

Joy and Judaism: A Parent Experience for Family Education

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Table of Contents

Introduction.....	3
Rationale.....	7
Resource and Works Consulted.....	11
Desired Results.....	15
Evidence of Learning.....	16
Learning Activities.....	17
Session Overview.....	19
Sample Session: Jewish Holidays, a Joy Journey....	p. 21
Sample Session: Shabbat....	p. 28
Sample Session: Chanukah Rated PG-13....	P.36

Introduction

Topic and Content: *Joy & Judaism* is a curriculum outlining the parent-only portion of a 2nd-3rd grade family education program. This curriculum was created with a large suburban synagogue in mind. During the program, parents gather in a learning and experimenting environment over two years, on a monthly basis. In addition to the sessions outlined here, parents participate in more ‘family’ oriented learning and experiences as a ‘parallel’ to their own educational journey.

Topic: The ideas of Joy & Judaism are brought together through the exploration of Jewish holidays and the questions they raise for parents and families about wonder, awe and identity. Through learning about and experiencing Jewish holidays, parents will reflect upon how these regular moments in Jewish time can provide a container for their and their children's' development. For this particular synagogue, “God, Identity and Holidays” are the curricular focus of the 2nd-3rd grade years. This curriculum aligns with that focus, but utilizes the overarching concept of ‘joy’ to relate these ideas to one another, to the adults’ development as individuals, and to their goals as parents to raise resilient, joyful children with a strong sense of identity. For instance, a study of Shabbat will give learners an opportunity to reflect at an adult level on textual references to Shabbat and how the idea of this weekly holiday seeks to develop important human capacities. Taking this textual study further, parents will determine how they might choose to cultivate certain values in themselves and their children through weekly Shabbat practice. The High Holidays session invites learners to interact with the cycle of remembrance (Tisha B’av), reflection (Elul) and celebration (Rosh Hashanah) that is at the root of the Jewish calendar. In general, we will explore the following questions: How can individual

holidays prompt us to think about specific questions that influence our journey towards our purpose - that of ourselves and our families? How is this holiday a frame for our roles as parents? How does this holiday give me an important path to know myself better while contributing to the world around me in positive ways? When we speak of identity in this curriculum, we are speaking of the developmental ideas of self-conception, sense of purpose and values, not the specific idea of Jewish Identity often referenced by Jewish educators and demographers alike. Jewish identity is particular to how one conceives of and understands oneself as a Jew. Since this exploration cannot be compartmentalized from how one conceives of oneself more broadly, this curriculum will focus on all aspects of one's self-conception.

Structure: The central activity of the curriculum consists of monthly parallel programming with adults learning for an hour, followed by an hour with children on a similar topic. In addition, family holiday and Shabbat experiences are suggested to integrate this curriculum with experiential activities and community building. Monthly learning opportunities will provide an opportunity for intellectual interaction with the texts and history of each holiday, building a brave space for these novice learners to question and challenge the ideas presented on an adult level. Each monthly learning gathering will include an opening circle where parents can share 'joys and oys' of parenting, including questions their children may have raised about Judaism, holidays, or more broadly, the world and their role in it. Each session will also create a bridge between home life and the educational experience by creating a customizable take-away that parents can experiment with at home with their children. Communal celebration will support this home based experimentation as the group comes together for holiday and immersive Shabbat experiences. The final shabbaton will be an opportunity for families to learn about the holiday of Shavuot and share their own innovations on the rituals of Shabbat, while reflecting on and celebrating the journey they have made together as a cohort.

Learners: This capstone will focus on the adult-specific portion of the program for parents whose children are entering 2nd-3rd grades. The cohort will commit to the program for 2nd-3rd grades, and then will be similarly grouped for 3rd-4th grade, and then 5th-6th grades (with the option to re-enroll after each 2 year track). Parents of this age group range in age from early 30s to late 40s, with some exceptions. This capstone will only outline the first year of the program. Learners will represent diverse faith backgrounds, with intermarried families and Jews-by-choice a significant population at the synagogue.

Why: This capstone addresses the needs of parents to feel educated in their role as their children's most influential teacher of Judaism. More so, this program exists to contribute to the parents' personal life journey towards meaning, appreciation and connection through a Jewish lens, beyond the educational role they provide for the next generation. Furthermore, the program seeks to create bridges between home and synagogue so that the learners themselves (the parents, not only their children) can practice bringing holiday celebration into their homes. Creating a program designed to address adult needs and concerns enhances the possibility that parents will develop personal connections to Judaism that outlive their children's smachot and college matriculation milestones.

Facilitator Guide: The ideal facilitator for this course is a Jewishly knowledgeable educator, crafter of questions and connector of people who can serve as a living text of ongoing Jewish formation, while integrating an awareness of adult and child development. This person can bring Jewish texts, philosophy, history and rituals alive through inquiry based learning that models *yisrael*/wrestling. The ideal facilitator is able to see learners as parents, but also more expansively as individual adults on their own journey towards finding joy and meaning in the world. The facilitator will seek opportunities to guide participants as they make connections between these many roles, the ways they and their children find or struggle to find joy, and

Jewish holidays. In this vein, the ideal facilitator sees that Jewish holidays are purposeful points of community building, personal reflection and celebration. The ideal facilitator is non-judgemental and open to thinking creatively with participants about the adaptation of traditional liturgy and ritual to the lives' of these families, providing moments for connecting to the mystery of the world and the light of each member of the family. The facilitator should also have a sensitivity towards diverse faith backgrounds, and recognize that not every participant will have a personal background in Jewish holidays or ideas. The facilitator should honor these individuals and acknowledge the important lessons their different narratives can bring to the community and the learners.

Lastly, it is important for the facilitator to be comfortable with less explicit references to God and identity, despite the implicit inclusion of these themes within the curriculum. While these are concepts integrated into the learning, these particular terms are not always used because they can become off-putting jargon for the learner, especially at the outset. For example, the first session refers to experiences of connection 'to something bigger', feeling moments of 'wonder and awe'. This is God related language without making it explicit, in order to frame the concept in an accessible manner. That said, should learners bring up the idea of God or Jewish identity conventionally understood, the facilitator can draw connections between those ideas and the frames used in the curriculum and encourage learners' discussion as appropriate.

Rationale

*When is the last time that you felt ‘delight and gratitude in being alive’? What were you doing?
Where were you? Who was with you?*

Jewish rituals and holidays provide a framework for exploring these questions and more in an intergenerational format. These purposeful Jewish pauses in time to celebrate, connect and remember provide an enduring way for parents and children alike to engage on their own level with the challenges and joys of life. As the late educator, Rachael Kessler writes, the concept of joy can “prompt deep reflection about life’s evolution and its purpose” (identity), and “awaken the spirit” (God).² For this reason, this parent-portion of a family education curriculum will focus on the idea of “Joy & Judaism.” Lessons will use the mediating topic of Jewish holidays as a concrete outlet to explore ideas of wonder, awe (God) and identity. Human development experts suggest that identity is constructed by a self that asks, ‘who am I? What do I find important, what do I believe, and what should I do in life?’³

Why this group of learners in this way? The goal of the synagogue’s family education program is to create a series of bridges between the home and the synagogue, between parents and children and between families and one another. As Ron Wolfson writes, “The single greatest influence on Jewish identity development is the family.”⁴ For this reason, the curriculum content focuses on holidays as a cornerstone of family and synagogue, while the topic of finding joy is relevant to the learners’ roles as parents and individual adults alike. The family is a cornerstone not only of the development of its youngest members, but of the adults at its helm. As such, the unique needs of both parents and children should drive educational design.

¹ Kessler, Rachael. *Soul of Education*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Virginia, 2000. p. 75

² Ibid

³ Mcdevitt, Theresa and Jeanne Ellis Ormrod. *Child Development and Education*. p. 520

⁴ Rosenkrantz, Glenn. “New Group Moving Jewish Family Education to the Forefront.” February 1st, 2012. <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/new-group-moving-jewish-family-education-to-the-forefront/>

In addition, to meeting the psychosocial needs of adults at this life stage, this curriculum's approach to parent-learning as a part of family education addresses demographic realities of synagogue life. Families with young children represent a significant proportion of synagogue membership today. However, there are strong trends that point to the short-lived nature of this engagement: many families dis-affiliate after b'nai mitzvah, confirmation or graduation of their youngest child.⁵ If we read between the lines on this trend, we can infer that parents see a sort of pediatric Judaism that resonates with their own youthful experiences of synagogue life. Jewish learning, and Jewish engagement are for juvenile years; once their children reach the terminus of their Jewish education, the shelf-life of Judaism reaches its terminus as well. Isa Aron writes that synagogue revitalization must directly address these issues, including the problematic assumption, "that Jewish learning is primarily for children."⁶ This curriculum will provide parents with adult-level learning and opportunities for community building that can establish a more durable tie to Jewish life and community. Learning content and activities will address the temporal needs of individuals who are coming into their role as parents of sentient human beings aware of the joys and challenges of the world. This curriculum will bring together parents of 2nd-3rd graders who are not new to their role as parents, but are still at an introductory phase as their child's foremost 'Jewish' and spiritual guide. This also addresses the developmental needs of adult learners who seek immediate application of knowledge. For this reason, the curriculum provides ways that Judaism is directly applicable to the parents' role as *parents*. However, the curriculum will also provide ways for the learners to explore how the holidays that mark Jewish time relate to their own identity development and

⁵ Hoffman, Et al, Synagogue 3000 Report, 2012. <http://synagogue3000.org/files/factreport.pdf>, p. 1

⁶ Aron, Isa and Hoffman, Larry. *Becoming a Congregation of Learners: Learning as a Key to Revitalizing Congregational Life*. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 2000. p. 1

questions about God. This will create a sustainable connection to Jewish ideas that outlives their child's time in religious school.

What do these parents seek? As part of information gathering for this Capstone, parents from families who have participated in family education at the synagogue for whom this curriculum will be a resource were consulted about their goals and experience. Parents cited a multitude of reasons for participating in family education experiences. These parents expressed a desire to create memories with their children, model the value of learning for their families, and fill in their own Jewish knowledge gaps. Past participants in family retreats at the synagogue also appreciate the opportunity to 'slow-down' and truly experience Shabbat in a way that they struggle to create when immersed in their regular day-to-day lives. Parents reflected a fascinating case for the inclusion of Shabbaton experiences in the curriculum: they expressed that the change of setting afforded in an 'off-site' Shabbaton allows for more in-depth adult learning, including the asking of new questions not always generated in the setting of the synagogue. This curriculum endeavors to make sure that in-depth adult learning does indeed occur at the synagogue as a central part of family education. The Shabbaton is nonetheless an integral part of the curriculum for experiential learning that addresses the additional goals expressed by these parents.

Parents also cited that, despite its role as a Beit Knesset, this synagogue's large size presents challenges for making meaningful connections and building more intimate relationships between families. The longer term nature of this cohort based program (two years, spanning 2nd-3rd grades) seeks to help families transcend the synagogue's size and make meaningful connections with one another. The immersive nature of retreats will add to the creation of this micro-community within the larger synagogue umbrella. In this way, the curriculum will address goals of the congregation to revitalize synagogue life and cultivate

strong links between home and synagogue,⁷ while also addressing the needs of parents as learners *and* as teachers.

Learning experiences and assessments will keep in mind the developmental need of this particular DIY generation of parents, as Lisa Farber Miller writes, “parents under 40 want to be co-creators of value and meaning...they represent a do-it-yourself generation.”⁸ Taking a cue from this thinking, sessions will foster deeper collaboration amongst the cohort, actively including them as partners in the creation of the experience. Learning experiences will include peer ‘interviews’, text study in large group, and chevruta, and experiential learning through creation of ritual objects or family-specific blessings. Assessments will be co-created experiential activities (such as a communally planned family shabbaton to cap off the year). Participants will also share their learning through the regular ‘oys and joys’ circles at the beginning of each session.

How does this program fit into Family Education as an evolving landscape? Joseph Reimer’s comprehensive chapter on the development of Jewish Family Education in *What We Know About Jewish Education* explains that this disparate field often lacks clear goals and measures of success,⁹ despite broad aims to increase family involvement in the synagogue, increase Jewish knowledge and home based practice. Reimer states that, “until the educators specify how the programs they are planning can reasonably be expected to lead to the achievement of these broad goals, they are engaging more in wish-fulfillment than in educational goals setting.”¹⁰

⁷ Reimer, J. (1992). “What We Know About...Jewish Family Education.” *What We Know About Jewish Education: A Handbook of Today’s Research for Tomorrow’s Jewish Educator*. Los Angeles, California. Torah Aura Productions. p. 181

⁸ Rosenkrantz, Glenn. “New Group Moving Jewish Family Education to the Forefront.” February 1st, 2012. <http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/new-group-moving-jewish-family-education-to-the-forefront/>

⁹ Reimer, J, *What We Know About...Jewish Family Education*” p. 182-183

¹⁰ Ibid p.182

The longer-term cultivation of a community of learners engaged in learning towards an immediate developmental goal (their roles as parents) but connected to questions of their own life's goals and fulfillment, are this curriculum's attempt to achieve a more enduring tie between parents, their children, Judaism and the Jewish community and achieve the broad goals Reimer references.

Resources and Works Consulted

Annotated Bibliography

Aron, Isa and Hoffman, Larry. *Becoming a Congregation of Learners: Learning as a Key to Revitalizing Congregational Life*. Jewish Lights Publishing: Woodstock, Vermont, 2000.

Aron and Hoffman situate learning as part of a broader conversation about synagogue transformation. The premise of the book is that creating a congregation of learners that fosters *individual* transformation, often requires significant change and transformation in the nature of the congregation itself. The authors break down the siloes between 'education' and other areas of the congregation and provide direction and resources for thinking about changes that make all learning more sustainable. Ideally, this capstone would be implemented in a congregation influenced by the thinking of Aron and Hoffman, where the curriculum is supported by broader organizational change. This book provides many resources, including practical, real-life examples of congregations who have experimented with revitalization efforts.

Elcott, David and Himmelfarb, Stuart. [The Cost of a Feel Good Manifesto](http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/the-cost-of-a-feel-good-manifesto/). EJewishPhilanthropy.com, October 2015.
<http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/the-cost-of-a-feel-good-manifesto/>

Elcott and Dreier's 2015 blog post is a call to the Jewish community to reconsider its entire strategic direction. The authors implicate a variety of Jewish leaders in the ongoing perpetuation of a juvenile Judaism - one seemingly passed from children to their children. Elcott and Dreier call for more purposeful and optimistic creation of opportunities for Jewish adults. Specifically they call on Jewish community leaders, "see adult Jewish human beings as other than financial providers for a next generation." This blog post was an important anchor in the thinking of the author of this Capstone, as this curriculum also seeks to see the parents not only as financial - or spiritual - providers of the next generation, but sentient, generative human beings in their own right worthy of attention and sophisticated learning opportunities.

Greenberg, Rabbi Irving. *The Jewish Way: Living the Holidays*. New York: Touchstone, Simon & Schuster, 1988.

Rabbi Greenberg's treatment of the Jewish holidays provides an overview of the yearly cycle of celebration and reflection. Framing the holidays as an Exodus journey whose goal is to

encourage humans to become their most highly evolved selves, his approach touches on this curriculum's themes of God, Identity and Holidays in an accessible way. The idea that holidays are a way of living 'Jewishly' that link to one another, rather than apart from our regular lives and disconnected from one another, offers participants a way of thinking about the holidays as part of the overall ebb and flow of their lives. Seeing the holidays as connected to one another, gives greater meaning to each one individually. Furthermore, Greenberg begins his 'year' with Passover (the initial Exodus moment) which is a departure from the usual cycle dictated by Rosh Hashanah (and many Religious School calendars). Beginning the curriculum rooted in Greenberg's framing provides a provocative 'scene change' for parents otherwise educated that there is only one Jewish 'new year'. Excerpts from the book are used in the curriculum, while the entire book can be a resource for facilitators and participants alike to refer back to every year.

Kelman, Stuart. *Jewish Education: A Handbook of Today's Research for Tomorrow's Jewish Education*. Los Angeles: Tora Aura Productions, 1992.

While slightly outdated, this handbook is a collection of articles and perspectives on Jewish education. Included in the collection are a number of pieces by researchers and practitioners about family or parent education. Interestingly, the 'parent' education pieces all fall into the trap articulated by the Elcott and Dreier piece, viewing this group only as an important tool for educating their children, rather than end-users in and of themselves. Two chapters in particular were relevant and helpful to this capstone, "What We Know About Jewish Family Education" by Joseph Reimer and "What We Know About Parent Education" by Stuart Kelman (also the editor of the collection). It is interesting to view these pieces as emblematic of their time, and influencers of the Jewish 'family education' this Capstone inherits. It is telling that the authors of these pieces struggled with many of the same challenges that face family education today. Reimer's point about ensuring that there is a tangible link between synagogue and home rather than assuming this bridge will appear out of thin air, was a motivator for the inclusion of concrete take-aways for family practice created by parents at the end of each lesson.

Kessler, Rachael. *The Soul of Education*. Association for Supervision and Curriculum Development: Virginia, 2000.

Kessler is a secular educator who integrates her personal philosophy of soulful education into practical tips for fostering the spirit of students, which is so often neglected. While Kessler is writing for a secular audience often concerned with test scores and quantitative data, her points about the neglected soul of students is relevant to our work in Jewish communal settings. As other sources also site, we sometimes take this soul or spirit for granted, particularly in parent education. Kessler's book contains 7 chapters or behaviors that can be fostered in the classroom to nurture the soul of the student: Connection, stillness, purpose, joy, creativity, transcendence, initiation. In each chapter, Kessler outlines the importance of each and roots it in her experience as an educator, mostly with adolescence. She then provides concrete activities and advice for bringing these behaviors or traits into the classroom. This capstone has transferred Kessler's ideas to a Jewish, adult environment, seeking to nurture the soul of parents particularly through the cultivation of 'joy'. Kessler's learning experiences also center on

opening and closing circles of listening and sharing, which influence the ‘Oys and Joys’ circles that open each session of this capstone.

Tickton, Schuster, Diane. *Jewish Lives, Jewish Learning: Adult Jewish Learning in Theory and Practice*. Berhman House/URJ Press: New Jersey, 2003.

This book is a treasure trove of scholarship, both qualitative and quantitative, on the unique endeavor that is teaching adults in Jewish settings. In particular, the book offers insights into what learners experience developmentally and emotionally when they enter an adult learning space. She names this as ‘showing up as a Jewish adult’ for the first time; a moment loaded with past memories, and present insecurities. Along with these loaded memories and insecurities, learners bring a variety of orientations and styles, outlined by Schuster. According to Schuster, adult learners seek connection with others, personal meaning, greater confidence in Jewish identity and knowledge in addition to a satisfying experience ‘wrestling’ with the text. Achieving all of these things is challenging and requires a teacher-learner partnership where the boundaries of authority and learner/teacher are fluid.

Additional Works Consulted:

Brodie, Rachel and Kelman, Vicky. *Jewish Family Education: A Casebook for the Twenty-first Century*. Los Angeles: California, 2002.

Hoffman, Rabbi Larry et al. Synagogue 3000 Report, 2012.

<http://synagogue3000.org/files/factreport.pdf>

Mcdevitt, Theresa and Ormrod, Jeanne. *Child Development and Education, 6th Edition*. Pearson: London, 2015.

Rosenkrantz, Glenn H. “New Group Moving Jewish Family Education to the Forefront.” February 1st, 2012.

<http://ejewishphilanthropy.com/new-group-moving-jewish-family-education-to-the-forefront/>

Wertheimer, Jack. (2007). Recent Trends in Supplementary Jewish Education (Executive Summary) (pp. 1–32). New York, New York: Avi Chai Foundation. Retrieved from <http://avichai.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Wertheimer-Recent-Trends-FINAL.pdf>

Wertheimer, J. (2005). Linking the Silos: How to Accelerate the Momentum in Jewish Education Today (Executive Summary) (pp. 1–42). New York, New York: Avi Chai Foundation. Retrieved from <http://avichai.org/wp-content/uploads/2010/06/Linking-The-Silos.pdf>

Resources for Facilitator and Participants

Diamant, Anita with Howard Cooper. *Living a Jewish Life*. Harper Collins, 2007. New York, NY.

Kipnes, Rabbi Paul and November, Michelle. *Jewish Spiritual Parenting*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2015, Woodstock, VT.

Kula, Irwin Yearnings. *Embracing the Sacred Messiness of Life*. Hyperion, 2006. New York, NY.

Strassfeld, Michael. *A Book of Life, Embracing Judaism as a Spiritual Practice*. Jewish Lights Publishing, 2006. Woodstock, VT.

Wolpe, Rabbi David. *Why Be Jewish*. Holt Books, 1995. New York, NY.

Desired Results

Mission of Organization/Priority Goals for Learners:

Congregants are on a lifelong journey of finding joy, community and meaning in Jewish life.

Enduring Understandings:

Our roles as parents, professionals and partners are full of challenges and joys that endure across time and place.

My own knowledge and experience of Judaism curates my child's experience.

Judaism is anything but child's play.

Essential Questions:

- How can values and rituals of Jewish holidays support my families' cultivation of joy and resilience?
- What is my own relationship to joy, wonder, and ritual and how does it impact my children?
- What is my relationship to Jewish communal ritual, and how can the community support my family's journey toward a life worth living?

Know	Learners will interact with ideas of Jewish holidays as they relate to their sense of purpose, joy and wonder.
Do	Learners will experiment with new Jewish Holiday rituals that emanate from reflection on their own identity and goals for their families.
Believe	Learners will believe that Judaism has ideas, meaning and tools relevant to their journeys as adults and parents.
Belong	Learners will create a community of practice where challenges and wonders of creating a Jewish family life, in particular issues of God, Identity and Holiday observance, can be shared, reflected upon and extended for the learning of all.

Evidence of Learning:

Evidence of learning:

- **Ongoing Group Problem Solving:** The cohort will respond to problems and questions brought to the group by their peers and discuss possible solutions. This will include a reflection about the process, giving an opportunity for participants to react to one another's ideas, challenge assumptions and explain choices.
- **Family Credo:** Parents will create a family credo that articulates what they find important, what they believe and how that informs how they live their life and raise their children. This will be created at the beginning of the program and re-evaluated at the end of the program.
- **Shabbaton Creation:** Parents will co-create an end-of-program shabbaton that demonstrates integration of the ideas of God, identity (self-conception in relation to the world and Jewish ideas), and holidays (in this specific case, Shabbat, but more broadly the idea of Jewish time and ritual). During planning, implementation and reflection, the learner applies the process to their own family life and demonstrates an appreciation for creating family learning experiences that reflect values and questions important to that person
- **Reflection on Experiments at Home:** Parents will report back to the group on a regular basis on holiday related activities or observance in their home over the course of the year. This can be something new of their creation, or the implementation of a take-away activity from a lesson.

Post Assessment (follow-up conversations 1-year post program)

- Parents re-enroll in 4-5th grade program
- Parents express increased comfort reflecting on existential questions alone, with partner (or other adults) and with children.
- Parents express ongoing experimentation with both at-home holiday celebration/observance and synagogue-based activities, whether alone or with children.

Learning Activities:

1. 'Joys and Oys': Every lesson will begin with a circle for sharing 'Joys and Oys' of parenting or life. These will be opportunities for the group to create a community in which they have a voice, as well as opportunities to share moments celebrating holidays and incorporating learning into how experiences of life are framed. The facilitator should learn from these circles about the challenges and peaks the families face and incorporate that into future teaching.
2. Text Study: Due to the focus on holidays, the group will study Rabbinic or Biblical texts related to the holidays, as well as contemporary thinkers. In order to facilitate adult appropriate independent learning, and development of relationships, these text studies will incorporate chevruta, jigsaw or large group discussion formats.
3. Additional experiences: In addition, the learners will also use mindfulness, credo-creation, journey mapping, and other constructivist approaches to investigate different texts and experiment with new ideas.

Inclusion of Diverse Learners: Most activities described can include learners of different physical abilities and developmental abilities. Many activities attempt to address the learners both as adults and as parents at the same time by referencing, 'you and/or your family'. When an activity is purely for the individual learner, that will be reflected in the lesson plan. The premise of the curriculum builds on the unique adult mindset in which learners seek immediate application to real-life issues as well as deeper investigation of material. The activities and content attempt to strike a balance between these two somewhat divergent developmental needs through a constructivist approach that builds on the learner's' own creativity and lived experience. The immediate application will be relevant to their major developmental life-stage, as parents and child rearers. Adult learners have a developmental need to activate prior

knowledge and feel a sense of competency. At the same time, this curriculum seeks to complicate this prior knowledge for the sake of the learner's growth. This will also require a constructivist approach that invites learners to construct their own knowledge, independently or as a community.

Session Overview

Session	Core Concept	Learning Activity	Text
Session 1 Jewish Holidays: Joy Journey (on opening Shabbaton)	The Jewish holidays, the stories of our families and ourselves, are a roundabout journey toward joy.	Creation of personal & family Roller Coaster of Life	Yitz Greenberg text
Session 2 The High Holidays: From Remembrance to Joy	The High Holidays are an opportunity to remember, reflect and celebrate what is important to us and our families.	Family Credo creation, Yom Hazikaron (RH) to Chag HaSimchateinu (Sukkot) Take-away: As 'high priests of their own families, parents will write out a series of 'forgive me...' statements to insert into individual family mahzorim.	Texts from Mishnah Moed, Hineini Liturgy, Exodus 19
Session 3 Shabbat (<i>preceded by Sukkot Shabbat dinner at facilitator's home</i>)	Shabbat is a weekly reminder of the Jewish value of celebration, connection and rest on our journey to creating a better world for ourselves and our children.	Human Joy Bingo Take-away: creation of customized 'Birkat HaKohanim' for Shabbat blessing of the children Take-away: 'Shabbat Question' pack	Parallel Text Analysis on Shabbat (Deuteronomy 20/Exodus 5/Genesis 2)
Session 4 Chanukah Rated PG-13	During Chanukah, we experience the coexistence of light and darkness, just as joy and sorrow go hand in hand in life.	- conversations on relationship between joy & sorrow. Take-away: Creation of Chanukah candle-lighting mat with questions the family can discuss each night of	Psalms 126, Shabbat 21b, story of Chanukah

		Chanukah	
Session 5 Tu B'shevat: Consumerism & Joy	Tu B'shevat teaches us about the relationship between consumption, joy and our planet.	Consumption checklist Take-away: creation of "Four Questions" about consumption for family	Mishnah on Tu B'shevat
Session 6 A Palace in Time (postceded by a Shabbat meal at a participant's home)	Shabbat teaches us the value of creating a 'Palace in Time' for our families and ourselves.	-Begin planning Shabbaton. Take-away: Families plan shabbat meals at one another's homes, including one new ritual/activity they hope to experiment with in this supportive environment.	excerpts from Abraham Joshua Heschel, <i>Sabbath</i> , Havdalah liturgy
Session 7 Passover	The Passover seder, is an educational opportunity for parents to teach their children about freedom from oppression, and the process of becoming liberated.	What does your family seder 'celebrate'? Take-away: creation of "5th question" for adults placards to encourage adult conversation and discussion at the family's seder table.	Mishnah/Tosefta on Pesach, Exodus 12-13
Session 8 Shavuot (on concluding Shabbaton)	Shavuot is a communal celebration of the ongoing giving of Torah, including the stories and values revealed in our individual and family journeys.	Revisiting family credo.	Na'aseh v'nishmah

Session 1: Jewish Holidays, a Joy Journey
1 hour and 45 minutes (extended session for Shabbaton)

Curricular EU:

- Our roles as parents, professionals and partners are full of challenges and joys that endure across time and place.
- My own knowledge and experience of Judaism and life curates my child's experience.
- Judaism is anything but child's play.
- Joy is an outgrowth of feeling a sense of purpose, wonder, remembrance and connection.

Session 1: Creating a Journey

Core Concept for this Lesson:

The Jewish holidays, the stories of our families and ourselves, are a roundabout journey toward joy.

Essential Questions:

- What is the narrative created by the calendar of the Jewish year?
- What does joy mean to me and in Judaism?
- What is my own experience of journeying towards joy and why does it matter as I create my child's world?

Know: Participants will gain an awareness of the cycle of the Jewish year and Jewish definitions of joy. Participants will create an awareness of their own journey towards joy.

Do: Participants will draw their own journey, interact with different definitions of joy, and participate in their first 'oys and joys' circle.

Believe: Participants will value the ambiguity of the word 'joy'. Participants will value the relationship between the Jewish holiday cycle and the cycle of life.

Belong: Learners create a community where their present challenges and diverse histories are embraced. Learners connect to the communal history of the Jewish people through new understandings of the Jewish holidays.

9:15-9:20: Do Now Activity: Why did you choose to participate in this program?

While the group is gathering and getting bagels and coffee, participants will be invited to use PollEv, to text their answer to the above question. As texts come through, the answers will show up on the projector.

9:20-9:30: Why are we here? Together we will react to and reflect on the reasons people chose to participate in the program.

Learners Goals: Discuss PollEv Responses

- What surprises you on this board? What connections do you see between our reasons?
- Does anyone have anything to add now that we've discussed a bit?

Milieu/ Teacher: Teacher shares their personal excitement about the program, congregational goals and an overview of the experience. Explain that our year will be an exploration of the holidays as they can develop our sense of joy and purpose in life. Emphasize

- **Alignment:** This focus on joy is a way of connecting our learning with your 2nd-3rd grade children's. Their learning over the next 2 years will focus on holidays, ideas of God and identity. We will dig into a discussion of Joy in a few minutes, but as we do, let's bear in mind that most of our children are developmentally positioned in pre-adolescence. In a few more years they will become more aware of the ups and downs of life, and the less than ideal nature of the world we live in, when viewed at certain angles. One of our goals together will also be to figure out how Judaism helps us to balance awareness of these challenges - whether personal or global - and still create moments of Joy that can sustain us as adults, and our children as they take the roller coaster ride through the teen years and the rest of life!
- **Role of Parents:** Jewish text (Torah, reference v'ahvta, project on screen) repeatedly emphasizes the centrality of the parents as teachers of their children. Contemporary educators and scholars agree that a child's parent is their most influential teacher, in Judaism and in life. Our own experiences, knowledge and goals translate powerfully to our children intentionally or not!
- **Our own journeys:** This year will also explore some of your own goals, values and experiences for your own growth and that of your children. We can think about this in the same way we think about that oxygen mask on the airplane; we always affix our own mask before putting it on our children! In order to be this best teacher, and indeed in order to figure out how we want to grow into that role, we first need to become learners ourselves and figure out what, why and how we model our values for our children.

Transition: The Jewish holidays will be our link throughout the broader concepts and ideas that we explore together this year. Framing the cycle of the Jewish year as a journey can teach us a lot about the cycles of our lives, and the lives of our children. The holidays touch on moments of re-birth, celebration of creation, loss, commitment, leaving home to return again, and the roadmap of becoming oneself in between.

9:30-10:00: From Exodus to Liberation and Everything in between: The Jewish Calendar Cycle

Generating List of Holidays (5 minutes) : Let's take a minute to map out the Jewish year for ourselves. This will be a working list and we can re-work it as we learn (use a dry-erase board that can be easily erased as later discussions occur). What holidays begin the Jewish year? We'll start with the first and just keep listing until we make our way back again. *Generate list, most likely it will start with Rosh Hashanah and continue through Shavuot.*

Past Holiday Experiences: Turn to person next to you and share a previous holiday experience and what it has meant to you. What is its purpose in your life?

With this working list in mind, let's turn to the perspective of Rabbi Yitz Greenberg, one of the greatest thinkers of our generation as he describes the Jewish calendar cycle. For this, we will break into chevruta, or pairs. Chevruta, or paired reading of text is a traditional Jewish learning approach. The idea is that one benefits from a different perspective and builds a relationship while learning. Consider partnering with someone you haven't yet met to discuss this text. *(break into chevrutot)*

Text Study 1 (10 minutes):

In Judaism's teaching, the Exodus is not a one-time event but a norm by which all of life should be judged and guided. The Exodus is an "orienting event" - an event that sets in motion and guides the Jewish way (and ultimately humanity's way) toward the Promised Land - an earth set free and perfected.

The Exodus is brought into life and incorporated into personal and national values through the classical Jewish behavior model - reenactment of the event. The basic rhythm of the year is set through the reenactment of the Exodus (Passover), followed by the covenant acceptance (Shavuot) and then by restaging of the exodus way (Sukkot).

Passover, marking the liberation, and Sukkot, commemorating the journey, are the alpine events in the Hebrew Calendar. Shavuot is the link between the two major Exodus commemorations, marking the transformation of Exodus from a one-time event into an ongoing commitment.

Questions for discussion:

1. According to this text, what event and holiday mark the beginning of the Jewish holiday cycle? What is the arc of the Jewish year by this account?
2. In what way is the Exodus an 'orienting event'?
3. What surprises you about this account of the Jewish year? How does it impact the way you think about the Jewish holidays?

Group Discussion of Text Study (5 minutes):

As a group, let's see what we learned. First, is there anything you would change about our earlier list/order of the Jewish year, based on this text? *Possible change to put Passover first.* We've updated our cycle a bit, based on this new information, having seen the historical significance of the Exodus story in charting the Jewish holiday cycle. Let's discuss the Exodus a bit. In what way is the Exodus an orienting event? *Possible answers: it is a beginning, a moment of liberation, first taste of freedom before a big journey, first taste of freedom as Jews.*

What possible connections do you see between the Exodus story and the idea of 'finding joy'? *Possible answers: the exodus was a joyful moment; Exodus was a joyful moment, but there were challenges ahead; the liberated slaves were trying to find their own joy; the Exodus story was bittersweet - maybe finding joy is too; joy is elusive, just like freedom.*

Transition: This text helps us understand the broad arc of the holiday cycle and its relationship to the idea of a 'better future' (sometimes called 'redemption'). But what about the rest of the holidays? Let's read this final text together to get a glimpse at what their role might be.

Text Study 2 (10 minutes)

Through its repetition, the Exodus became so real that the Israelites remained faithful to its message in the face of an indifferent world - even in the face of oppression and defeat.

A people does not live by vision alone. After communicating the goal, the Torah turns to the next key challenge: how to develop the incredible human capacities need to carry the burden of the mission. (PAUSE to ask: what do you think Rabbi Greenberg means by 'human capacities'? How do you understand that phrase?)

The focus on developing human capacity is particularly exemplified in the Sabbath and the Days of awe, the primary holy days that nurture personal life along the way. The Sabbath on a weekly basis and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur annually are the key periods of individual and family renewal. These holidays accomplish their goals primarily by lifting the individual out of the routine that controls and, too often, deadens the daily life.

Discuss together as a group:

1. According to the text, what is the purpose of the holidays of Shabbat, Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur? *(developing human capacity).*
2. In your opinion, what human capacities are the holidays trying to develop or cultivate? *(Possible answers: hope, discipline, remembrance, community, joy, productivity, resilience)*
3. Which of these capacities are you trying to develop in your own children or in yourself? (and maybe there are some we haven't mentioned that you or your family are working on - we can list those here too!)

As we continue our journey together - we'll continue to talk about these capacities and to what end. In the meantime, we've covered a lot about the Jewish holiday cycle. Now let's turn to our own life cycles and see if they have any relationship to the narratives we've been talking about.

10:00-10:30am Journey Mapping

Every learner will receive a large piece of butcher paper and there will be colored pencils, and markers available. At this point, let's look at our own 'orienting events', moments when we've developed human capacities in our own lives.

Over the next 15 minutes you'll have time to use this piece of paper to do a simple but not always easy task - creating a life map of the turning points in your journey so far. These include the peak experiences, milestones, the low points, and the turning points that sent you into different directions. You can also represent influences or people that were important to you. We'll talk about themes you notice once we're done. Grab another bagel, juice, and make yourself at home while you make your map.

10:00-10:20am: Journey Mapping: Things to Include (pass out in handout to learners,¹¹)

- *"Peak" experiences, high points*
- *"Valley" experiences, Low points*
- *Milestones*
- *Influential people*
- *Turning points, or moments causing significant change. They may not have been clear at the time, but might be significant in retrospect*
- *Other important childhood or adult memories, positive or negative*

10:20-10:30 Discussion of Journey Mapping Exercise

Bring group back together, having given them 5 minute, 2 minute warnings to wrap up. Facilitate a discussion to extract themes.

- What moments were related to community, or feeling a part of something bigger (God/belonging)?
- What moments clarified purpose or values (identity)?
- What moments were intentional rituals or time markers (like holidays)?
- Were there any moments that one would label joyous? What made them joyous?

10:30-10:45 What is Joy to you? What is Joy in Judaism?

What is Joy to you? (7 minutes)

Based on these moments we've described as Joyous, let's see how each of us would define the word joy? *write down on sticky note and put on the wall.*

¹¹ p. 47, *Reframed Teacher Leadership: A Narrative Inquiry*. Dissertation of Cynthia Kenyon, University of Northern Iowa, 2008.

Give everyone time to view the other definitions, and draw lines or post questions between them.

These are your working concepts of the word 'joy'. Is there anything anyone found surprising or appreciated about another person's definition? *(take a few responses)*. We'll come back to these throughout our time together *(take picture of the wall with post-its to save for later)*

What is joy in Judaism? (7 minutes)

A basket/bowl/hat should be filled with slips of paper containing the following different words for 'Joy' or happiness in Judaism. Each person should take a slip and read it out loud to the group. Once they've read the word and its 'description' out loud, that person should place it on the wall closest to the definition for 'joy' created by a learner.

- **Simcha** (Hebrew: שמחה), a generic word for happiness, also used to describe a celebration (e.g. a wedding, bar/bat mitzvah), it is also a name for both males and females
- **Osher** (Hebrew: אושר), a "deeper, lasting happiness"
- **Orah** (Hebrew: אורה), a word used to mean both "light" and "happiness"
- **Gila** (Hebrew: גילה), a term that may specifically refer to an exuberant outburst of joy^[3] or the "happiness of discovery"
- **Rina** (Hebrew: רינה), a term used to describe a "refreshing happiness"
- **Ditza** (Hebrew: דיצה), a "sublime joy"
- **Sasson** (Hebrew: ששון), a "sudden unexpected happiness"
- **Tzahala** (Hebrew: צהלה), a word used for both "happiness" and "dancing"
- **Chedva** (Hebrew: חדבה), a word denoting the "happiness of togetherness"

If there are words that do not connect to our definitions of Joy, that's ok. We'll put them to the side. Let's take a brief minute to discuss. How was it to make the connections between our definitions and these Hebrew words related to Joy? Do you notice any themes about which fit more easily into our thinking?

Transition: This was a brief moment of beginning to explore moments we find joyous and the way it relates to Jewish ideas of happiness and joy. We'll keep exploring these ideas. Before we move on, I want to share one more definition of joy provided by an educator, Rachael Kessler. Kessler defines joy as moments when we feel "delight and gratitude in being alive". As you might have experienced earlier in our session, Kessler points out that thinking of these moments can prompt deep reflection about our life's evolution and our own purpose, connecting us to our soul

and filling us with a feeling of awe and wonder. It is these moments we are working to create together with your families in this program and as we think about the holidays in our lives.

10:45-11:00am Closing Circle: Joys and Oys

Now that we've talked about our definitions of joy and how they interact with Jewish and secular ideas, we'll have our first 'Joys and Oys' circle. Ordinarily we will do this at the beginning of each session, but since we are just getting to know one another, we'll close with it today. This is simply an opportunity for you to share anything 'joyful' in your or your family's life (by ANY of the definitions we discussed!), a moment of delight and gratitude in being alive, an unexpected happiness, a happiness of togetherness (Refer to/point to Hebrew terms). Anything. At the same time, this is also a place to share 'oys'. I know we didn't do an exercise defining the word 'oy', but it is usually said at a moment of challenge, frustration, or at its worse, sorrow. It is sometimes accompanied by eye rolling, deep sighs, hands in the air. Those sorts of moments! There's no pressure to share, you can always pass, this is just your space to share what's going on in your life with the group.

Would anyone like to begin? *(allow anyone in the group to share)*

Note to facilitator: make sure to take notes for future problem solving sessions and to incorporate into your teaching later

Close with Shechechiyanu, with Hebrew and English projected on the screen (explain that we do this at firsts to express joy and gratitude at being alive and present in the moment)

Session 3: Shabbat **1 hour and 30 minutes**

Curricular EU:

- Our roles as parents, professionals and partners are full of challenges and joys that endure across time and place.
- My own knowledge and experience of Judaism and life curates my child's experience.
- Judaism is anything but child's play.
- Joy is an outgrowth of feeling a sense of purpose, wonder, remembrance and connection.

Session 3: Shabbat

Core Concept for this Lesson:

Shabbat is a weekly reminder of the Jewish value of celebration, connection and rest on our journey to creating a better world for ourselves and our children.

Essential Questions:

- How does it feel to stop and reflect on the joy already present in my life?
- What does Shabbat celebrate according to Jewish oral tradition?
- How can my family find joy in Shabbat in a way that suits our family's particular values?

Know: Participants will gain a fluency in a few key Jewish textual references to Shabbat.

Participants will gain a reminder of the joy in their own lives.

Do: Participants will 'interview' one another to discover their own joy and witness it in others' lives. Participants will create a personalized resource for celebrating Shabbat with their family.

Believe: Participants will value Shabbat's role of providing a weekly moment for reflection, celebration and connection.

Belong: Learners will create a community where they can witness one another's joy and support one another's experimentation with Shabbat family ritual.

9:15-9:40am Intro and Do Now Activity: Joy Bingo

As participants enter the room, they will be invited to grab bagels and coffee.

10 minutes, 'Joy Bingo': The following questions inspired by different Hebrew words related to joy will be posted on a projector screen in the room.

Questions

○ **What's the best surprise you've ever experienced?**

■ *Gila* (Hebrew: גילה), a term that may specifically refer to an exuberant outburst of joy^[3] or the "happiness of discovery"

■ *Sasson* (Hebrew: ששון), a "sudden unexpected happiness"

○ **Where is the most relaxing place you've ever visited?**

■ *Rina* (Hebrew: רינה), a term used to describe a "refreshing happiness"

○ **What moment in your life still makes you smile or laugh when you think about it?**

■ *Osher* (Hebrew: אושר), a "deeper, lasting happiness"

○ **When was the last time someone in your family made you laugh out loud?**

■ *Chedva* (Hebrew: חדבה), a word denoting the "happiness of togetherness"

○ **What is a moment when you were really proud of yourself or someone else?**

■ *Ditza* (Hebrew: דיצה), a "sublime joy"

While everyone is getting settled, every participant will receive a 'Human Bingo' Sheet with the names of everyone in the group. The participants will have a generous amount of 'settling-in' time to try and get 'bingo' (5 in a row) by finding different people in the group and asking them the above questions.

Sample 'Joy Bingo' Sheet

'Joy' Bingo				
Brian	Susan	Diane	Michael	Jonathon
Helen	Gavin	Scott	Abigail	Kevin
Debbie	Matthew	Jennifer	Kathy	Noah
Charles	Sarah	Louis	Jeremy	Aaron
Joshua	Don	Sharon	Christine	Drew

10 minutes: Joy Bingo 'Debrief'

Discuss: Facilitator will welcome the group back together and discuss the following questions with the group:

1. What was surprising about this experience for you? Which question was the easiest or hardest for you to answer?
2. What did you learn about yourself?

7 minutes: Joys and Oys This is simply an opportunity for you to share anything 'joyful' in your or your family's life (by ANY of the definitions we discussed!), a moment of delight and gratitude in being alive, an unexpected happiness, a happiness of togetherness (Refer to/point to Hebrew terms). Anything. At the same time, this is also a place to share 'oys'. Moments of challenge, frustration, or at its worse, sorrow. It is sometimes accompanied by eye rolling, deep sighs, hands in the air. Those sorts of moments! There's no pressure to share, you can always pass, this is just your space to share what's going on in your life with the group. This week, consider sharing any oys or joys that have come up as your family has observed Jewish holidays or tried new rituals since our time together started.

Facilitator Transition: Let's return to a part of the very first text we studied together, from Rabbi Yitz Greenberg. As you might remember, Rabbi Greenberg taught us that the Jewish holidays are a constant re-experiencing of the idea of 'Exodus'. In particular, Rabbi Greenberg writes:

(Projected on screen - have a parent read aloud)

The focus on developing human capacity is particularly exemplified in the Sabbath and the Days of Awe, the primary holy days that nurture personal life along the way. The Sabbath on a weekly basis and Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur annually are the key periods of individual and family renewal. These holidays accomplish their goals primarily by lifting the individual out of the routine that controls and, too often, deadens the daily life.

In our previous session we learned about the Days of Awe, and how they disrupt our routine on an annual basis, by obliging us to seek forgiveness, contemplate our own death through fasting, and celebrating the 'journey' by dwelling in a temporary fragile structure for a week.

Today we will be learning about the experience of Shabbat, and how this weekly 'disruption' is a reminder of our purpose, our values, and the work we still have left to do. We'll look to the Torah to see what the text teaches us about this weekly holiday and at the end of our session, we will have an opportunity to stop and think about what a weekly opportunity for renewal can look like in your family's life.

9:40-10:10 (30 minutes) Text Study on Shabbat

Facilitator: First, let's look to our textual tradition to glean what the purpose of Shabbat is.

20 minutes: Text Study Part 1, Genesis 2:1-3

Gen. 2:1 Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all their multitude. **2** And on the seventh day God finished the work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all the work that he had done. **3** So God blessed the seventh day and hallowed it, because on it God rested from all the work that he had done in creation.

א ויכלו השמים והארץ וכל צבאם:

ב ויכל אלהים ביום השביעי מלאכתו אשר עשה
וישבת ביום השביעי מכל מלאכתו אשר עשה:

ג ויברך אלהים את יום השביעי ויקדש אתו כי בו
שבת מכל מלאכתו אשר ברא אלהים לעשות:

Discussion questions:

1. In chevruta (4-5 minutes) What are the major events of this text? (*possible answers: the world is created, God rests, shabbat is created*)
2. Recap and discuss as a group (2-3 minutes): What does the text want to teach us about the idea of God in these verses? (*God creates things, God needs to rest, God can make things holy*)
3. In chevruta (4-5 minutes): How do you relate to the image of God in this text? (*possible answers: all week I am stressed trying to get work done, I need a rest sometimes, I don't believe in this kind of God/I don't believe that God created the world*).
 - a. **Note to facilitator:** If parents bring up the idea that they don't believe in God in this way, and don't believe this story of the creation of the world, this is an important opportunity to facilitate a discussion about the value of God as a 'character' in a story, in addition to a more complicated concept than we originally were taught in religious school. This is a space to affirm and validate these feelings.
 - b. **God Talk:** If God is a character in a story - what is the author trying to teach us about this character's experience? Who is this 'character'? What are this character's responsibilities and life experiences that we know of and how are they similar to our own? (*bring in ideas of parenting, being responsible for a multitude, the creation of a family, and the ongoing creation of the world. We are all responsible for the ongoing creation of the world, just like this 'character'*).
4. As a group (4-5 minutes): What are some of the things that might have made it hard for God to rest? What makes it hard for you to rest? (think about your own life for inspiration!)

20 minutes: Text Study Part 2, Deuteronomy 5:12-15*Project*

Ex. 20:10 But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; you shall not do any work—you, your son or your daughter, your male or female slave, your livestock, or the alien resident in your towns. **11** For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, but rested the seventh day; therefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day and consecrated it.

Deut. 5:12 Observe the sabbath day and keep it **holy**, as the LORD your God commanded you. **13** Six days you shall labor and do all your work. **14** But the seventh day is a sabbath to the LORD your God; **you shall not do any work**—you, or your son or your daughter, or your male or female slave, or your ox or your donkey, or any of your livestock, or the resident alien in your towns, so that your male and female slave may rest as well as you. **15** **Remember that you were a slave in the land of Egypt, and the LORD your God brought you out from there with a mighty hand and an outstretched arm; therefore the LORD your God commanded you to keep the sabbath day.**

Discussion Questions: Making Shabbat Holy

1. In the Hebrew, the words for ‘hallow’ and make ‘holy’ (see green highlight), are related (K/D/SH). What information do the texts give about how to make something holy? (not working for everyone, even the workers get a break)
2. Group brainstorm: What other ways do you know of that one makes things ‘holy’ on Shabbat or not? (group brainstorm: write on flip chart: not working, not using electricity/not driving, sharing a meal, blessing things, singing songs).
3. In chevruta 3-5 minutes): “What are some of the ways YOUR FAMILY makes things holy? (Share out with group and put on flip chart)

Discussion Questions: Values of Shabbat

Note to Facilitator: This next section is an opportunity to generate possible themes and values of Shabbat that might resonate with the parents’ sense of identity/self and purpose, and what they hope to cultivate in their families. As parents generate values associated with Shabbat in these texts, keep a running list on a flip chart to which you can return later.

4. According to Exodus 20:11, why is Shabbat created? How does this compare to the Deuteronomy text (see yellow highlighted)? (*possible answers: Shabbat relates to the Exodus, God saved you from Exodus*).

5. We have now 2 different possible meanings/reasons for Shabbat.
 - a. What are the values of the verses in Exodus (we rest because god rested)?
 - i. (possible answers: *gratitude* for the things created for us, *celebration* of hard work,, *achievement*, *betzelem elohim*/we are made in the image of God or each of us is divine in our own way)
 - b. What are the values of the Deuteronomy idea that we observe shabbat to remember that we were slaves in Egypt and needed to be saved?
 - i. possible answers: *freedom*, *gratitude*, *social justice*
6. What are some additional values of Shabbat that you can think of, from these texts or not?

Transition: Parents choose values to focus on as they experiment with Shabbat practice: Colored post-it notes are on the tables for parents to choose from. Each parent should place a post-it next to a value of Shabbat that resonates with their sense of self and a value they seek to cultivate in their family

10:10-10:20 Creating a Weekly Disruption

Transition: These texts teach us about the WHY and about the HOW of Shabbat. It can be a moment of renewing our commitments to our values, celebrating what we've done to practice those values, and remembering the fortune of our lives. As Rabbi Greenberg reminded us at the beginning of our session, Shabbat is a disruption of our 'normal' that helps us develop human 'capacity'. As members of a Jewish community, and as parents, we are still negotiating how this 'disruption' can work in our own lives, together we'll brainstorm and select ways to begin experimenting.

Group parents together based on the values they placed a post-it next to.

Facilitator: How can Shabbat help you live your values? What 'human capacities' are you or the members of your family working on developing? Take this time now in these smaller groups to think of ways that you can use Shabbat to live your values - with your family or independently. (facilitator circulates to groups to make suggestions).

10:20-10:30 DIY Birkat HaKohanim for Shabbat

Facilitator: One way that we can express our values and our hopes for our family is through the weekly blessing shared by parents with their children on Shabbat. In addition to the blessings over candles, wine and challah that you might be familiar with, this practice of blessing children is also a part of the traditional shabbat ritual.

Blessing of Children/Birkat Hakohanim is projected.

May God make you like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel, Leah, Ephraim and Menasseh.

May God Bless you and guard you. May the light of God shine upon you, and may God be gracious to you. May the presence of God be with you and give you peace. -

<http://www.reformjudaism.org/practice/prayers-blessings/shabbat-and-holiday-blessings-blessing-over-children#sthash.ZowfApft.dpuf>

With our time remaining, each family/parent will write a Family Blessing to share with their children each shabbat.

Questions to think about as you compose:

- Do you have a favorite biblical character or personal ancestor you keep in mind when raising your children?
- What traits and behaviors are you and your children working to cultivate that you hope they are 'blessed' with?
- What other hopes, dreams and blessings would you like to share with your children?

Bonus At-Home Activity with Kids:

Directions: Each couple/parent will receive 18 playing card sized pieces of cardstock and an empty playing card box. 6 cards will be printed with the 'Joy' questions used during human bingo. Parents will be encouraged to work with their children to create questions for the additional cards, and decorate them and the box together.

Example:

- *Gratitude:* What is one thing that someone did for you this week that you are grateful for?
- *Social Justice:* What is problem in the world that you became aware of this week? What can you do about it?

How to use your Shabbat cards (printed and handed out to parents)

- Set on the table during a meal. Go around the table and have each person pick a question to answer.
- If you give to tzedakah, take a card after each person puts money in the box.
- Start Saturday morning breakfast with each person taking a Shabbat card to answer.
- Driving to and from athletic games? Keep the shabbat cards in the car and make the most of your time on the run.
- Have an older child you want to include? Text a Shabbat card question to your tween/teen.
- Post a Shabbat question in a place everyone in the family frequents (hint: the paperwork always has to get done!)

Wrap up: Next time we come together, we'll discuss how it went incorporating these 'disruptions' into your own lives or any of the others!

Session 4: Chanukah Rated PG-13 **1 hour and 15 minutes**

Curricular EU:

- Our roles as parents, professionals and partners are full of challenges and joys that endure across time and place.
- My own knowledge and experience of Judaism and life curates my child's experience.
- Judaism is anything but child's play.
- Joy is an outgrowth of feeling a sense of purpose, wonder, remembrance and connection.

Session 4: Chanukah Rated PG-13

Core Concept for this Lesson:

During Chanukah, we experience the coexistence of light and darkness, just as joy and sorrow go hand in hand in life.

Essential Questions:

- What are the different stories of Chanukah and why are some more easily elevated than others?
- How does Jewish ritual invite joy and sorrow to co-exist?
- How can my Chanukah be a moment of reflection and celebration for my family?

Know: Participants will become acquainted with diverse stories of Chanukah and the historicity of each.

Do: Participants will compare different stories of Chanukah and interpret their meanings. Participants will create a take-home tool that can remind their family of the messages of Chanukah in Jewish oral tradition, history and ritual.

Believe: Participants will value the more adult versions of the Chanukah story and believe in their own ability to balance the joy and sorrow of its narrative.

Belong: Learners will feel a part of an adult learning community that can support questioning of accepted narratives and balance that with the need to teach age-appropriate messages to our children.

9:15-9:20: Do Now - What is one word you associate with Chanukah?

9:20-9:30 Oys and Joys

9:30-9:40: Set Induction: Inside Out Clip

Facilitator shows clip from *Inside Out* (2015), asks participants to remind one another of the premise of the movie. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pvMxhza4myY>

Joy and Sadness:

1. What happens in the clip?
2. How do joy and sadness interact?
3. What is the filmmaker trying to teach us about these different human emotions?
4. When have you, or your children, found yourself living in this tension? (chevruta)

Transition: Today we will explore the holiday of Chanukah through this lens. Review words associated with Chanukah shared at the beginning. Does anything surprise you about this list? Today we'll explore some divergent stories of Chanukah and reflect on what these complicated re-tellings can teach us.

9:40-10:10am Stories of Chanukah (...or Jews really do control Hollywood)

2 minutes: Split into 3 groups, 'production companies'. For our first activity together, you are all filmmakers and movie producers.

15 minutes:

- We are the producers of the next big Hollywood blockbuster and we are looking for the right angle. You are a group of filmmakers ready to pitch the next big story of Chanukah (think *Exodus: God and Kings* and *Noah* with Russell Crowe).
- 15 minutes - read the summary you have been given and put together a pitch for a screenplay.
- Your ultimate goal: Make the story compelling, easy to understand, and to also really tell what you believe to be the TRUTH about Chanukah.
- You as a filmmaker feel like it is your responsibility to make sure that the world learns the true story of Chanukah. If you have reasons why you think your story would be a market success (this is business, people!), share those in your pitch.

10 minutes Each group pitches their story

5 minute Debrief:

- Based on these pitches, what is one new word you associate with Chanukah?
- Why do you think some of these stories are told and others not? (*possible answers: more complicated, some more joyful than others, some more flattering to Jews than others, they bring up hard questions and issues*)

10:10-10:30am A New December Dilemma: Cultivating Resilience in Ourselves and our Children

Facilitator: Some of these stories are more joyful than others. Some of our own stories or feelings are more joyful than others, especially as we approach winter and the traditional 'holiday season'. Chanukah, while a celebratory moment, is also a story of resilience, of individuals and a people struggling with conflict and turmoil and making it through the other side. While you might still tell the story of the oil to your children for the next few years, how can our celebration of Chanukah be a model of the balance of joy and sorrow that we walk in life?

- Distribute pages 181-183 from *Jewish Spiritual Parenting* (Kipnes and November) describing joyful Chanukah rituals that do not include gift-giving, for reference at home.

Take-away: We'll spend the last bit of our time together creating Chanukah lighting placemats to rest your menorah/chanukiah on each year. Art supplies are available, but most importantly, decorate your placemat with questions that will prompt your family to think about their own resilience over the past year. You'll see that these questions connect to the themes of the different stories of Chanukah you each read. *Some may need to be rephrased when discussing with children around the menorah.*

Suggestions:

- What is one difficult relationship I worked on this year?
- What is one challenge I encountered in school or at work this year?
- What is one thing that I love about myself that I shared with the world this year (even if it was hard)?
- What is one surprise I did not expect to happen this year?
- What is one thing that I had to say goodbye to this year that I still miss?

Wrap up: Practice Chanukah blessings together as a group. During a closing go around, each person picks one question from their placemat to answer.

Parents should leave completed placemats with the facilitator to laminate and return before the holiday.

Appendix A: Session 4 Resource, Chanukah, 3 Stories for Comparison

The Story of Chanukah Version #1

What is Chanukah? ...

This is what our sages taught:

On the 25th of Kislev - the days of Chanukah, they are eight, not to eulogize on them and not to fast on them, for when the Greeks entered the Temple, they polluted all the oils in the Temple, and when the Hasmonean dynasty overcame and defeated them, they checked and they found but one cruse of oil that was set in place with the seal of the High Priest, but there was in it only enough to light a single day. **A miracle was done with it, and they lit from it for eight days.**

The following year the sages fixed those days, making them holidays for praise and thanksgiving.

Talmud Shabbat 21b



Picture of a page of Talmud

The Story of Chanukah Version #2

Maccabees 1 & 2 tell the story of the Maccabees, a small band of Jewish fighters who liberated the Land of Israel from the Syrian Greeks who occupied it. Under the reign of Antiochus IV Epiphanes, the Syrian Greeks sought to impose their Hellenistic culture, which many Jews found attractive. By 167 B.C.E, Antiochus intensified his campaign by defiling the Temple in Jerusalem and banning some Jewish practices.

The Maccabees--led by the five sons of the priest Mattathias, especially Judah--waged a three-year campaign that culminated in the cleaning and rededication of the Temple. **This small band of brothers fought together against the great Greek army of Antiochus.**

Since they were unable to celebrate the holiday of Sukkot at its proper time in early autumn, the victorious Maccabees decided that Sukkot should be celebrated once they rededicated the Temple, which they did on the 25th of the month of Kislev in the year 164 B.C.E. Since Sukkot lasts seven days, this became the timeframe adopted for Chanukah.



Depiction of Judah Maccabee, left

The Story of Chanukah #3

Around the year 170 BCE, the land of Judea was dominated by Greek, Hellenizing powers. Despite this, the Jews enjoyed relative religious freedom because the Greeks were Pagan. They didn't really mind if your God was different from theirs, as long as you paid your taxes!

Amidst this era of freedom, many Jews fell in love with the Greek culture of arts and athletics, and stopped practicing their own religion and stopped worshiping God at the Temple in Jerusalem. Other Jews remained as committed as ever to Temple worship, including sacrifice, Shabbat, Kashrut and circumcision. **This conflict about how to respond to Greek culture led to near civil war amongst the Jews.**

Antiochus IV tried to stop the violence and prevent the competing factions of Jews from weakening his own power by outlawing many Jewish practices including Kashrut, circumcision and Shabbat. Some Jews were put to death for practicing these Jewish rituals, since Antiochus felt they were causing **internal conflict** amongst Jews.

Finally, those Jews most committed to Jewish tradition and ritual, called 'Maccabees' won out, beating the Jews who were committed to Greek culture and the Greek army of Antiochus IV. They celebrated their victory by rededicating the temple in Jerusalem and holding a huge feast, called Chanukah, which means 'rededication.'