THE CHOSEN

based on the novel by Chaim Potok
adapted for the stage by Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok
directed by Edward Sobel
Table of Contents

Section I: About the Play
- Summary of the Play
- Character Breakdown
- Williamsburg, Brooklyn
- Biography of Chaim Potok
- Interview with Director and Adaptor
- Production Designs
- Vocabulary

Section II: Judaism
- Jewish Tradition and Culture
  - Orthodoxy
  - Zionism
- The Founding of Israel
- State of Israel Timeline
- Current Events

Section III: Themes and Images
- Old and New
- Friendship

Section IV: For Your Classroom
- Lesson Plans
Study Guide Contributors

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Section I

The Chosen
The Play

Summary of the Play
page 5

Character Breakdown
page 6

Williamsburg, Brooklyn
page 8

Biography of Chaim Potok
page 10

Interview with Director and Adaptor
page 12

Production Designs
page 14

Vocabulary
page 16
“For the first sixteen years of our lives, Danny Saunders and I lived within five blocks of each other and never knew of the other’s existence. If it hadn’t been for this new league, we probably never would have. You see, the Hasidic yeshiva that Danny attended organized a team too, and one warm Sunday in June they showed up in our school yard for a game.”

Reuven Malter
Summary of the Play

*The Chosen* begins as the adult Reuven Malter tells the story of a baseball game he played in 1944 as a teenager in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. The game is a tense fight between Reuven's liberal *yeshiva* and Danny Saundert's *Hasidic* school. When Danny comes to bat, he hits Reuven in the eye with the ball, sending him to the hospital.

While Reuven is in the hospital, Danny comes to apologize. Although Reuven has never known anyone from the Hasidic community, the boys quickly become friends.

Danny's father, Reb Saunders, is the leader of his Hasidic congregation, and Danny is expected to take over for his father one day. But Danny has been secretly going to the public library every afternoon, where Reuven's father, David Malter, has been recommending secular books for him to read. Danny devours the books and rapidly realizes that he will never be happy in the closed world of Hasidism.

As the boys get to know each other, Reuven learns that Danny's father is raising him in silence. They never speak except to discuss *Talmud*. After Reb Saunders meets and approves of Reuven, he begins to use him as a means to communicate with Danny.

After World War II ends, David Malter becomes an avid *Zionist* and speaks at a pro-*Zionist* rally. Because Reb Saunders believes that the establishment of Israel is forbidden by the *Torah*, Danny is no longer allowed to associate with Reuven.

During this period of separation, both boys struggle to reconcile their desires for the future with their fathers' expectations. Danny wants to transfer to a secular university, but to do so would mean telling his father that he will not be the *tzaddik* for their community. Reuven's father has always pushed his son to study mathematics and become a professor, but Reuven tells him at last that he will become a *rabbi* instead.

After a recent graduate of the boys' college is killed fighting in Israel, the school and the Jewish community come together in support of the new nation. Danny is allowed to see Reuven again. Reb Saunders asks Reuven to come to his house during Passover to study *Talmud* with him and Danny, as they used to do. Through Reuven, Reb Saunders tells Danny that he knows he wants to leave their closed community and become a psychologist. Although he is disappointed that his son will not follow in his footsteps, he gives Danny his blessing.
Character Breakdown

**Reuven Malter**

*In the play, Reuven appears as a teenager and as an adult.*

16 year-old Reuven pitches for his school's baseball team and is interested in mathematics. His father would like him to become a professor, but Reuven wants to be a **rabbi**.

The adult Reuven is the narrator of the play. He is a rabbi in his thirties.

**Danny Saunders**

A 16 year-old Hasidic boy with a brilliant mind. He is expected to succeed his father as the leader or their community, but he wants to be a psychologist instead.

**Reb Saunders**

Danny’s father. A **tzaddik**, or holy man, who leads a group of Hasidic Jews from Russia. His family has led the community for generations.

**In the play, the actor playing the adult Reuven plays other characters.**

**Dr. Nathan Appleman** - Danny’s Psychology professor at Hirsch College.

**Mr. Galanter** - The baseball coach at Reuven’s school.

**Jack Rose** - A secular Jew and friend of David Malter.

**David Malter**

Reuven’s father is a teacher and a scholar of **Talmud**. He takes a modern approach to Talmudic scholarship.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Danny Saunders</th>
<th>Reuven Malter</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>At Bat</strong></td>
<td><strong>Now Pitching</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Danny Saunders</strong></td>
<td><strong>Reuven Malter</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Danny Saunders** is raised in a **Hasidic community**.

**Danny's** father is a **tzaddik**, and **Danny** is expected to succeed him.

As a Hasidic Jew **Danny** is expected to focus his studies only on the **Torah** and **Talmud**.

**Danny** attends a Hasidic **yeshiva** that his father founded.

**Danny** dresses in traditional Hasidic clothing and keeps his **payos** long.

**Danny's** father believes that the Jewish people must not create the state of Israel until the return of the Messiah.

**Reuven Malter** is raised as an **Modern Orthodox Jew**.

**Reuven's** father is a professor. He hopes that **Reuven** will become a professor.

**Reuven** is encouraged to pursue outside studies, including history, mathematics, and philosophy.

**Reuven** attends a more liberal yeshiva where his father teaches.

**Reuven** dresses in modern clothing.

**Reuven's** father believes that in the wake of the Holocaust, it is time to establish a Jewish homeland in Israel. He is an avid **Zionist**.
"Long ago, in The Chosen, I set out to draw a map of a New York world through which I once journeyed. It was to be a map not only of broken streets, menacing alleys, concrete-surfaced backyards, neighborhood schools and stores... a map not only of the physical elements of my early life, but of the spiritual ones as well."

Chaim Potok

Reuven and Danny grow up within five blocks of each other in the Williamsburg neighborhood of Brooklyn, New York during the 1940s. The boys' lives center on the blocks near Lee Avenue, where the population was primarily Jewish immigrants from Poland and Russia.

The first synagogues in Williamsburg were built in the nineteenth century, but the Jewish population did not become large until 1903, when the completion of the Williamsburg Bridge linked the neighborhood to Manhattan's Lower East Side. Prior to the opening of the bridge, most of Williamsburg's residents were second and third generation German and Irish immigrants, but the bridge brought many poor and working class Jews, drawn to the neighborhood's low rents. The influx was so notable that the bridge was often referred to as "The Jews' Highway"; the newcomers soon dominated the neighborhood. After World War II, the Hasidic population of Williamsburg grew abruptly as survivors of the Holocaust came to the United States seeking a place to rebuild their decimated communities. Today, most of the Hasidim in the U.S. live in Brooklyn.

Walking through Williamsburg today, you can see many signs of the Hasidic community. There are men in hats and dark suits speaking Yiddish on the street and dishes on the counters at shops to allow merchants and customers to exchange money without touching hands -- Hasidic Jews do not touch people of the opposite sex except for their spouses. There are many adaptations in the neighborhood to accommodate the restrictions of Shabbat. The Torah forbids carrying objects outside the home on Shabbat, so many of
the buildings in the area have combination locks so that observant Jews can come and go without keys. Some areas are enclosed by an eiruv, a symbolic fence which extends the area of "home" so that carrying is permitted. Some tall buildings have "Shabbas elevators" which stop automatically at all floors on Saturday.

Williamsburg has always been an ethnically mixed area, and the various groups living there have often clashed. Until recently, the major tension has been between Hasidic Jews, who are the majority of the population, and immigrants from Latin America. In recent years, however, many artists and "hipsters" have begun moving to Williamsburg, attracted by its low rents and proximity to Manhattan. A vibrant art scene is flourishing in the neighborhood, with new galleries, restaurants, and shops. Because these newcomers tend to have more money than the established residents, rents have been climbing, an issue of especial concern to the Hasidim, whose closed community tends to keep them earning little money and who often have large families. Since Hasidim must be able to walk to their shuls on Shabbat, they cannot move to another, cheaper neighborhood unless the entire congregation goes as a group. In January 2004, a small rally was held in Williamsburg to protest the influx of new residents, and organizers distributed a printed prayer entitled "For the Protection of Our City of Williamsburg From the Plague of the Artists".
Chaim Potok was born in the Bronx in 1929. His given name was Herman Harold Potok, but he was customarily known by his Hebrew name, Chaim, which means "life". Like Reuven Malter, Potok was born into an Orthodox community, and his early life revolved around his yeshiva and Talmudic study.

Young Potok loved to draw and paint, but his interest in art was frowned upon by his parents. In their view, art was a waste of time and forbidden by the Second Commandment, which prohibits "graven images". He became instead a voracious reader of secular literature. Like Danny Saunders, he spent much of his teenage years reading in secret at the public library. He studied the craft of novel writing by treating Hemingway's works as he would the Talmud, picking apart each word and phrase as he rode the bus to Yeshiva University in Manhattan.

When he graduated from college, he realized that the time had come to break from the Orthodox traditions which he found increasingly oppressive. He enrolled at a seminary of Conservative Judaism to learn a non-fundamentalist reading of Jewish tradition.

The break was not easy. Leaving the sect seemed to his family and friends as extreme as leaving Judaism altogether. Thirty years later, Potok recalled his departure: "I had to rebuild my world literally from zero. And to this day there are people from the old world who won't speak to me."

Potok was ordained as a Conservative rabbi, served as an Army chaplain in Korea, and later earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy.
The Chosen was published in 1967, Potok's first book and the first novel to introduce the insular Hasidic world to mainstream America. He said later, "I thought 500 people might be interested in reading this story about two Jewish kids". The Chosen spent more than six months on the New York Times best-seller list and was a finalist for the National Book Award. It was made into a movie in 1981, a musical in 1988, and a play in 1999.

Potok went on to write many other successful novels and short stories, including a sequel to The Chosen, The Promise (1972), My Name Is Asher Lev (1972), and Davita's Harp (1985). Most well known among his non-fiction writing is Wanderings (1978), a history of the Jewish people and how Judaism changed as it encountered other cultures.

Potok worked as a university professor and an editor of various Jewish publications until his death in 2002.

Other Works by Chaim Potok

Novels and Novellas:
The Chosen, 1967
The Promise, 1969
My Name is Asher Lev, 1972
In The Beginning, 1975
The Book of Lights, 1981
Davita's Harp, 1985
The Gift of Asher Lev, 1990
I Am the Clay, 1992
Old Men at Midnight
(3 novellas), 2001

Nonfiction:
Wanderings: Chaim Potok’s History of the Jews, 1978
Tobiasse: Artist in Exile, 1986
The Gates of November, 1996

Potok also published short stories and many essays and articles.
Ed Sobel: What inspired you to adapt The Chosen?

Aaron Posner: Basically I was interested in doing something with Jewish themes because that was something I was interested in exploring for myself. I'd met Chaim because he had been coming to the Arden Theatre in Philadelphia [where Mr. Posner is Resident Director], and I had actually run into him in Chicago. A couple of weeks later, I decided to call him up and ask for advice on what Jewish works he thought might make good adaptations. I thought I should reread some of Potok's books before I talked to him, and I started with The Chosen which I had read in high school, but all I really remembered was the baseball game. I re-read it and thought, "Oh my God, I don't need to look any further, this is amazing". It appealed to me on a lot of personal levels, so I read it a couple of times. I thought, "This is good, but it's all over the place so I'm not sure how I would do it". Then I realized this was a story of two fathers and two sons and everything else could go.

ES: What was your process of collaboration with the book's author, Chaim Potok?

AP: I called Chaim and presented him with my idea for the adaptation and told him that I would like his help with it. He was in a great place to collaborate because he had done a couple of scripts on his own. He appreciated how hard adaptation is. He liked my idea, so I got his permission and started in on the script. I basically did the lion's share of the adaptation, but then he read drafts and wrote scenes. I would send him requests if I needed help with a scene if there was something I couldn't write or wanted his perspective on. And that's sort of how it went.

ES: Let's talk about the adaptation. One of your inventions is to have the adult Reuven as the narrator....

AP: Well, it is and it isn't. The adult Reuven really is the narrative voice of the novel. Chaim was in his mid-thirties when he was writing the book, which is the age I suggest that the narrator should be. I thought that sensibility, the perspective of the adult looking back (but not looking way, way back) was sort of implicit in the structure of the book. It felt like a logical way of getting at the story.

ES: In other words, rather than deciding to strictly dramatize the events, you felt it was important to maintain an external narrative voice.

AP: Yes. It was a helpful device to allow the piece to be played with only four other actors, because the narrator can play the other roles that are necessary.
It was a way of keeping the focus on the dynamics between the two fathers and the two sons. Plus, there is a sort of plainness and straight forward honesty to Chaim's narrative, and his prose in general, that I thought was captured in the single narrator.

**ES:** I'm particularly impressed by the way you were able to capture the whole world of the book: the sense of place in the Jewish communities and the atmosphere of the 1940s. It seems you were able to translate much of the authenticity of the experience of the novel, but did you do any additional research?

**AP:** The bulk of my research consisted of a number of long and delightful conversations with Chaim and Adena [Potok’s wife]. I would ask the most naïve questions I could. Sometimes they would answer with this delightful sense of exasperation, "How could you not know this?" -- but they went pretty far into detail. They invited some of their Yiddish-speaking friends over as well. The great thing about being able to assemble a group of people and ask them questions is that they will inevitably disagree about almost everything. This was very helpful for me in the process.

**ES:** How do you see this story being universal enough to communicate something important to audiences as diverse as those in Philadelphia, Pittsburgh, Seattle and now to high schoolers in Chicago?

**AP:** Chaim was deeply proud of the letters he received from a young girl in the Philippines and young gay man in London, or from non-Jews, particularly, who in someway felt that this story was autobiographical to them. They also felt in some way separated from the world they grew up in.

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"I think this makes a wonderful story for high school students. I like putting the idea in front of them - kids that disobey their fathers to sneak off to the library, who read against the rules because they care so much to learn. It is important to that have out there.

Hopefully the more vigorous and hard-edged that can be, will really get through to people."

Aaron Posner
Production Design

The four designers for *The Chosen* -- Keith Pitts (Set), Rachel Healy (Costumes), Michelle Habeck (Lighting), and Michael Kraskin (Sound) -- will collaborate with director Edward Sobel to create the world of the play on stage.

Costume Design

Costume Designer Rachel Healy made these pencil renderings of her costume ideas for Reb Saunders and Reuven Malter.

The two drawings of Reuven show how his costume could change during the play.

Reb Saunders is shown as though giving a sermon at his shul. On his shoulders is the prayer shawl Jewish men wear during morning synagogue services.

Renderings

Since designs are usually not finished until shortly before a show opens, Set, Costume, and Lighting Designers often create renderings - drawings, paintings, or computer-generated images -- to show their ideas for the show to the director, actors, and the production crew which will help build and realize the design. Renderings allow a director to see the designer’s plan for the show and to request adjustments while there is still time to make changes.
**Set Design**

*The Chosen* will be on stage in Steppenwolf’s Downstairs Theatre from October 12th-30th. Performances will take place in the morning, but there will be a different show on the same stage at night: *The Dresser*.

The *Dresser* set cannot be removed from the stage every day, so the designer for *The Chosen*, Keith Pitts, will adapt the set to a different play’s setting.

![A model of the set of *The Dresser*, designed by Santo Loquasto. Like a rendering, a model shows the Set Designer's ideas before the set is built.](image)

**Sound Design**

*Sound Designer Michael Kraskin shares his thoughts on his design for The Chosen:*

Music has played a large part in both the religious and daily lives of Jews throughout history. Like music from all over the world, Jewish music ranges from the extremely serious, heard in prayers such as "Mi Chamocha," to jovial and rhythmic dance tunes such as the popular wedding song "Hava Nagilla." And like music from other cultures, Jewish music helps to maintain a sense of community and connection for Jews living in diaspora throughout all nations.

The job of a sound designer is to create an acoustic environment to help define the reality and tell the story of the play. Throughout *The Chosen*, the characters learn much about themselves and their world by exploring what differences exist between them. But as they move from scene to scene, music will carry them on their journey and serve as a living reminder of what they have in common and the world they share.
### Vocabulary

**Apikorsim**: Jews who have been educated in the faith but deny its basic tenets.

**Eretz Yisroel**: [Hebrew] Literally, the Land of Israel. A special term for the area which Jews believe God promised them in the Torah.

**Gematriya**: A discipline of Jewish mysticism devoted to finding hidden meanings of words through numerology. Each Hebrew letter is given a numerical value, and the values of the letters in words or phrases are added and compared to discover meaningful relationships.

**Goyim** [Yiddish]: Non-Jews.

**Goyishkeit** [Yiddish]: Non Jewish culture and ideas.

**Haganah**: A militia founded in Palestine in the 1920’s to protect Jewish settlers from attack by Arab Palestinians. At various times, Haganah cooperated with the British Army (which controlled Palestine prior to the formation of Israel), but the group did help Jews illegally immigrate during the 1930s. After 1948, Haganah was transformed into the Israel Defense Forces (IDF), the Israeli army.

**Hasidism**: An Ultra-Orthodox denomination, founded in Europe in the 18th century. Hasidism places greater emphasis on ecstatic worship and spirituality than on the Talmudic scholarship of Orthodoxy.

**Irgun**: A Zionist rebel group, also known as Etzel. Irgun was considered a terrorist organization by some governments, but Israelis regarded Irgun members as freedom fighters. Irgun was secretly supported by the Polish government, which hoped that the establishment of a Jewish state would encourage Poland's poor Jews to emigrate.

**Kosher**: Ceremonially clean according to Jewish law. Usually refers to food, but can be used more broadly.

**Macher** [Yiddish]: An important person; a big shot.

**Meshugunah** [Yiddish]: Crazy.

**Payos**: Earlocks or sidecurls. Many strictly observant Jewish men wear their earlocks long in accordance with a passage in the Torah.

**Rabbi**: Literally, a teacher. A rabbi is a scholar and an expert in Jewish law. Rabbis frequently serve as spiritual leaders of their congregation, but (unlike in many other faiths) any man in the congregation can perform the same sacred rituals as the rabbi.
**Zionism**: A political movement founded in the 19th century, dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state in Israel.

**Shabbat** or **Shabbas**: A day of rest and contemplation; the holy day of the Jewish week, commemorating God's day of rest after creating the world in six days. Shabbat lasts from sundown on Friday night until sundown on Saturday. Orthodox Jews believe that no work should be done on Shabbat, including driving, preparing food to be cooked, or lighting a fire or stove.

**Shul**: A common term for an Orthodox synagogue. Literally, a school.

**Synagogue**: A Jewish house of worship.

**Talmud**: The book of Jewish law and commentaries on the Torah by learned rabbis.

**Torah**: The word Torah can refer to the entire Jewish Bible (known to Christians as the Old Testament) or to only its first five books, given to Moses by God.

**Tzaddik**: A righteous man, often considered to possess spiritual or mystical power. Not all tzaddiks are rabbis, but the leading rabbi of a Hasidic community is regarded as a tzaddik.

**Tzitzit**: The fringes of the tallit, a shawl that Orthodox and Hasidic men and boys wear beneath their clothes. The fringes extend beyond the edges of the outer garments in order to remind the wearer of the commandments.

**Yeshiva**: A school where students study sacred texts, particularly the Talmud.

**Yeshiva Bocher**: [Yiddish] A student at a Talmudic academy.

**Zionism**: A political movement founded in the 19th century, dedicated to the creation of a Jewish state in Israel.

**The Zohar**: A mystical commentary on the Torah.
"We do not live forever. We live less than the time it takes to blink an eye.

So then why do we live? What value is there to our life if it is nothing more than the blink of an eye?

The blink of an eye is nothing. But the eye that blinks, now that just might be something. The span of a life is nothing, but the man who lives may be something if he fills his life with meaning.

Meaning is not automatically given to life. We must choose. And if we choose to fill out lives with meaning, then perhaps when we die we too will be worthy of rest."

David Malter
Section II

Judaism

Jewish Tradition and Culture
page 20

Orthodoxy
page 24

Zionism
page 26

The Founding of Israel
page 27

State of Israel Timeline
page 28

Current Events - The Security Barrier
page 30
The Jewish people trace their origins back 4,000 years to Abraham, who established the belief that there is only one God. Abraham, his son Isaac, and grandson Jacob are referred to as the Patriarchs of Israel. The Jewish people believe they have been chosen to be in a unique covenant with God and to be a “light unto the nations.”

Judaism is both a religion and an ethnicity - in the Torah, the Jewish People are referred to as a Nation. The sense of this word does not mean a political or territorial entity, but rather a group of people who share a common history, a common destiny, and a sense that they are all connected to one another.

**Orthodox Judaism** formed as a reaction to the development of Reform Judaism during the Enlightenment Period. Orthodox Jews follow the commandments of the Torah strictly.

**Conservative Judaism** developed in the early 20th century. It embraces modern culture while adhering to traditional Jewish law and custom.

**Modern Orthodox Judaism** came about in the mid-19th century. It attempts to adapt the ideas of Orthodox Judaism to the surrounding modern world.

**Hasidism** is a branch of Orthodox Judaism that was developed in Poland in the late 18th century. Today the Hasidism is the strictest Jewish denomination.

**Reconstructionist Judaism** developed in the United States in the 1920's. It retains the traditional culture of Judaism while allowing its theology to reflect changing ideas of the world.

**Reform Judaism** came out of the Enlightenment period of the 18th century. Reform Judaism is a liberal denomination and is the largest in the United States.
The Torah

The word Torah means “a teaching” or “law.” God gave the Torah to Moses at Mt. Sinai after the exodus from Egypt. It can refer to the whole of Jewish law and teachings, known as The Written Torah or Tanakh, or to just the first five books, known as the Pentateuch (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). These are also the first five books of the Christian Bible. They chronicle the history of the Hebrews and contain the commandments that Jews must follow. The Written Torah also contains prophecy and later Jewish history.

The Talmud

The Talmud is known as the "Oral Torah." God taught the Oral Torah to Moses, and it was passed down through the generations. For centuries rabbis resisted recording the Oral Torah, because they believed that teaching the law orally would help to maintain Jewish tradition. The Great Revolt in 66 CE and the Bar Kokhba Revolt in 132 CE resulted in the death of over a million Jews and the destruction of the leading yeshiva. Rabbi Judah haNasi felt that with the decline in knowledgeable Jews, the Oral Torah must be written down. In the second century, the oral law was compiled and written down by learned rabbis.

The writing of the Talmud was completed in the fifth century. It contains the Misnah (The Laws) followed by the Gemara (The Commentaries). The Talmud also includes ethical guidance, medical advice, historical information, and Jewish folklore.

Observant Jews often take the practice of studying a page of Talmud every day. Among Orthodox Jews, Talmudic scholars are regarded with awe and respect.

"The Talmud was at the very center of all Jewish education, and, by tradition, virtuosity in the study of Talmud was considered the only true test of intellectual brilliance." - Reuven Malter
Hebrew

Hebrew is the ancient Canaanite language of the Jewish people. For 2,500 years it was mostly used for study of the Torah, ceremony, and prayer. With the creation of the state of Israel in the 20th century, it was revived as a spoken language. Today, along with Arabic, it is one of the two official languages of Israel.

The Hebrew alphabet is different from the English alphabet. It is written from right to left and has no vowels. There are different styles of writing Hebrew. For sacred texts, such as the Torah, there is a special style called Stam’m. In this style there are splayed marks on each letter called crowns.

Yiddish

Yiddish was the primary language spoken by Eastern European Jews for a nearly thousand years. It began as a Germanic dialect and developed into a language that incorporated Hebrew, Aramaic, Slavic languages, and Romance languages. Yiddish is written in a slightly different version of the Hebrew alphabet. Because Hebrew was regarded as a more pure language, the use of Yiddish began to decline in the 18th century. By the mid-20th century, Yiddish was no longer a widely spoken language. Today the Yiddish language is still used among some Jewish groups, mainly Hasidic Jews.

Gematria

Gematria, a practice in Jewish mysticism, is a system of associating numbers with Hebrew letters. Each letter of an alphabet corresponds to a number. Numerical values of words are totaled up and compared with other words to discover hidden truths and meanings.

“The words eylom hazeh, ‘this world’, add up to 163, and the words eylom habo, ‘the world to come’, come out to 154. The difference between this world and the world to come is nine.

Nine is half of 18. Eighteen is chai, ‘life’.

In this world, there is only half of chai.

We are only half alive in this world.”

Reb Saunders
Holy Days

Shabbat
Shabbat, the Sabbath, lasts from sundown on Friday until stars are visible on Saturday. It is the holy day of the week, a time for rest and contemplation. On Shabbat, Jews remember the creation of the world and their deliverance from slavery in Egypt. They observe Shabbat by resting from any effort which exerts control over the physical world, including writing, carrying objects outside of the home, turning electrical devices on or off, and driving. Any Shabbat restriction may be broken in order to save a life. Although more liberal Jews may not obey all Shabbat restrictions, many still attend services at a synagogue and spend time with family and friends.

Rosh Hashanah
Rosh Hashanah, the Jewish New Year, falls in September or October. It is a time to plan for a better life in the coming year. People often eat apples dipped in honey as a symbol of the sweetness of the new year. Just as on Shabbat, no work is allowed, and much of the day is spent in synagogue.

Yom Kippur
Ten days after Rosh Hashanah is Yom Kippur, the Day of Atonement. These two days are the most important of the year, and together they are known as the High Holy Days. Yom Kippur is a day of repentance for sins between man and God. Much of Yom Kippur is spent in synagogue; it is a day of fasting and prayer.

Sukkot
The autumn festival of Sukkot, which begins five days after Yom Kippur, celebrates the harvest and also commemorates the time the Israelites spent in the desert after leaving Egypt. During that time they lived in temporary huts, so during Sukkot Jews build, decorate, and dwell in Sukkahs, small outdoor booths made of branches.

Hanukkah
The 8 days of Hanukkah, the Festival of Lights, commemorate the rededication of the Temple after the Jews revolted against the Greeks who ruled Judea. Although they had only enough oil to burn the temple lamps for one day, the lamps burned for 8 days. To celebrate the miracle, candles are lit each night and it is traditional to eat food fried in oil. Hanukkah is not a major holiday, but it is familiar to non-Jews because it occurs near Christmas.

Purim
Purim, the most joyous holiday of the year, usually falls in March. It celebrates Queen Esther and her cousin Mordechai, who saved the Jewish people from extermination in Persia. Traditionally, carnivals are organized and plays are presented.

Passover
The 8 days of Passover commemorate the Jews’ exodus from Egypt; it is sometimes called “The Time of Our Freedom”. When Pharaoh refused to free the Jewish slaves and God sent the Plague of the Firstborn, the houses of the Jews were “passed over” while the Egyptian firstborn were killed. On the first night of Passover, families share a Seder dinner, a meal filled with rituals to recall the significance of the holiday. Symbolic foods are eaten, and the story of Exodus is retold. Throughout the holiday, Jews eat unleavened matzohs rather than risen bread as a reminder of the haste of the exodus. Passover is usually in April or early May.
Modern Orthodoxy developed in the mid 18th century. It was a compromise between the Ultra-Orthodox movement and the liberal Reform movement. Rabbi Samson Raphael Hirsch led the movement. He wanted to reconcile traditional Judaism with the modern world.

Modern Orthodox Jews hold fast to traditional beliefs, but live by a more relaxed standard of Jewish laws and customs. They take the values of Orthodoxy and adapt them to modern social realities. Orthodoxy requires a strict adherence to Jewish law and practice, yet at the same time it encourages secular studies, including history and philosophy. Modern Orthodox Jews believe that this combination can be intellectually profitable.

Orthodox Judaism

In The Chosen, characters belong to the Modern Orthodox and Hasidic branches of Judaism.

The idea of “Orthodox” Judaism did not exist until the beginning of the 18th century. This was the time of the Enlightenment, a period characterized by new ideas in intellectual thought. In reaction to the liberal Reform movement and in response to the challenge of modernism, Orthodox Judaism was born. It grew out of a need for a return to Jewish roots and for a commitment to strict observance within the Jewish faith.

Orthodox Judaism is characterized by a firm adherence to Jewish Law (halaka) and Jewish theology. To Orthodox Jews, Jewish law, given to Moses at Mt. Sinai and handed down through the generations, represents the direct will of God. Orthodox Jews believe this law will never change. Orthodoxy considers itself the only true heir to the Jewish tradition and considers all other movements heretical.

Orthodoxy, the least united and most diverse of all Judaic movements, is composed of many different groups with intersecting beliefs and practices. Two major branches of Orthodoxy -- and the two discussed in The Chosen -- are Modern Orthodoxy and Hasidism.
Hasidism is a branch of Orthodoxy that developed in 18th century, Poland, in response to the spiritual void felt by many observant Jews of the day. At that time the Talmudic study of Orthodoxy had become removed from the daily lives of the people. Led by Rabbi Israel ben Eliezer, Hasidism stressed the importance of religious enthusiasm and devotion.

One of the most important characteristics of the movement is the leadership role of the tzaddik. This is a charismatic leader around whom a Hasidic group gathers. The tzaddik serves as an intermediary between his followers and God. Leadership is usually passed from father to son.

Today Hasidic Jews have become the most ardent defenders of tradition in Jewish law and custom. They differ from other Orthodox Jews in their devotion to a dynastic leader, their distinctive clothing, and their intense study of Torah. Today there are about a dozen major Hasidic movements; the most well known is Chabad-Lubavitch. The main centers of Hasidism are in the United States and Israel. Most American Hasidim live in Brooklyn, New York.

“There were three or four Hasidic courts in Williamsburg, each with their own synagogue, customs, and fierce loyalties. They could be seen on the streets or behind shop counters, wearing their traditional garments of black and white, full beards, long earlocks (or payos), eking out meager livelihoods and dreaming of Shabbat.”

Reuven Malter
Zionism is a movement to create a national homeland for the Jewish people. The desire to return to the ancestral homeland is a cornerstone of the Jewish religion. The modern Zionist movement calls for a political state on the historical land of the Kingdom of Israel. The Zionist movement has caused much religious and political controversy throughout the world.

Religious Controversy - In principle, the movement to reunite the Jewish people in their homeland is based on religious belief. Many Jewish prayers and writing speak of Jerusalem, Zion, and the Land of Israel; Jewish customs, language, and calendar are based in the holy land. Many believe a return to this land would not only bring freedom from persecution, it would strengthen the religion as more people would follow the commandments of the Torah. But while religious Zionist Jews view the State of Israel as the beginning of redemption, other, primarily certain Hasidic sects, see the establishment of political Israel as an abomination. They believe the Messiah will come to lead them to Israel and that Zionism's refusal to wait violates the Torah's commandments. They view the present state of Israel as blasphemous.

Political Controversy - Although Zionist ideology is based in religious tradition, the effort to create modern Jewish state has led into political controversy. Many secular Jews, who do not follow the Torah, support the political action of the Zionist movement. Other Jews protest the nation's policies, particularly the treatment of Palestinians.
In 1897, Jewish leaders formally organized The World Zionist Organization in reaction to the rising anti-Semitism in Europe and throughout the world. President Theodor Herzl was elected and believed the Jewish problem needed to be addressed with international political action. The aim of Zionism was stated officially as "a secure haven, under public law, for the Jewish people, in the land of Israel."

World War II and the tragedy of the Holocaust brought the need for a Jewish homeland into sharp focus for both the Jewish people and the rest of the world. In America, strong holds of the movement were found in New York, Boston, and Chicago. During the 1940s, there were rallies and conferences held in these cities.

In 1947 the British, who controlled the disputed land of Palestine, handed the problem of creating a Jewish Nation to the newly founded United Nations. The solution that was created was a partition plan, dividing Palestine into Jewish and Arab portions. When British troops pulled out of Palestine in 1948, the Jewish people declared Israel an independent state. The new nation was promptly recognized by several Western countries. Today approximately five million Jews, more than one third of the world's entire Jewish population, live in Israel.
1910s

1917: British Foreign Minister Arthur Balfour writes a letter to leading Zionist Lord Rothschild in support of “the establishment in Palestine of a nation home for the Jewish people.” This becomes known as the Balfour Declaration.

1918: World War I ends.

1920s

1920s: Hundreds of thousands of Jews immigrate to British-controled Palestine creating great unrest.

1929: In August one hundred and thirty-three Jews are killed by Palestinians and one hundred and ten Palestinians are killed by British police.

1930s

1936: Palestinian political and religious groups come together and organize a strike against the British rule. This is the start of the Palestinian rebellion whose aim is liberation of Palestine and Transjordan (modern-day Jordan) by force.

1950s

1950: Israel grants citizenship to every Jew requesting it.

1956: Israelis and Arabs begin a second major war, known as the Sinai Campaign. Convinced that Egypt is preparing for war, Israel invades and occupies the Sinai Peninsula and Gaza Strip.

1959: In secret, Yasser Arafat co-founds Patah, a Palestinian liberation movement.

1960s

1964: Neighboring Arab governments, wanting to create a Palestinian organization that would remain under their control, create the Palestine Liberation Organization or PLO.

1967: Six Day War -- Israel's land is doubled. The victory brings previously unknown confidence and optimism to Israel and its supporters. The conflict displaces 500,000 Palestinians.

1980s

1982: Operation “Peace for Galilee” intends to wipe out Palestinian guerrilla bases near Israel's northern border, although it pushes further. Hundreds of Palestinians are killed in refugee camps.

1987: First Palestinian Intifada, a mass uprising against the Israeli occupation, begins. Protests take the form of civil disobedience, general strikes, boycotts on Israeli products, graffiti, and barricades, but stone-throwing demonstrations against the heavily-armed occupation troops capture international attention.

1988: The PLO votes to accept a two-state peace solution suggested by the UN in 1947. Israel, viewing the PLO as a terrorist organization, will not negotiate.

1990s

1993: The Oslo Accords. Palestinians agree to recognize Israel in return for the beginning of phased dismantling of Israel's occupation.

1994: Israel and the PLO reach an agreement based on the Oslo Accords. Suicide bombings and other violence continues.

Rabin, Peres and Arafat are awarded the Nobel Peace Prize for concluding the Oslo Accords and following up on the agreements.
### 1930s-1940s

**1939-45**: Six million Jews are killed in the Holocaust during World War II.

**1947**: Britain, which ruled Palestine since 1920, hands over responsibility for solving the Zionist-Arab problem to the UN. The area is in constant unrest with fighting between native Arabs and Jewish immigrants, many of whom are fleeing Nazi persecution. A UN special committee recommends that the territory be split into separate Jewish and Palestinian states; the proposal fails.

**1948**: The State of Israel, the first Jewish state in nearly 2,000 years, is proclaimed on May 14th in Tel Aviv. The declaration comes into effect the following day as the last British troops withdrew. Palestinians remember May 15th, when the last British troops departed as "al-Nakba", or the Catastrophe. That day five Arab countries invade Israel starting the War of Independence.

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### 1940s

**1940s**

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### 1970s

**1972**: A series of attacks on Israelis and other targets by the PLO under the leadership of Yasser Arafat. Eleven Israeli athletes are killed at the Munich Olympics.

**1973**: The Yom Kippur War or Ramadan War. Unable to regain through diplomatic means the territory lost in 1967, Egypt and Syria launch major offensives against Israel. Israel is left more dependent on the US for military, diplomatic, and economic support.

**1974**: After Arafat speaks at the UN, the Palestinian cause gains international recognition.

**"Today I have come bearing an olive branch and a freedom fighter's gun. Do not let the olive branch fall from my hand."**

**1979**: A peace treaty is signed by Egyptian President Anwar Sadat and Israeli Prime Minister Menachem Begin. Sadat stuns the world by flying to the Jewish state and making a speech to the Israeli parliament in Jerusalem. Arab states boycott Egypt for breaking ranks and negotiating a separate treaty with Israel. Subsequently, Sadat is assassinated by Arab extremists.

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### 2000s

**2000**: Jewish political leader Ariel Sharon visits the al-Aqsa monument in Jerusalem, leading Palestinians to demonstrate, eventually creating general uprising known as the Second Intifada. Unable stop the continuing violence, Barak resigns.

**2001**: Ariel Sharon is elected Prime Minister. The death toll soars as policies such as assassinating Palestinian militants, air strikes, and incursions into Palestinian self-rule areas are intensified. Palestinian militants, meanwhile, step up suicide bomb attacks.

**2002**: The Arab league adopts a proposal calling for Israeli recognition of the Palestinian state in exchange for normal relations with Arab countries. A series of suicide bombings prompts Israeli forces to seek out Yasser Arafat, who becomes trapped in his Ramallah compound.

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### 1990s

**1995**: The signing of Oslo II agreement. The West Bank is split into three areas controlled by Israelis and Palestinians. Palestinians are not happy, and Israel's religious right is furious at the "surrender of Jewish land." Rabin is assassinated by a fanatic Jewish nationalist.

**1996**: Conflict returns with a series of devastating suicide bombings.

**1999**: Ehud Barak, who pledges to "end the 100-year conflict" between Israel and the Arabs within one year, wins the Israeli election.

**2000**: The Arab league adopts a proposal calling for Israeli recognition of the Palestinian state in exchange for normal relations with Arab countries. A series of suicide bombings prompts Israeli forces to seek out Yasser Arafat, who becomes trapped in his Ramallah compound.
In 2002, the Israeli government decided to build a barrier dividing Israeli and Palestinian territories. Israel describes the barrier as a necessary response to the terrorist attacks of the Second Intifada; Palestinians claim that the wall intrudes into their land and is an attempt to cut them off from their resources and jobs while annexing their land to accommodate Jewish settlements.

The barrier -- known as a "fence" to Israelis and a "wall" to Palestinians -- is 440 miles long. For most of that length, the barrier is a concrete base with 16-foot mesh and wire superstructure, although some parts are 26-foot solid concrete "sniper walls." Razor wire and a trench flank the structure, which it is fitted with electronic sensors.

The nations and individuals who object to the wall do so because Israel has encroached on Palestinian land to build it. Its path does not follow Israel's pre-1967 boundary, and hundreds of Palestinians have been separated from their means of economic survival, whether because their farmland or water sources are inaccessible or because they depend on jobs on the Israeli side. Perhaps the most significant objection is that the barrier creates a de facto boundary; many fear that it is a first step towards limiting the Palestinians to a fraction of their current territory.

The Israeli government contends that the fence is purely a security measure and can be moved after a negotiated settlement. The suicide bombings and other attacks of the Second Intifada have killed hundreds of Israeli civilians, and the attempts of the Israeli Defense Forces to curb the violence have been largely unsuccessful. In areas where the wall is completed, however, attacks have dropped sharply. Israel says that while any inconvenience to the Palestinians is regrettable, the decrease in violence justifies its actions.

Many international groups, including the International Committee of the Red Cross, have objected to the wall. In July 2004, the International Court of Justice in The Hague issued a non-binding ruling against the barrier. Some earlier rulings have resulted in small changes in the proposed path of the fence. The Israeli Supreme Court is currently considering a challenge to the barrier. The Israeli government, which has dismissed UN objections as "one-sided and biased," says it will abide by any Israeli court ruling.

"Ayloo Ve'ayloo, Both these and those" is the phrase that ends the play and is the central Talmudic battle. It is the possibility for two things to be true at the same time and that contradictions can be reconciled only by acknowledging them as direct contradictions and agreeing to move forward even though it's an impossible thing to reconcile.

"I think about this every time I hear about more damage in the Middle East, and more hatred and more resentment, and it seems more and more impossible. The only possibility is somehow accepting that everybody is wrong and everybody is right and being able to move forward together on those terms, however impossible that might be."

Aaron Posner
Section III

Themes and Images

Old and New
page 32

Friendship
page 33
In *The Chosen*, Chaim Potok explores the tension between traditional customs and ideas of the modern world. Both David Malter and Reb Saunder must decide how to approach the world and what values to pass on to their sons; their views of Zionism further reflect their views of the world. Potok uses the two men's choices to demonstrate different ways to balance old and new ideas.

Reb Saunders sees the outside world as a contaminated place, and to protect Danny, he keeps him within the closed world of Hasidism as much as possible. He sends Danny to a traditional yeshiva, which offers only the minimum number of English courses. He does not allow Danny to see movies, and only grudgingly permits him to read secular books at the library. Reb Saunders treats Israel as he treats Danny: as something both precious and vulnerable to corruption by secular ideas. Because he wants to protect the sanctity of Eretz Yisroel, he opposes the Zionists, who he believes will desecrate the Holy Land with secular ideas.

David Malter has a more liberal view of the world. He sends Reuven to a more modern yeshiva and encourages him to explore and learn all he can. He and Reuven openly discuss the new ideas that Reuven encounters, but they retain their religious traditions and values. David Malter supports the Zionist effort to build the nation of Israel. He believes that after the horror of the Holocaust the time has come to embrace a new idea: the creation of a Jewish homeland even without the Messiah.

All the efforts of Reb Saunders and David Malter cannot guarantee that their sons will follow the paths laid out for them. The open world of America is very different from the Russia they have left. Despite Reb Saunder's efforts, Danny becomes enthralled by the world beyond Hasidism and wants to leave the fold and the tzaddikate to become a psychologist. And no matter David Malter's desire to see Reuven follow him into academia, Reuven has plans of his own, too: he will become a rabbi. Just as the struggles over Zionism abate when the state of Israel becomes a fact rather than an idea, both fathers ultimately accept and bless their sons' decisions.
In *The Chosen*, Chaim Potok explores friendship through Danny Saunders and Reuven Malter. Potok creates a relationship that is built on intense care, loyalty, and support for one another.

Reb Saunders claims that God sent Reuven to Danny when he needed a friend. The friendship they share starts on a baseball field and grows into a relationship that shapes each boy's growing up. In the Talmud, a rabbi says, "I have learned much from my teachers, but from my friends more than my teachers": Danny and Reuven choose each other as friends and teachers. Jewish tradition values friendships strengthened by spiritual debate and intellectual interaction. Danny and Reuven study together and discuss both religion and the world: each challenges and supports the other.

"**A Greek philosopher said that true friends are like two bodies with one soul.**"

*David Malter*

Potok shows us through Danny and Reuven that true friendship demands work and is often challenging. Danny and Reuven come from different backgrounds; their fathers raise them in different settings; each boy has different experiences and views on Judaism and the world.

The differences in opinion and values of the boys’ fathers come to affect their friendship. After Reuven's father speaks at a Zionist rally, Reuven is excommunicated from the Hasidic community and from Danny's life. Reuven says that their friendship was shattered by Zionism. Reuven's father tells him, “a difference of opinion should not be allowed to destroy a friendship.” Eventually Danny reopens the door to their friendship. Potok creates a friendship between Danny and Reuven that will not allow itself to shatter.

"**You think a friend is an easy thing to be? If you are truly his friend you will discover otherwise.**"

*Reb Saunders*
“Words distort, words play tricks, they conceal the heart, the heart speaks through silence.

[My father] taught me that one learns of the pain of others by suffering one’s own pain, by turning inside, by finding one’s own soul.

Of all people, he told me a tzaddik must know of pain. Knowing pain destroys our self-pride, our arrogance, our indifference towards others.”

Reb Saunders
Section IV

For Your Classroom

Lesson Plans
page 36
Lesson Plan by
Resident Artist Kimberly Senior

A word is worth one coin; silence is worth two.

The Talmud

Grade Level: 5th-12th
Concept: Increase understanding and appreciation of Chaim Potok's The Chosen through classroom discussion and activity centered on silence and non-verbal communication

Primary Subject: English
Connection to other Subjects: History, Drama, Psychology

State Goals Addressed:

State Goal 3: Write to communicate for a variety of purposes
State Goal 4: Listen and speak effectively in a variety of situations
State Goal 5: Use the language arts to acquire, assess, and communicate information
State Goal 25: Know the language of the arts
State Goal 26: Through creating and performing, understand how works of art are produced
State Goal 28: Use the target language to communicate within and beyond the classroom setting

General Goals: Using silence as a device, work with students to understand the concept of silence and discover what other tools they have in order to "speak"

Materials: Students will need paper and pen. Teacher needs a variety of objects.

Anticipatory Set: Students free write for 5 minutes from the prompt selected from Chaim Potok's book The Chosen:

"The silence that followed had a strange quality to it: expectation, eagerness, love, awe."

Students should write without lifting their pen off the paper. They should not worry about grammar or spelling and should write as honestly as possible and without censoring themselves.
Step by Step Procedures: Teacher solicits from students some sharing of their free writes. Discuss what are the advantages and disadvantages of speaking. What are other ways we have to communicate? Elicit some personal stories of "silence."

Teacher uses the idea of "series" to work with students on non-verbal communication. Students should organize themselves, without speaking, in any number of the following ways:
- by age/birthday
- by height
- by alphabetical order
- by address
- or any other series the teacher comes up with

Discuss after exercise what made it difficult to complete the tasks without speaking.

After this discussion, ask for a volunteer. Blindfold, loosely, the volunteer and give the volunteer objects one at a time. The volunteer needs to guess what the objects are. Interesting objects to play with are a sponge (wet or dry,) a tennis ball, various fruit, etc. Try this with several students.

Segue into a discussion about relying on different senses when robbed of one. Explain how silence, and not speaking, forces us to communicate in different ways.

Closure: Inform students that in the play they are going to see at Steppenwolf which deals with the question of silence between a father and a son. Assign them to look for these characters and to identify the challenges and benefits in their relationship as a result of this silence.

“You can hear silence, Reuven. It has a quality and a dimension all its own. It talks to me. I feel myself alive in it. It talks. And I can hear it.”

Danny

Silence is good everywhere, except in connection with Torah.

The Zohar
Exploring Friendship

FRONLOAD

Give students context for the day's lesson. Explain to them that the play they are going to see (or just saw) -- The Chosen -- has lots of rich themes and that one of them is friendship. Read them the following lines from the play:

**REB SAUNDERS:** You think a friend is an easy thing to be? If you are truly his friend you will discover otherwise.

***

**MALTER:** The Talmud says that a person should do two things for himself. One is to acquire a teacher. Do you remember the other?

**YOUNG REUVEN:** Choose a friend.

Discuss. Encourage students to contribute interpretations of the lines, ideas, questions, thoughts, associations from their own lives.

LESSON

NOTE: The following is a sequence of activities designed to explore friendship as both a concept and a theme in The Chosen. Individual activities can be pulled from the sequence and done on their own.

**Free Write**

Explain to students that they are going to do some personal writing on the theme of friendship. Brainstorm as a class a title for the free write (i.e., "The Meaning of Friendship," "Being a Friend," "What is a Friend?" "Making a Friend").

Have one student write the selected title on the board. When she/he sits down, the exercise begins.

Tell students to write continuously (without stopping - even for punctuation!) for three minutes on the topic. Encourage them to write in cursive. Let them know that they have the freedom to be abstract, silly, or even strange -involves free-associating. It is not a linear essay. They are to record all the images and words that float across their minds. Assure them that nothing they write will be "wrong."

After they are done writing, have students read over their free writes and circle or underline words/phrases/sentences they find particularly interesting. Ask willing students to read aloud the things they circled or underlined.

**Concept Web Tableau**

_The Master of the Universe sent you to my son when he was ready to rebel. He sent you to listen to my son's words. I knew your soul was good and that you would be a good friend. I knew it that day my Daniel came home and told me he wanted to be your friend. Ah, you should have seen his eyes that day. You should have heard his voice. A thousand times I have thanked the Master of the Universe that he sent you to my son._

Reb Saunders to Young Reuven

In a standing circle. Explain to students that they are going to create a tableau that details the ingredients of a good friendship. Begin by having one student strike a pose in the center of the circle that communicates the idea FRIENDSHIP. Encourage the student to use her/his whole body and to say the word FRIENDSHIP as she/he freezes. Encourage other students to build on to the tableau - adding good friendship ingredients (i.e., trust, loyalty, generosity, listening, laughter) until they deem it complete.
Original Scenes

*A friend is a person with whom I may be sincere. Before him I think aloud.*
Ralph Waldo Emerson

*Friend (n): A person whom one knows, likes, and trusts.*
Merrim-Webster’s Dictionary, 10th edition

Break students into small groups. Give each group a few minutes to select one of the good friendship ingredients and create a scene that illustrates it. For example:

One student delivers a monologue to another about a fight he had with his father. The other student just listens.

Some cool kids make fun of a girl eating by herself in the lunchroom. Another girl, her loyal friend, sits down next to her - even though she knows she'll be branded as "uncool" for doing so.

A student forgets his lunch. His friend, the poorest student in school, generously shares his lunch even though he knows his friend can afford to buy one.

A girl admits to her friend that she made a fool of herself on a date with a really cute guy. She trusts her friend not to make fun of her. Her friend makes her laugh and feel better.

A Scene from the Play

Give several students the opportunity to read aloud the following segment from Scene 4 of *The Chosen* (see pages 40-41). Encourage them to read loudly and clearly and to take the time to make eye contact with each other.

Some Discussion Questions:

What happens in this scene?
What is each character thinking and feeling at the beginning of the scene?
What is each character thinking and feeling at the end of the scene?
What do the characters learn about each other?
What good friendship ingredients are revealed?

Digging Deeper

*Fate chooses your relations, you choose your friends.*
Jacques Delittle (1738-1813), French poet

*Faithful friends are beyond price: No amount can balance their worth.*
Old Testament, Sirach 6:15

Ask students to write down:

Three reasons that their best friend is their best friend.
What they would trade for their best friend's friendship (i.e., a million dollars, a car, their life, their sibling’s life, nothing)
How they think their best friend would respond to the same prompts

Invite students up in groups to write some of their answers on the board. *(Note: This is voluntary.)* Discuss.

REFLECTION

Give students an opportunity to articulate their learning -- about friendship, the play, themselves.
from scene 4 of *The Chosen*,
adapted by Aaron Posner and Chaim Potok:

Danny, a sixteen year-old Hasidic Jew, visits Reuven, a sixteen year-old Orthodox Jew, in the hospital. Danny almost caused Reuven to be blinded in one eye in a baseball game.

DANNY: I don't understand why I wanted to kill you. *(Beat)* It's really bothering me.
REUVEN: Well, I should hope so.
DANNY: Don't be cute, Malter. I really wanted to kill you.
REUVEN: Why?
DANNY: I don't know. That's what I'm telling you. But I did. Remember right before that last pitch you threw me, I smiled at you?
REUVEN: I remember. Believe me.
DANNY: It was right then. At that moment it just hit me. I wanted to step over the plate and...and just open your head up with the baseball bat.
REUVEN: *(Amazed)* Wha...?
DANNY: And it wasn't your whole team or anything, just you. Like it was just you and me out there, and I just...I just wanted to -- I don't know, to -- get you.
REUVEN: Well, it was a pretty hot game. And I wasn't exactly wild about you, either.
DANNY: I don't think you even know what I'm talking about.
REUVEN: Now wait a minute --
DANNY: It wasn't the game. It was you. You really had me going there, Malter.
YOUNG REUVEN: Quit calling me Malter. You sound like a teacher or something.
DANNY: So what should I call you?
REUVEN: If have to call me anything, call me Reuven.
DANNY: Okay. And call me Danny.
REUVEN: Okay.
DANNY: You know, you're a pretty rough player.
REUVEN: So are you. Why do you always hit like that?
DANNY: Like what?
REUVEN: Straight back at the pitcher.
DANNY: I don't know. I don't try. It just happens that way. Maybe the way I hold the bat. But I've never hurt anyone before. You were supposed to duck.
REUVEN: I had no chance to duck.
DANNY: Sure you did.
REUVEN: There wasn't enough time.
DANNY: There was time for you to bring up your glove.
REUVEN: Yeah, but...(*He is caught, considering this for the first time...*) Huh...
DANNY: (*Putting it to together for the first time*) Maybe you didn't want to duck.
REUVEN: (*Realizing along with him*) Maybe I didn't.
DANNY: (*Still putting it together a piece at a time*) Maybe you didn't want to because I was the one who hit it. Maybe you didn't want to duck any ball that I hit.
REUVEN: Right...
DANNY: You had to stop it.
REUVEN: I think that's right.
DANNY: Like I wanted to "stop" you.
REUVEN: Yeah, I guess so.
DANNY: Well, you stopped it.
REUVEN: Yeah. I stopped it all right. (*Beat*)
DANNY: I better get going. I have school.
REUVEN: Oh, by the way, who won the game?
DANNY: Oh, We did. Sorry.
REUVEN: Maybe you should be a professional baseball player.
DANNY: I don't think my father would be too happy about that.
REUVEN: He'd say it was a game for *goyim*, huh?
DANNY: I don't know what he would say. He doesn't talk to me very much.
REUVEN: Come on. He's a rabbi and he doesn't talk much?
DANNY: Oh, he talks a lot, just not to me.
REUVEN: I don't understand.
DANNY: He prefers silence. He once told me he wished that we all could talk in silence.
REUVEN: Talk in silence?
DANNY: That's what he said.
REUVEN: I don't get it.
DANNY: I don't either. (*Beat*) I better go.
REUVEN: Okay.
DANNY: I'll come again tomorrow...if it's okay with you.
REUVEN: Sure. Danny?
DANNY: Yes?
REUVEN: Thanks for coming.
DANNY: Thanks for listening.
Resources

http://books.guardian.co.uk/obituaries/story/0,11617,766828,00.html
http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Main_Page
http://cias.com/e/o/zionism.htm
http://jewishhistory.huji.ac.il/Internetresources/Zionism.htm
http://philtar.ucsm.ac.uk/encyclopedia/judaism/hasidim.html
http://religiousmovements.lib.virginia.edu/nrms/hasid.html
http://www.ariga.com/yiddish.shtml#yx
http://www.billburg.com/history/jewish.cfm
http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/williamsburg_walking_tour.jsp (also the audio download here)
http://www.cjh.org/
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http://www.nytimes.com
http://www.ou.org/about/judaism/
http://www.pbs.org/alifeapart/intro.html (also good Hasidism info here)
http://www.puertorico-herald.org/issues/2003/vol7n34/Over100Years.en.shtml
http://www.themystica.com/mystica/articles/g/gematria.html
http://www.time.com/time/time100/leaders/profile/bengurion.html
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http://www.barbspics.com/jwsp/jwshtopindex.html
http://www.eyeemaze.net/hasidim/
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http://www.jbuff.com/synagogue_pictures.htm
http://www.jewfaq.org/alephbet.htm
http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/loc/Berlin1.html
http://www.merip.org/.../zionism-pal-isr-primer.html
http://www.richardmcbee.com/herzberghasidimofwilliamsburg.html
http://www.ucalgary.ca/~elsegal/TalmudPage.html
http://www.connect.ab.ca/~ethics/images/candle.jpg

42
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