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TOWARDS THE ORIENTATION OF THE NEW TEACHER

FOR THE

REFORM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

Stuart E. Davis

Thesis submitted in partial fulfillment  
of requirements for Ordination

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion

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Referee, Professor Sylvan D. Schwartzman

### Digest

For many years there has been a need for a practical, readable work to orient the new teacher to the Reform Religious School. Good students, as good teachers, are not accidents. Teaching is a learning process, and to teach, one must learn. This thesis recognizes this need and endeavors to fulfill a segment of the demand for qualifying instructors.

It is written in a manner that is relaxed and flexible, just as teaching should be. A child-centered atmosphere has been created so that the emphasis is on the whole child, his needs and his development. An awareness of the individuality of each child is stressed with hopes that the teacher's program and course of study will be adapted to this philosophy.

While the child is the object of instruction, the teacher is the transmitting subject of instruction. It has long been recognized that too many teachers regard themselves as infallible authoritarians and fail to see the child's human qualities, as well as their own. It is hoped that the new teacher will have positive attitudes and a wholesome respect for the children's ideas and needs. It is also hoped that the teacher will keep an open mind as to his, or her, own shortcomings and refrain from projecting them upon the students.

The thesis has been written in two parts: the first being the general concepts of education. The teaching and learning process is more than an accumulation of fact, whether it takes place in a secular or religious educational environment. The new teacher should be aware of the fact that learning is a multiple experience and that a child grows emotionally, intellectually and socially in every academic encounter. With a better understanding of the child's areas of development the

teacher is equipped to deal with individuals and to help build a foundation for learning and character building. This thesis attempts to help the instructor guide the child to meaningful educational experiences that will be related to the child's life.

The second section has been devoted to techniques and practices to aid the teacher. Here again, there is a definite correlation between secular education and religious education. The techniques and methods are the same, only the subject matter differs. Guides have been provided for lesson planning in this segment of the work, with attention toward diversified devices and the use of supplementary material.

Pupil assignments and their importance to the classroom work has been considered, along with the importance of making every learning experience a related one. The significance of teaching independent thinking has been discussed as well.

The last chapter of the thesis is devoted to evaluating the student and the teaching. Through evaluation, the teacher can measure the effectiveness of the teaching. A measurement of the teacher is as important as the measurement of the students, and the results should be utilized in discovering ways to improve methods.

Finally, this thesis is designed for use as a text in a course of study or as a reference for independent study. It is the hope of the author that his teaching has been flexible and effective and the learning meaningful and motivating.

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## PREFACE

As in the field of secular education, Jewish religious schools find themselves in the predicament of obtaining qualified teachers. These religious school instructors must have a genuine interest for and in religious school education, and even more important, they must have adequate preparation and training.

In very general terms Judaism has based its propagation on the knowledge of the religion as well as an involvement in the practices. Since this is the case, it is naturally assumed that those in the position of religious school teachers be founded in this philosophy themselves and have the necessary methods and techniques at their disposal. It is for this expressed purpose that this thesis has been written, ever realizing that education, in whatever discipline, contains no bounds and has no limits.

Acknowledgement is due to Dr. Sylvan D. Schwartzman, Professor of Jewish Religious Education at the Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion, for his patient and practical assistance. Also, my deepest appreciation to my wife, Sheila B. Davis, whose aid and knowledge of education helped bring this thesis into fruition.

## Chapter I

### THE DEMANDS IN JEWISH EDUCATION

#### Who Me - A Teacher?

Sunday  
School  
Director:

You have all been asked here because at one time or another you have expressed an interest in our Temple Sunday School. To the best of my knowledge, none of you has ever taught in our Sunday School. I know that some of you have had secular teaching experience, a few of you have attended our Sunday School, but the majority of you have had no particular teaching experience but have an interest in our Temple and its Sunday School. The reason I know of this interest is because of the personal contact I've had with you, or you have spoken with the Rabbi and the teachers in the Sunday School and they have given me your names.

Each year at this time we find ourselves in need of a few new teachers. I've called you together to explore the possibility of obtaining volunteers for next year's Sunday School session.

David:

I'd like to help out, but what I know about Judaism you could put in a thimble.

Harriet:

I'm very interested in studying about Judaism, but I don't think that I could put it over to the students. I'm sure it's not like my class at public school; at least I've been trained for that job.



Betty: I feel the same as Harriet, as far as studying about Jewish subjects. It's very interesting and I like to help my own children with their Sunday School studies, but I've never been trained to teach any type of school.

Robert: It seems to me that you want someone who has a deep belief in Judaism. It's true that I have an interest in the Sunday School, but I'm not sure that I could teach without being biased.

Morrie: If you're worried about not knowing anything about Judaism, first, you'd probably be surprised at what you do know, and secondly, I feel that most teachers should learn along with their pupils.

Betty: You're right, Morrie, I have found that not only do I learn when I help my own children, but when I show interest they learn more and so do I.

Carol: Betty has a good point there. I have found the same thing when I help my younger brother and sister. You know, I've never thought of it that way until just now. But the thing that still concerns me is that in a class room there must be certain techniques. Teachers usually do not deal with their own children or brothers and sisters.

Robert: If I were interested, as some of you seem to be, in teaching, where would I get the experience and knowledge that one needs to be a teacher? I think one would need a great deal of both of these in working with children.

Karen: The way I see it, correct me if I'm wrong, if you can read faster than the children and keep ahead of them in the lessons, you'll fare out all right.

As you can easily see from the discussion, many of these people are interested in teaching religious school and all have questions in one or more areas. All of the reasons mentioned in the discussion, as well as many more, are logical and eminent. The Sunday School Director, being a professionally trained person, is aware of these feelings of insecurity in his prospective teachers and will do his best to abate them through explanations and examples in his training program.

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Concepts of Learning

The popular concept of learning seems to mean the accumulating of facts, words and information. The means of accumulating these facts is secondary and any techniques are acceptable as long as there is good recitation in class and the pupils are orderly. Exercises, memorization, drills, testing, and "teacher-ladling" are all acceptable.

The child in this school environment becomes a victim of subject matter. His needs are overlooked and the only consideration is the fact that he learns for the coming test or recitation.

Betty: Well, the second grade finally learned the Ten Commandments. Last Sunday I offered a prize for the student who learned them the fastest and the most perfect. This Sunday some of them knew them.

David: Fine, but will they still know them when they get to my sixth grade?

Sunday School Director: Good question - how effective is this artificial stimulation?

Harriet: I don't believe you have really taught the class the Commandments, Betty. They may be able to vocalize them but they have no meaning for the children. By teaching this way you are not helping the child gain in experience or build his ideas and actions. Your second graders can't use what they have learned because it has no true meaning in their everyday life and therefore there is no real motivation for them to remember.

Betty: Perhaps that's why only some of them learned the Commandments. I guess memorizing isn't a very significant and meaningful experience.

David: There seems to be a relation between how much the child retains and his emotional involvement in the subject. In other words, I have found that my sixth graders seem to learn and remember when they are able to relate the subject to what is happening to them outside of Sunday School.

Sunday School Director: Yes, David, here you have hit upon an important factor in learning. You see, when we think that we are teaching one aspect - let's say historical facts - actually we may and often do cross many other lines.

Ted: I know just what you mean. Last Sunday when I was teaching early life in Palestine, I found that the students learned more than just the subject, per se. For instance, we found that those people had similar social problems and economic concerns as we have today.

We are beginning to see the growth of a teacher. Because these are thoughtful people they are interested in knowing more about children and the learning process. They have succeeded in discovering that in order for a child to learn, the subject must be meaningful, understandable and related to the child's experiences. They have also learned that the subject matter must be based on the understanding of the child's capabilities, interests and background. Learning is a multiple experience; in one given lesson a child may grow emotionally, socially and intellectually. It is also important that the teacher equip the student with the facility to carry what he has learned in one grade to succeeding grades and then to life itself.

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What Teachers Should Know About Learning

As the first few weeks of Sunday School pass, our new teachers become aware that there are many facets to teaching and learning. It is not enough to know just the subject matter. Because the whole child is involved in the learning process, the instructor must also be aware of the child's many areas of development.

The realization that there are individual differences in maturation

comes soon to the aware teacher, and due to these differences one often must use various types of motivation for one subject. If the class consists of twenty pupils, there will be twenty different attitudes and interests to be reckoned with and organized. This is why a teacher must be flexible and willing to learn something about each individual pupil and group psychology.

Morrie: One of the high points in my teaching the eighth grade has been the ethics course. Until this morning this was the one aspect of the curriculum in which I thought there was real meaning and communication.

Sally: What happened?

Morrie: This morning when I tried to involve the children in a discussion of threats to Jewish family life today - specifically, early dating - some of the boys and a couple of girls began to giggle and make wisecracks. Personally, I thought that the information was very interesting and they could learn something from the discussion. Well, when those few began to cut up I stood up and told them that it seemed to me that they should be able to control themselves and pay attention like the rest of the class.

Carol: Is this the first time that something like this has happened - didn't you ever notice any giggling before?

Morrie: Sure, there's been tittering and moving around during other discussions but never an outburst like this. If I

have to continually cope with outbursts such as the one this morning, how can we cover the material?

Sunday School Director: Morrie, what do you mean that these children should be able to control themselves and pay attention like the rest of the class? Do you think that this is entirely a discipline problem?

Evelyn: Morrie, how old are the students in your class?

Morrie: It's the eighth grade class, some thirteen or fourteen.

Evelyn: It seems to me that if you have a difference in chronological age there might even be a greater difference in their mental or social age.

Morrie: Look, what difference should that make in terms of respect for not only the teacher but the subject matter itself? I'm presenting facts.

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The foregoing discussion was followed by an interesting exploration into the development and readiness of the individual child. It is of acute importance to know that all classroom work, whether mechanical or conceptual, must be presented and adjusted to individual differences. This is of particular importance in a Sunday School class since there is heterogeneous grouping. In planning a lesson, consideration must be given to each child according to his interests, capabilities and background. In light of this, the judging of the child's performance must be viewed in the same vein.



Harriet: I have found by using certain child-study techniques in planning units, selecting and presenting materials and organizing work groups, I am able to present my material according to the child's individual needs.

Sunday School Director: That's a very good suggestion, Harriet. Morrie, if you could facilitate this in your classroom I'm positive that many of the problems that are concerned with emotional and social readiness will be solved.

Morrie: Understanding that children develop differently according to their needs, can you give me an example of the child-study techniques and how to use them?

Sunday School Director: There is no one technique that is necessarily used over another; the ideal is to be able to utilize a variety of approaches. For instance, here are some that you might consider in order to understand your children better:

1. Personal interviews with children and former teachers, and if necessary, parents.
2. Personal observation in your classroom of the individual child.
3. Give quizzes that require subjective answers and interpret.
4. Keep files of samples of work and look for growth.
5. When necessary, secure assistance from the Sunday School Director.



6. Keep an anecdotal record of pertinent information on each child.

7. Review cumulative records of the children.

By using a combination of these techniques, the structure of your lesson will not be beyond the grasp of the ability of your students; thus, you will reduce frustrations and discontent with Sunday School and thereby stimulate interest.

Evelyn:        This is all well and good, but I think that we have overlooked the simple possibility that some children due to slowness in motor development, depending upon their age, just can't sit still for a long period of time, and thereby lose the content of the lesson.

Harriet:        Exactly, and the same is true of intellectual development. Some children are not intellectually ready to grasp certain concepts. They also may be deficient in certain skills, such as reading, and therefore be hindered in their learning.

The teacher must continually be cognizant of the fact that the class as a whole is made up of individuals and as such with individual differences and needs. The effectiveness of group learning is only as strong as the effectiveness of individual learning.

Situation Problems

1. When the Temple Sunday School needed teachers a number of people were invited to an evening meeting with the director of the school. For fear of not getting anyone on his staff or in the teacher training program, the director tried to abate the prospective teachers' apathy in committing themselves by saying: "You have nothing to worry about if you keep a chapter ahead of the kids." What are the implications involved here - is this true?
2. Helen has found that her sixth grade class does not retain facts from one lesson to another. She is about to plan a lesson on times in Jerusalem just prior to the destruction of the First and Second Temples. Helen believes that it is important to remember dates and specific facts concerning these two periods. What suggestions could we give her to make these times seem real to her students?
3. Ida, who is six years old, never seems to get excited over the fun activities in class. When called upon to tell a story she talks low and under her breath or not at all. The teacher has noticed that no one in the class wants to sit near her and she apparently has no friends. Ida's teacher tried to talk to her after class one day. Ida's only reply was, "I don't like Sunday School." Now what?

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Chapter II

WHAT IS A GOOD TEACHER?

Characteristics Of A Good Teacher

A teacher's function is to create the most favorable conditions and atmosphere for the learning process. The ultimate goal for the teacher is helping the student become a mature, informed, cooperative and creative individual who will be able to adjust to, learn and develop from problems and situations in life.

The foregoing may be called the teacher's attitude and responsibility toward the class. At the same time the teacher has responsibilities toward the self. There are basic attitudes and characteristics that one must have in order to teach effectively. There must be a desire and a capacity for self-growth and self-criticism along with a friendly and proper attitude towards children, as well as a respect for professional obligations and ethics. Teaching, being a science, involves certain procedures, but more important teaching is an art and an involvement in human relationships. Because teaching is involved with people and all of their differences and emotions, it cannot be viewed as a mechanical experience. The necessary factors for efficient teaching and learning are flexibility, experimentation and progressiveness - the solvents for hard mechanical theories.

Sunday School Director: Is there someone in the class who would like to propose a reason for being here today?

Evelyn: I want to learn what it is to be a good teacher.

Karen: Actually, I thought I'd take this course to see if what you say agrees with what I'm doing in the class room (laughter).

Sunday School Director: That's a pretty good reason - are there any others?

Steve: Are we going to have tests in this course?

Sunday School Director: I know that's important to you, but I really haven't thought about it - maybe we should consider it together at a later meeting. Don't you think we'd better find out what we are going to do before we talk about examinations? (laughter) Are there any other suggestions?

John: I thought you were going to explain how to become good teachers.

Sunday School Director: I don't think that this is something that can be told as such. I believe we could arrive at the so-called answers if we discussed it amongst ourselves.

Karen: Don't tell me this is going to be a free-for-all where everyone gives their true confessions.

Sunday School Director: Karen, I know what you mean. We could go around the mulberry bush getting nowhere fast - arriving at very little. But since we are all interested in finding the answer we have an obligation to ourselves to stick to the subject and make our discussion meaningful.

Karen: I doubt that we can do it, but I hope you're right.

Sunday School  
Director: I hope I'm right, too (laughter); let's take a chance.

The teacher should realize that in the classroom there will be a great deal of distance between the teacher and the students, as well as between the students themselves - a fear, as it were. The students will take the natural course of depending upon the teacher to tell them what to do and what not to do. Being aware of this, the teacher - his job being to direct rather than dictate - attempts to redefine the atmosphere of the classroom. Therefore, as in the foregoing discussion he tries to elicit the reason for taking the class - or in another situation, why a class would study a particular subject or facet of a subject. At first, as one would suspect, there will be a hesitancy to answer. Generally, people in a case such as this are fearful they will give the wrong answer and thus merit disapproval. Some answers that are given will be a test to see to what limits the members can go and what the results will be - they will be, so to speak, to try out the teacher.

In the previous discussion Karen began, "Actually ..." almost apologetically, being aware that a student does not usually tell the teacher that the reason for taking a course is to see if his ideas and practices agree with the ones she uses. Realizing this, there was laughter from the group, in which the Sunday School Director joined, adding that it seemed to be a valid reason.

The teacher must be understanding of the student's feelings. This is evident in the case of the Sunday School Director when he reacts positively to Karen's statement that the discussion will be a "free-for-all."

The Sunday School Director does not feel challenged as a person but as a teacher and thus tries to create an atmosphere of free expression where participation and differences of opinion are in order.

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In a subsequent discussion the Sunday School Director, seeing that his group of teachers were involved in a great deal of talk about theory of teaching with little discussion of their own personal involvements, asked this question, "What makes a good teacher?"

John: It's true we have done a lot of talking about the teacher, but there is still a problem of drawing it all together so that it will be meaningful to each of us personally. The problem is, we've been talking about the abstract teacher and not ourselves.

Robert: The trouble is that we are afraid of each other and still don't know how far we can trust one another. We won't be able to see the daylight until someone actually says: "I've got a problem and this is it, I need some help. It's not completely the fault of my class, part of it must be mine. I need help if I'm going to be a good teacher."

Carol: Bob, we're all so afraid that we'll say something stupid.

Sunday School  
Director: We are finally getting down to brass tacks. One of the big problems in life, as well as in teaching, both of which are important to us, is that most adults are



not secure in their personal lives and thereby carry it into the classroom. Even I feel insecure at times, not only with the children but with you.

The Teacher encourages participation by creating a climate which supports the student's right to make statements and expressions of attitude without a threat to his personal security or moral judgment. When the atmosphere is relatively free from the anxiety of threat, then the student is less likely to feel defensive and will more readily develop into a free participating individual in the classroom.

One can hardly rely upon any one given set of rules to create such a positive atmosphere since the various number of situations are beyond counting. But it will suffice to say that each situation demands a different adjustment. The least a teacher can do is to be aware of his own needs, tensions and insecurities as much as possible, keeping them out of the classroom to the best of his ability; thereby not adding to the existing school pressures a detrimental attitude of tension and threat in teacher-pupil relations.

Above all we are striving for an acquisition of knowledge through independence of thought unhindered by fear and chastisement from the teacher. The teacher's obligation is to lead and direct, never to dictate; to stimulate the search for knowledge, never to stifle it.

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### Professional Ethics

Teaching, as with other professions, has inherent in it a set of standards or professional ethics. Sincerity is an important rule. Unless a teacher imparts to her students her own convictions in that she is convinced of the worthwhileness of the subject matter, the child is being deprived of the basic educational value. That is to say, the teacher has to find and be intent on the material transmitted - convinced of the value of religious education.

Diane: Every time I give a test I'm disappointed in the results. My class is so disappointing sometimes that I'd quit right now if I didn't need the money.

Sunday School Director: Diane, do you mean that you are disappointed because the children are not learning the material, or is it that they are not scoring well on the exams?

Diane: I don't know. I just don't see results. I think that in some way they could reward me by making a good show.

Sam: Sometimes I find that it's necessary to stop for a moment - stand back from the class and gain a fresh perspective of the needs of the pupils.

Diane: New perspective on the needs of pupils? Look, I come to class, read a lesson with the kids, give them the facts - that's what I'm getting paid for. They just don't appreciate me. They fool around and then flunk

the test. How does that make me look?

Sunday School Director: I think I see a few things here that we should explore together, that concern us all as professional people. The first thing we have to ask ourselves is, are we meeting our obligations to the students. You know that it is far-fetched to expect the child to perform if the teacher has not prepared the work in the right frame of mind.

David: If you mean that in the classroom itself we don't always function at our best, I know what you're talking about. There have been mornings that I'm all out of sorts because of something that has happened at home or I haven't adequately prepared the lesson the night before. Then come class time I just muddle through, not thinking of what I'm going to do or say beforehand. And you know what, come to think of it, when this happens I look to the children to bolster my feelings, and when they don't I blame them, not myself, for not being on the ball.

Sunday School Director: That's right to the point. Everyone needs successes and rewards, but these are not obtained by miracles. They have to be earned, both by teachers and pupils. Even a loser in a game can feel rewarded if he knows that he has done his very best. When we blame others, actually we are censoring our own unpreparedness.

Sam: I don't want to sound like a do-gooder, but the way I feel is that first and foremost I'm here to impart to the children a good Jewish education which is most important to them in becoming mature people. Sure, I need the salary and the other intangible rewards, but their education comes first and they can't learn unless I'm willing to give of myself - this is my real reward when they respond to my willingness.

Diane must re-evaluate her attitudes towards teaching in the Sunday School. As a professional person the teacher has certain loyalties to the Sunday School and to its pupils. It is not fair to exploit a class for personal gratification, whether it be through projects or examinations. Performance on either one of these is not the only measuring stick for learning. Furthermore, the classroom is a poor place to release personal frustrations - be they concerned with the school or the teacher's home. The teacher must maintain a certain degree of dignity as well as to enhance the dignity of the pupils as human beings. This can only be achieved through respect for the educational process and a respect for the students.

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One of the unfortunate pitfalls that a teacher must contend with is prejudging the pupils insofar as his own expectations of what the individual or class should be or do. We have a tendency to want people to be what we expect them to be rather than accepting them as they are. When this is the case and the person does not live up to our expecta-

tions our next reaction is usually that of rejection or censure.

Sunday School  
Director: Bob, what do you mean, the material was so easy to understand?

Robert: I must have gone over that lesson a half dozen times in class and on top of that they were supposed to read it at home, yet when I began to sum up the material you should have heard all of the stupid questions I got.

David: Stupid questions?

Robert: Look, these kids have done all right in the past - all right, for instance, Pam B.....

Sunday School  
Director: No names - that's not ethical. (Laughter)

Robert: All right; this certain girl - now I don't expect too much from her, but I figure after I've gone over a lesson as many times as this one and she still asks irrelevant questions and doesn't pay attention when I try to explain - I'm convinced that she's dumb and the rest of the class is about a foot behind her.

The Sunday School Director has questioned the validity of Robert's statement. Bob said that the material was easy, but still he found it necessary to go over it a number of times. The teacher may find something easy to grasp, but his experiences far surpass those of the students. Merely going over the lesson might not be sufficient - a variety of approaches perhaps are in order. It is not necessarily so that

either the class or the young girl are slow to grasp the material.

Robert is manifesting an attitude of prejudgment. He has failed to take into account the factors of his approach or even the readiness of the pupil. Sometimes we must be satisfied with partial understanding - exercising an understanding of the pupils, accepting them as they are.

#### Situation Problems

1. Steve, it seems, is a compulsive talker. He not only disturbs the teacher, but at times the class as well. The teacher, in discussing this with his director states: "I can't possibly teach my class with Steve in it; he's not learning and he prevents the others from learning also. Even when he answers a question he goes on and on. He always has to dominate the conversation. One of us has to go."
2. "Argue, argue, argue, that's all she does," says the teacher. "I have a lesson to teach and the students have to pass their tests - and I'm going to teach and that's all there is to it. There is no reason why the class, or I, have to put up with that girl and a few of the others arguing about the material."
3. "What a day. I came to class all prepared to teach that history lesson, with all kinds of gimmicks, and then I was going to give them a test. No sooner did I start the lesson than the whole class



picked it up, took over the discussion - covering just about every point. You would have thought they were the teachers."

"Just about every point! I'd never let something like that happen in my class. I've got to teach and I want to see concrete results on tests. You can't measure results just on conversation. What kind of teacher doesn't give tests?"

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### Chapter III

#### A PHILOSOPHY FOR TEACHING IN THE REFORM RELIGIOUS SCHOOL

##### Teaching Objectives In The Reform Religious School

The principal aim of education is to enable our young men and women of today to think. This may seem to be an over-simplification, since one might say we all think, but it is the total implication of what the word "think" implies that we are most concerned with in Jewish education. Our society has become so complex, so specialized, that the basis of education no longer concerns itself with broad general categories. On the contrary, we tend to train our students in particular disciplines.

In stating that the principal aim of education is to teach our students to think we hope to instill in them two necessary qualities: the ability to make choices intelligently, fairly and judiciously, and the capacity to regard each of their fellow men as an important, necessary human being in society.

How can religious education play a role in this scheme? Don't our public schools and universities fulfill this function? Because of the specialized nature of our emerging world the task of secular institutions is difficult, just attempting to convey the immense amount of material required in any particular field of endeavor. In all instances it is the aim of secular education to prepare man to equip himself with the tools by which he can turn his learned talents into the necessary commodities for living. But this is not enough, for man has a need for the spiritual aspects of life as well. For the welfare of himself and



others man needs lessons on love, respect, sympathy and friendship, the spiritual qualities which receive little or no attention in the secular institution.

This, therefore, is the core of Jewish education: to concern itself with man and his spiritual values, helping him to build a wholesome life for himself, with others.

John: Then it is my duty to build Jewish character in my students - right?

Harriet: This is truly the aim of education. But how do you teach someone to have character?

Sunday School Director: Perhaps this is the time to consult the Union of American Hebrew Congregations' curriculum the Union has made available and see what they believe the guiding principles of Reform Judaism are.

John: Do you think, then, that these principles are the building blocks of the character we are speaking about?

Robert: Certainly, principles are the basis of all behavior patterns and help for dispositions and attitudes.

Sunday School Director: While the principles of Reform Judaism are to be used as a guide, they should in no way be considered as a dogma or catechism. Since Reform Judaism has the ability to adjust to the times and the needs of people, you find yourself supplementing these basic guides.

Let me suggest that the first spiritual principle we would like to offer our children is through a knowledge of God.

Harriet: Certainly the basis of Judaism is the idea of One God. This has many overtones and could be used as a springboard for teaching social action, ethics, and brotherhood.

John: That certainly sounds like a good beginning of a fine character. Does the Torah have any meaning in this framework?

Joan: Yes, if we contemporize the permanent spiritual ideals, the historical precedents, and the moral law for modern living, the Torah is of great value.

Robert: Of course, then we must not forget that man is at the center of these ideals and he, as a co-worker with God, has moral freedom to make real these ideals.

Sunday School Director: The things you have discussed are excellent, and they are a fine place to begin building this Jewish character we have been discussing. Do you think that ethics have a role in this discussion?

Joan: Ethics and Judaism, I would say, are synonymous. Certainly Reform Judaism has justice as one of its components and when one thinks of the concept of God, he naturally relates it to ethics and the inalienable dignity of man.

John: I'm beginning to understand the building of character through the understanding and awareness of everything we have spoken of so far, but are there any tangibles

we can offer our students so they may live what might be called a religious life?

Sunday School Director: I would like to point out to you an interesting side-light. Did you know that our Bible, the Torah, has no Hebrew word for religion? The closest we can get for such a concept is the word life itself; therefore, Judaism from its beginning thought of life and religion as being synonymous.

David: I should think the best stronghold for making this real would be the home. By helping our pupils learn so they may instill their spiritual values at home, and worship with their families, seems to be one of the most important aspects of our teaching.

Harriet: We must also teach respect for a cultural and spiritual history and our Temple.

Robert: Prayer is certainly a tangible and directs us to an awareness of our needs and hopes, and towards God.

The above discussion has been a fertile one. Through the teacher's verbalization of the things that are important to them and Reform Judaism we have evolved an excellent program for teaching the Sunday School child good character, ethics, wholesome attitudes and the tenets of Judaism.

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Fulfilling The Objectives Of The Reform Religious School

Judaism throughout the ages has emphasized education. Through a wealth of literature, practices, and holidays, the Jews have been able to

perpetuate their religion, passing it on from generation to generation. While the concept of education has remained constant, interpretations of the facets of Judaism have changed and new books and approaches to education have resulted. After discussing the basic objectives in Reform Education, the Sunday School Director poses the question of fulfilling these objectives.

David: In our last discussion we came up with some pretty good concepts and objectives. It also brought to the fore again what a big job we teachers have. We really influence the total environment of the child. What we teach has a direct effect on the child's attitudes toward school, home, Temple, and the community.

Robert: You are so right. That's why I feel it is so important to create a classroom atmosphere in which the children feel able to discuss their experiences.

Harriet: I agree with you, Bob, because children learn not only from their own experiences, but by way of example and through vicarious experiences.

Sunday School Director: The beginning for the primary child would be Biblical stories. Since these stories are examples of the principles we are trying to convey and the young child has few experiences to draw from, we must tell him others' experiences. Bible stories appeal to the very young and when modernized they are poignant, meaningful, and good teaching tools.

- Joan: This holds true for the older children too. They are carried away by the romanticism and are learning the processes of life very subtly.
- Harriet: I use Bible stories to help me teach customs, traditions and symbols, particularly those stories that have meaning for Reform Judaism and that have inspirational value.
- Robert: Let us not overlook the Prayerbook - there is a wealth of learning there. It too helps teach traditions, spiritual values and the aspirations of man. This and other Jewish literature, the Talmud and Midrash, can also be utilized, but I should think just with older children.
- David: I think you could say that any material from Jewish sources or anything that can be related to Judaism may be implemented to carry out the objectives of Reform Judaism.
- Joan: I see something now that perhaps I overlooked in the past: our whole curriculum serves this very purpose. I'm sure the children have the impression, most of the time, that the subjects they learn are for the sake of teaching the subject alone, but this is not true. The material that we use and teach has to convey more than just the words or stories, it must present meaningful concepts.

- Sunday School Director: Of course. How many times have we heard or said ourselves, the same thing is taught over and over in every grade? But this makes no difference as long as each time the material is taught the concepts grow according to the readiness and age of the children. Not only that, but Joan's point about the curriculum itself exemplifying the very objectives we're trying to convey is true. We mentioned earlier the fact that the foundation of all teaching begins with the Bible. Our curriculum shows just that, and also has gone beyond the Bible. For instance, the social studies in the second grade teach the children about our Jewish Community; this has its basis in the Bible even though the Bible is not used in teaching the second graders about the community. It's taught according to the contemporary scene going back through Jewish history. Even our holidays and practices are taught in this manner.

Reform Judaism has held to the principle that survival is dependent upon making Judaism vital and living. Our practices, our thinking and our education must live in concert with the times. Judaism must be meaningful according to the age. The basic tenets of Judaism remain; it is the expression of these tenets that adapt according to their usefulness and need. There are still religious schools teaching Judaism only in terms of the past and our religion cannot survive without adapting our education to helping the children live and grow in a democratic society.



Therefore, while we must continually draw from our past, we must at the same time draw a parallel with the life of the times.

The application of the objectives the Sunday School teachers evolved in their past discussion leads to several positive results: an interest and a positive attitude towards Judaism through a self-involvement; an appreciation for Reform Judaism and Jews generally, as well as for the tradition; an acquisition of the understandings upon which to build adult attitudes and roles, and the necessary skills for Jewish practices. These all lead to a living Judaism - a religion that is useful and loved.

#### Situation Problems

1. "My job is to teach the class facts. The most important thing is that the children receive a good academic background in Judaism. Let the spiritual side take its own course; I'll leave that to the Rabbi and the parents. Character building is for the home." Has the teacher understated her job? What is it that she has overlooked?
2. "Our class is studying the Guiding Principles of Reform Judaism, as adopted by the Central Conference of American Rabbis at Columbus, Ohio, in 1937. After I have them memorize these principles they'll know what our religion is all about." What are the implications here for Reform Judaism? Is it possible to ever achieve hard, fast doctrines for a living religion?

3. "I thought that this was a Reform Religious School! My child came home last Sunday and told me that they were learning things that go on in Orthodox Synagogues. I want my son to learn something about Reform Judaism and be a Reform Jew - not waste time on things we have rejected and have no concern for." What are the academic and spiritual overtones this parent is overlooking? Is it necessary to study origins?

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#### Chapter IV

#### PLANNING LESSON PLANS

##### Purpose Of Lesson Plans

Lesson planning is perhaps one of the most important aspects in teaching. Through this vehicle the teacher has more self-confidence and a sense of orderliness in the presentation of the subject matter. The lesson plan also enables the instructor to obtain a better perspective of the teaching and the learning. By planning the teaching process a more stimulating, motivating, and varying program is developed with a definite goal in mind. It is important to remember, though, that plan does not connote inflexibility and rigidity. First of all, each lesson plan should come from the children with an alertness of their needs; secondly, it should be flexible enough to be changed if necessary.

Teachers frequently complain of a discipline problem or that their teaching is not as effective as they feel it should be. These complaints are usually valid and can often be traced to poor or no planning of teaching lessons. The first place a teacher should look when confronted with these problems is to the basic organization of the lesson.

Betty: I've been making out lesson plans in great detail for my class all semester. Now I have reams of papers I don't use anymore.

Steve: That's good, Betty. You probably don't need as many specifics as you did in the beginning of your teaching.

Sunday School  
Director: You have both made a point I have been meaning to bring up for discussion. Everyone does not require the same type of lesson plan. Some teachers find the more specific they are, the more successful their teaching. Others need only outlines for what they wish their class to learn. There are a few factors in all lesson plans, though, that are very important.

Robert: I sure discovered that. When I first began writing plans I forgot the children and just concentrated on the lesson. It wasn't too long ago that we had a lengthy discussion on the learning process, in which we considered the child's experiences and needs. These, certainly, must be remembered when planning a lesson.

Harriet: There's another point it seems should be made here concerning the interest level of the children. Different age groups have different curiosities, and consequently the teacher has to appeal to the various interests at various ages. This is a good reason for remembering supplementary materials and how useful they can be.

Sunday School  
Director: The method of going about writing a lesson is also important. Organization is again of the utmost importance. At the very beginning of a unit of teaching it is necessary to assess your pupils' past knowledge. In the lower grades this probably will not be a formal review; in the upper grades it may well be formal.

Morrie: Before I even begin the concrete building of a lesson plan, I decide what my objectives will be, and I have found that there are a few general ones that I include in every lesson plan. Of course, I want to impart certain information and I also want to set the stage for impressions and attitudes I want my class to have. At the same time I'm teaching subject matter, I always want to build good habits and help the children with skills.

Joan: The textbook is usually not enough for me when I plan my units of study, so when I'm preparing my lesson plans I also include supplementary material and references. Often I use the suggested bibliography in the textbook, and I always try to use the Temple library.

Betty: For me, the motivation or initiation of a unit is very significant, and I include this in my planning. I feel that motivation comes through a series of important experiences the children have had, and I try to furnish these. I also try to stimulate a desire on the children's part and keep in mind their needs, problems, and questions so that each of my pupils is challenged and interested.

Sunday School  
Director: That's an important point to keep in mind. Now, what about the actual presentation of the lesson?

Andrew: Yes, this interests me because I've had difficulty with this part of the lesson plan. Perhaps it's because

I began teaching in the middle of the year and missed getting to really know my pupils.

Steve: Atmosphere in the classroom is very important to the receptiveness of the children, particularly when beginning a presentation. It's important to feel the pulse of the class, and this is a good reason for having flexible lesson plans that can be easily and quickly revised.

Morrie: Don't you think it's time we brought up the fact that we must categorize our subject matter into time units so as to maintain the interest of the children and to keep them stimulated and wanting to learn more? While I look at the total objectives of the whole unit of study for the year, I find I must also consider each class in the same terms as being a lesson in and of itself. Even though I feel it's necessary to have a good idea of what I'm going to do for the whole semester the total effect of each class lesson is the only way to fulfill the goal.

Harriet: Don't forget that often the lesson isn't finished in one class meeting, even though the teacher expected it to be.

Joan: I always keep a list of questions about the lesson, just to be sure I can keep the class moving if we hit a standstill. Thought-provoking questions are also good in developing a teaching activity.

Andrew: Along the same lines, I try to have some type of additional assignments ready for the child who wants to learn more about the lesson. There are many times when this is not necessary to have, but if it is I try to utilize material I am familiar with from my readings in the Temple library.

Betty: Well, we seem to be at the review point. I usually review what we have learned at the beginning of the next class. I've discovered this is often good for initiating the new lesson and showing relationships.

Morrie: Sometimes, though, don't you find you can review at the end of your class? It's a good way to summarize and clarify everything.

The teachers involved in this discussion concerning the purpose of lesson plans have all brought up important facts. Lesson plans may be a chore, but they are an absolute necessity. This is especially true when a class meets only once or twice a week, because there is the danger of losing continuity when the children or the teacher forgets what has been discussed and learned previously. Certainly, teaching is much more effective when the lesson is outlined beforehand. The teacher is more secure and therefore better able to cope with any situation that may arise.

The teacher that is familiar with the subject matter will not need as specific a lesson plan as that teacher who is still the novice. One finds, after a great deal of experience, mental notes are enough for

general concepts and written plans are only needed for new and revised material. The lesson plan serves as an outline from which the teacher can draw particular experiences that will be the most profitable to the class.

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Experimenting With Lesson Plans

A sample of a year's unit lesson plan on selected portion of the Bible:

I. General Purposes

- A. To provide a series of related experiences so that the child has an awareness of his place in the Sunday School and the Jewish community.
- B. To help the child become more self-directive in solving his own problems.
- C. To help develop a responsibility within the child towards himself, others, and Judaism.
- D. To help the child become more secure, so that he may become a wholesome individual.
- E. To provide opportunities for the child to participate in all types of experiences, religious and secular.
- F. To help the child express himself.
- G. To help the child learn relationships.
- H. To expose the child to the Bible and its implications to Reform Judaism and Judaism as a whole.

II. Specific Purposes

- A. To provide the child with experiences and activities that will increase his understanding of his forefathers and their relationship to his Jewish life.
- B. To help the child understand his responsibilities to Jewish life.
- C. To aid the child in developing an appreciation and awareness of Judaism.
- D. To stimulate expression through art, music and poems.

III. Initiation of the Unit

- A. Through a stimulating environment.
  1. Attractive pictures.
  2. Picture with thought-provoking questions as a caption.
  3. A center of interest.
    - a. Figurines.
    - b. Maps.
    - c. Books.
- B. Through children's knowledge and contributions.
  1. Discussions.
  2. Books.
  3. Dramatic play.
- C. Through other related activities.
  1. Showing of slides.
  2. A brief review of related stories.
  3. Movies.
  4. Drawing pictures of Biblical stories.



5. Singing related songs.

IV. Development of Unit

A. Each section is interwoven.

B. May be more emphasis on one phase than another.

V. Anticipated Outcomes of the Unit

A. Culminating activities.

1. Simple plays.

2. Murals.

3. Original songs or poems.

4. An assembly program.

5. An open house.

a. For parents.

b. For other Sunday School classes.

6. Puppet show.

7. Collecting scrapbook.

a. Informational material.

b. Maps.

c. Charts.

d. Pictures.

e. Original stories.

B. Basic understandings.

1. An increased understanding for the child in his relationship to Biblical times.

2. A broader understanding of Jewish tradition and life.

3. An understanding of living in harmonious relationship with others in order to have a more desirable way of life.

4. A better understanding of the need for each person in the Jewish community to be well informed about his religion.

5. An appreciation and understanding of the beauty found in Reform Judaism.

C. Appreciations and attitudes.

1. Growth in attitudes desirable for effective Jewish living.

2. Growth in a feeling of inner security.

3. An increased curiosity toward Judaism.

D. Skills and techniques.

1. Increased proficiency in Jewish and democratic practices.

2. Studying and learning effectively and independently.

3. Evidence of being able to face and solve problems.

4. Evidence of ability to use increasing vocabulary and learned concepts.

5. Evidence of ability to do critical thinking and study.

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A sample of one Holiday lesson plan on Passover for primary grades:

I. Objectives

A. To give the child a sense of identification with Holiday.

B. To teach general knowledge of Passover.

C. To teach specifics of Passover.

D. To help child understand vocabulary germane to Holiday.

II. Initiation of Lesson Through Songs

A. "Bake a Matzo," from Jolly Jingles by Rose W. Golub.

B. "Chop, Chop, Chop," from So We Sing by Levy and Deutsch.

C. "An Only Kid" (Had Gadyo), from Union Haggadah.

D. "Four Questions," from Union Haggadah.

III. Lesson

- A. Discussion with class about story and history of Passover from simplified Biblical portion in Exodus.
- B. Relate the life of the Jews in the Passover story to the life of the slaves in American history.
- C. Familiarize children with Seder symbols with use of flannel board and pictures.
  1. Haggadah: tells story of Passover - used as guide in Seder.
  2. Seder: meal that is like a party - traditional name for meal of Passover meaning "arrange" or "order." The Seder includes stories, singing, praying and special food.
  3. Matzo: "hurry-up" bread - Jews had to "hurry-up" and leave Egypt and didn't have time to let bread rise.
  4. Parsley: reminds us of the spring season.
  5. Horseradish: bitterness stands for the lives of the Jews under slavery in Egypt.
  6. Charoses: made of chopped nuts and apples, wine and cinnamon - reminds us of the bricks the Hebrews made in Egypt.
  7. Roasted egg: recalls the sacrifices made in The Temple in Jerusalem.
  8. Roasted lamb bone: reminds us of the lamb the Hebrews ate before fleeing Pharoah.

9. Afikomon: means dessert - last food eaten at the Seder, the afikomon consists of a piece of Matzo, half of which the leader of the Seder hides and the children hunt for, receiving a prize when they find it.
10. Four cups of wine: reminds us of the time when Moses was sent by God to deliver the Jews from Egypt - reminds us of the four freedoms.
11. Elijah's cup: cup of wine that is on all Seder tables - no one drinks it - it is left for the kind prophet Elijah who is supposed to come and bring joy to the Seder.

IV. Rest Period and Break for the Children

V. Arts and Crafts

- A. Making a Seder plate - using paper plate children have colored, draw and cut out Seder objects and paste on plate.

VI. Dramatic Play

- A. The Hebrews readying themselves for the journey out of Egypt and crossing the Red Sea.
- B. Children set a Seder table.

VII. Assignment and Program for Next Week

- A. Learn the Four Questions in English.
- B. Prepare for model Seder.

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Sample of one History lesson plan on the divided Kingdoms of Israel and Judah for intermediate grades:

I. Objectives

- A. To give children an understanding of life in the land of

Palestine.

- B. To help children see relationships to life and Judaism during days of the two kingdoms, Judah and Israel.
- C. To give the children an understanding of the social atmosphere in the lives of the people in Palestine.

II. Review of the Division of Palestine

III. Initiation of the Lesson Through Character Sketches of the People Living at That Time.

- A. Prophet Elijah - prophesied in the Kingdom of Israel against worship of Baal.
- B. King Ahab - unjust ruler of subjects.
- C. Jezebel - wife of Ahab.
- D. Naboth - man who wanted to own and keep his own land.
- E. Elisha - became Elijah's pupil and follower.
- F. Jehu - became king after Ahab's rule, was cruel and had short reign.
- G. Joash - king who allowed no idols and rebuilt the temple.
- H. Jeroboam - king who ruled Israel brilliantly.
- J. Amos - first of the great literary prophets whose words were gathered in a book of the Bible.

IV. Lesson

- A. Relate the people of this Biblical time to people now.
- B. Discuss the need for competent leadership and its effect on human beings.
- C. How different people affect one another in their direct relationships.

- D. Discuss political struggles within the Kingdom of Israel and the pressures that came from without.
- E. Discuss how two seemingly like nations, with similar cultures, became enemies - relate this to modern day living.
- F. The social and political conditions in the Kingdom of Judah under the rule of Joash.
- G. The social and political conditions in the Kingdom of Israel under the rule of Jeroboam II.
- H. An introduction to Amos and his place in Jewish history.

V. Break for Children

VI. Activity

- A. Break class into two sections: one section lives in Judah, the other in Israel. Each child writes a letter to a friend living in the other kingdom describing his life and the men of his times.

VI. Assignment

- A. Supplementary readings: In The Land Of Kings and Prophets, by J. D. Schwartz, pp. 15-19, 27-35, 62-66, 79-84, 96-99.
- B. Read next chapter in text.

VIII. Teacher's Bibliography:

- A. The Bible, I Kings, chapters 18, 21.
- B. The Bible, Amos.
- C. A History of The Jewish People, by Margolis and Marx, chapters 12, 14, 16, 17.

Situation Problems

1. "I don't believe in lesson plans because I think they make teaching stilted and inflexible. I'd rather meet each class as it comes and be spontaneous." Discuss this teacher's attitude and theory. Is it feasible?
2. Joan is having a discipline problem with her class. The children seem unwilling to settle down and learn. She tells her supervisor she makes detailed lesson plans but the pupils are not receptive. Does Joan have a real discipline problem? What factors should she look for in her lesson plan?
3. The second grade Sunday School teacher seems nervous and unsure when teaching her class. The pupils distract her easily and her disorganization is quite apparent. She complains of having little or no rapport with the children. What type of help can this teacher use and how will it aid her?

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## CHAPTER V

### DIVERSIFIED TECHNIQUES IN TEACHING SUBJECT MATTER AND PUPIL ASSIGNMENTS

#### Specific Techniques For The Classroom

Needless to say, the two first prerequisites to teaching subject matter are a familiarity with the subject and with the class text, if one is used. Supplementary materials are the teacher's greatest aid and should be used whenever feasible and practical. They provide for diversified learning and give the child a chance to enlarge upon his experiences through various mediums of communication.

Andrew: I used the slide projector for the first time today and my class loved it. We had one of the best discussions afterwards that we've ever had. The children really seemed to understand the social and political divisions of the Near East during Biblical times, after seeing these aspects graphically depicted on the screen.

Sunday School Director: Visual aids make real the words and concepts that are read in books or heard from the teacher. What are some of the experiences others of you have had with similar mediums?

Harriet: Since I've learned to use the movie projector I've utilized it quite often. I've discovered many places to obtain good films to use in my class.

- Steve: Where else besides the Union of American Hebrew Congregations can you get films for use in Sunday School?
- Harriet: Well, there's the Jewish Chautauqua Society, the Public Library and Hebrew Union College. They all have fine films.
- David: The Union also puts out a whole rash of filmstrips covering almost every subject with correlated recordings. These are good because they are aural and visual. Some of the filmstrips can easily lend themselves to dramatization in which the children can act out the scenes that are shown on the screen.
- Joan: I use records a lot too. Besides recordings that have music on them, there are some that have stories and games. The children like them and respond well after hearing them.
- Karen: There are many aids that I find are stimulating to the children. Quite a few of the supplementary materials I use in class are made by the children. We've made puppets, murals or friezes, which are like murals but instead of being painted flat they have cut-outs pasted on them or other objects in relief. We also make models, charts and maps. Each activity has been a multiple learning experience for the child.
- Robert: My wife gave me a flannelboard that she uses in her public school class. This has been a great asset to my

- teaching. I like it because it is mobile and I can move the pictures or figures on it while talking.
- Andrew: Last week I borrowed the Temple's tape recorder. The children enjoyed listening to their debate when we played it back and it reinstalled some of the points that were made during the discussion. One of my pupils suggested we write a short dramatization of what we've just completed studying and tape it; then someone else suggested that we take the tape around to some of the shut-ins at the hospitals and do a pantomime to the tape.
- Sunday School Director: I'm pleased that all of you have learned how successful and satisfying teaching is when supplementary and diversified aids to teaching are used. Games are another good teaching device. This is one I use quite often: a football field is drawn on the blackboard and the class is divided into two teams. Every question I ask is worth so many yards. The team with the most touchdowns wins. Some of the best games are created by the teacher, and with a little thought they become worthwhile tools and make learning fun.

There are many other diversified methods of teaching and the experienced teacher learns to adapt the best ones for her particular class. Some classes have keener and more channeled interests than others and the teacher should take advantage of these interests and use them as a tool.

for teaching.

Many pupils enjoy dramatizations and storytelling. These are particularly useful when they have been created by the children themselves. The older child may enjoy panel discussions and quiz programs because of the external influences in their lives. For the creative or artistic pupil, scrapbooks, relief maps, or other arts and crafts projects are satisfying and provide a more broadened learning experience. Music is also an excellent medium of educational aid. Songs tend to involve all of the children in a unified activity and provide a group experience. Judaism is particularly rich in music and song for all of the holidays and through the use of such, facilitate identification and learning.

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#### Pupil Assignments

Too often the pupil has the misconception that the assignment given by the teacher is a chore or a necessary evil of education. This has come down to us by virtue of a long history of the autonomy of the teacher. Teachers, also, are too often guilty of indulging themselves in this historical expectation and thereby abusing the real purpose of the assignment.

David:        Almost every time I give an assignment to my class there is a great amount of groaning and complaining. I don't like to assign work anymore than the children like to do it, but one thing I do know is they can't learn unless they study prior to coming to class.

Joan:        I see the assignment as relating to more than just the immediate learning process. I believe that the assignment should in some way aid the student in developing good study habits. If a teacher keeps in mind that the students will be more willing to work if a desire for study has been created beforehand, the assignment becomes a challenge to most students.

John:        I get the impression, Joan, that you're suggesting that we have to prepare the assignment in many cases just as we prepare our class lesson.

Sunday  
School  
Director:    I would say that you're correct in assuming that's what Joan meant, John. Throughout all of our previous discussions we've stressed keeping the class in mind in all of our teaching, and I see no reason why we should neglect them in this aspect. Since the teacher has the obligation to provide guidance, the assignment - serving various purposes - must be planned as well.

Harriet:     Sometimes I feel as if the assignment is rather one-sided, in that most teachers think of it only in terms of preparation for the next lesson. At times I have given an assignment that relates to the present lesson we are studying. This gives the students an exposure to sources other than their text and teaches them the art of research and independent study.

Robert:     I imagine that we're more fortunate than the teachers were when I was in school. I have noticed the great

abundance of work books, teachers' guides and work sheets, as well as many other aids that are available to make assignments more fun and meaningful.

Harriet: You're right, Bob. I often use these for my assignments or even adapt them for the individual needs of my class. My own creations are not necessarily better or as good as the ready-made materials; nevertheless, I find that by spending a little time making my own I gain more facility in teaching techniques and learn more about the subject.

Sunday School Director: Earlier David complained about the reception of the assignment by the children. I believe if you keep in mind the fact that the assignment must be planned and worked up just as your lesson has been, with the children in mind, then it will be received in a better light. There is another factor involved though - at what point of the lesson do you make the assignment?

Morrie: I usually make the assignment at the end of the period, but I try to leave enough time so it won't be a rush affair. If the children are anticipating the end of the class and are anxious to get out of the room, it's difficult to stimulate interest in the work and there is little time to clarify what should be done.

Harriet: There have been times when I have interspersed the assignment throughout the lesson, or have given it in the middle. It depends upon questions or needs that

arise at the moment. It all points back to the same thing, the assignment must be pertinent and an integral part of the class work.

Joan: In my lower grade class I give little, or no work at all, to be done at home. I feel they are too young as yet for this responsibility. Making the assignment part of the lesson in class I can keep a good eye on the children's work habits and proficiency. At the same time I can aid them and help clarify difficulties as they arise. Of course, simple assignments like collecting pictures, for instance, they do at home.

John: I think that you could sometimes use this method for the older children and then plan an activity as a follow-up, such as a panel discussion or a debate.

David: I'm beginning to see why I'm having trouble getting my assignments over to the pupils. Actually, I just had an idea. Earlier we spoke of different techniques in teaching subject matter, I bet I could utilize some of those methods in making assignments both at home and in the classroom.

Betty: Along the lines of what David just said, I have had my class, as individuals, make out a list of questions at the completion of a lesson. We use these questions in class as a review for a test on that lesson. In this way the students review the lesson while making up the questions, get an exposure to independent study and



also have the feeling that they have participated in composing the test, since I try to draw the test from these questions.

David: I like that idea; I think I'll try it soon.

Robert: There are a lot of devices one can implement for the assignment. It doesn't always have to be "read the next chapter - so and so - in your text." One of the things I have done is to have my class keep a running list of characters and events, with key points about each one, from their history or heros course - they do this on their own. This is good for a review later on, as well as instilling these points as they record them.

Morrie: Even though I find it best to make the assignment at the end of the class, I too go beyond just the text book assignment. I have found that having the children draw maps or even fill in outlined maps is a good assignment to do along with their reading. Sometimes I make this a two-fold project, they draw the map in class as a part of the lesson and then at home, while reading, fill it in with cities, boundaries, or routes followed.

The above discussion has pointed out an important aspect of the teaching situation. The assignment in itself is to be regarded as no less important than the preparation and presentation of the lesson. While the students learn in the classroom, it is through the preparation

for the class work that they develop efficient study habits and the desire for independent learning. In order to realize these desired goals the teacher must use all of the resources and techniques available to her so as to stimulate the student.

#### Situation Problems

1. One morning while the teacher was lecturing to her class about the Cain and Abel story and its relation to ethics, one of the boys blurted out to his neighbor, "I'm Cain, take that and that," pretending to shoot the boy sitting beside him. Two other students from the back of the room called out, "Come on, gang, let's get Cain." The teacher blew up and shouted at the class, "Can't you ever behave? Keep quiet! I'm going to finish this subject or I'll give you a test right now." Was the teacher correct in her action? How would you handle the situation?
2. "I've come to the conclusion that homework is senseless in Sunday School. We began our unit on comparative religions and I make assignments from the questions at the end of the chapter, but the children just don't do them. I can teach them just as well in class rather than waste time trying to get them to answer those questions." What point is the teacher overlooking? What can you suggest to help her?
3. "I've been trying to teach my primary class the symbols of Pass-over. I've read them the list and their meanings several times and

I even sent it home with them, but they just don't seem able to learn about them. Perhaps they're too young, and I should forget about teaching them specifics." Is this teacher's assumption correct? Has she utilized good teaching methods? What can you suggest?

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## CHAPTER VI

### EVALUATING THE PUPIL AND THE TEACHER

#### Measuring What The Students Have Learned

In education, as in life, there is a need for measuring what has been learned and if the learning process has been meaningful. Testing can provide opportunities for the teacher to learn whether the pupils have fulfilled the objectives of the learning experience. They also help the teacher become more familiar with the individual needs of the pupil, his capacity for learning, his weaknesses and his difficulties.

Testing is not an isolated experience and must be correlated and integrated with the unit of study. Evaluation should not be merely a basis for grading and promotion. If it is to be valuable, great consideration must be given in the construction and the executing of an examination.

Andrew: Well, this will probably be our last meeting until next Fall and there are a few things about grading and promoting I'd like to bring up. Should I give one big test that covers the whole year, or what?

Sunday School Director: Testing and evaluating are always immanent at this time of year. Let me warn you, though, promotion should not be based on just one examination. Evaluating your pupils is important, but it should have been an integral part of your class routine all year. I hope that none of you has left it all to be done now, at the end of the term.

Joan: I've been using tests all year to discover more about my students. One of the best ways to learn about children's needs and individual characteristics is through examinations, I've discovered.

Stephen: Exactly what I've found out. Tests not only measure the skills learned, but also whether the children have met the objectives of the lesson.

Harriet: I don't think I'll give a test this last week. I've been measuring my pupils' progress all along and also their readiness for the next step; therefore I have a pretty good picture of their accomplishments.

Andrew: I'm glad to hear we don't need one big exam. I've been giving small tests all year too, not just to measure what the pupils have learned, but also to help me determine whether my instruction has needed to be altered in any way.

Sunday School Director: Good; you've all become cognizant of the use of tests. If a test is fair and reliable, it is useful. When I say reliable, I mean the exam should measure specific achievements, should be objective, and should help the teacher discover the extent of the pupils' retention.

Measurement, in any form, is always a difficult task. It is a necessary job though, and so there are a few things that will help the teacher when he is constructing a measurement of the pupils. A test

should meet certain expectations to be good: it should determine whether the instruction needs altering, the material the child is being examined about should be able to be assimilated into workable knowledge, this should be another type of learning experience for the children, and last but not least - the results of the test should be utilized in finding ways to improve methods.

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Measuring The Teacher's Effectiveness

Sunday School Director: Just as we have been discussing the need to measure what the child has learned, we must also measure our effectiveness as teachers. I'm sure you will discover through our discussion that this is closely related to lesson planning.

Betty: The relationship is easy to understand. I would imagine the procedures and methods of a good instructor are fairly similar to the procedures and methods of a good lesson.

David: I believe one of the most important things in teaching is good communication or rapport with the class. I measure the success of the lesson and my teaching by the response of the children.

Harriet: For some reason, my most effective way of discovering whether I have motivated the class is by seeing if the group carries the responsibility.

Robert: Do you mean, Harriet, you can tell how good your



teaching is when the children take the initiative to study themselves.

Harriet: Yes, and also when they do independent thinking and make suggestions for learning experiences.

Sunday School Director: That's an excellent measure of effectiveness and you probably have a very fine relaxed atmosphere in your class, Harriet.

Joan: A good way to tell you have had a good teacher-pupil learning process is when you find you have conveyed the materials to all of the group.

Stephen: I guess this goes along with the fact I've discovered; I've found that my teaching is better when I've established a feeling of mutual trust and respect.

Andrew: Yes, you can also tell how successful your teaching is by seeing if you've fulfilled your objectives for each unit of learning and for the year.

David: And I've found out that one of the ways to measure my effectiveness is through evidence of my own learning and growth. If I've learned something and changed somewhat, I find the children have had a successful experience with the material.

These teachers have certainly grown a great deal from that first day when they sat with the Sunday School Director and expressed all their fears and trepidations about accepting a position as a Sunday School teacher. Certainly, they are not perfect, as no teacher should

be, but they have learned many ways of coping with the difficult and satisfying task of teaching.

The men and women we have come to know through their discussions will be in a constant learning experience so long as they are teaching. As long as they remain intellectually curious and flexible, their self-confidence and their techniques will grow and improve. If they continue to keep in mind the fact that each child is an individual and that each child has his own needs and desires, and should be allowed to meet with successes in the classroom, any Sunday School will be pleased to have these teachers on the faculty.

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Teacher's Evaluation Check List

This is a check list devised to measure and evaluate the teacher's performance and effectiveness. It is by no means a complete measure for the teacher and is meant merely to serve as a general indication of the teacher's attitudes and ability.

The scale is rated on the four standards below, each standard is assigned a number, the corresponding number appears after each statement and one should be circled as to its applicability.

Excellent - 1	Fair - 3
Good - 2	Poor - 4

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1. The teacher is able to get along (generally) with the students in direct relationship. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
2. There is a real and wholesome belief in the need to teach Judaism that the teacher is able to convey to the students. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

3. The teacher is responsible in terms of cooperation and dependability. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
4. Evidence that the teacher is willing and able to learn from the pupils. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
5. The teacher is able to handle the class in such a manner that neither she nor the students get upset to any great degree. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
6. There is a mutual respect between the teacher and the students. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
7. The teacher is able to utilize material in an interesting and stimulating manner. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
8. The teacher provides for a relaxed atmosphere in the classroom where there is a feeling of fellowship and good cheer. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
9. The teacher tries to provide successes for all of the pupils. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4
10. The teacher encourages cooperation rather than competition. 1 - 2 - 3 - 4

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Scoring

A numerical evaluation may be obtained by adding each of the circled numbers at the end of each statement. The results should be rated as below:

- 10 to 14 Excellent
- 15 to 24 Good
- 25 to 34 Fair
- 35 to 40 Poor

An individual rating of each statement may be utilized by considering the number circled and the statement on its own merit:

- A. All statements circled "2" should be considered and improved upon.
- B. All statements circled "3" should be considered and altered.
- C. All statements circled "4" should be considered and remedied.

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