



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

CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAM FOR 7TH GRADERS

CAPs for sale! CAPs for sale!

[And, such a bargain, you shouldn't know from it !!]

HAVE **YOUR** SEVENTH GRADERS BEEN **CAP'** ed??

Our **CULTURAL ARTS PROGRAM** offers a 2 hour session during which 7th graders experience 2 workshops. Each program has an explanatory educational component and 2 craft projects. There is a nominal \$4.00 fee per participant for materials. Choose 2 from the following:

A Taste of Hebrew Calligraphy, Clay Creations, Fabric Creations, Foiling Techniques, Illumination, Painted Glass, and Wood Projects.

ENRICHMENT COURSES for 12 year olds and up (parents and other interested adults are welcome to participate)

In an effort to improve synagogue skills, the Dept. of Education sponsors these Enrichment Classes. The courses last from 3 - 10 weeks, depending on the course chosen: Torah Reading, Nusach, Shofar Blowing, Hebrew Calligraphy, Tallit Making, Megillah Reading.

For more information or to schedule one of these programs, contact Nita Polay Levin, Education Field Worker, at (732) 738 - 4301, or Levin@USCJ.org.

TEACHER TRAINING MINI-COURSES

Winter/Spring Semester is taking shape!

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 (10 - 11:30 a.m.)
LOCATION: GLEN ROCK JEWISH CENTER

For PRESCHOOL DIRECTORS, we are in progress with a Mini-Course just for you with Caryn Bruckheimer, centrally located at our office in Edison. Working title: "Our Congregational Nursery Schools: The Gateway to a Jewish Experience" --- Explore and discuss the various ways in which nursery schools, along with the synagogue team, offer unique opportunities for establishing long-term connections with all families, including unaffiliated and inter-faith.

Date, time, and exact description TBA.

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL DIRECTORS/PRINCIPALS: Keep your eyes open for an upcoming course in March, the week after Purim (March 16 - 20) for on Evaluation and Assessment with Susan Wyner, National USCJ Consultant for Synagogue Education!

RELIGIOUS SCHOOL TEACHERS AND DIRECTORS: We are planning a Mini-Course in YOUR area! Look for one in Morristown and Fort Lee

And we're not done yet!!

If you are interested in attending any of these courses, contact Michelle Rich at 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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preschool corner

Are You Thinking About Hanukkah yet??

Our packets are still available, with all kinds of activities, programs and games for preschoolers - kindergarten

Included in the packet :

information for parents & teachers

food: dreidel sandwiches, candy dreidels, candle salad, an edible menorah, and waffle latkes
puppets

stories & suggested books

grab bag ideas

crafts

sequencing activity

patterning activity

games, puzzles, and activities
**if you are interested in this packet, contact Nita at Levin@USCJ.org
or call (732) 736 - 4301**

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Hello All,

Happy December. I hope everyone had a good Thanksgiving. I'm looking forward to chatting with everyone this Wednesday, Dec 3, at 12:15 EST (you can do the math for the rest of the country). The call in number is 646-519-9391. No codes. Topics will include dealing with academics, if we feel like we want to go beyond what's been shared in writing (you can check out old postings in the archive:

<http://uscj.org/scripts/wa.exe?A1=ind0810&L=ECDIR&X=71F9E408925930BD6C&Y=handelman%40uscj.org>), and any other topics anyone wants to suggest. I suppose we can tackle Hanukkah too.

B' Shalom,
max

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I'd stop eating chocolate but I'm no quitter.

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Shalom, Colleagues.

The following are some high-tech Hanukkah activities that may be new to some of you. You can click onto the sites listed below.

[Hanukkah on the Web](#)

Although books abound with Hanukkah stories, craft projects, recipes and decorations, we shouldn't ignore the draw that today's families and educators have to the web and its contents. Here are a few helpful and safe web sites that are fun to explore and can safely be recommended.

Warning for web users: sites are plentiful this time of year, but care should be taken to assure that the sources are of Judaic content, and not a generic or non-Jewish representation of our holidays and traditions. The following have been tested for their appeal as well as their Jewish traditional sources:

On-line fun and activities:

www.torah tots.com/holidays/chanukah

www.holidays.net/chanukah

www.holidays.kaboose.com

www.hanukat.com
www.mavensearch.com

Information and Craft Projects:

<http://judaism.about.com>
www.dltk.kids.com/world/jewish/hanukah.htm
www.billybear4kids.com/holidays/hanukah.htm

Family Activities:

<http://printables.familyeducation.com>
<http://fun.familyeducation.com>

If you know of other sites that you would like to share with your colleagues, feel free to send them along. Well-tested and updated site recommendations are always welcome.

Hope you have the chance to learn and grow as you create or recreate your own school Hanukkah celebrations that are educational as well as fun!

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Shalom, Chaverim:

**Our USCJ colleague, Wendy Light, Consultant for Framework for Excellence and Placement passed this wonderful opportunity on for us. We thought that in this holiday season, it would be a terrific project for your schools and congregations. I'm not certain of the original source, but read on for a great and easy mitzvah project.
(also attached in docs format)**

**XEROX IS DOING A MITZVAH AND YOUR SCHOOL CAN HELP!!
Pass it on!**

If you go to this web site, www.LetsSayThanks.com you can pick out a thank you card and Xerox will print it to be sent to a soldier that is currently serving in Iraq. You can't pick out who gets it, but it will go to a member of the armed services.

How AMAZING it would be if we could get everyone we know to send one!!! **It is FREE and it only takes a second.** Wouldn't it be wonderful if the soldiers received a bunch of these? Whether you are for or against the war, our soldiers overseas need to know we are behind them.

This takes just 10 seconds and it's a wonderful way to say thank you. Please take the time and please take the time to pass it on for others to do. We can never say enough thank you's!

Thanks for taking to time to support our military!

The case of the missing Kaf:

In the last ednotes sent, my electronic version of the Historic and Gastronomic History of Hanukkah arrived with the Kaf/Chaf missing in the e-mail text and docs formats. If this happened to you as well, (see below) the message included the pdf format which is more reliable should you decide to use it in your setting, as well as Maxine Handelman's *Shiur* in case you missed it the first time.

A Historic and Gastronomic Guide to Hanukkah

Some of the facts that may be less known to some of our parents:

The Book of Maccabees describes the first Hanukkah celebration, which more closely resembled Sukkot than the Hanukkah we celebrate today. The Maccabee fighters had missed Sukkot while battling the Greek-Syrians in the second century BCE. Once the Temple was retaken, they were eager to recapture this holiday as well. Thus, an eight-day celebration (II Maccabees 10:1-8), which would later evolve into the Hanukkah we recognize today. The rabbis of the Talmudic period were concerned that an annual celebration based on war and victory was a complicated legacy for Jewish continuity. From this concern came the story of the cruse of oil that you will not find in the Book of Maccabees, but will become an important symbol of our Chanukah traditions. (Babylonian Talmud, Shabbat 21b)

Our colleague and friend Maxine Handelman, North American Consultant for Early Childhood Education, recently sent early childhood educators her December Shiur citing the two texts. If you didn't receive it, it is attached here as a .pdf file. These texts along with Maxine's questions might be useful to you and your teachers.

The priest Mattathias, the head of the Hasmoneon family, took the leadership in guiding the Jews of Israel to reject the Hellenistic culture imposed by the Greek-Syrians. He and his five sons initiated a revolt, however Mattathias died shortly thereafter, and it was his third son Judah who showed the most strength and fortitude to take up the mantle of leadership. The many battles by a small rebel band of Jews "hammered away" at the strong Greek-Syrian army. These rebels became known by the acronym Maccabee (*vf/), from the root created from the first letters of the phrase: Mi (/) Kamokha (f) Baelim (v) Adoshem (*) and also attributed to Hebrew roots of a word for "hammer": %v,/ is an extinguisher, and %f/ means to "hit" or "deliver a blow". Yes, the Greek-Syrians were blown away!

It was this band of Jews that took the leadership in cleaning the Temple of all evidence of Greek idolatry, and preparing it for use in giving praise to God for the victory over the powerful aggressor, and in gratitude. Because the use of pure olive oil was a regular part of the sacrificial cult, and in deference to the rabbinic tradition of the miracle of the oil, Jewish kitchens around the world abound with artery clogging, oil based recipes during Hanukkah. According to her introduction to Hanukkah in *The Jewish Holiday Cookbook: An International Collection of Recipes and Customs* by Gloria Kaufer Green (pp. 147-149) the relevance of oil as a Hanukkah symbol has even more impact when we remember that the Hebrew word for "oil" is "shemen" (0/-), which we also find reflected in the word for the

number "eight" -"shemoneh" (שמונה) for the number of days we celebrate, and featured in the name Hasmonean, in Hebrew "Hashmonayim" (חשמונאים). (A great opportunity for a root letter search!)

Hanukkah Food Traditions (also from Gloria Kaufer Green):

In the Ashkenazic tradition, there are many variations of the latke recipe. In Eastern Europe, potato pancakes were fried in melted goose fat, as oil was scarce and pricey. The rendered fat (schmaltz) was also used to make gribeness, skin cracklings.

Sefardic Jews prefer to use oil to fry pastry and dip in syrup--the best known being soofganiyot, (סופגניות) the Israeli jelly doughnut holes, coated with sugar.

According to the Apocrypha, the beautiful widow, Judith, arranged to dine with the enemy general Holofernes, who was planning to destroy her town. She fed him great quantities of cheese and to make him thirsty, and wine to quench his thirst. Once he fell asleep, she beheaded him, thus saving the community. In her honor, some Jewish households serve cheese and dairy products during Hanukkah (like the sour cream that makes those latkes taste soooo good!) It is said that Judith's valor inspired the Maccabees to keep the pressure on.

From Your Friends at United Synagogue, May Your Hanukkah Shine Brightly!

From all of us at The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, have a happy and Joyful Hanukkah!

USCJ EC Staff Meeting *Shiur* – December 2008

“Dear God, How come you did all those miracles in the old days and don’t do any now?”

- from *Children’s Letters to God: The New Collection* compiled by Stuart Hample and Eric Marshall, NY: Workman Publishing, 1991.

Questions for discussion:

1. Hanukkah is the holiday of miracles. What is/are the Hanukkah miracle(s)*?
2. Think about a moment that felt miraculous to you, and tell your colleagues about it. (Only one person gets to say “the birth of my child.”) Describe your feelings at the time of the “miracle” and its lingering effects.
3. The battle commemorated on Hanukkah occurred between 168 and 165 BCE. We learn the history of Hanukkah from I Maccabees and II Maccabees, written around 135 BCE and 120 BCE respectively, which are found in the Apocrypha. (The Apocrypha are writings excluded from the Tanach – the Hebrew Bible.) We read:
“Maccabee with his men, led by the Lord, recovered the temple and city of Jerusalem.... The sanctuary was purified on the twenty-fifth of Kislev, the same day of the same month as that on which foreigners had profaned it. The Jews celebrated joyfully for eight days as on the Feast of Booths [Sukkot]. By public edict and decree they prescribed that the whole Jewish nation should celebrate these days every year.” (II Maccabees, 10: 1, 5-6, 8)

The rabbis, writing the Talmud some 500 years later, bring up an entirely different miracle: “What is the reason for Hanukkah? Our rabbis taught ... that when the Greeks entered the temple, they defiled all the oil there. When the Hasmonians [Maccabees] beat the Greeks, only one cruse of oil that still bore the seal of the high priest could be found. Though it contained only enough oil for one day’s lighting, a miracle occurred, and the lamp burned for eight days. The next year they ordained these days a holiday with songs and praises.” (Babylonian Talmud, *Shabbat* 21b)

What can you make of these differing stories? Why would the rabbis stress the miracle of oil

over the military victory? Why is the oil story still so popular?

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*The Hanukkah miracles include the vial of oil, enough for one day, lasting for eight days, and the victory of the tiny Maccabee army over the great Greek/Syrian army.

4. As a staff, do a little more research. Check out books like *Jewish Every Day* (Maxine Handelman, A.R.E. Publishing) and on-line resources like this study guide from Koach: <http://www.uscj.org/Koach/documents/Hanukkah-04.pdf>. When all of you feel like you have a good handle on the whole story of Hanukkah, develop a consistent version of the story to use throughout your school. Which miracles will you include? Discuss how the study and celebration of Hanukkah will spiral through the years at your school, increasing in complexity each year and building on the previous year's understandings.

For more information, see the article by Maxine Handelman at www.morim.org called "It's a Miracle!"

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HANUKKAH ACTIVITIES, IDEAS AND GAMES!

Are you getting ready for Hanukkah in your religious school? Feel free to contact us for supplements.

*Consider making a booklet for each student with educational games and puzzles that re-enforce information they have learned. They can work on these during spare moments, like, if you are giving them a break, or if you have 5 minutes left, which is not enough time to begin another lesson. We have many, MANY games and puzzles to send you! And, did I say MANY???

*arts & crafts, recipes, stories and plays

*Here's an interesting way to make sure you are not being redundant from previous years: An activity that is called *Circles of Knowledge*: divide students into teams. Give them 10 minutes to list on paper every fact or piece of knowledge they can remember about Hanukkah. Then, bring the groups together to play a game. Going from team to team, they name one item on their list. If it is correct, the team gets a point. If incorrect, obviously, they don't. Also, they don't get a point for anything mentioned that another team has already mentioned. So, this helps them pay attention to each other. It helps if they cross off items that another team mentions.

*Have a discussion on what a miracle is and what miracles have occurred in modern day.

*We can also send you information for older students about Hanukkah as the impetus to think about energy efficiency.

*And don't forget to have a discussion about "THE" December Dilemma. Our kids are DESPERATE to discuss how they are feeling at this time of year. Where else to do it, but in religious school!
