

School Guide: **L'CHAIM**



ABOUT THIS GUIDE

This BYkids School Guide is designed to help teachers expand students' use of this film from passive watching to active, deeply personalized learning. Included are three sample Pathways, each driven by an essential question to challenge students. Use the Pathway questions to start discussions in small groups or with the whole class. We've also added Discussion Starters and Suggested Projects, but we encourage you and your students to follow your own pathways and create your own projects.

BYkids wants our films to be part of compelling, project-based, collaborative learning experiences that are cross-curricular, link cultures and countries by themes we all share, and spur students to develop the personal, social and emotional competencies they need to become global citizens while mastering necessary college and career readiness skills. Most of all, we want students to value their own stories while learning from the stories of others around the world. We encourage you to share the creativity and knowledge that flourish in your classroom as you and your students expand on these BYkids suggestions and create your own learning units. We'd love it if you would share your discoveries and ideas with us at **BYkids.org**!

BYkids
THEIR WORLD THEIR FILMS

Funding provided by



ΙΔΡΥΜΑ ΣΤΑΥΡΟΣ ΝΙΑΡΧΟΣ
STAVROS NIARCHOS FOUNDATION

ABOUT THE FILM

19-year-old Semon Shabaev is a member of a thriving Jewish community in Berlin, Germany. Despite his country's dark history of genocide, Semon embraces his religious and cultural heritage. As the last generation of Holocaust survivors fades, a new wave of Jews, including Semon's family, has come to live in the country that once attempted to eradicate them. Semon interviews community leaders, friends and rabbis, observes a remembrance service, and facilitates a cross-cultural workshop as he examines his German-Jewish identity.

In recent years, antisemitism has been on the rise worldwide. For example, the Anti-Defamation League reports that the number of antisemitic incidents and assaults on Jews and Jewish institutions in the United States has doubled in 2020, and that one billion people (26 percent of the world's population) harbor antisemitic attitudes.

Today, eighty years after one of the worst chapters in human history, Germany has the fastest-growing Jewish population in Europe. Mentored by Emmy-nominated filmmaker Anja Baron, Semon shines a light on resurgent Jewish life in Germany.

Semon's film dives into the question of identity, of feeling both German and Jewish, and addresses the historic burden of guilt for the Holocaust carried by his adoptive country. Semon explores German-Jewish identity and the Holocaust by examining silent memorials, active remembrance, and daily echoes of the Holocaust in everyday life in Berlin. He focuses on efforts to both understand antisemitism and find ways to not repeat the past. At the same time, he introduces us to a lively community of young German Jews and the joyous celebration of their rich heritage and culture.

ABOUT SEMON'S MENTOR

Anja Baron is an award-winning documentary filmmaker, producer, and director whose work has been screened at prestigious festivals worldwide and shown on U.S. and European television to critical acclaim, including two Emmy nominations. Baron worked as a correspondent for UNICEF, reporting on crises impacting women and children around the world. She mentored Mohammad Shasho in the BYkids film *Out of Aleppo*, in which the 17-year-old Syrian refugee documents the story of his relocation to Berlin.

"Mentoring a young Jewish man in the filmic exploration of Germany's dark history while exploring new horizons is a profoundly moving experience for us both—and possibly helps us navigate the many layers of the ongoing relationship between Germans and Jews."

Anja Baron

ABOUT BYkids

We create understanding through storytelling.

BYkids produces documentary films by kids and partners with public television, educators and online innovators to inspire conversations around global issues of human dignity and social justice. FILMS BYKIDS share the stories of kids who confront issues such as immigration, bullying, juvenile justice, climate change and child marriage. We reach kids—in schools and home-learning—with films and teaching materials that promote empathy and understanding to make global issues feel personal, relevant and actionable. Join us at BYkids.org to see and support stories that build global citizenry.

THE GUIDE

PATHWAY 1

WHY IS LEARNING HISTORY, BOTH POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE, IMPORTANT?

Semon focuses on the importance of learning from history, even when it is tragic, to inform the present and future and help us make better lives for all.

From the Film

“In Berlin, you can never escape the past. Past and present always live side by side... The worst genocide in human history happened in the last century here in Germany... It is important for me to show how this country is dealing with its dark past and not just with silent memorials but actively remembering the dead... It’s part of German remembrance culture.”

~ Semon Shabaev

Discussion Starters

- Remembering negative events in a nation’s history is hard. What does learning about both the negative and positive events in a nation’s history accomplish? How might learning only about either the positive or the negative events result in a biased view of history?
- What did Semon mean by “German remembrance culture”? How does remembering the past change how you look at the present?
- How does remembering a past with such terrible events as the Holocaust help build a more positive present and future for everyone?

Suggested Projects

- With a small group or your class, research the history of the Holocaust or another negative, biased event in history. How can understanding that history provide lessons for change so that we do not repeat the mistakes of the past?

Create a presentation that communicates three areas:

- 1) the historic, negative event
- 2) the present changes as a result of that event and of the efforts of many people
- 3) your ideas for how that event can inform what we can do in the future to make it better.

Your presentation can take many forms—a podcast, skit, posters—it’s up to you. Be sure to document the facts of the event and any present efforts you can find.

Your goal is to use the history of an event to improve the present and future, so you may also want to suggest ways your class, school or community can take an active role in “remembrance culture.”

- Semon says that at one point he “started building walls around myself.” In what ways did he break through those walls that might have focused on the history of the Holocaust and antisemitism? How can you help break through walls of discrimination in your class and school?

With a small group, write a survey, give it to everyone in your class or school, and find out their attitudes, the way a social scientist might. Avoid having students write their names (for privacy) but if you want to analyze the data for differences by specific groups, you might ask each person to note, for example, their (identified) gender or ethnic group.

You may want to ask about recent history related to bias, and how important they see events in creating positive movements for change. To bring out attitudes, you may even include some biased statements and ask the respondents to rate how strongly they agree or disagree with them. You may also want to ask what actions they think would be positive to take to create or accelerate understanding and change.

Analyze the results. Are there differences in the responses? You may want to graph the data.

Create a presentation for your school that you can post on a bulletin board, publish in the school newspaper, or share in any way you feel is appropriate. Choose a title for your presentation that focuses on creating positive change.

- What negative and positive parts of the history of our country do you feel are important to learn about for our future? How can we learn from them to make a better, more unbiased future for everyone? How can learning history, in all its horror as well as beauty, help us craft a better future?

Write a persuasive essay or create a video or work to present your views. Be sure to include logic and facts as well as your own thoughts to support your opinions. If you are having trouble getting started, consider the statement in Semon’s film by the head of the Ronald Lauder Foundation in Germany: “Because what happened in the past can happen again.”

Present your results from your Happiness Survey to the school or your class. Invite everyone to select one item that they see as important for happiness and create a drawing, artwork, or other creative expression of what it means to be happy to be alive. Incorporate those creative expressions along with the results of your survey in a special Happiness Night at your school.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 2

HOW CAN YOU CHANGE BIAS AGAINST A RELIGION, CULTURE OR ANOTHER GROUP?

Semon has embraced his Jewish culture, intellectual tradition and religion, as well as his country, Germany. He is dedicated to sharing this attitude.

From the Film

“Life gives you two families: One you are born with and the other one, the other one (that) you choose by yourself.”

~ Semon Shabaev

Discussion Starters

- It can be difficult to stand up and express your own values without a supportive group that shares at least some of your values and beliefs. How can you help others to avoid building walls around themselves?
- What are the qualities needed in friends and supporters to give others self-confidence in being themselves, like the self-confidence Semon and his friends express in being Jewish and German?
- Should supporters always agree? How can disagreement on some issues be presented with respect and discussion to lead to understanding different viewpoints?
- How are different viewpoints presented and supported in history or in governments or large organizations today? How can you help make respectful discussion in your “families” take place to improve communication between people?

Suggested Projects

- Semon and his friends visit places of remembrance and Holocaust history. That is an emotional experience. They refer to both the sacrifice AND the resilience of the Jewish people. With your group, create a remembrance hour or day that commemorates a group of people you wish to celebrate. Identify the school or other “family” you can involve in this shared event.
- With your class or in a small group, identify the qualities and actions that a “chosen family” would exhibit. It may be useful to make a chart with two columns—“Qualities” and “Actions”—to indicate some actions that a “chosen family” would take based on each quality. For example, if respect is a quality, what actions result? How can a person disagree respectfully?
- Form a school club or informal group that meets to socialize and to support others as a “chosen family.” You may want to create some guiding principles for your club, such as all are accepted, respect for all, and other principles you think will help to establish a space for inclusion and welcome.

THE GUIDE (continued)

PATHWAY 3

HOW DOES GIVING BACK TO YOUR COMMUNITY MAKE THE FUTURE BETTER??

Semon highlights a number of ways that education and giving back to his community are important to him.

From the Film

“We give possibilities to the kids here that they don’t get every day . . . and we give them the possibility every Sunday to learn something about Judaism, to meet new Jewish friends, to learn something about history, about Jewish traditions.”

~ Emanuel Adiniaev, Youth Coordinator, Jewish Community of Berlin

Discussion Starters

- Olam and being a mentor or youth guide for younger children are important to Semon. Why is it important to help others?
- What activities are available in your community for helping others, sharing your culture or religion, and being part of a group?

Suggested Projects

- With your class or group, plan a special class period or night at your school to highlight and share the histories of different groups of students. Each group can plan an art exhibit, bulletin boards, a group mural, music, video, or other performance to show both their unique history and their resilience through history. Invite families, and model respect for all. You will need time and teacher sponsorship, as well as communicating with the school administration.
- Create a “L’Chaim” (“To Life!”) night at your school. You may want to show the film and organize a discussion about it; highlight some of the projects around the film; have a “Thank You to All Our Families” presentation and theme. A panel discussion about what you have learned, and what you want to change for the future could be interesting.
- In the Jewish religion, the Bar Mitzvah (meaning 'son of commandment') and Bat Mitzvah (meaning 'daughter of commandment') are coming of age rituals and celebrations, most often when a child becomes 12 or 13 years old. In Judaism, it is the time a child is seen as a Jewish adult. The child has been educated in Jewish customs, religion and history, and has learned to read in Hebrew from the Torah, Judaism’s oldest sacred text (comprised of the first five books of both the Jewish and Christian Bibles.) At a Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual, a child often reads some of the original Hebrew text in front of their family and friends, and then shares their interpretation of what that section of the Torah means.

What are some other coming of age rituals from other cultures? What values does a

young adult needs to develop now that they are no longer a child?

With your group or class, create a bulletin board, presentation or other creative but fact-based expression of how different cultures and religions regard what is expected of a young adult. Identify similarities and differences. Remember to be respectful of all religious and ethical beliefs and opinions – there is a difference between showing factually what a religion believes and your opinion of those beliefs.

COLLEGE & CAREER READINESS ANCHOR STANDARDS

Dear Educator,

You and your students, in defining the creative and collaborative details of each Pathway and Project, will implement many different standards not limited to any one content area but focused on critical and rigorous, evidence-based thinking. Below are provided some College and Career Readiness Anchor Standards that appear in the majority of state PK-12 curriculum standards in ELA and Math, and in the Next Gen Science Standards, but you and your students will go beyond those limited standards. Also included are Social Emotional Competency areas identified by CASEL, a charitable organization that has helped to lead the way in defining and evaluating social emotional learning. We hope you will share your experiences and ideas at BYkids.org.

PATHWAY 1

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.

CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.

CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.

CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.

CCRA.R.8 Delineate and evaluate the argument and specific claims in a work, including the validity of the reasoning as well as the relevance and sufficiency of the evidence.

CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.

CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.W.7 Conduct research based on focused questions, demonstrating understanding of the subject.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.3 Evaluate a speaker's point of view, reasoning, and use of evidence and rhetoric.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

CCSS Standards of Mathematical Practice

MP2 Reason abstractly and quantitatively.

MP3 Construct viable arguments and critique the reasoning of others.

MP4 Model with mathematics.

MP7 Look for and make use of structure.

MP8 Look for and express regularity in repeated reasoning.

NEXT GEN SCIENCE STANDARDS, SCIENTIFIC and ENGINEERING PRACTICES

SEP 1 Ask questions and define problems.

SEP 4 Analyze and interpret data.

SEP 5 Use mathematics and computational thinking.

SEP 8 Obtain, evaluate, and communicate information.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CORE COMPETENCE AREAS (CASEL.ORG)SELF-AWARENESS:

Integrating personal and social identities

Demonstrating honesty and integrity

Linking feelings, values, and thoughts

Examining prejudices and biases

SOCIAL-AWARENESS:

Taking others' perspectives

Recognizing strengths in others

Demonstrating empathy and compassion

Showing concern for the feelings of others

Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones

Recognizing situational demands and opportunities

SELF-MANAGEMENT:

Setting personal and collective goals

Using planning and organizational skills

Showing the courage to take initiative

Demonstrating personal and collective agency

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:

Communicating effectively

Demonstrating cultural competency

Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
Resolving conflicts constructively
Resisting negative social pressure
Showing leadership in groups

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING:

Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness
Learning to make a reasoned judgment after analyzing information, data, facts
Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

PATHWAY 2

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
CCRA.W.1 Write arguments to support claims using valid reasoning and relevant and sufficient evidence.
CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.
CCRA.W.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.
CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.
CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.
CCRA.SL.6 Adapt speech to a variety of contexts and communicative tasks.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CORE COMPETENCE AREAS (CASEL.ORG)

SELF-AWARENESS:

Integrating personal and social identities
Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
Identifying one's emotions
Demonstrating honesty and integrity
Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
Examining prejudices and biases
Experiencing self-efficacy
Developing interests and a sense of purpose

SOCIAL AWARENESS:

Taking others' perspectives
Recognizing strengths in others

Demonstrating empathy and compassion
Showing concern for the feelings of others
Understanding and expressing gratitude
Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones

SELF-MANAGEMENT:

Managing one's emotions
Exhibiting self-discipline and self-motivation
Setting personal and collective goals
Using planning and organizational skills
Showing the courage to take initiative
Demonstrating personal and collective agency

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:

Communicating effectively
Developing positive relationships
Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving
Resolving conflicts constructively
Resisting negative social pressure
Showing leadership in groups
Seeking or offering support and help when needed
Standing up for the rights of others

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING:

Identifying solutions for personal and social problems
Anticipating and evaluating the consequences of one's actions
Recognizing how critical thinking skills are useful both inside and outside of school
Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being
Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts

PATHWAY 3

CCSS ELA College & Career Readiness Anchor Standards

CCRA.R.2 Determine central ideas or themes and analyze their development.
CCRA.R.3 Analyze how and why individuals, events, or ideas develop and interact.
CCRA.R.6 Assess how point of view or purpose shapes content and style.
CCRA.R.7 Integrate and evaluate content in diverse media and formats.
CCRA.W.2 Write informative/explanatory text to examine and convey complex ideas.

CCRA.W. 3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events.

CCRA.W.4 Produce clear and coherent writing appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.1 Prepare for and participate effectively in a range of conversations and collaborations with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing your own clearly and persuasively.

CCRA.SL.2 Integrate and evaluate information in diverse media and formats, including visually, quantitatively, and orally.

CCRA.SL.4 Present information, findings, and supporting evidence so that listeners can follow the line of reasoning and the organization, development, and style are appropriate to task, purpose, and audience.

CCRA.SL.5 Make strategic use of digital media and visual displays of data to express information and enhance understanding of presentations.

SOCIAL EMOTIONAL LEARNING CORE COMPETENCE AREAS (CASEL.ORG)

SELF-AWARENESS:

Integrating personal and social identities
Integrating personal and social identities
Identifying personal, cultural, and linguistic assets
Demonstrating honesty and integrity
Linking feelings, values, and thoughts
Examining prejudices and biases
Experiencing self-efficacy
Developing interests and a sense of purpose

SOCIAL-AWARENESS:

Taking others' perspectives
Taking others' perspectives
Recognizing strengths in others
Demonstrating empathy and compassion
Showing concern for the feelings of others
Understanding and expressing gratitude
Identifying diverse social norms, including unjust ones

SELF-MANAGEMENT:

Setting personal and collective goals
Using planning and organizational skills
Showing the courage to take initiative
Demonstrating personal and collective agency

RELATIONSHIP SKILLS:

Communicating effectively

Developing positive relationships

Demonstrating cultural competency

Practicing teamwork and collaborative problem-solving

Resisting negative social pressure

Showing leadership in groups

Seeking or offering support and help when needed

Standing up for the rights of others

RESPONSIBLE DECISION-MAKING:

Demonstrating curiosity and open-mindedness

Reflecting on one's role to promote personal, family, and community well-being

Evaluating personal, interpersonal, community, and institutional impacts