

Chapter 1 - Why Ben-Gurion? / Dreams and Youth

Workshop- The Power of Youth

Part 1:

1. Before watching the video, ask: What do you know about David Ben-Gurion?
2. Write the answers on the whiteboard.

Explain that David Ben-Gurion was the first Prime Minister of the State of Israel and was, in effect, the person who established the state in 1948. In the upcoming video we will learn a little more about him and about the beginning of his journey.

Part 2: Processing the Video

1. Questions for reflection and discussion (participants may also spend a few minutes writing):
 - What new information did I learn from the video?
 - What thoughts came to mind while watching?
2. **Alternative activity:** Participants receive a sheet showing the two teenagers from the video saying: "Perhaps young people used to do great things, but that is no longer the case today." Fill in the speech bubble or write what you would reply to them.
3. Invite participants to share their reactions to the video and discuss the issues it raised.
4. Now discuss the question raised by the video: What role do young people have in shaping society in general, and within the Jewish people in particular?
5. Display three posters containing statements about the role of young people in society. Ask everyone to stand beside the poster with which they most agree:
 - **Poster 1:** Young people have no special role in society. The teenage years are the best years of our lives. They should be spent studying, enjoying time with friends, having fun and making the most of every moment before we grow up and enter the realities of adult life.
 - **Poster 2:** Young people have the ability to create major changes in society. History has shown this repeatedly. Young people possess a strong critical sense and are not yet burdened by the responsibilities of adulthood. Their role is to point out what needs to be improved in society and to lead that change.
 - **Poster 3:** Young people can contribute to society, volunteer and occasionally help those in need. However, we should not expect too much from them. They are still too young and do not really have enough power to create significant change. Perhaps young people once did great things, but that is no longer relevant today.

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Ask several participants to explain why they chose their particular poster.

6. Say: Ben-Gurion, who began his path as a Zionist leader while still a teenager, had great faith in young people and assigned them a major role in the establishment of the state.

We will now read two of his quotations, discuss them briefly and discuss the questions that follow:

“The character of the people of Israel means, first and foremost, the character of Israel’s youth- their creative ability, their pioneering initiative, their loyalty to the mission that history has placed upon them in our generation.” From: Career or Mission, 10 June 1954

Ask:

- Why does he say that the character of the people of Israel is above all the character of its youth?
- What mission has history assigned to young people?
- Why specifically to the youth?

“We possess many precious things in this country: a beautiful land, a blue sea, healthy air, farms and institutions, yet none of these can compare with the most precious asset in which we have been blessed- the Jewish youth. This youth is the future of the nation.”

Ask:

- Why does Ben-Gurion call Jewish youth the most precious asset?
- Do you agree with him?
- What is the role of Jewish youth today in 2026? (Write the answers on the board)

Part 3: Conclusion

Ben-Gurion had high expectations of Jewish youth. It was young people who fought for the establishment of the State of Israel, founded new communities and played a central role in building the country. Do we, as young people today, still have a role to play within the Jewish people? Within Zionism?

The role of youth changes in response to the realities, challenges and needs of each generation. Yet it is up to us to define our own role and decide how we will fulfil it.