



**THE ELECTRONIC EDUCATOR-**  
 A weekly update of information for you and your school!  
 A service of the NJ Region USCJ Dept. of Education  
 Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities  
 Nita Polay Levin, Field Worker  
 Lisa Harris Glass, Executive Director

*L'hit-kasher,*

meaning: *to connect, and to call on the phone.*

From time to time, we will be arranging conference calls for your convenience. You don't have to leave the comfort of your home or office to participate, don't have to worry about the high cost of gasoline, or extra time spent in travel. And, you don't have to be concerned about getting lost or traveling to the other end of the region!

**There's still time to sign up!**

1. Talk with Lisa Micley, Director of Education, *Babaganewz* Magazine—Monday, March 17, 10 a.m. Subject: ISRAEL AT 60—for teachers and principals of religious schools
2. Speak with Serene Victor, National Consultant for Synagogue Education, USCJ—Monday, April 28, 10 a.m. Subject: WORKING WITH MY SCHOOL COMMITTEE: What I Need to Do to Help Them Be Good At the Job. For RELIGIOUS SCHOOL PRINCIPALS ONLY. Limited registration. Only a few more spots left!
3. LET'S TALK: a monthly discussion among PRESCHOOL DIRECTORS, with other directors around the country, with Maxine Handelman, Consultant for Early Childhood Education. The first session was Wednesday, March 5, 1 pm. Watch for details of the next one!

*Registration is free, a benefit of your school's membership in United Synagogue. To register, contact Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities:*

*[Rich@USCJ.org](mailto:Rich@USCJ.org), (732) 738 – 4301*

\*\*\*\*\*

**Up-Coming Mini-Courses**

*Please share this list with your faculty and encourage them to attend any courses that would be of benefit to them*

**COURSE # 4: COOPERATIVE LEARNING TECHNIQUES**  
**INSTRUCTOR: DR. SHOSHANA SILBERMAN**  
**DATE: Wed., March 12, 7 – 8:30 p.m.**  
**LOCATION: Beth El Synagogue, E. Windsor**

\*\*\*\*\*



When Vashti is called to come to the king clad only in her crown (and, readers are to assume, nothing else), she refuses. The king is convinced by his advisors that all other women will learn to refuse their husbands as she did if he allows her to get away with it so he has her removed. Her time on stage is completed in less than a chapter.

Since the 1970s, feminists have taken Vashti to heart as the first proto-feminist: She is the first woman in the Bible who refuses to be objectified as a sex object, instead naming such behavior as inappropriate.....

What a contrast to Esther, who is quite meek in comparison. When brought to the palace, she passively goes along with whatever the head eunuch plans for her. When she finally approaches the king, she wines and dines him before beseeching him, using every traditional feminine wile in the book, and rather effectively at that.

In many ways, Vashti is the paradigmatic woman who won't take any garbage from the men around her, even if it costs her, which it does. In comparison, I always thought of Esther as the ideal of the savvy female business exec who learns how to make it in the top tier of a man's world and bring her people along with her..... These have been the two models for how women have negotiated their lack of real power throughout history.

-Rabbi Susan Grossman, posting on <http://blog.beliefnet.com/virtualtalmud/2007/02/is-hillary-next-vashti.html>

**Questions for discussion:**

1. What do you know about Vashti and Esther from the Purim story? As a group, share what you all know to get a full picture. You can always check your facts in Megillat Esther (the Book of Esther).
2. Do you see yourself as more of a Vashti or more of an Esther? Why? Think about the children in your class. Which of them have the “take the bull by the horns” approach, and which use different resources and strategize?
3. Traditional commentators accused Vashti of not wanting to appear before the king because she had grown a tail or contracted leprosy. The rabbis of old were not big Vashti fans, to put it mildly. But in recent decades Vashti has been recast as a feminist, a strong woman with her head and her heart in the right place. Esther, on the other hand, works within the system, but also takes matters into her own hands when the going gets tough. How might you defend Vashti's actions, or not? Do you approve of Esther's tactics?
4. Do you include Vashti in your telling of the Purim story with your children? At what age do you believe it is appropriate to introduce children to Vashti? Remember, it is important never to teach children things they must unlearn later. This means you can edit the story but never change it. Make sure you have school-wide agreement about who is telling which version of the story. Both Vashti and Esther have valuable lessons for children – Vashti is an example of always standing up for what is right; Esther pays attention, she understands the people around her and she is wise, and brave, enough to use this understanding to shape events to her purposes. How can you give the children in your class lessons from both of Purim's heroines?