

Golda Meir's Leadership



50 min



GRADES 6-8

LESSON PLAN

LENS/DOMAIN

Israel

SUBJECT

Jewish American
History

TOPIC

Golda Meir

In this lesson, students explore Golda Meir's background, values, and leadership, tracing how an immigrant child in Milwaukee grew to be the first female prime minister of Israel and a global leader.

They analyze how leadership can take root in everyday communities, then apply those insights to their own lives by creating comic strips.

This lesson plan utilizes a video from PBS Kids and was created using resources from the archives of Jewish Museum Milwaukee.



Enduring Understanding

1. Leadership grows from everyday experiences, identity, and community, which means it can begin anywhere, with anyone.
2. Jewish heritage and history demonstrate resilience through migration, community-building, and civic contributions.
3. Where leaders come from, and who they are, shape how they understand responsibility.

Essential Questions

1. Are leaders shaped more by their circumstances or by their choices?
2. Does belonging to a community come with obligations?
3. How do communities shape their leaders, and how do leaders shape their communities?



A partnership of:
Holocaust Education Resource Center
Jewish Museum Milwaukee
Coalition for Jewish Learning
Jewish Community Relations Council

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Readiness

 15 MIN

Open with a partner discussion.

Pose this question to the class and direct them to turn and talk:

"What values make someone a good leader?"

Give pairs 1 to 2 minutes. Then call on one person from each pair to share a value or two, and record their answers on the board or chart paper.

Introduce Golda Meir.

Say, "Today we'll learn about Golda Meir, a leader who faced many difficult decisions. She grew up in Milwaukee after her Jewish family immigrated from Kyiv to escape antisemitism and violence in Eastern Europe. Like many Jewish communities at the time, her family valued education, helping others, and working together. These values helped shape her leadership later in life, first in Milwaukee and eventually in Israel, where she became one of the country's founders and its fourth Prime Minister. Golda was the third woman in history to become the head of state for a country."

Video Clip

Show timestamps 5:19 -11:50 from [Xavier Riddle and the Secret Museum](#) to introduce Golda Meir's story.

After the clip, ask:

- What experiences shaped Golda's beliefs and values?
- What motivated her life choices?
- What challenges did she face in pursuing her goals?
- Golda left a comfortable life in Milwaukee to help build a new country, Israel. What would make someone take that kind of risk?
- How did she balance personal life with her ambitions?
- What qualities helped her become a leader?
- How might her early life and identity have prepared her for future leadership?

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Input

 15 MIN

Timeline Activity (10 minutes)

Divide students into small groups of three or four.

Give the students the following instructions:

This task has TWO parts: matching and ordering.

Part 1: Match the Event to the Photo

- Use the provided set of archival images and compare them to the events from Golda Meir's life
- Carefully look at each photo:
- What do you notice? (clothing, setting, people, age, location clues)
- What time period might it be from?
- Match each photo to the event you think it represents.

Part 2: Put the Events in Order

- Once you've matched all the photos and events:
- Work with your group to place them in chronological order (earliest to latest).
- Lay them out on your table in order.

Materials

- [Printed timeline cards \(events from Golda Meir's life\)](#)
 - Be sure to print all pages of the file, as the first page includes instructions and the final page includes individual events (which will need to be cut into slips)

Timeline events (Answer Key)

1. First known photo of Goldie Mabovitch (1904) **Artifact G**

2. Golda (Goldie Malvosky) and her friends are in the Milwaukee Journal for their American Young Sister Society efforts to purchase textbooks for classmates. **Artifact L**

3. Golda Meir with her 8th grade class at 4th Street School, Milwaukee (1912)
Artifact E

4. Attends Milwaukee State Normal School and becomes active in student leadership as a class officer (1916-1917)
Artifact K

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Timeline events (Answer Key con't)

5. Goldie in the Poale Zion Chasidim pageant (1919)

Artifact D

6. Golda moves to Israel (then under British rule) and begins agricultural movements (1921)

Artifact B

7. Golda's political career begins, she signs Israel's Declaration of Independence two years later (1948)

Artifact F

8. Golda meets with President John F. Kennedy at the White House (1962)

Artifact C

9. Golda is informed that she has been elected Prime Minister of Israel (1969)

Artifact J

10. Golda visits her former home, Milwaukee. WI (1969)

Artifact A

11. Golda gives a speech in New York (1972)

Artifact I

12. Golda dies (1978)

Artifact H

Once groups complete their timeline, review it together as a class to clarify the actual timeline.

(G, L, E, K, D, B, F, C, J, A, I, H)

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Discussion (5 minutes)

Ask students the following questions:

- What challenges did Golda face at different points in her life?
- How might her experiences as a Jewish immigrant have shaped her understanding of leadership?
- How might belonging to a community influence someone's sense of responsibility?

Reinforce/underscore answers that relate to:

- Making difficult decisions
- Feeling responsible for your community
- Balancing different perspectives
- Responding to uncertainty

Say:

"Historical leaders are often complex figures. They can be important and influential while still making decisions that people debate or question. The goal of studying Golda's leadership is to understand how people respond to difficult circumstances."

Output



After learning about leadership through the life of Golda Meir, students will apply those ideas to a real situation in their own lives. A Community Leadership Comic Strip will allow students to organize their thinking visually while focusing on leadership qualities, problem-solving, and responsible actions.

Planning (5 minutes)

Provide students with the ["Comic Strip Planning Worksheet"](#). Explain that Golda Meir noticed issues in her community and needed to use her values and leadership skills to address them. Tell students that today, they will be envisioning themselves doing the same. Explain to students that the questions on the worksheet will help them create a plan for this before they illustrate it in a comic strip.

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Creating the Comic Strip (15 minutes)

[Provide students with the template from the Comic Strip Planning Materials.](#)

Students may include:

- Drawings
- Symbols
- Arrows Showing Connections
- Speech Bubbles
- Keywords And Captions

Optional Sharing (If Time Allows)

Students can briefly share their comic strips with a partner or small group.

Exit ticket (3- 5 minutes)

When the class is back together, ask students to write down an answer to one of the following questions:

- The leadership quality I think is most important is...
- One thing leaders must do when solving problems is...

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TEACHER TIPS:

- *Golda Meir grew up in Milwaukee, but her leadership decisions eventually affected people around the world. Remind students that her story shows how leadership often begins with everyday experiences and grows over time.*
- *Remind students that leadership is about using your values and identity to influence your decisions and taking responsibility when challenges arise.*
- *Note that Golda's leadership occurred during complicated political and historical circumstances, including wars and national debates.*
- *If controversy arises, emphasize that studying leaders does not require students to agree with every decision they make. Instead, the focus is on understanding leadership challenges and historical context.*
- *If you do not have prep time to cut the timeline events into strips, provide extra time for students to do so during the activity.*
- *Remind students the strip should show a leadership choice and its effect: problem, values, action, outcome. That's what lets the art carry analysis and hit both the Art communication standard and the Social Studies civic-responsibility goal.*

WISCONSIN STATE STANDARDS:

For Social Studies:

SS.Inq2.a.m:

Explore evidence from multiple reliable sources representing a range of perspectives and media, selected through research to guide the inquiry. Rationale: The timeline activity has students examine archival photographs as primary sources, reading each for clues before matching and ordering them.

SS.Hist1.a.m:

Use multiple perspectives to analyze and explain the causes of issues or events within and across time periods. Rationale: The video and discussion ask students to trace what experiences and historical conditions shaped Golda's values and leadership.

SS.BH1.a.m:

Identify patterns such as culture, family, community, and personal interests that influence a person's perceptions and behavior. Rationale: The lesson centers on how her Jewish immigrant upbringing and community shaped her sense of responsibility and leadership.

SS.Inq5.a.m:

Explore opportunities for personal or group civic engagement with community, state, national, and global implications. Rationale: The Community Leadership Comic Strip asks students to envision their own leadership and civic action, applying Golda's example to their own lives.

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WISCONSIN STATE STANDARDS (continued):

FOR ENGLISH LANGUAGE ARTS:

SL.6.1 / SL.7.1 / SL.8.1 Engage effectively in a range of group discussions with diverse partners, building on others' ideas and expressing one's own clearly. Rationale: The lesson runs on discussion, from the opening turn-and-talk about leadership values through small-group timeline work, whole-class debrief, and the exit ticket share.

SL.6.2 / SL.7.2 / SL.8.2 Analyze the purpose of information presented in diverse media and formats. Rationale: Students draw meaning from the Xavier Riddle video clip to understand Golda's early life and choices.

W.6.3 / W.7.3 / W.8.3 Write narratives to develop real or imagined experiences or events with clear sequencing and detail. Rationale: The comic strip is a visual narrative based on a planned leadership scenario, featuring captions and dialogue. The exit ticket adds a light writing moment; attach a writing standard to it only if you require full-sentence responses rather than sentence-stem completions.

L.6.6 / L.7.6 / L.8.6 Acquire and use grade-appropriate general academic and domain-specific words and phrases. Rationale: Students work with vocabulary such as leadership, values, immigrant, community, and civic contribution across the discussion and output.

FOR ART & DESIGN

A.A.Cr.8.m Generate original solutions through exploration and practice. Rationale: The Comic Strip Planning Worksheet has students devise an original response to a community problem before drawing.

A.A.Cr.9.m Engage in experimentation with the expressive qualities of media, tools, and techniques with refined craftsmanship. Rationale: Students build the comic using drawings, symbols, arrows, speech bubbles, and captions to carry meaning.