



**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

---

**Welcome back to another great year of teaching  
and reaching our Jewish youth!!**

We want to wish you luck in the coming year and also a smooth  
beginning!

And, of course, to help you make the best of your efforts, we  
begin another year of the Electronic Educator!

If there is anyway that we can be of help to you, please feel free to  
contact us. We are the "YOU" in USCJ.

Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities:  
[Rich@USCJ.org](mailto:Rich@USCJ.org)

Nita Polay Levin, Education Field Worker: [Levin@USCJ.org](mailto:Levin@USCJ.org)  
phone: (732) 738 - 4301

\*\*\*\*\*

## **Preschool Corner**

### Lunch Ideas

1. Egg Salad
2. Grilled Cheese
3. Tortilla Wrap
4. Hard Boiled Egg whole or sliced
5. Cheese and Crackers
6. Cream Cheese and Jelly
7. Morning Star Farms Veggie/Soy Corn Dogs, hot dogs, chicken nuggets, etc...
8. Cottage Cheese and Fruit
9. English Muffin Tuna Melt, pizza, melted cheese
10. Yogurt
11. Fish Sticks
12. Falafel Balls
13. Salmon Patty
14. Tuna Muffins
15. Quiche
16. Cheese Pizza
17. Mac and Cheese

18. Cheese (Spread) and Crackers
19. Veggie/Soy Burger
20. Crescent Rolls with Cheese Rolled Up
21. Biscuit Egg and Cheese
22. Gefilte Fish
23. Bagel, Cream Cheese and Lox
24. Bagel and Tuna
25. Bagel and Cheese Slices
26. Granola Bars
27. Buttered Noodles with Parmesan Cheese
28. Pasta with Vegetarian Sauce
29. Quesadillas w/ cheese, rice etc...
30. Tuna Fish & Crackers
31. Vegetarian Chili w/ chips
32. Thick vegetable soups
33. Fruit salad

\* \* \* \* \*

An invitation to our preschool directors from Maxine Segal Handelman, national USCJ Consultant in Early Childhood Education:

Hello,

After I sent out the email about "Resources from the USCJ EC Consultant" to the databank of USCJ EC Directors (if you are not currently a USCJ EC Director, you probably didn't get that email. If you are a USCJ director and you didn't get that email, please let me know!) in which I mentioned the listserv for USCJ teachers, in addition to this list serv, I received a few comments to the effect that people didn't know that list serv even existed. And in truth, maybe that's the reason that the teacher list serv is not so active. So here's the plug:

Your teachers could be getting as many resources and ideas from their fellow teachers around the country as you do on this list serv! All you have to do is tell them about the USCJ EC Teacher's list serv and encourage them to sign up! Here's what they have to do:

Teachers go to: <http://uscj.org/archives/ecteach.html>

Click on "Join or leave the list (or change settings)" and fill in your information from there.

Print this email out and give it to your teachers when they come back to teach in the fall. Or better yet, cut and paste this information into an email to all your teachers and then they can sign up right away and start talking, becoming better teachers, attracting more families to your schools, and the world will be a better place!

Ok, so summer may be going to my brain. But still, encourage your teachers to join the USCJ EC teacher's list serv. It's the right thing to do.

B'Shalom,  
max

Maxine Handelman  
Consultant for Early Childhood Education  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
847-641-9963  
Fax: 773-929-4387

[www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org)

Thank you to everyone who joined in the call today. We shared lots of great ideas, which you can read below. Enjoy the month. Our next call is Wednesday Sept. 3, 2:15 NY (1:15 Central, 12:15 Mountain, 11:15 Pacific) Number to be announced – Suggested topic – Anxious parents, stressed teachers, positive and supportive strategies as children move through the school (year by year).

EC Dir Chat August 6, 2008

Topics: Teacher orientation, the beginning of the school year

Call notes

### **Teacher orientation/Pre-planning**

Orientations range from 3-5 days, including a day of CPR and first aid. The rabbi is involved in the orientation for Jewish learning, or just being accessible.

Carol uses a theme for orientation which will carry throughout the year (this year, self-reflection and evaluation)

Shabbat with staff:

Debbie invites her entire staff (22 staff members, many not Jewish, no families) to her home for Shabbat dinner the Friday before school starts, so everyone can experience Shabbat.

At another school, 2 teachers at a time (and their families) are invited to the director's house for Shabbat dinner, until everyone has been (all during the first few months of school)

Teacher sharing idea:

Debbie's staff decided to try and use the same theme in each classroom at the same time. She purchased a large white board, for teachers to write down support, ideas and resources for other teachers related to the theme. When the new theme begins, the board will be cleared and started over.

Question: Are teachers paid additionally for staff training, learning time and special events they are expected to be at?

The majority responded that their teachers have contracts which specify a salary (not an hourly rate). The contract specifies all the time this salary includes – set up and clean up time, special programs, learning and staff development. In many cases, when the regular hours are computed for the salary, the days off for Jewish holidays make up for the extra hours of special events and staff development.

Pay is not cut if teachers do not attend some of the things specified in the contract, but this non-attendance is reflected in their review and future salary increases.

Carol has a contract she will send to Max – please email Max if you would like a copy [Handelman@uscj.org](mailto:Handelman@uscj.org).

Carol also begins her meetings with games and ice breakers that earn teachers prizes. She will send Max a list of these games. Drop and email if you want this list.

To avoid boring veteran staff with procedures and policy info that new staff needs, Barbara Rich has veteran staff members teach the policies and procedures to the new staff (Barbara provides the outline of what to cover).

Staff handbooks:

One director encourages her staff to come to her with issues and changes for the staff handbook, and revises the staff handbook each year to reflect better policies.

Others mentioned that their synagogue requires that the synagogue staff handbook is used for all synagogue employees, including EC staff. If people send me their staff handbooks, I can make these available to others. ([handelman@uscj.org](mailto:handelman@uscj.org))

**Starting the School Year with Families and Kids (it's all about building community!)**

Idie has a family buddy system, matching a returning family with a new family, so they can set up a play date before school starts.

One school has a visiting day, where 2 children and their parents visit the classroom at a time for a short visit. There is open playground time, so families can spend time with friends on the playground before and after this visit. (this school visit replaces home visits, which were getting too hard to schedule).

Parent orientation can include not just the adminstrivia from the director, but also time for the parents to make a project for the child to receive on the first day of school, and an ice breaker for parents to get to know each other.

Host a parent meet & greet (first day jitters) after drop off on the first day of school.

Take a picture of each child (or family) at the first meeting, and then ask parents to write a hope or dream they have for their child to go along with the picture, to be posted in the child's class room.

Shabbat for families:

Debbie's school, the school organizes Friday night pot luck dinners by neighborhood, no staff, just the families. The school provides the challah, blessings, etc, and it is great a nd fairly low key.

Another school has "Share-a-Shabbat" 3x per year, where families volunteer to host or be hosted. The school sends home the Shabbat bag with blessings, a story, etc (but not challah and grape juice, due to budget).

Parent gatherings – getting to know you:

Debbie's school has a mom's night out – within the first couple of weeks of school, for all the moms in the school to get to know each other. They give out a Shabbat candle lighting kit from fridaylight.org. Moms expressed wishes for Debbie to attend too.

Idie's school has an adult cocktail party, usually on a Sat night, catered, with a charge to parents. Idie attends, and it is a chance for her to meet dads she rarely sees.

Family gatherings:

Idie's parent association arranges a picnic in a park for all the families before school starts. Idie attends, but no teachers.

Family dinner in the sukkah, minimal charge for families

Max will solicit and compile for distribution a list of Social/Community Building ideas for parents, and for families, and educational ideas for parents, and for families. Together we can enrich each of our schools!

Enjoy the rest of summer and good luck with the beginning of the school year.

Maxine Handelman  
Consultant for Early Childhood Education  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
847-641-9963  
Fax: 773-929-4387  
[www.uscj.org](http://www.uscj.org)

=====  
**We welcome Sue Wyner, the new USCJ Consultant for Jewish Education, to our family and look forward to her many words of wisdom!**

Dear Colleagues,  
It's that time of year. It's time to think about making that first impression. Educators want to put their best

face on, and in the process not forget the important value of *kabbalat panim*, making those we greet feel welcomed in every way possible.

The following is a checklist meant to assist you in thinking about *kabbalat panim*. It is certainly not complete, but may help you organize some of your activities in the bustle ahead.

- Fresh and welcoming bulletin boards, that have information about upcoming activities as well as pretty pictures
- Signs that guide people in the right direction as they enter
- Fresh, new signs on the classroom doors with the teacher's name and grade or subject area
- A welcome table staffed with someone who can answer questions or take late registration.
- An orientation for new members or parents, complete with the opportunity to meet clergy and available staff, and learn more about what the school and synagogue have to offer.

Some synagogue schools take an extra step in creating a sense of *kabbalat panim* by providing:

- A table with cookies and juice to greet students on the first day (even if they usually have the opportunity to purchase snacks, it's a nice and inexpensive touch.
- Balloon bouquets in strategic locations (watch out for latex allergies).
- Some schools like students to go directly to their rooms, where the welcome happens with teachers greeting at the doors
- Others provide an opening school assembly with music and introductions of teachers.

But the welcome is best provided before anyone steps through the doorway with a letter that goes home for each family a few weeks before school. Some samples are attached with a variety of approaches. The approach you choose should be consistent with the climate and atmosphere that pervades your school.

May 2008-09/5768-5769 be a blessing to you, your school, and your congregation!

(My thanks to my colleagues Serene Victor and Rabbi Stuart Seltzer for the letters that they have shared in the past, and which I have attached with one of my own. Please note, as well, the Transportation Form that can be used to track how students arrive and leave--a helpful safety feature!)

Susan E. Wyner  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
North American Consultant for Synagogue Education  
[wyner@uscj.org](mailto:wyner@uscj.org)

*If you would like any of Sue's attachments, contact Nita at [Levin@uscj.org](mailto:Levin@uscj.org). These include her articles: Baruchim habaim, ashrei letter, opening school/parent letter, and transportation form.*

\*\*\*\*\*

*From the Torah Aura Productions Bulletin Board:*

August 8, 2008	Volume 15, Issue 15
Speaking of new products, the past few	<b>In This Issue</b> <a href="#">Israel and Family Ed</a> <a href="#">Carol Takes a Bow</a> <a href="#">Artzeinu - Wikified!</a>

weeks have been pretty busy 'round here.

We started shipping [Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter](#), a revolutionary new way to teach about Israel. We also released [Apples & Oranges: Judaism and the World's Religions](#), a comparative religion text for middle- and high-schoolers. And we were very pleased to begin shipping [What We Now Know About Jewish Education](#), a monumental work of scholarship edited by Paul Flexner, Roberta Louis Goodman and Linda Dale Bloomberg. (Each copy is 3.5lbs of scholarly goodness!)

Lets put it this way: Alberto, who runs our shipping department, is tired. Very tired.

But the rest of us (perhaps minus Alan's left foot) are energized and ready for another CAJE conference and for the beginning of a new school year. So welcome to this week's [TAPBB](#). Keep your mailboxes open -- there's more to come.

## Israel and Family Education

*In honor of Israel's 60th birthday (and the publication of **Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter**) we're going to be taking some space in the TAPBB to talk about some real Israel issues. This is the sixth in a series of essays about how Israel fits into the school curriculum.*

by [Joel Lurie Grishaver](#)

My understanding of the relationship between Israel education and family education starts with two working assumptions. (1) The most important outcome of any Israel education is to get students to

Let Me Count the Ways:  
Finale

Join Our Mailing List!

Available Now!  
**Artzeinu:**  
**An Israel Encounter**

Have you heard about the revolution in Israel education?

It's called **Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter**, and it's new from Torah Aura Productions.

Not just a travel book, Artzeinu is an insider's guide to the people, history, and culture of Israel.

Designed for 5th and 6th grade, it's a book that teaches more than geography, an encounter that goes into the heart and nature of Israeli life. This is not just a tour book, but an exploration of the essence of Israel.

To learn more, [just click](#).

Top-Notch Scholarship Leads to Top-Notch Practice.

**What We Now Know About Jewish Education: Perspectives on Research for Practice.**

*When What We Know about Jewish Education was first published in 1992, Stuart Kelman recognized that*

towards the importance of visiting Israel have a lot to do with whether students will visit Israel (that's obvious) and (more importantly) those attitudes are hard to change.

One not-so-secret truth is that family education is all about getting parental buy-in. While we do have objectives about building the communications and healthiness of family, and we are interested in Jewish growth within the family, most of this happens through changes in parental attitudes. We get Shabbat celebrated in the family more because parents become willing than because students ask for it. The same is true of Israel.

[Read the rest of this entry »](#)

## Let Me Count the Ways: Finale

*Since the fall of 1996 we have had the privilege of including Carol Oseran Starin's column **Let Me Count the Ways** as part of the Torah Aura Bulletin Board. The Let Me Count the Ways column*

knowledge and understanding would greatly enhance the ability of professionals and lay leaders to address the many challenges facing Jewish education. With increased innovation, the entry of new funders, and the connection between Jewish education and quality of Jewish life, research and evaluation have become an integral part of decision making, planning, programming, and funding.

This new resource, **What We Now Know About Jewish Education**, captures the essence of a field on the cusp of major change and growth as it turns toward research and evaluation for information, insight, affirmation, and inspiration. By bringing together the best thinkers and researchers from a cross section of disciplines and institutions, this new volume provides both professional and lay leadership with a new tool to advance the quality of Jewish education in schools, synagogues, camps, centers and every other venue where Jews are learning formally and informally, building their own personal connections with the Jewish people.

Edited by Paul Flexner, Roberta Louis Goodman, and Linda Dale Bloomberg, **What We Now Know About Jewish Education** is available right now. To order, click [here](#).

For this last column I've chosen, from the 200 columns, 5 of my favorite solutions - a story, a strategy, a resource, a project, and an insight.

[Keep reading... »](#)

## A New Kind of Teacher's Guide

Recently, we asked a bunch of educators what their ideal teacher's guide might look like. They told us that they wanted it to be easily accessible. They wanted a TG to have lots of ideas for experiential learning, for family education, and for interesting classroom discussions.

"Wouldn't it be cool," one educator told us, "if I could constantly add new pieces to a teacher's guide, and if my colleagues could add their best ideas, too?"

Indeed, it would be cool.

[Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter](#) is a new kind of Israel book. And that's why it comes with a new kind of teacher's guide.

In October, we'll be shipping the Artzeinu TG. It will be an invaluable tool for teachers, which is what you've come to expect from our teacher's guides. But this one's a little different.

**First:** The entire guide is available right now. For free. The [Artzeinu](#) teacher's guide will come in print (shipping in October) and online (available now... no cost) versions.

**Second:** The online version of the guide is a wiki, which means that you can add your own ideas, read what other teachers and educators contributed, and discuss the best way to make innovative Israel programming come alive in your school.

**Third:** The guide isn't just a page-by-page set of instructions for using the book in your classroom. Rather, it's a collection of real Israel programs, built on the foundation of [Artzeinu](#) but reaching much, much further.

Ready to get started? Check out the [Artzeinu: An Israel Encounter Teacher's Guide Wiki](#) at <http://wiki.torahaura.com>.

\*\*\*\*\*

**We are happy to forward to you *EdNotes* from our new national Consultant for Synagogue Education, Susan Wyner. However, if you would like to be on her list directly, contact her at [Wyner@uscj.org](mailto:Wyner@uscj.org).**

=====

Each of you already have or plan to have your own comfortable ways of staying in touch with your teachers on a regular basis. It's helpful to find a plan that works both for you and for your staff.

Most popular approaches:

- A 15-20 minute pre-class sessions to go over important information and get faculty feedback. Some directors do this on a weekly basis.
- A weekly teacher memo either sent by snail mail and/or e-mail (model provided below and as an attachment)
- Monthly teacher meetings, interwoven with weekly memos
- A dry erase or chalk board outside the school office with updates
- Postings on the teacher sign-in board
- Individual teacher memoranda prepared ahead of time and placed in teacher mail boxes

As you walk around the school during class time with clipboard or writing pad and pen in hand, you can continue to take notes throughout the session which you can quickly transform to information for the upcoming sessions.

A sample teacher memo for the first week of school:

**Alef Bet Religious School of B'nai Shalom Congregation**  
***Weekly Teacher Memo***

Week #1

September 5 & 6, 2008

**EVERYONE:**

1. Welcome back to the Alef Bet Religious School. All of us at B'nai Shalom Congregation hope that you had a fortifying summer. May 5768-5769 be an enriching school year for each of you.
2. Welcome to our newest faculty members:
3. Last minute reminders about:
  - Teacher arrival expectations
  - Checking in
  - Copy machine regulations
  - Taking attendance/Tzedaka
  - Greeting students cheerfully
  - Book distribution procedures
  - Lesson plans and where to leave you a copy
  - Directing parents who need to complete registration  
(you need to have a plan in place for parents who "show up" unexpectedly)
4. For our first day of school:
  - Special start up assembly or activity?
  - New Parent orientation?
  - Any schedule changes
5. Upcoming events in the congregation
6. Upcoming events in the community
7. Interesting educational tidbits

**Parashat haShavua:** Treat your faculty to a weekly synopsis and encourage them to review it with their students.

Example: This week we will read from *parashat Shofetim*.

Upon entering the Promised Land, *B=nai Yisrael* are commanded to establish courts of law. Judges are told to be fair and impartial, and never to accept bribes or show favor to anyone. The people are warned against idolatry yet again, and rules are given should they decide to establish a monarchy in

the future. Warnings are given against soothsayers and sorcery (look out Harry Potter!) as forms of idolatry, and the people are warned to be wary of false prophets. Three cities of refuge on each side of the Jordan are established to protect those who Aaccidentally@ kill someone. The portion concludes with rules for conducting war. ***The sedra really takes an unusual shift from justice to hostilities! What are some of the concerns that God must have as B'nai Yisrael prepares to enter haAretz? What are some of Moses' concerns? What must B'nai Yisrael be thinking about?***

**BY GRADE LEVEL:**

1. Special Activities this week.
2. Programmatic plans for the future
3. Special in-services

**Have a wonderful first session and a terrific year!**

**Some good sources to assist with *parasha* synopses:**

**Jewish Theological Seminary website.** You can also sign-up to receive an e-mailed weekly commentary.

**Loeb, Sorel Goldberg and Barbara Binder Kadden. *Teaching Torah:*** A Treasury of Insights and Activities, Behrman House (originally ARE text) available for \$32.50.

**Fields, Harvey J. *A Torah Commentary for our Times.*** A 3-book series that covers the entire 5 Books of Moses including rabbinic commentary, in easy-to-read format. It is published by URJ (Union for Reform Judaism) and makes references to Reform Judaism, so you will need to use discretion. But being able to quote rabbinic commentary can really make you look smart! Expensive unless you get it from Amazon.com.

Susan E. Wyner  
United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism  
North American Consultant for Synagogue Education

2550 Windy Hill Drive  
Pepper Pike, OH 44124  
[wyner@uscj.org](mailto:wyner@uscj.org)

**\*\* \*\* \*\* \*\* \*\***

Shalom, colleagues,

For those who have been to CAJE--welcome back. We hope that your time at the annual CAJE conference was enriching. Now that we are all moving into the school year, it's the time that we focus on what's new out there in the world of educational knowledge to share with teachers. The following are some general educational sites that are extremely valuable. Although geared to the general studies world, these sites are treasure troves of highly adaptable information.

This time of year--they are oriented to getting started in the classroom. All are free, and it's very easy to sign-up for regular e-mail announcements:

- [www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org) features the newest thinking in education and educational policy
- [www.Teachermagazine.org](http://www.Teachermagazine.org) provides thoughtful information for the reflective teacher. This month features articles such as, "Teaching Secrets: Five Tips for the New Teacher" by Cindi

Rigsbee; "Reframing Bullying in the Middle Schools" by Sarah Shulkind (could easily link to some of Judaism's big ideas!)

- [www.AtoZTeacherStuffNewsletter.com](http://www.AtoZTeacherStuffNewsletter.com) Hands on materials, include links to lesson planning and freebies for teachers

If any of you have some favorite sites to share with colleagues, please feel free to send them on to me, and I'll gladly include them in future Ednotes in your name.

Take it easy during the next few weeks as you gear up for your dynamic start!

Sue

Susan E. Wyner

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

North American Consultant for Synagogue Education

\*\*\*\*\*

**Site closing alert!**

My thanks to several of you who investigated some of the sites that were previously sent to find that in the past year they have changed or gone out of business. I am reattaching a corrected list, which also incorporates the general sites that you received previously--sonow you have them all on one page!

So as not to cause you frustration, please note:

No longer functioning--do not even try them:

[jweduclist@egroups.com](mailto:jweduclist@egroups.com)

[www.Machlmorim.org](http://www.Machlmorim.org)

[www.crosswinds.net](http://www.crosswinds.net)

<http://mishmash.virtualave.net>

Now a Christian site--not reliable for our purposes:

[www.jsource.org](http://www.jsource.org)

Sorry for the inconvenience, and hope that the list below will be of assistance to you.

My thanks to our very helpful colleagues.

Sue

Susan E. Wyner

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

North American Consultant for Synagogue Education

[wyner@uscj.org](mailto:wyner@uscj.org)

### **More Websites for Jewish Educators**

From Fran Richter, Education Director, Har Zion congregation, Scottsdale, Arizona

[www.caje.org](http://www.caje.org)

[www.jewishnet.net](http://www.jewishnet.net)

[www.torahtots.com](http://www.torahtots.com)

Wonderful site (with an Orthodox bent) to teach holidays and Tanach

[www.maven.co.il](http://www.maven.co.il)

Everything you want

More Websites for Torah Study

I enjoy the weekly commentary from [zielgertorah@ajula.org](mailto:zielgertorah@ajula.org).  
Subscribe at [torahsubscription@ajula.edu](mailto:torahsubscription@ajula.edu). Dalia Podwol, principal,  
Congregation Am Echad, Park Forest, IL

#### More Websites on Educational Issues

[www.responsiveclassroom.org](http://www.responsiveclassroom.org). Check out the Responsive Classroom Newsletter and there are some workshops around the country (Oakland, Rutland, VT, Taunton, MA, Freeport, ME, Mahwah, NJ, Langhorne, PA, Northampton, MA.)  
Serene Victor, Lecturer and Faculty Leader of the DeLeT/MAT (Master of Arts in Teaching) program, Brandeis University

#### Other Web Connections

[www.Babaganewz.com](http://www.Babaganewz.com). It's a terrific magazine and on-line teacher resources.

[www.Jvibe.com](http://www.Jvibe.com). Some teens like it, some don't. Has a "cool" look.

[www.ascd.com](http://www.ascd.com). They have a myriad of resources on trends in Jewish education, and teacher training material.

[www.teachermagazine.com](http://www.teachermagazine.com). A great site on a variety of tips for teachers on good educational practice. Free e-mail available with the most up-to-date issues.

[www.atozteacherstuff.com](http://www.atozteacherstuff.com). Teacher hints from lesson plans to educational activities and free stuff, too. Free e-mail alerts available.

[www.edweek.org](http://www.edweek.org). Can apply to receive hard copy of Education Magazine, but this free educator alert service is also available. Great articles on a regular basis.

\*\*\* \*\*