



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

There is still time to register for our up-coming workshop:

*Excellence in the congregational school, uscj-style:
Framework for excellence*

Framework allows principals to
initiate important educational conversations and get support in raising the educational barre
Framework allows lay people to
frame the right questions and set reachable goals

Framework gives everyone
United Synagogue's high standards for educational excellence, a proven system that fits into
the changing needs of our school population

Framework tells your synagogue that you, the educational director, are doing an excellent job (which could translate into "job security." *HOW? The national USCJ organization recognizes the high standards that you are carrying out for your synagogue.*)

And it tells the community that your synagogue cares about Jewish education (which translates into more potential members. *HOW? When looking for a religious school to send their children to, potential members will take into consideration that YOUR school meets these high standards, while others might not*)

Please join Wendy Light, Director of Framework for Excellence
Bring your questions, bring your concerns. Bring your lay leaders to learn how Framework for Excellence can enhance your school and your congregation and to join you in this.

*Wednesday, November 7
7 – 8:30 PM
NJ Regional office, USCJ
1090 King Georges Post Road, Suite 1003
Edison (Raritan Center)*

PLEASE CALL FOR DIRECTIONS (and, especially, don't rely on MapQuest, as they will get you farblundged!)

*RSVP to Michelle Rich, Director of Education and Youth Activities:
Rich@USCJ.org, or (732) 738 - 4301*

Hi Everyone,

This is a final reminder and push for you to register for this two day symposium at JTS in New York. I have studied with many of the speakers and know that it will be worth your time and effort. And, it would be great to see you as I plan to be there (unless by some chance my about to be born grandson has a brit on one of those days :-))

If you need a hotel room, check out www.clubquarters.com. The password is 'USCJ'.

Read the attachment below and sign up.

B'shalom,
Serene
USCJ Consultant for Synagogue Education

Faculty and students are invited as our guests

William Davidson Graduate School of Jewish Education of The Jewish Theological Seminary

presents

“Pedagogy and Curriculum in Contemporary Jewish Education”

An academic conference in memory of Professor Seymour Fox, z”l

Sunday, November 11, 2007 4:30–9:30 p.m.
Monday, November 12, 2007 9:00 a.m.–5:30 p.m.

The conference speakers will be scholars whose work was closely related to Seymour Fox’s own concerns. Professor Lee Shulman, president of the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching, will be the opening-day speaker. The program will also include reflections on Seymour Fox’s life and career by friends and colleagues.

The conference, “**Pedagogy and Curriculum in Contemporary Jewish Education,**” will take place at The Jewish Theological Seminary in New York on Sunday, November 11, and Monday, November 12, 2007.

RSVP to Tyree Perez: typerez@jtsa.edu
or Dr. Ofra Backenroth: ofbackenroth@jtsa.edu.

Everyone is invited to the lectures. For dinner and lunch please send a check of fifty dollars per person by November 5, 2007, to Tyree Perez.

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Preschool corner

This month's shiur is very timely, as I am sending it to you from my sick bed (not to worry, it's just that really nasty cold going around the country, but I'm actually going to try and fight it with rest)! Enjoy, have a great discussion, and remember, I always love feedback (and if someone could email me some chicken soup, that would be great too!)

I look forward to seeing lots of you at NAEYC next week. If you're coming and haven't made your reservation for the USCJ dinner on Wednesday night, get on it!

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

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

USCJ EC Staff Meeting *Shiur* – November 2007

Genesis 17:26-18:1

Thus Abraham and his son Ishmael were circumcised on that very day, and all his household; his homeborn slaves and those that had been bought from outsiders, were circumcised with him. The Lord appeared to him by the terebinths [small Mediterranean trees] of Mamre; he [Abraham] was sitting at the entrance of the tent as the day grew hot.

Questions for discussion:

1. It is said that the third day after circumcision is the most painful. The rabbis say that God visited Abraham on this day, and that God is establishing the model for *bikur cholim* (bee-kore ho-leem), the mitzvah of visiting the sick (*Sotah* 14a). What might you imagine God said or did with Abraham on this visit? With cold and flu season upon us, what are some things you can imagine saying or doing when you visit someone who is sick?
2. Have you ever been sick or injured, and had people visit, call or email you? Have people sent cards? How did it feel to receive these visits and messages? What does it feel like when you are the healthy person making the visit?
3. In the Talmud, we learn, “One who visits removes one sixtieth of the patient’s illness.” (*Nedarim* 39b) This attributes great power to the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*. How could this be true? Do you believe that receiving a visit actually can make someone who is sick or injured better?
4. Young children are very capable of doing the mitzvah of *bikur cholim*. The Talmud is clear on this point: “*Bikur cholim* has no boundaries or limits, i.e., youth may visit the elderly and the elderly may visit the youth” (*Nedarim* 39a). There are many ways to involve children. The class can call an absent child on the phone, or make and send cards in the mail. If the class has jobs, one job can be *Bikur Cholim* Helper. This child is responsible for noticing if all the children are present, and to point out if someone is missing. If a child is missing because s/he is sick, the *Bikur Cholim* Helper can call the child on the phone. How will *bikur cholim* become a regular practice in your classroom?

More information and resources about *bikur cholim* can be found at <http://www.bikurcholimcc.com/>

Maxine Segal Handelman
Consultant for Early Childhood Education, United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
handelman@uscj.org

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Okay, okay ... I'm here in Boston (did you know that I work from a home office here?) so I couldn't resist asking Robin Kahn from Beth Israel in Andover, MA, what she was going to do to relate the World Series to her Hebrew school students. Here's how she is thinking about it. (I knew I could count on her for something

fun and educational). If you are interested in a more detailed version of her lessons, she will probably have them ready for tomorrow's game so be in touch with her directly at eddirector@bethisraelmv.org.

Go Sox!
Serene

Yup, I have been thinking....

3 thoughts....

-Torah Aura's I HAVE A QUESTION ABOUT GOD has a chapter called, "does God really care who wins the world series or superbowl"

-playing them mandy patinkens (I botched that sp.) yiddish version of TAKE ME OUT TO THE BALLGAME and talking about assimilation and acculturation

-i have a Hebrew red sox t-shirt and I thought I would spell out some English words with Hebrew letters and have them translate them....world series, baseball, home run, papelbaum (sp?), fenway, rockies, Boston, Denver etc....

Do you have any ideas?

Yes, you can put on ed notes...thanks for asking. GO SOX!

Quoting Serene Victor <serene@msvictor.org>:

Family Meals at the Synagogue

Hi Folks,

Here's a tip to improve the quality of family dinners you have at the shul, whether for Shabbat, holidays, or other events. I came up with this idea by imagining what it is like to have successful Shabbat company at home. The children eat dinner in about 10 minutes and then go off to play while the parents linger over their food and conversation.

Here's my suggestion. Set up the 4 corners of the social hall with play centers. One corner has dress-up, one corner has floor pillows and books, one corner has board games or cards, one corner has blocks (these are just examples). When kids finish dinner they can move to one of the corners to play. They are still in sight of the parents who are now able to stay at the table, lingering over food and conversation. Some synagogues get a high school kid to staff each corner for supervised play, but this isn't really necessary. Give it a try ... everyone who has used it has been pleased with the results.

B'shalom,
Serene

Serene Victor
USCJ National Consultant for Synagogue Education

Hello Everyone,

I was impressed by the write up for this web conference professional development opportunity November 8 and 15 to discuss a question that we often run from. How do we make halacha meaningful? This seems to be an opportunity for us personally as well as educators to take a look at this troubling question. Let me know if you sign up.

http://www.lookstein.org/email_ad40.htm

B'shalom,
Serene

Serene Victor
USCJ National Consultant for Synagogue Education

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Hi Folks,

I came across this resource on the USCJ website. Thought you might be interested especially those without a rabbi in your congregation right now.

B'shalom,
Serene

Ask a Conservative Rabbi

Have you been wondering about some fine point of Jewish law? Do you want to know why you do something, or how you should do something, or whether you should do something? A group of Conservative rabbis, each a specialist in some aspect of halakha, can answer your emailed question. These rabbis should not be seen as replacements for your own rabbi, whose opinion is definitive in his or her own synagogue, but they can provide in-depth explanations to a whole range of questions. To ask a question, email askarabbi@uscj.org.

Serene Victor
USCJ National Consultant for Synagogue Education

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Fourteen Sugyot (Talmudic Discussions) Every Jew Should Know

The Conservative Yeshiva of United Synagogue is pleased to announce an On-Line Course, Fourteen Sugyot (Talmudic Discussions) Every Jew Should Know, taught by veteran Conservative Yeshiva instructor Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein. The course will begin the week of January 6, 2008, and continue for 14 weeks to end before Pesach. The course is open to Yeshiva alumni, members of USCJ congregations, USCJ staff, and others who are interested in furthering their Jewish learning.

The Babylonian Talmud is the foundation of Jewish life since its formation some 1500 years ago. It is the source of Jewish practice and, perhaps more importantly, it is central to shaping the Jewish thought process, our way of looking at the world, and the manner in which we approach, think about and solve problems. This course will seek to provide the student with representative examples of important discussions on a variety of issues that will offer a window into how the sages think and analyze problems. As the title of this course suggests, the selection of the examples keeps in mind that there are certain classic Talmudic debates that are fundamental to Jewish identity, religious and moral meaning and practice. These examples, obviously, touch only the tip of the iceberg, but will hopefully provide the student with some basic Talmudic skills, some inspiring debate, and an appetite for more learning.

1. Does the observance of commandments require kavvanah (intention)? (Rosh Hashanah 28b)
2. How important is human dignity? (Berachot 19b-20a)
3. Can one perform a mitzvah with something stolen? (Sukkah 29b-30a)
4. Why do we sound the shofar on Rosh Hashanah the way we do? (Rosh Hashanah 33b-34a)
5. What is the reward for observing the commandments? (Kiddushin 39b)
6. What is the status of a conversion for the sake of marriage? (Yevamot 24b)
7. Are there cases where one is exempt from human liability but still liable before God? (Baba Kamma 55b-56a)
8. Is it possible to acquire lost property? (Baba Metziah 21a-22b)
9. What exactly are the four questions we ask at the seder and who is supposed to ask them? (Pesachim 116a)
10. What is the Jewish attitude toward verbal deception? (Baba Metziah 48b)
11. What exactly is the afikomen that we eat at the seder? (Pesachim 119b-120a)
12. Why do we say berachot of thanks? (Berachot 35a)
13. Should Torah study be combined with earning a living? (Berachot 35b)
14. Does a person have an obligation to act beyond the requirements of the law?

(Baba Kama 98-99 selections)

This is an asynchronous class - the teacher will post materials each week for study individually or in hevruta. Students can log-on at any time and participate in online forums for discussion. The teacher will be a frequent contributor to the forums and will be available to answer questions. Students are expected to spend 1-2 hours per week in partner study and contributing to the online forums.

Instructor: Rabbi Mordechai Silverstein received Rabbinic Ordination from both the Jewish Theological Seminary of America and Yeshiva University. He is a Ph.D. candidate in Talmud at Hebrew University. He teaches Talmud, Midrash and Advanced Midrash at the Conservative Yeshiva.

Tuition for the 14-week class is \$250. Since a goal of the class is Hevruta study, a 10% discount will be given to Hevruta partners who sign up together for the class. Alumni of the Conservative Yeshiva receive an additional 10% tuition discount. Students from Israel, Asia, South Africa, Eastern Europe and other developing nations will receive a 50% tuition discount. (The course is open to a limited number of USCJ employees for a registration fee of \$50.)

Registration: To register for the class, please click on the link to the Conservative Yeshiva on-line registration system, <https://uscjisrael.researchsuccess.com/> and choose "on-line learning spring 08" for

your choice of program. Follow the instructions for completing the on-line application. Alumni or current students of the Conservative Yeshiva, please email yeshiva@uscj.org to receive an application.

Please share this announcement! Additional on-line courses are planned to begin in February. If you have questions about the course or about on-line learning with the Conservative Yeshiva, please contact Rabbi Gail Diamond at yeshiva@uscj.org .

Conservative Yeshiva of United Synagogue

8 Agron Street, PO Box 7456

Jerusalem, Israel

011-972-2-622-3116

011-972-2-624-6473 (fax)

yeshiva@uscj.org

<http://www.conservativeyeshiva.org/>

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REVISED – LATEST UPDATE

USCJ Response To The Wild Fires In The Pacific Southwest Region

We have all been glued to our television sets as we watch the terrible disaster of the reported 17 wild fires displacing what is now believed to be one million people in the state of California.

We are all greatly concerned and USCJ has received requests regarding our efforts in terms of assisting the Pacific Southwest Region and those institutions which may have been effected, as well as where the donations of money may be sent.

The United Synagogue has coordinated efforts through Joel Baker, the Executive Director of the Pacific Southwest Region of USCJ for anyone wishing to donate money at this time.

*** Our plan is in place!**

The Staff at Rapaport House is prepared to receive financial donations and answer your inquiries:

Checks should be made out as follows:

Pay to the Order of:

United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

(Memo: California Fire Relief Fund)

Address your donation to:

USCJ - Rapaport House

155 Fifth Avenue

New York, NY 10010.6802

California Fire Relief Fund

Further questions regarding relief efforts should be sent to:

Barry S. Mael
Chief Service Delivery Officer
The United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism
Rapaport House
155 Fifth Avenue
New York, NY 10010 - 6802
Direct Dial: 646-519-9330
Facsimile: 212-353-9439

Please continue to keep all of the people in this region in your prayers

Letter To Pacific Southwest Region From Joel Baker, Executive Director of the Pacific Southwest Region

Ladies and Gentlemen:

Due to the circumstances surrounding the wildfires I have been able to speak to some, but not all, of you. I wish you, your families and your congregational family safety and good health.

The Region has been updating both the PSW Regional congregations as well as our Conservative family around the country. They are all deeply concerned with your well being and anxious to be of help. My office will coordinate communication and their efforts. I will take your lead as to tangible help we can provide when you know what you are facing. As you organize to respond please keep us and our resources in mind, as we keep you in our thoughts.

It is our honor to be of service to you.

Joel
Joel Baker
Executive Director
Pacific Southwest Region/United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism

818-986-0007 Fax 818-986-6903 E-Mail: pacsw@uscj.org



"WITTY-WORDS"

FROM THE MANHATTAN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE CENTER
of the BJENY

Kristallnacht is the name given to the night of November 9-10, 1938 where Nazi violence was unleashed against Jews, Jewish-owned business and synagogues in Germany and Austria. Jews were arrested, imprisoned, murdered and synagogues were set ablaze.

Below are some links that might be helpful in bringing this topic into your class:

http://www1.yadvashem.org/exhibitions/kristallnacht/home_kristallnacht.html

<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/kristallnacht/frame.htm>

<http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/holocaust/peopleevents/pandeAMEX99.html>

<http://www.aish.com/holocaust/overview/Kristallnacht.asp>

<http://www.jewishvirtuallibrary.org/jsource/Holocaust/kristalltoc.html>

BJENY MEDIA CENTER

AND

BJENY Holocaust curriculum
for middle school students called
It Is My Business: Selected History from 1933-1945
written by: Emily Amie Witty

Cost: \$90.00

includes a copy of the curriculum;

map transparencies;
CD list of videos;
the Yad Vashem DVD Outcast;
and an educators' guide

AND

Consider scheduling a tour at two of our local museums:
Museum of Jewish Heritage of New York: A Living Memorial to the Holocaust

Has a new exhibit on Jewish Resistance

For more information email or call: Dr. Paul Radensky @ 646-437-4310

And

The Yeshiva University Museum at the Center for Jewish History
has a new exhibit on the Life of Alfred Dreyfus

For more information email or call: Ilana Benson @ 212-294-8330 ext. 8823

Emily Amie Witty

Director, Manhattan Educational Resource Center
Board of Jewish Education of Greater New York
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New York, NY 10018
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Fax: 646.472.5461
witty@bjeny.org

FROM OUR FRIENDS AT TORAH AURAH PRODUCTION BULLETIN BOARD

»As Easy as Comparing Apples to... Apples?!?!

Have you seen the awesome Jewish edition of Apples to Apples®? Well, we got it!

Apples to Apples® is the wild, award-winning card and party game that provides instant fun for four to ten players!

In This Issue:

- »No-Stress Teacher Training
- »Candlestick Magic & Hiddur Mitzvah
- »Teaching Tip: "Speed Hevruta"

»No-Stress Teacher Training

Last Sunday, Joel and Josh spent the day at Congregation Beth Emek in Pleasanton, Calif. They worked with education director Judith Radousky and a bunch of teachers, discussing

It's as easy as "comparing apples to apples"...just open the box, deal the cards, and you're ready to play! Select the card from your hand that you think is best described by a card played by the judge. If the judge picks your card, you win that round. And everyone gets a chance to be the judge!

Torah Aura is proud to carry the [Jewish edition](#) and the [Junior Jewish edition](#) of Apples to Apples®. Each round is filled with surprising and outrageous comparisons from a wide range of Jewish people, places, things, and events. Fast moving and refreshing, [Apples to Apples®](#) is a great way to add pizzazz and fun to your Jewish classroom.

[To buy Apples to Apples for your school or home, just click. >](#)

»Hanukkah Already?



Hanukkah is fast approaching. December 3rd will be here before you know it.

For a super-cool Hanukkah art project, check out our "[Decorate Your Own Dreidles](#)." These wood dreidles are 2.75" tall, and they come with blank sides that your students can decorate.

While you're at it, you should check out our bulk [wooden dreidles](#) (the ones that come with the letters already on them). You get 25 for just \$6.99.

Of course, don't forget the excellent Hanukkah materials from Torah Aura, especially [The True Story of Hanukkah](#). The lesson goes way beyond the oil story, presenting Hanukkah as the evolution of a social struggle between two different groups of Jews using historical documents and primary sources.

[Get your Hanukkah supplies early to guarantee you have them on time. Click to get started, >](#)

director Judith Radousky and a bunch of teachers, discussing lesson planning, classroom management, and how to best utilize all kinds of curricular materials in their teaching.

It was a lot of fun, a lot of learning, and it cost Congregation Beth Emek... nothing.

Here's the deal: If you use Torah Aura materials, we'll come to your school to work with educators, rabbis, teachers, and even parents. You pay us nothing. Nada. Zilch. Every Torah Aura book or instant lesson comes with free teacher training. (All you have to do is arrange to cover the cost of our coach-class travel from Los Angeles.)

Interested in doing some awesome teacher education? Email Josh: josh@torahaura.com, or call him at (800) BE-TORAH, x122.

»Candlestick Magic & *Hiddur Mitzvah*

by [Laurie Bellet](#)

Yesterday, I ordered 100 [wood candlesticks](#). I suppose that it isn't so surprising. After all, I do teach a lot of students and, candlesticks for Shabbat are a staple on everybody's art experience agenda. I guess I ought to add that this is the second order of 100 wood candlesticks that I have placed since the current school year began.

So, here's the deal and (and what a deal it is):

Currently, at [Bayerwood.com](#), you can order wood candlesticks (the tall spindle style) for only 25 cents apiece (50 cents/pair). Listed on the website as "repairable," I can't figure out what needs to be fixed. I cannot find the flaws! The candlesticks come in several sizes: [7 inch](#); [9 inch](#); [11 inch](#). I ordered the 9 inch, the first time, and this size has been well suited for all my students in 1st through 8th grade. Yesterday, I ordered the 7 inch size, just for variety.



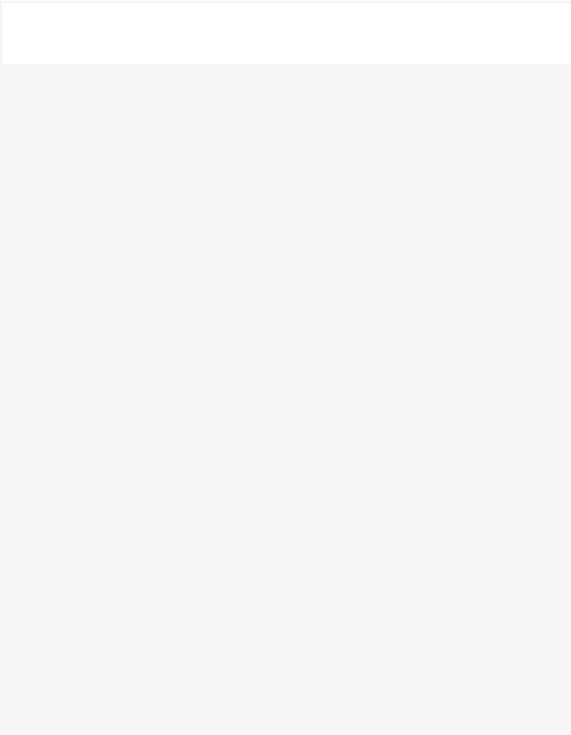
As with any art experience, the outcome, even a stunning pair of Shabbat candlesticks, is only a 'thing,' a product, if the process is not accompanied by a bigger lesson. Creating a pair of Shabbat candlesticks (or Kiddush cup, or any ritual object for that matter) is truly a remarkable experience. This week, I asked 1st and 2nd graders to consider that, as artists, they are taking a 25 cent piece of flawed wood in order to transform it into something *kodesh*, an item imbued with sanctity. These young students eagerly gave serious thought to the difference between the 25 cent piece of so-called, "repairable" wood and a Shabbat candlestick. It didn't take them long:

"You decorate it extra beautifully."

"You plan to use it for a special reason."

"You work with all your heart!"

This was my cue to further the lesson and introduce *hiddur*



mitzvah, the commandment to beautify. When we fulfill this mitzvah, we further our individual and unique relationship with God. It is like giving someone you love a surprise that you just know, for sure, will make them happy. Being the giver becomes a precious gift in and of itself. All of a sudden, we are not just painting or gluing, we are engaging in a sacred dance. We are heightening an Eternal relationship.

[To learn how to make incredible candlesticks in your classroom, click and read more. >](#)

»Teaching Tip: "Speed Hevruta"

Rabbi Micah Streiffer at Temple Beth El in Charlotte, North Carolina writes:

Today with my 7th graders I did "speed hevruta." I lined them up in 2 lines facing each other and asked a question. They had 1 minute to discuss that question, and then one line moved to the right so that everyone had a different partner for the next question. It kept things hopping and gave them opportunities to study with a bunch of different people. (and since they are 7th graders, they're not capable of talking about anything for much longer than 1 minute).

Got a great teaching tip? [Drop us a line](#), and we'll feature it in the TAPBB.