



Webinar Discussion Guide

One Year Since October 7th: How to Talk with Your Teen Grandchildren

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Purpose

This guide provides prompts for conversation with teen grandchildren about the JGN webinar "One Year Since October 7th: How to Talk with Your Teen Grandchildren," led by Dr. Samantha Vinokor-Meinrath on September 25, 2024. View the webinar recording here:

<https://jewishgrandparentsnetwork.org/video-library/>

Key Takeaways

- The attack on Southern Israel by Hamas on October 7, 2023 was a pivotal point for the Jewish people around the world, transforming the lived experience of Jews into one marked by a new "before" and "after."
- Since October 7th there has been a demonstrated rise in antisemitism around the world. Many Jewish young people have experienced antisemitism for the first time and have grappled with feelings of "otherness" and existential loneliness based on their Jewish identities.
- Intergenerational connections and conversations are helpful in providing opportunities for a young person to build resilience, to see their own experiences as part of a larger story, and to process their developing feelings.
- Adolescence is a time of seeking independence, personal exploration, and tremendous growth. Jewish teens are navigating the complexities of their own development against a backdrop of rising antisemitism.
- Meeting teens where they are in terms of their reactions to October 7th means acknowledging nuanced feelings, grappling with multiple narratives, and potentially challenging the worldview of previous generations.

Starting the Conversation with Grandchildren

- Stay informed about the news yourself — keep informed about what’s going on in Israel and the Jewish world from reputable and neutral sources.
- Keep the conversation ongoing. Just as there isn’t one day where you’re going to talk about other aspects of Jewish identity and move on, talking about October 7th and its impact does not need to be limited to one conversation.
- Allow your young person to reflect and speak without judgment or the need to caveat their feelings.
- Recognize that their worldview may be different from yours, and this is not meant to indicate that they care less – but they may care differently.
- Help them understand the insidious nature of modern antisemitism. Compare or contrast it to other forms of hate targeted at specific groups. Offer help and support as needed. Support organizations can include the Anti-Defamation League (<https://www.adl.org/>), your local Jewish Community Relations Council (JCRC), The Jewish Education Project (www.jewishedproject.org/), and local synagogues.
- Consider how you would react to a teenager of any other minority group sharing their dilemmas, and what you would expect of them. How does it compare to your hopes/reactions to a Jewish teen?
- Appreciate the complexity of where your teen is, and everything that they are comfortable enough to share with you.

Conversation Questions

1. What do you know about what happened on October 7th?
2. Does being Jewish feel different to you than it did a year ago?
3. What makes you proud to be Jewish?
4. What are some of the Jewish choices you’ve made lately?
5. Have you experienced or witnessed antisemitism and what was your reaction?
6. We know there has been tremendous suffering by many people around the world, and specifically in the Middle East, this past year. What are you seeing that troubles or upsets you?
7. As we reach the one-year anniversary of the October 7th massacre, what do you hope your friends understand? How are you feeling?