

GO & Learn



Facilitating discussion about the Palestinian
Call for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions
(BDS) in Jewish Communities.

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Welcome to JVP's Go & Learn Curriculum!

This curriculum was developed by a team of YJPers (Young, Jewish and Proud, the youth-led wing of Jewish Voice for Peace). Thank you to Infinity Rotbard, Michael Deheeger, and Carolyn Klaasen for their many hours of work on this project, as well as to Davey Shlasko and Rebecca Subar for their contributions as part of the facilitation team.

What you will find here are a set of modules that can be mixed and matched, depending on your event's vibe, target audience, length, venue, etc. There is no one way to run your event.

The modules combine Jewish text study—some religious and some secular—with close reading of the Palestinian Call for BDS, a values-clarification activity, and some history of the support and opposition to the BDS movement thus far. The activities combine paired study, small groups, interactive exercises, and self-reflection. In truth, the primary text of the events are the participants. We trust there is something here for everyone.

In designing this curriculum we were hoping to create opportunities for real learning—not debate or dialogue. A place for participants to reflect on their own relationship to boycotts and divestment campaigns, to think about solidarity and privilege, and to contextualize the Palestinian Call for BDS more broadly. We are hoping that the exercises will feel challenging, engaging, and worthwhile for participants across the political spectrum from those that oppose,

support, or are confused about BDS. We are hoping these events will reveal that Jews not only can learn and discuss about even the most controversial issues in constructive and valuable ways, but that these spaces of learning and discussion are vital.

In short, the main goal of these events is to challenge the current climate McCarthyism in the Jewish community around BDS and to highlight how essential it is for us all to Go & Learn.

Onward!



Alissa Wise, Co-Director of Organizing
On behalf of the Go & Learn Education Committee

P.S. Please review the facilitator's instructions as well as the materials (handouts, cards, timeline, powerpoint presentation) together with your group before you decide which modules to use. Please reach out if we can help in any way to make your event a success. Please also be in touch with an update on how the event went, how the materials can be improved, etc. You can reach us at: golearn@jvp.org.

MODULE 1

Ideas for Opening & Closing the Event Pre-Program Timeline Activity

Overview

People will start interacting with, contributing to, and familiarizing themselves with the BDS timeline, which will be referred back to in Module 3.

Materials

- The BDS Timeline, printed out and on display in an accessible space (Download *BDS Timeline* in Module 4)
- Post-it notes and markers

Facilitation Instructions

- As people arrive, a greeter should introduce people to the timeline and the materials available for responding to it and encourage them to participate.
- Suggested responses can include adding events or campaigns, their personal experiences, (were they ever censored for their views? did they participate in actions not included on the timeline?) or their reactions to different pieces.

I. Welcome - 5 minutes

With energy and enthusiasm welcome folks to the event. Introduce yourself/have all facilitators briefly introduce themselves. Lay out plan for the evening.

Getting Ready to “Go and Learn” WHOLE GROUP WELCOME

Overview:

A text study to explore the concept of “going and learning” and to set the tone for the evening.

Length: 25 minutes

Goals:

- Prepare folks to step out of their comfort zones

Takeaways:

- This is a conversation framed in Jewish and non-violent movement traditions

Materials:

- Text study sheet
- Ground rules on poster/big paper

Idea

Ask a few questions and invite folks to raise their hands to see “who is in the room.” For example:

- Raise your hand if this is your first time talking about BDS
- Raise your hand if you have ever been to a YJP/JVP program before
- Raise your hand if you have met someone new tonight already!

II. Set ground rules - 3 minutes

Set some ground rules to ensure a safe/comfortable space for everyone. Write them up on the walls and make sure everyone agrees (have everyone do “thumbs up” to agree or something) that way if someone violates them, you can refer back!

Some sample ground rules include:

- Step up your listening/step up your talking
- Use “I” statements
- Ask clarifying questions (before making assumptions)
- Try everything on (and decide later)
- Zero tolerance for oppressive language or actions (homophobic, Islamophobic, anti-Semitic, racist, sexist, ageist, ableist language of any kind as well as inappropriate sexual advances or threats of violence)

III. Text Study - 15 minutes

To illustrate importance of study and exploration, try on a new way of thinking.

“That which is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow. That is the whole Torah; the rest is the explanation; go and learn.”

– Hillel the Elder, asked to summarize the entire Torah

Question for Discussion

What is the relationship between the concept of “Ma dsa’ani lach”/don’t do to others what you hate being done to you... and “zil gmor”/go and learn? How do you understand the connection between an all-encompassing ethical obligation and an imperative to Go & Learn?

Facilitation Instructions

1. Invite everyone to turn to 1-2 people near them. Allow a moment for everyone to find a person or two to talk to. Once everyone has found someone, invite them to share with each other their name and one thing they know about BDS coming in to tonight.

2. After everyone has introduced themselves to their buddies, handout the text study sheets. Invite the small groups to read and discuss the texts together for 7 minutes. Discussion questions are provided on the text study sheets. You may want to point out the discussion questions on the text study sheets. After 7 minutes of pair or small group text study/conversation, invite everyone back together again (if you have speakers you can bring everyone back by playing music, if not use your voice or a bell of some kind).

3. Once attention is focused at the front of the room, invite a few people to respond to the discussion questions, or share briefly what they discussed. Make sure a few points are made, and if not, you make them:

- Connection between our ethical obligations to others and learning/exploring ideas even if they are uncomfortable. Part of ethical living is ongoing education and seeking to understand the Other—those close to us and those we might feel are our enemies.
- Invitation to try on new way of thinking—just for the next 2 hours—see if you can open yourself to think big and bold and newly.

4. After 7 minutes of sharing insights, thank everyone for their contributions, affirm that this is just the beginning of the conversation and move on to the next module.

Concluding the Event

Goals:

- Evaluation of event: did you go & learn?
- Educate people about local campaigns and invite participation
- Sense of closure from an emotional viewpoint

Activity #1: Local Organizing Pitches

- Establish that there will be a 15-minute time limit, and that this will be strictly a broad overview of local BDS organizing for the sake of time
- Facilitators/Organizers from campaigns provide brief overviews of local campaigns
- Circulate sign-up sheets with options
- This is an incredible organizing opportunity! Be ready with a next step for people who are eager to continue deepening their involvement. We may not get them in a room again otherwise!

Activity #2: Emotional Closure

- Option A: Go-round, each person share one feeling word and one takeaway.
- Option B: If the event is happening in a community where people have some shared cultural context, sharing a song can be a way to close.
- Option C: Head, heart, hands check out: In groups of 3-6, each person share one thought, one feeling, and one action you intend to take next.
- Option D: Show YJP declaration video

Activity #3: Closing Text Study

- See Text Study Resources

MODULE 2

Exploring Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions

Overview

An interactive activity followed by a facilitated discussion in which participants look at other historical boycotts, divestment campaigns, and sanctions.

Goals

- Present boycotts as a legitimate nonviolent strategy
- Enable participants to explore and develop their own criteria for evaluating and participating in boycotts

Takeaways

- Contextualization of BDS tactics in history/other social justice movements
- Personal understanding of how they relate to BDS tactics and movements
- BDS can be used toward human/civil rights in an effective way
- BDS is not racist and is peaceful toward liberation

Materials

- stickers (four colors; suggested green, red, blue and yellow)
- pre-printed cards to hang on wall (Download “BDS Cards”)
- tape
- either a whiteboard, butcher paper, etc. — some way of writing

Facilitation Directions

- Before the event starts, print out the cards and tape them across a wall (or multiple walls, depending on the size of the crowd).
- Print out the sign describing what each sticker means and put it someplace visible. Have dot stickers available.
- **Give the group a context for the activity**
 - Introduce the idea that while the word “boycott” is relatively new, this is a technique that has been used throughout history.
 - ASK if anyone can think of a historical example of a boycott.
 - GIVE definition: Ask group how they would define boycott. Take several responses. Summarize a definition back to them. The definition should be something along the lines of ... “Organized collective refusal to participate in a particular economic relationship (e.g. refusal to buy a company’s products) for the purpose of demanding some kind of change.”
 - The 4 underlined parts: organized, collective, refusal to participate, and for a purpose, are all key.
- **Introduce the activity**
 - Like any strategy, there are appropriate and inappropriate times and ways to carry out a boycott. In this activity, we are going to explore our own feelings about

boycotts that have happened in the past. Explain and emphasize goal: to explore our own criteria for evaluation/participating in boycotts - NOT to make decisions or come to consensus about anything.

- Across this wall, there are cards with examples of different campaigns that have involved boycott, divestment or sanctions on them.

- You have stickers available. Look around at the different boycotts and share your opinions by putting stickers on them. Try to at least put up one green and one red sticker. You have about five minutes to do so.



Green: I feel good about this one. I would participate in and/or support it.



Red: I don't feel so good about this one. I would definitely not participate in it.



Blue: Hey, I have been a part of this one!



Yellow: I have more questions about this one, or am not sure how I feel.

- Allow five minutes for stickering. Give a one-minute warning. If more time is needed, give it.

- Invite the group to look at the wall, and then move them into a discussion:

- First, choose one example where there is near-unanimous agreement, and ask people to explain some of their reasoning in coming to a decision. Try to identify the principles behind the reasoning. Ask questions to the group like: "What makes you say you would participate in/support this boycott?"

What about it makes it something you would participate in or support? What do you look for in a boycott you would

participate in /support?" While one facilitator is calling on speakers and managing the discussion, another facilitator should write down themes (not necessarily direct quotations) from the discussion.

- Next, choose an example on which there is a mixture of sticker colors. Ask the same questions, first of those who put a green sticker, then to those with yellow or red stickers.

- Throughout the discussion, refer back to examples that have something in common with, or different from, the example at hand - ex: if someone says they would participate in an example because it was organized by a broad coalition, you might contrast it with another example that had fewer green dots and where there was no broad coalition.

- As its nearly time to wrap up, refer back to the list that the second facilitator has been writing. Point out that these are some of the criteria people identified using to make decisions about boycotts. If there's time, ask for thoughts/responses/additions to the list.

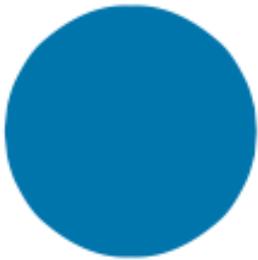
- Some items you might expect to be on this list of criteria are: agree with the aim (toward human rights), likely to be effective, at the right moment in the context of a broader movement, called for by a group you trust, the right tactic for the problem, other methods have been tried first, ...



Green: I feel good about this one. I would participate in and/or support it.



Red: I don't feel so good about this one. I would definitely not participate in it.



Blue: Hey, I have been a part of this one!



Yellow: I have more questions about this one, or am not sure how I feel.

KEY: Boycott, Sanctions, Divestment Survey

Nestle

In the 1970s, the Infant Formula Action Coalition launched a boycott of Nestlé products in response to unethical promotions of Nestlé infant formula over breast milk.

Hyatt Hotel Boycott

UNITE HERE, a union representing workers in several industries, including hotels, is currently calling for a consumer boycott of most Hyatt Hotels. Calling Hyatt the “worst employer in the hotel industry,” UNITE HERE has called for people to sign a pledge vowing not to eat, meet or sleep at Hyatt. This campaign has been supported by “Justice at Hyatt,” an initiative led by Jewish clergy and community leaders.

Treif Matzah in Berdichev

In the 18th century, Rabbi Levi Yitzhak of Berdichev declared all of the matzah from a factory treif because of the long hours women worked there for too little pay.

Kosher Meat Boycott of 1902

In May of 1902, the Beef Trusts controlling the wholesale market caused the price of kosher meat on the Lower East Side to jump from 12 to 18 cents per pound. In protest kosher butchers refused to sell meat for a week, but failed to bring prices down. In response, Jewish women influenced by the labor and women's suffrage movements organized a consumer boycott of kosher meat. Their initiative led the kosher butchers to rejoin the boycott, and by June 9th the price was back down to 14 cents a pound.

University Disinvestment from South Africa

Beginning in the 1960s, disinvestment from South Africa was advocated as a strategy for ending apartheid. Starting in the late 1970s and through the 80s, student-led movements led universities across the U.S. to vote to stop investing in companies that traded or had operations in South Africa. By 1988, 155 institutions had disinvested themselves from South Africa.

Montgomery Bus Boycott

Following a series of incidents around preferential seating for white passengers, the black citizens of Montgomery, Alabama declared a boycott on city buses in December of 1955. The 381-day boycott caused a huge financial deficit for the Montgomery public transit system, and finally resulted in a city ordinance that allowed black passengers to sit anywhere they wanted.

Ban on Attending Gladiator Games

The Talmud declares that anyone who sits in the stadium at a gladiator game is guilty of bloodshed. Because of the cruelty of the sport, attendance at the games was forbidden unless one went to try to save the life of a gladiator or testify to his death so that his wife could remarry.

Israeli Cottage Cheese Boycott

After the government stopped regulating the price of cottage cheese, it rose 45% in three years. Angered by the huge hike in what is considered a staple food product in Israel, Itzik Alrov called for a consumer boycott of cottage cheese on face- book in June 2011. The boycott was successful in getting prices lowered not only on cottage cheese, but also on other basic commodities.

Lysistrata Sex Boycott

This play by Aristophanes imagines the women of Greece refusing to have sex with their husbands and lovers until the men end the Peloponnesian War.

TIAA-CREF's Divestment from Darfur

TIAA-CREF, a large US investment management company, announced on January 4, 2010 that it would sell its shares of Asian energy companies because of their failure to take meaningful steps to help end genocide in Darfur. This was part of a targeted divestment campaign led by The Save Darfur Coalition, which targets “highest offenders” — those with “a business relationship with the government of Sudan that helps fuel the genocide, impart minimal benefit to the country’s underprivileged, and have not shown a change in behavior after being engaged on the issue.”

Nazi Boycott of Jewish Businesses

Soon after Adolf Hitler was sworn in as Chancellor of Germany on January 30, 1933 the Nazis declared a one-day boycott against Jewish Germans. They stationed SA officers in front of Jewish- owned businesses, which were also marked by the Star of David and anti-Semitic slogans. The boycott marked the beginning of a nationwide campaign against the entire Jewish population.

Module 3

Looking at the Palestinian Call for BDS

There are several texts that could be explored as a transition into this module. See “Go & Learn Text Study” handout for options.

Overview

An exploration of the text of the Palestinian call for BDS through pair-based study, small groups, personal reflection and facilitated discussion.

Length

45 mins

Goal

To familiarize participants with the broad BDS call, the call for Academic and Cultural boycott, and JVP’s BDS positioning including:

- who issued the call
- why the call was made
- what the demands are

Materials

1. Handouts
 - Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions against Israel Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights: www.bdsmovement.net
 - JVP Statement on BDS, 2015: www.jvp.org/content/jvp-issues
 - PACBI Call: www.pacbi.org/etemplate.php?id=869

2. blank paper
3. pens
4. butcher block
5. markers

Facilitation Instructions

(1 min) Introduce the session

It’s important that we all know what we’re talking about when we discuss BDS. We’re going to take time now to look at the call that was issued by Palestinians for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions in 2005. This part of the program is for trying to understand the call, not debating it.

(10 min) Chevruta-style text study

(traditional rabbinic pair-based learning)

Divide the room into study buddies. Clarify that you don’t need to decide/disclose your answer to that call, only identify what is being asked.

Give them 10 minutes to discuss the following BNC call in pairs:

- Who does this call come from?
- What reasons does the call give for why BDS is needed?
- What are the demands of this call?
- Does anything surprise you about the content of this call?
- What is asked of you in this call?

(10 min) Small group text study

Have each pair of chevruta/study partners find another pair and become a group of four. Hand out the PACBI call handout. Give them 10 minutes to discuss the PACBI call in pairs:

- How does the rationale differ from the broader BDS call?
- How is it the same?
- How would you say the PACBI call relates to the broader BDS call you read?
- Does anything surprise you about the content of this call?
- What is asked of you in this call?
- Who and what are PACBI calling on people to boycott, and not to boycott?

(10 min) What the BDS and PACBI are and aren't

It will likely be useful to define the purpose of the conversation very clearly: To understand what the documents says, NOT to discuss how we agree or disagree with it. It may also be useful, in introducing the document, to acknowledge that people will probably have feelings about it and that's okay.

Have two pieces of butcher block paper up. One said "WHAT THE CALLS ARE" the other says "WHAT THE CALLS AREN'T"

Spend a few minutes for people to write reflections on post it notes and post them under the proper heading: what the calls ARE and what they are NOT.

For example, some responses to what the calls are could be "non-violent", some responses to what the calls are not could be "anti-semitic".

After participants have posted, invite them to read what others have contributed and add comments, agreements, questions, etc

Facilitator note: Be sure to frame this not as we all are going to agree, but more as a reflection, of even when we read the same text, how to differently we can understand it. Reinforce that this about what the call says, not what perceptions you came in with.

(5 min) JVP's 2015 Statement

Handout JVP's statement and read it aloud, seder-style (each person reads a paragraph and passes it on to the next person).

Acknowledge that JVP's statement has changed in early 2015 after an intense and thorough process involving JVP's members, chapter leaders, councils, donors, allies, staff and board.

(5 min) Closing

After the reading, do a "2-minute paper," which means everybody writes down what they're thinking and feeling for 2 minutes without stopping or lifting pen. The writing is theirs to keep and will not be used for any activity.

After the 2 minutes are up thank everyone for the group learning and conversation, and acknowledge that this topic can trigger a lot of emotions. Encourage people to put both feet on the floor and take a few deep breaths before moving on to the next module.

Palestinian Civil Society Calls for Boycott, Divestment and Sanctions Against Israel Until it Complies with International Law and Universal Principles of Human Rights

9 July 2005

One year after the historic Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) which found Israel's Wall built on occupied Palestinian territory to be illegal; Israel continues its construction of the colonial Wall with total disregard to the Court's decision. Thirty eight years into Israel's occupation of the Palestinian West Bank (including East Jerusalem), Gaza Strip and the Syrian Golan Heights, Israel continues to expand Jewish colonies. It has unilaterally annexed occupied East Jerusalem and the Golan Heights and is now de facto annexing large parts of the West Bank by means of the Wall. Israel is also preparing — in the shadow of its lanned redeployment from the Gaza Strip — to build and expand colonies in the West Bank. Fifty seven years after the state of Israel was built mainly on land ethnically cleansed of its Palestinian owners, a majority of Palestinians are refugees, most of whom are stateless. Moreover, Israel's entrenched system of racial discrimination against its own Arab-Palestinian citizens remains intact.

In light of Israel's persistent violations of international law; and

Given that, since 1948, hundreds of UN resolutions have condemned Israel's colonial and discriminatory policies as illegal and called for immediate, adequate and effective remedies; and

Given that all forms of international intervention and peace-making have until now failed to convince or force Israel to comply with humanitarian law, to respect fundamental human rights and to end its occupation and oppression of the people of Palestine; and

In view of the fact that people of conscience in the international community have historically shouldered the moral responsibility to fight injustice, as exemplified in the struggle to abolish apartheid in South Africa through diverse forms of boycott, divestment and sanctions; and

Inspired by the struggle of South Africans against apartheid and in the spirit of international solidarity, moral consistency and resistance to injustice and oppression;

We, representatives of Palestinian civil society, call upon international civil society organizations and people of conscience all over the world to impose broad boycotts and implement divestment initiatives against Israel similar to those applied to South Africa in the apartheid era. We appeal to you to pressure your respective states to impose embargoes and sanctions against Israel. We also invite conscientious Israelis to support this Call, for the sake of justice and genuine peace.

These non-violent punitive measures should be maintained until Israel meets its obligation to recognize the Palestinian people's inalienable right to self-determination and fully complies with the precepts of international law by:

1. Ending its occupation and colonization of all Arab lands and dismantling the Wall
2. Recognizing the fundamental rights of the Arab-Palestinian citizens of Israel to full equality; and
3. Respecting, protecting and promoting the rights of Palestinian refugees to return to their homes and properties as stipulated in UN resolution 194.

Endorsed by:

The Palestinian political parties, unions, associations, coalitions and organizations below represent the three integral parts of the people of Palestine: Palestinian refugees, Palestinians under occupation and Palestinian citizens of Israel

Questions for Discussion from BDS Call:

- Who does this call come from?
- What reasons does the call give for why BDS is needed?
- What are the demands of this call?
- Does anything surprise you about the content of this call?
- What is asked of you in this call?

www.bdsmovement.net

MODULE 4

Support & Opposition to the Palestinian Call for BDS

Overview

An interactive activity exploring the implementation of different types of BDS since the call and providing an opportunity for participants to process their reactions and exchange opinions.

Goals

- Educate participants about 5 main types of BDS: Consumer Boycott, Academic Boycott, Cultural Boycott, Divestment, and Sanctions
- Educate participants about the diversity of BDS support internationally since the 2005 call for Boycott
- Normalize BDS by presenting real, non-violent campaigns with clear goals and human rights motivations

Takeaways

Participants grasp that the BDS movement is a diverse, non-violent grassroots movement

Materials

- BDS timeline (to be posted on the wall)
- “Types of BDS” Presentation (powerpoint—will require access to a projector ideally or can be printed out)

I. Types of BDS (10 minutes):

Walk participants through the “Types of BDS” presentation either using printouts or AV, and allow time for some clarifying questions.

II. Timeline (10 minutes):

Invite people to take 10 minutes, with a partner, to examine the BDS timeline posted

around the room and the comments/additions people have made. Encourage people to discuss their reactions as they do so, and to use the “Types of BDS” presentation as a frame to understand the strategies and thinking behind different actions.

III) a) Spectrum activity (20 minutes):

Invite participants if they are able to stand up. Label one side of the room Agree and one side Disagree. You will then read a series of 3 statements (below) and invite all to stand in a line on a spectrum between agree and disagree based on their relationship to the statement.

As you make each statement, invite folks to talk in small groups with people from each response group (agree, disagree, strongly agree, strongly disagree, also unsure?) to discuss briefly. Also have a few comments from each group to the entire group to hear why they are standing where they are standing. Statements:

1. I feel that BDS is proving to be a successful strategy.
2. I feel that there has been unjustified censorship in the Jewish community against discussion of BDS.
3. I feel that BDS can be a positive force for change.

III) b) Small Group Discussion (10 minutes)

(if you have time): Introduce small group discussion with this question:

- How do you feel about the 5 principle BDS strategies (Consumer Boycott, Divestment, Sanctions, Cultural, Academic) and the ways they have been implemented?