Lech-Lecha

Go toward yourself.

GENESIS 12:1–17:27 · SHABBAT, OCTOBER 24, 2026 · HAFTARAH: ISAIAH 40:27–41:16

Lech-Lecha is a story of leaving inherited expectations, receiving new names, negotiating covenant in the body, and widening the meaning of family.

KEY TEXTS

Genesis 12:1 לֶךְ־לְךָ מֵאַרְצְךָ וּמִמּוֹלַדְתְּךָ וּמִבֵּית אָבִיךָ

"Go forth from your land, your birthplace, and your father's house, to the land that I will show you." Lech lecha can be heard as "go forth," "go for yourself," or, in a Chassidic reading, "go to yourself."

Genesis 17 — New names

Abram becomes **Abraham**; Sarai becomes **Sarah**. The earlier name is provisional; the new name is divinely spoken into covenant. For trans Jews whose chosen names are treated as less real, the parashah stages the opposite: God affirms the later name.

Talmud, Yevamot 64b — Tumtumim

Rabbi Ami says Abraham and Sarah were tumtumim, people of indeterminate sexual characteristics; Rav Nahman adds that Sarah was an aylonit and lacked a womb. The passage's own concern is infertility — queer teachers reclaim it as ancestral precedent for sex/gender variance treated without alarm.

Genesis 16:13 — Hagar names God

"You are El-Ro'i" — "God who sees me." Hagar is the only human in Tanakh to bestow a name on God: an enslaved, pregnant Egyptian runaway names the divine.

Deuteronomy 30:6 — Covenant of the heart

God will "circumcise your heart." Sai Koros's "Queer Covenants" uses that verse to ask what covenants queer relationships create and uphold.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Eight prompts for paired study, full-group conversation, or personal reflection.

1 · Go for yourself

What places, roles, expectations, or versions of yourself have you had to leave? What did leaving cost, and what did it make possible?

2 · Chosen names

What does it mean for a name to be affirmed rather than merely tolerated? What future can a name hold?

3 · Gender-variant ancestors

How does imagining the first Jewish ancestors as tumtumim change the founding story? What might the rabbis' matter-of-factness teach us?

4 · Covenant in the body

What does it mean to carry covenant in a body? Where do you carry your own commitments — in flesh, habit, memory, or relationship?

5 · Hagar names God

Who remains unseen in our communities? What changes when the unseen get to name God back?

6 · Whose family counts?

How can we celebrate queer family-building while honoring Hagar's warning about consent, labor, and power?

7 · What makes a bond sacred?

Beyond marriage, what covenants do we make with partners, friends, elders, and chosen family? What responsibilities make them durable?

8 · Ha'ivri — the other

When have you stood on the other side? What did it cost, and what did it make possible that belonging never could?

THE 75-MINUTE SESSION

10 min	Read Genesis 12:1 and name a departure.
15 min	Study "go toward yourself" in paired lenses.
15 min	Names and Yevamot 64b.
15 min	Choose: body/covenant or Hagar.
20 min	Discussion, personal covenant, closing word.

Distilled from the Lech-Lecha Deep Dive study guide · Torah Through an LGBTQ+ Lens with Mikki · In the full guide, interpretive claims are labeled traditional, modern queer reclamation, or study-leader extension.