



**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**

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Shalom,

It is our hope that you have been enjoying and getting meaning from all of our fall chagim.

Due to truncated weeks in honor of the chagim, it's been a couple of weeks since we sent out the *Electronic Educator*. We are sending this out today and next week we will resume our regular schedule.

## UP-COMING TEACHER TRAINING MINI-COURSES

*Only 3 more courses left this semester!*

### **COURSE 7: INFUSING THE PRESCHOOL CLASS WITH JEWISH VALUES**

**INSTRUCTOR: JANICE JUMBO**

What about our preschool room lets all who enter know that this is a Jewish program? Is there an Israeli flag or a Shabbat set in the house corner? Are there kipot in the dress-up corner and on the snack table? Do we bring God into our discussions when we see something extraordinary in nature? Do we sing Jewish songs or use a Hebrew greeting when children enter? Janice, a very creative and innovative teacher, has been teaching nursery school Jewishly for many years. Participants in this Mini-Course will leave with many ideas they will feel comfortable adding to their daily routine, including Circle Time. You may want to bring a tape recorder!

**DATE: Mon., Oct. 27, 4 - 5:30 p.m.**

**LOCATION: Beth El Synagogue, E. Windsor**

### **COURSE # 8: DEVELOPING A SENSITIVITY TO CHILDREN WITH SPECIAL NEEDS (for Religious School teachers )**

**INSTRUCTOR: WENDY DRATLER**

Wendy Dratler, our Special Needs consultant who taught our *New Jewish Child Left Aside* course, will aid educators to "feel what it is like to be disabled," allowing for empathy for these individuals and the experiences they struggle with the mainstream. Participants will have hands-on experiences, benefit from sensitivity lessons that are tied to Bible stories, how Torah tells us to treat the disabled, and how to make students with disabilities feel like the star of the class.

**DATE: Sunday, November 9, 12:45 - 2:15 p.m. >Note the correct date**

**LOCATION: Temple Israel, Ridgewood**

### **COURSE 9: B'TZELEM ELOKIM: DEVELOPING A COMMUNITY OF MENSCHEN (for religious school teachers)**

**INSTRUCTOR: DR. SHOSHANA SILBERMAN**

Learning to treat each other with respect and dignity in the way in which Judaism teaches is a reflection of God. In this Mini-Course, participants will learn how to develop a cohesive community of students exhibiting *menschlichkeit* behavior, understanding that we are all created in the image of God.

**DATE:** Sunday, November 23, 9 - 10:30

**LOCATION:** Temple Beth Torah, Ocean

## New Course, first for the Winter/Spring Semester:

**Preschoolers and Israel: Perfect Together !**

**INSTRUCTOR:** LINDA RIPPS, VETERAN TEACHER

Due to the popularity and timeliness of the topic, Linda will reprise her workshop that she facilitated in Montville at the beginning of September.

Young children are not developmentally capable of conceptualizing the global map or of a place that is not in their daily lives. This would make it seemingly useless to teach them about another country far away, and yet, it is never too early to introduce a love for Israel as the special place of the Jewish People, which is different from learning about other cultures and countries. By using some Hebrew, the Israeli flag, videos and story books about Israel, we begin to plant the seeds that will bloom as they get older. Linda, who has taught preschool and is an expert in resources about Israel, will show you how to introduce the concept of *kibbutz* and other aspects of the country to young children.

**DATE:** MONDAY, JANUARY 19 (MARTIN LUTHER KING DAY), 2009 (A.M. :  
*TIME TBA*)

**LOCATION:** GLEN ROCK JEWISH CENTER

If you are interested in attending any of these courses, contact Michelle Rich at [Rich@USCJ.org](mailto:Rich@USCJ.org). As a benefit of your synagogue's membership in United Synagogue, all courses are free for teachers affiliated with a USCJ school or anyone who is a member of a USCJ congregation.

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## Activities to Add Spice to *Simchat Torah*

"Turn it and turn it and turn it again!" It is always a marvel to me that no matter how many times I read the chapters of the Torah, there is always something new to learn.

Educators have asked for creative ways to entice families to *Simchat Torah*. As we complete the last book of *Devarim* and turn back to *Breishet* and the faith story of creation, finding meaning for younger children beyond a Torah march is even more challenging. Here are a few tried and true possibilities you might want to consider:

1. Since young families can lose interest after the first few *hakafot*, create an alternative family activity that focuses on Torah. This can include a display area with a Torah available that they can see up close--handle the objects that dress the Torah and teach them the names. Open the Torah in front of them and read from *Breishet*, so they can follow. Then read your favorite, pictured version of the creation story. Have a sweet treat to make Torah sweet in their mouths. End with a Torah parade with mini-Torahs.

2. If you have a large space available with lots of parents, this is a great activity. The children stand in the middle of the space with the facilitator. The parents form a ring around the room. The Torah is taken out and opened, and passed from parent to parent, opening the Torah until it is open full circle. Then the facilitator guides the children around the Torah, and points out key parts of the Torah, especially those that are visible in design, ("Here are the seven days of creation!" "Here is the parting of the Sea of Reeds!" "Here is where we got the Torah at Mt. Sinai!" etc--with lots of enthusiasm). It's very exciting for both parents and children. If the group isn't too large, parents can share something about a tradition that they want to pass to their children while passing the Torah down the line.

3. Choose a whole bunch of Torah stories in book form. Scatter them around the room or space, and take the children on a Torah treasure hunt. You can copy the covers ahead of time, pass them out, and have the children find the matches. Every time there is a match, you stop and review the Torah story.

These are just thumbnail sketches of some possibilities, but it might open up your thinking. Have some ideas to share with your colleagues! Pass them on, and we'll include them in the next Ednotes!

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Chevre,

This year October 31 falls on a Friday night—a challenge for educators as we continue to instill the value of *Kabbalat Shabbat*, and family Shabbat home celebration.

Our colleague, **Serene Victor**, has always been insightful when it comes to issues of Halloween and the American Jew. She has passed along for our enrichment her Ednotes from October 2002 with some significant highlights. Below are some articles relating to how parents like those in our schools struggle with these issues, as well as some wonderful stories that have goblin themes in Jewish contexts that you can share with parents.

Also, below is a wonderful letter that Serene used in the past to help guide parents in making their own decisions when Halloween falls on Shabbat.

Thanks, Serene!

**Articles and Websites: Still accessible in 2008 (Sue tried them!)**

[JewishFamily.com](http://JewishFamily.com). Under Holidays:

**Halloween (Oct. 31)**

*Making Peace with Halloween* by Rebecca E. Kotkin

*We're Off to See the Wizard for Halloween* by Judith Bolton-Fasman

*How My Son Convinced Me He Could Trick-or-Treat on Halloween* by Anne Ludden

*Below is a list of some stories that your colleagues have used successfully for Halloween. Thank you to everyone who contributed to this list:*

*Serene*

**Stories and Collections**

*Lilith's Cave - Jewish Tales of the Supernatural*

*The Golem*

*Invisible Kingdoms: Jewish Tales of Angels, Spirits, and Demons* a book written by Howard Schwartz, illustrated by Stephen Fieser, and recommended for students in grade three and up, is soon to be on the market.

*Elijah's Violin, A Collection of Jewish Folk Stories*

*The Rabbi and the 29 Witches* by Marilyn Hirsh.

*The Fearsome Inn* by Isaac Bashevis Singer

*Ghosts and Golems, Haunting Tales of the Supernatural* compiled by Malka Penn

"*Reb Leib and the Witch Cunegunde*" by I.B. Singer

### **Sephardic Customs**

Among Sefardim, there used to be (and in some places, I'm told, there still is) the custom of children going door-to-door to gather the ingredients for "burmuelos" (like sufganiyot) on Chanukah. The children would carry pots and pans, banging on them and singing silly seasonal songs to announce their arrival (This info from Rabbi David Kay, Naples, Florida)

## HALLOWEEN

Temple Talmud Torah

613 Mitzvot Way

Shalom City, IL

Phone: 123-456-7890 Fax: 123-456-7899

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

October 23, 20\_\_

Dear Parent,

I wish I could meet with all of you to discuss a wonderful example of the choices we need to make as committed Jews who also fully participate in American life. Since I can't, I thought I would try to conduct a "discussion" with you through this letter.

Halloween is right around the corner. It occurs to me that many of you are in the midst of having to decide what to do faced with this conflict of values. I want you to see this as a teaching opportunity since this year it falls on a Friday night. Does Halloween take precedence over *Shabbat*? Why or why not? Does *Shabbat* take precedence over Halloween? Why or why not? What are we going to be teaching our kids by the decisions we make and how do we communicate these decisions to them?

If we are afraid to opt for *Shabbat*, what does that mean about how we experience *Shabbat* in our lives, or what we think about how we will make our kids "happy"? If this isn't even a question for you, why not, and what are you teaching your kids by this?

This is a deliciously complex occasion to think about being Jewish. I'd love to hear how you resolve it.

Wish you a "sweet" decision,

Faithfully,

Rabbi

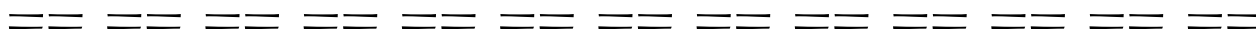
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The Conservative movement might be a big tent, but even such a structure needs one main entrance. Now we have one.

The movement's new website, [www.conservativejudaism.org](http://www.conservativejudaism.org), is a gate into the movement. Smaller gateways lead to the various organizations and groups that make up its larger whole. The website is still very much a work in progress, but it is now open. Look at it, play around with it, see what it has, figure out what it needs, and pass it on.

As we enter this new year, which already clearly will offer many brand-new and formidable challenges, we do so increasingly unified as one movement.



## from our friends at BabagaNewz

	
<b>Teaching Kindness with BabagaNewz</b> <i>Hesed / Kindness</i>	
<b>In This Issue</b>	<b>October 17, 2008 / 18 Tishrei 5769</b>
<a href="#">Lessons on Hesed</a>	<p>The BabagaNewz value for <a href="#">Heshvan/November</a> is <i>hesed</i>, kindness. By engaging in acts of <i>hesed</i>, we emulate God's kindness and work toward a just society dedicated to <i>tikkun olam</i>.</p> <p>In honor of this special value, I have an exciting contest opportunity for you to share with your students. In our <a href="#">Hesed Lyrics Challenge</a>, students will write song lyrics about kindness, and renowned Jewish musician, Craig Taubman, will set the winning lyrics to actual music. Click <a href="#">here</a> for all the entry details.</p>
<a href="#">Parashah Movies</a>	
<b>Sukkot Resources</b>	
<a href="#">Hag Sameah!</a> Click <a href="#">here</a> to get mini-lessons, crafts, and other inspiration for	

lessons, crafts, and other inspiration for **teaching Sukkot**.

### Workshops

BabagaNewz has upcoming **teacher workshops** in a number of communities. Click [here](#) to learn more.

### Quick Links

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### Link to Us

Link your school website to BabagaNewz.com. Let kids connect directly to the **engaging educational games, music, crafts, videos, and more** from your home page. Click [here](#) for more information!

### Join our list

Join Our Mailing List!

[here](#) for all the entry details.

*Hag Sukkot sameah*,  
Sara Marx  
Web Editor

### Lessons on *Hesed*, Kindness

Our [Heshvan 5769/November 2008](#) magazine and [Teachers' Guide](#) focus on the theme of *hesed*, kindness. The lesson plans and materials that supplement the print magazine are available online [here](#).

#### >>[Torah Page](#)

Students will study the quote from Proverbs 21:21: "A person who chases after tzedakah and *hesed* will find life, righteousness, and honor." Students will participate in a scavenger hunt around the school or synagogue building to seek out examples of tzedakah and *hesed* in their surroundings.

#### >>[Shui Maizlech: Kind to the Core](#)

This magazine article features a teen who performs the ultimate *hesed*: serving as a *shomer* (guard) for the deceased before burial. This lesson deals with understanding kindness as a virtue, as well as the different ways to be kind to others. To accompany this

How to  
Comfort  
Mourners

article and lesson plan, we have created a comprehensive guide for students, families, and schools, entitled How to Comfort Mourners. To view the online guide, click [here](#). To download the printable version, click [here](#).

#### >>[Israel Feature: A Slice of Hope](#)

This article introduces readers to Yad Eliezer, the largest food relief organization in Israel. In the lesson, students will compare a perfect Shabbat meal to a Jewish text about how a meal must include opening your home to those less fortunate. They will think about acts of *hesed* to help relieve hunger in their own communities. [Click here for Ten Ways to Fight Hunger](#).

### Also Explore

- [More Heshvan lesson plans and materials](#)
- [Quick Start lesson plan](#)
- [Book of the Month - Study Guide: Alan and Naomi by Myron Levoy](#)
- [Torah for Teachers](#)

### Just in Time for Simhat Torah...

Introducing our **Parashat Hashavua mini-movies!**

Every week, watch the all new, original, mini-movies of *parashat hashavua* (the weekly Torah reading). They are **concise and fun**, and your students can learn the main points of the *parashah* simply by watching online in class or at home. Click [here](#) to see the movies, just in time for [Simhat Torah!](#)

Wishing you Mo'adim L'simcha!  
Nita & Michelle