature: cattle, creeping things, and wild beasts of every kind." And it was so. **25** God made wild beasts of every kind and cattle of every kind, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. And God saw that this was good. **26** And God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth." **27** And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

Tanakh, The Holy Scriptures, (Philadelphia, Jerusalem: Jewish Publication Society) 1985.

## Program Worksheet: B'tzelem Elohim

### TORAH

“And God said, ‘Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. They shall rule the fish of the sea, the birds of the sky, the cattle, the whole earth, and all the creeping things that creep on earth.’ And God created man in His image, in the image of God He created him; male and female, He created them.”

According to the Torah, Adam, the first human, was created in the image of God. The Torah explains that man is the pinnacle of creation and bears an intentional likeness to God. Man is endowed with the authority to govern the earth and its creatures.

### RASHI

Rabbinic writings held that “in our image, after our likeness” means that Adam was created in the image of the dignity of God.

Rashi explained that the “image of God” refers to our ability to understand and think, which distinguishes us for all other creatures.

### MAIMONIDIES

Maimonides took the “image of God” to mean that we are created with an intellect, the only feature God and human beings have in common.

### we all got a life to live

*we all got a gift to give  
just open your heart and let it out  
we all got a peace to bring  
we all got a song to sing  
just open your heart and let it out  
when I reach out to you  
and you to me  
we become b'tzelem Elohim  
when we share our hopes  
and our dreams  
each one of us b'tzelem Elohim  
we all got a tale to tell  
we all want to speak it well  
just open your heart and let it out  
we all got a mountain to climb  
we all got a truth to find  
just open your heart and let it out  
when I reach out to you  
and you to me  
we become b'tzelem Elohim  
when we share our hopes  
and our dreams  
each one of us b'tzelem Elohim  
b'reishit bara Elohim  
all our hopes, all our dreams  
b'reishit bara Elohim  
each one of us b'tzelem Elohim  
when I reach out to you  
and you to me  
we become b'tzelem Elohim  
when we share our hopes  
and our dreams*

This verse (in God's image) defines the relationship between God and man. It does not deal with a certain group of men or with any religious context dependent on man's deeds'. Its subject is man in the most general terms, referring to humanity more as a potential than as an actual existence. On the one hand, it is vague, and the relationship described in it cannot be precisely defined; on the other hand it is sufficiently clear to denote an absolute intimacy between man and God, to a degree not usually expected in a religious context. Therefore, one is not surprised to find that this verse served as the basis for Jewish understanding of the nature of God and God's relationship to man in a variety of ways.