

“LabJudaism”

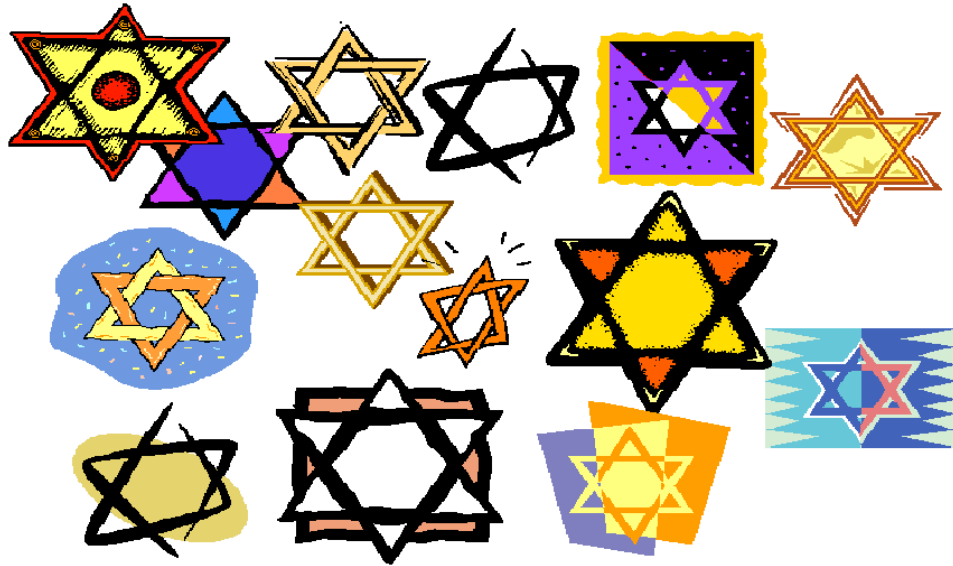
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The capstone curriculum submitted in partial fulfillment of requirements for
Master of Arts in Religious Education

Hebrew Union College-Jewish Institute of Religion
School of Education
New York, NY

April, 2012

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Curriculum Rationale

“Our generation doesn’t view Judaism as an obligation,” said Rabbi Jamie Korngold, the Adventure Rabbi, who offers an online bar mitzvah program. “It’s something that has to compete in the marketplace with everything else they have in their lives.” (“Bar Mitzvah Studies Take to the Web.” Virshup, Amy. The New York Times, November 19, 2010) How can we, as Jewish educators, recreate the Bar Mitzvah experience and restore its religious and personal significance for each individual?

From the beginning of the advent of the Jewish ritual of Bar Mitzvah, the preparation for the ritual became an opportunity for Jewish education. Beginning in the late 1930s, a new trend used the Bar Mitzvah as “motivation for the children’s acquisition of a wider amount of Jewish knowledge than the rite itself requires, in fact, for his entire elementary Jewish education.” (Engelman, Uriah Z. “Educational Requirements for Bar Mitzvah.” Department of Research and Information of the American Association for Jewish Education. December 1951. P.8) “The Bar Mitzvah ceremony is being used by an increasing number of congregations throughout the country as a means of motivating the children to enroll in weekday afternoon Jewish schools and to devote themselves to a more intensive study of the Jewish religion, the Hebrew language and related subjects, than would be required for the mere fulfillment of the rite.” (*ibid*, “Jewish School Census”) But, when it comes to the educational programs surrounding Bar/Bat Mitzvah, there is no shortage of complaints.

That does, however, not have to be the case. Just like dating, computers, cell phones, and everything else, Jewish education must be innovative and captivating in today’s world. The few years before a child will turn thirteen and become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one of the predictable times that families join an organized religious institution. It is not only our job, but our obligation to meaningfully engage these families at this time and to give them a deep and

meaningful connection to Judaism. I propose that we create “LabJudaism” to do just that.

“LabJudaism” is an innovative and experimental program created to help the student and his/her family prepare to be active Jewish adults. This program will begin to transform the way one becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah, giving a new twist to an old tradition. Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation is not Torah trope and d’var Torah writing; it is a thoughtful process about what it means to live Jewishly. This period of time is when one can develop a way of thinking, how to live fully, meaningfully, and how to navigate the crazy world that we live in. “LabJudaism” will give each family member the chance to make meaning out of life. Meaning can be very difficult to define but I will use it to refer to, finding purpose, value, and personal worth in one’s activities. It is to make it your own, to take something and add a dimension that is valuable to the individual, a deeper understanding of something.

Today’s Jews embrace Bar/Bat Mitzvah as not just a Jewish rite of passage, but an American rite of passage. (Cohen, Steven M. and Eisen, Arnold M. The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis (2000), p.10.) Cohen and Eisen point out that the Bar Mitzvah is how to live as fully human beings, engaged fully in humanity through a personal Jewish lens. “While most Jewish ritual practices show a decline from one generation to the next, bar mitzvah remains virtually universal, bat mitzvah has become much more common, and both occasions have become the occasions for more elaborate festivities.” (“Recent Publications on Bar/Bat mitzvah: Their Implications for Jewish Education Research and Practice.” Schoenfeld, Stuart. Glendon College, York University; Religious Education; Fall 94, Vol. 89 Issue 4, p.594) Bar/Bat Mitzvah is a ritual that is usually the first rite of passage that the child is an active participant. Cohen and Eisen opine that if people desire to participate in a particular observance, “it is because of their *experience of its meaning*.” (Cohen, Steven M. and Eisen, Arnold M. The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis

(2000), p.93.) If there is not time or effort put into finding meaning within Judaism, after the ritual, the behaviors and practices learned will be left behind. Schoenfeld discovered that those polled had a positive feeling during Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation and service, but their connection was fleeting. Cohen and Eisen are teaching us that we must incorporate meaning into the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation or else it will be a one-time experience that eventually will lose its relevance. “LabJudaism” takes preparation to a new level by practicing and experimenting with Judaism and taking the time to reflect on those experiences. It is only when one is provided the opportunity to experiment and be supported in the "making" meaning can the process have meaning. This program is geared to teach the "scientific method for life," through a Jewish lens. In this program, the child becomes a Bar/Bat Mitzvah by experimenting with the holidays, but the method learned applies to everything in religious life for many many years to come.

“Living Jewish values means much more than remembering stories from the Bible or being able to say a prayer in Hebrew.” (Kaiserman, Saul Jewish Education is about Living Jewish Values. *Originally published in Temple Emanu-El Bulletin, Vol. 84, No. 2, October 2011*) Today, most Bar/Bat Mitzvah congregational programs consist of one, maybe two days a week religious school classes and private tutoring. The course of study is geared towards the student learning how to be prepared for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah, usually, Shabbat service. According to Helen Leneman, who surveyed both Reform and Conservative congregations, the content of the basic curriculum for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah classroom course is as follows:

- Torah and Haftarah blessings;
- Order and structure of the service;
- The history of Bar/Bat Mitzvah;
- Meaning of responsibility, both Jewish and in general;

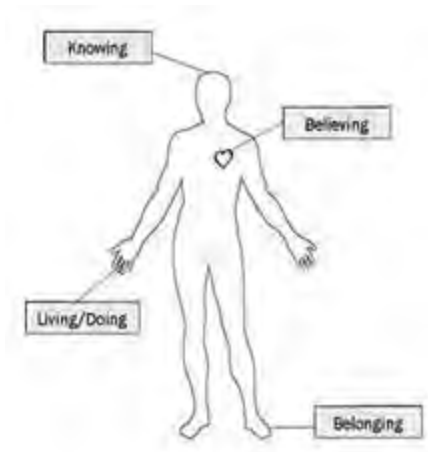
- Meaning of mitzvah primarily through mitzvah projects; (Bar/Bat Mitzvah Education: A Sourcebook. Helen Leneman (ed.). A.R.E. Publishing, Inc.: Denver, Colorado (1993), p.247)

There is no question that the concept of a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is extremely powerful. This is evident by the advent of *faux mitzvahs*, Bar/Bat Mitzvah celebrations for non-Jewish thirteen year olds. “A centuries-old Jewish tradition, bar mitzvahs (for boys) and bat mitzvahs (for girls) mark the passage from childhood to adulthood...” (“The Rite Stuff.” Tresniowski, Alex, Frey, Jennifer, Grossman, Wendy, Stambler, Lyndon, Stein, Anne E., People, 00937673, 4/26/2004, Vol. 61, Issue 16) Jews and non-Jews have taken this ritual and turned it into an elaborate celebration where families and friends can get together and enjoy the event. Some may say it is just to have a party, but I argue that the party has a greater meaning to connect to others, particularly family members who many times are aging and scattered throughout the country. The event brings meaning and celebration to our mundane lives.

A real life example of the power of the ritual of Bar/Bat Mitzvah is the story of an old man’s dying wish. In this story, the true meaning of a Bar Mitzvah is exemplified. A man, at home on his deathbed, with his family and rabbi at his side, announced that he did not want to die without becoming a Bar Mitzvah. In light of his request, the rabbi created an impromptu ceremony with the man’s family and friends. As a result, the man died fulfilled. This story is powerful because of the message it sends to us about the importance one can hold for a Bar/Bat Mitzvah. “In this context at the end of life, the meaning of a Bar Mitzvah ceremony is vividly reaffirmed: It is about the taking on of a new status. It is about the receiving and the passing on of tradition. It is about becoming an adult spiritually.” (“Today I am a Man”: An Eleventh Hour Legacy. Kaplan, Karen Bookman. Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling. 62 no 1-2 Spr-Sum 2008, p.153-155) Maybe

because of his Judaism, this man did not die alone, but rather was surrounded by friends and family and his rabbi, people who he connected with personally and spiritually.

“LabJudaism”, intended for students and their families one year before they become Bar/Bat Mitzvah, will help give a framework to think deeply about the ultimate messages and meaning of a congregation’s Bar/Bat Mitzvah program. What is it that we hope our children and their families will take away from the preparation and study for the Bar/Bat Mitzvah ritual? How does the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program affect its participants and ultimately influence our community, both now, during and after the experience? The goal of this curriculum is to give parents and Bar/Bat Mitzvah students the tools to live Jewishly and develop personal connections to Judaism beyond the ceremony. “To be Jewish is to be part of a Jewish community and requires more than cerebral activity. To be Jewish involves activity and interaction. It shapes how one thinks of oneself; more important, it is a way of being.” (Saxe, Leonard, and Barry I. Chazan. "Final Thoughts." *Ten Days of Birthright Israel: a Journey in Young Adult Identity*. Waltham, Mass: Brandeis UP, 2008. 186. Print.)



The diagram above, from The Lomed Handbook, is a mnemonic device that highlights four dimensions of effective education. First, every experience must engage and inspire the mind

of the learner (the “head”). Second, the “hand” is a reminder that every learning experience must both incorporate and lead to action. This could come about with a change in behavior or the development of a new skill. Third, we must consider the “hearts” of our learners, for in everything we teach we must ask, “Why should we care?” And finally, the “feet” remind us that effective Jewish education leads us to take a stand shaped from our beliefs as an integral part of a community.

Using the “whole person” approach to education ensures that the Bar/Bat Mitzvah program is responsive to the genuine questions of our learners, that the learning is applicable to daily life, and that our synagogue community is one in which our children and whole families will grow into responsible, capable, and practicing Jews. Life is a laboratory; we are always experimenting, making mistakes and trying again. Our Jewish lives are no different, and it is our responsibility as Jewish educators to create the Jewish laboratories for experimentation and learning. This Bar/Bat Mitzvah program is a laboratory for Jewish living.

Using the Jewish holiday cycle throughout one year as its backdrop “The Bnei Mitzvah Lab” will revolutionize what it means to become an active Jewish adult. During the Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation, we have a captive and engaged audience. This program will not just be about Haftarahs or service leading. Instead, it will assist participants in developing a higher order of Jewish thinking so that they can make Jewish choices. By living and experiencing traditional Jewish holiday rituals, participants will be probed to evaluate what brings meaning to their life and how Judaism is a part of that. If we describe “Bar/Bat Mitzvah”, it is the Jewish rite of passage. It is a ritual ceremony that marks the thirteenth birthday of a Jewish boy or girl, after which the Jewish community of old said that he or she symbolically takes full responsibility for his or her moral and spiritual conduct. “LabJudaism” will create a cycle of:

1. Experience
2. Reflection
3. Point of view/values/questions

This cycle can influence the next cycle of life, based on what was meaningful, important, and interesting for the individual. Ordinarily, experiential education emphasizes the experience only. However, “LabJudaism” not only emphasizes experience, but more importantly highlights the abstract conceptualization, and experimentation to help someone make it his or her own. Before we can send off and expect any Jewish Bar/Bat Mitzvah student to someday be responsible for their own Jewish lives, we must be obligated to give them the tools necessary to feel that they are truly capable of knowing what living Jewishly is all about. The goal of this curriculum is to help young people be more fully responsible for co-constructing their lives. In order to do this, they must be informed so that they can make thoughtful decisions about their Jewish life. The experiencing of Jewish holiday ritual with community and family will help give them the tools to think and adjust. Just “going through the motions” will not create the experience which will reinforce the desire to live Jewishly. “LabJudaism” will build a program that has as its primary goal a rich meaning to Jewish ritual and living, and will instill understanding of the beauty and depth of our religion.

Goals, Enduring Understandings, and Essential Questions

Priority Goals:

1. Introduce families to the spiritual and religious meaning of Jewish holidays.
2. Create a space for developing personal meaning.
3. Enable young people approaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah to develop a framework to live full Jewish lives.

Enduring Understandings:

1. Making a meaningful and connected Jewish life is my responsibility.
2. Rituals and traditions of Judaism bring order to life and mark sacred time.
3. Living a rich Jewish life requires marking time as sacred.

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to live in Jewish time?
2. What does it mean to me to celebrate a Jewish holiday?
3. How can I make meaning of an ancient Jewish tradition?
4. What tools and rituals do I engage in to make meaning for each holiday?

Dear Teacher,

Congratulations, you have taken the first step to making a difference in someone's life! As Jewish educators, we have the ability to re-create the Bar Mitzvah experience and restore its religious and personal significance for each individual. Just like dating, computers, cell phones, and everything else, Jewish education must be innovative and captivating in today's world. The few years before a child will turn thirteen and become a Bar/Bat Mitzvah is one of the predictable times that families join an organized religious institution. It is not only our job, but our obligation to engage these families and to give them a deep and meaningful connection to Judaism.

"LabJudaism" will do just that. "LabJudaism" is an innovative and experimental program created to help the student and his/her family prepare to be active Jewish adults. This program will begin to transform the way one becomes Bar/Bat Mitzvah, giving a new twist to an old tradition. Bar/Bat Mitzvah preparation will become a thoughtful process about what it means to live Jewishly. This period of time is when one can develop a way of thinking, how to live fully, meaningfully, how to navigate the crazy world that we live in. "LabJudaism" will give each family member the chance to make meaning out of life. Meaning can be very difficult to define but I will use it to refer to, finding purpose, value, and personal worth in one's activities. It is to make it your own, to take something and add a dimension that is valuable to the individual, a deeper understanding of something.

The goal of this curriculum is to help a young person be more fully responsible for co-constructing their life. In order to do this they must be informed so that they can make thoughtful decisions about their Jewish life. The experiencing of Jewish holiday ritual with community and family will help give them the tools to think and adjust. "LabJudaism" will build a program that has as its primary goal a rich meaning to Jewish ritual and living, and instills understanding of the beauty and depth of our religion.

Enjoy the journey! **B'hatzlacha!** (Good Luck!)

“LabJudaism” Curriculum Outline

<u>Experiment</u>	<u>Pages</u>
Lesson 1: Shabbat Dinner at a Family Home	13
Lesson 2: Rosh Hashanah 2 nd day Lunch at a Family Home	15
Lesson 3: Sukkot Party in a Sukkah	17
Lesson 4: Havdalah Bar-B-Que*	18-23
Lesson 5: Hanukkah Celebration	24
Lesson 6: Shabbat Kodesh*	25-35
Lesson 7: Purim Seudah	36
Lesson 8: Passover <i>Bedikat Chametz</i> *	37-43
Lesson 9: Kabbalat Shabbat Service and Oneg	44
Lesson 10: Shavuot Late Night Study Session	45

*Indicates a fully scripted lesson.

Shabbat Dinner at a Family Home

Lesson 1 Text Study

Creation

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth..." (*Genesis 1:1*)

For six days God created. "And God saw all that God had made and, behold, it was very good...

".... It was evening and it was morning, the sixth day. And the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their host. And God completed on the seventh day the work which God had done; and God rested on the seventh day from all the work which had been done.

"And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it; because in it God rested from all the work which God had created, to make..." (*Genesis 1:31-2:3*)

"More than the Jewish People has kept Shabbat, Shabbat has kept the Jewish People."
Ahad Ha-Am

Questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think that God rested on the seventh day of Creation?
2. How do you rest after a long week at school or at work?
3. How does resting help us to move forward productively?
4. What does it mean that "Shabbat has kept the Jewish People"? How does that impact your feelings about the meaning of Shabbat?

Preparing for Shabbat

By instruction as well as by personal example, the sages of the Talmud (rabbinic text about Jewish law, ethics, philosophy, customs and history) taught to honor and enjoy the Shabbat.

"It was said of the sage Shammai that all his days he ate for the honor of the Shabbat. How so? For when he found a prime specimen, he would say, 'This is for Shabbat.' Then, if he found a better one, he would set aside that one for Shabbat and eat the first one...." (*Talmud, Beitza 16b*)

"Said Rabbi Judah in the name of Rav: So was the custom of Rabbi Judah bar Illa'i: On Friday, they would bring before him a tub filled with hot water, and he would wash his face hand and

feet; he then wrapped himself in fringed sheets and would have the appearance of an angel of God." (*Talmud, Shabbat 25b*)

Rava would personally prepare the fish for Shabbat. Rav Chisda chopped vegetables. Raba and Rav Yosef chopped wood. Rav Nachman bar Yitzchak would be seen running about on Friday carrying bundles on his shoulders. Many of these were wealthy men who had numerous servants to do their work; yet they insisted on personally toiling in honor of the Shabbat (*Talmud, Shabbat 119a; Shulchan Aruch, Laws of Shabbat*)

Questions for discussion:

1. Why did Shammai save the best food for Shabbat? Why do you think that Rava, Rav Chisda, Raba, Rav Yosef, and Rav Nachman all did a lot of work to prepare for Shabbat?
2. When you are preparing for a special occasion or a party, what types of things do you do?
3. Why should we prepare for something with intention (deliberately)? Do you think it makes a difference to the event or the ritual or celebration?

As a family, try this!

God rested on Shabbat, Shammai saved the best foods for Shabbat, and some of the other rabbis worked hard to clean and prepare food for Shabbat. All of these things were special and unique to each individual, but all were done in order to make Shabbat special and holy.

Above you were asked what types of preparations you make for a party and how you rest after a long week. Can you imagine adapting the things you already do and making them your preparations to make Shabbat special?

As a family, write down two ways that you can honor and enjoy Shabbat. (You can use any of the examples above or take inspiration from how different and individualized each person's actions were.)

Rosh Hashanah Tashlich

Lesson 2 Text Study

“Cast off all your transgressions from yourselves and make for yourselves a new heart and a new spirit.” (Ezekiel 18:31)

Each year we stumble. We make mistakes.
Each year at Rosh Hashanah we resolve to try again—
To cast out jealousy, to cast out anger,
To cast out suspicion, to cast out cynicism.
To reach toward generosity
To reach toward forgiveness,
To reach toward openness,
To reach toward hope,
To reach toward faith,
To turn toward God,
To be one with God,
To be one with each other.

“You will cast all your sins into the depths of the sea, and may You cast all the sins of Your people, the house of Israel, into a place where they shall be no more remembered or visited or ever come to mind.” (Micah 7:19-20)

Questions for discussion:

1. What are some things that you have done that you would like “cast off” (throw away and forget about)?
2. How can you feel like this is a new start, like Ezekiel says, “... a new heart and a new spirit”?

As a family, try this!

Tashlich is a ritual where we pretend that bread crumbs are the sins that we have done this past year. Each sin is thrown into the water and is gone from our lives forever. It is important to spend this time to think about the things that you have done wrong, so that you can learn from it and try not to make the same mistakes. But, Rosh Hashanah and Tashlich are also new beginnings for us to think of all the good things you have done and of all the good things yet to do.

As a family write down on the post-it notes provided the ways that you can-

- reach toward generosity
- reach toward forgiveness
- reach toward openness
- reach toward hope
- reach toward faith
- turn toward God
- be one with each other

Sukkot Party in a Sukkah

Lesson 3

Text Study

The Zohar, the foremost book of Jewish mysticism, explains that the Sukkah generates such an intense concentration of spiritual energy, that the divine presence of God actually manifests itself there in a similar way to the Garden of Eden.

During Sukkot the souls of the seven shepherds of Israel -- Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Moses, Aaron, Joseph, and King David -- actually leave the Garden of Eden to partake in the divine light of the Sukkah (Zohar - Emor 103a).

The Jewish mystical texts explain that each of the seven Ushpizin (special guests symbolically invited into our sukkah) correspond to a Kabbalistic spiritual pathway called a sefirah through which the world is metaphysically nourished and perfected (Zohar 2:256a).

Abraham represents love and kindness

Isaac represents restraint and personal strength

Jacob represents beauty and truth

Moses represents eternity and dominance through Torah

Aaron represents empathy and receptivity to divine splendor

Joseph represents holiness and the spiritual foundation

David represents the establishment of the kingdom of heaven on earth

Questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think we invite these special people into our sukkah, and not into our home?
In your opinion, what makes the sukkah special?
2. Which of the ancient leaders above do you feel represents you and why?

As a family, try this!

These seven men are ancient leaders of Judaism. Your task is to invite into our sukkah a different leader of Judaism. Your guest can be dead or alive, male or female, Biblical or not. It can be a Jewish leader in business, science, politics, social action, etc.

Share with your family who your *ushpizin* guest would be and why?

Havdalah Bar-B-Que

Lesson 4

Priority Goals:

1. Introduce families to the spiritual and religious meaning of Jewish holidays.
2. Create a space for developing personal meaning.
3. Enable young people approaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah to develop a framework to live full Jewish lives.

Enduring Understandings:

1. Making a meaningful and connected Jewish life is my responsibility.
2. Rituals and traditions of Judaism bring order to life and mark sacred time.
3. Living a rich Jewish life requires marking time as sacred.

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to live in Jewish time?
2. What does it mean to me to celebrate a Jewish holiday?
3. How can I make meaning of an ancient Jewish tradition?
4. What tools and rituals do I engage in to make meaning for each holiday?
5. How is Judaism braided into my everyday life?
6. How can Havdalah help me make holiness more apparent in my life?

Evidence of Understanding: Belonging will be demonstrated when the family blogs their experiences after they have done their experiment.

Havdalah Bar-B-Que at a participant's home:

Materials:

Copies of prayer sheet

Copies of text sheet

Havdalah Candles (1 per family)

Matches

Kiddush cup (1 per family)

Wine

Grape juice

Spice box (1 per family)

Three families from the program will experience Havdalah together. Parents and children will join at one of the participant's homes. When the families first arrive they will be welcomed by the hosts.

- I. Before the guests arrive: Prior to Shabbat, the clergy/teacher should make sure that the family has all the supplies and prayers necessary for the evening. The

clergy/teacher will arrive half an hour early to the host home to meet with the family. Explain to the hosts that this is their experience, so you would like them to welcome everyone and lead introductions. Additionally, you should ask and encourage the family to lead the group in the Havdalah prayers. This would be a good time to practice the prayers with the family members. Ask them which prayers they feel comfortable leading. Try and get the family members to take as much leadership in this as possible. Remember, our ultimate goal is to have families take control of their own Jewish lives!

- II. Host: Welcome! We are so glad to have everyone here at our home for Havdalah, a special time to end Shabbat. Before we begin with song and prayers, I want us all to go around and welcome each other. As we go around say your name and share one thing you think distinguishes you from others. (Example, I have a huge smile and sometimes it's hard for me to stop smiling! Or, I know an extraordinary amount about reality television.)

(Everyone introduces themselves)

- III. This evening we are going to begin with a family study session. Pass out text sheets and materials for each family (Havdalah candle, spices, and wine). Ask families to first read the text sheet and then to follow with the questions and finally to do the experiment.
- IV. Now that everyone has met and spent some time with their family thinking about what Havdalah means we are going to take some time to just enjoy each other's company and share in great food. Together recite the motzi and then enjoy the Bar-B-Que.

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,
Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*

ברוך אתה יי, אלהינו מלך העולם,
המוציא לחם מן הארץ.

Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe,
Who brings forth bread from the earth

- V. After about 30 minutes gather families in a central location in the host's yard. Earlier you experimented closely with the parts of Havdalah. With your senses warmed up we are going to share now in the Havdalah service. If someone that will be there can play guitar, it is a nice addition, but singing should happen with or without accompaniment. Give each family a different item to hold and before each blessing let families know what the blessing is for.

Below is the protocol for this evening's Lab.

KNOWING

1. Background research - read *Havdalah*, by Marge Piercy

Questions for discussion:

- What does the braided Havdalah candle mean to you? What do the multiple wicks represent for you? (Is each wick an important person for you, or is it something you are interested in, or a commitment you have, or something else?)
- Shabbat is a 24 hour period for us to rest from our daily work. Havdalah is a special ritual to help us transition back into the regular week. How can the ritual of Havdalah help you bring to you some of the sweetness and peacefulness that we have on Shabbat? Can you remember the smell of the spices during the week or the taste of the wine to help you feel less stressed?
- What is the light that shines inside of you? What makes you feel peaceful and happy and rested? Is it a person, a food, a smell, an activity?

DOING

2. Doing an Experiment - There are four blessings that make up the Havdalah service. Each blessing is said over something; wine, spices, candle/fire, and separation. One could call them sensory blessings. As a family, you will use the supplies you have been given. Use your senses to feel your way into beginning a holy week.

Sensory Blessings (from [A Day Apart](#) by Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer):

Yayin = Wine - the tongue is used to taste the wine

- What does the wine/grape juice feel like on your tongue? What does it taste like?
- How can that taste and feeling help you in the coming week?

B'Samim = Spices – the nose smells the spices

- What do the spices smell like? Are they sweet, strong, fruity, flowery, dark, etc.?

- The ancient rabbis said that the spices help revive us, because at the end of Shabbat our “extra” soul leaves us and we are weak. How can remembering the smell of the spices help you feel stronger, as if you still have that “extra” soul?

Ner = Light – the eyes see the light of the candle

- Look into the light – What great things do you see happening for you this week? What great things do you see that you will do for others this week?

Havdalah = Separation – the brain with its “common sense” distinguishes between Holy and secular

- How can you bring Holy and secular closer together?
- How can you make your everyday life have within it more moments of holiness? Is it something you must do or something you can think about?

BELIEVING

3. Analyze Your Data and Draw a Conclusion-After your family does the experiment and goes through the traditional Havdalah prayers with everyone, you will come together and analyze what the experience felt like. Was this ritual of separation between Holy and secular helpful for you to find holiness in your life? Can you see your family using any of this ritual on a weekly basis? How?

BELONGING

4. Communicate Your Results- Post on the “LabJudaism” blog what your family results were.

Havdalah

Marge Piercy

(adapted from The Art of Blessing The Day)

The sun slides from the sky as the sparks of the day are tamped out. From the last we ignite the twisted candle that summons us to remember how to braid into the rough wool of our daily lives that silken skein of the bright and holy;

The candle that reminds us we pray with many accents, in many languages and ways. All are holy and burn with their own inner light as the strands of this wax flame together.

Woman, man, whomever we love and live with, single or coupled, webbed in family or solitary, born a Jew or choosing, pious or searching, we bring our thread to the pattern. We are stronger for the weaving of our strands.

Let us draw together before we scatter into the maze of our jobs and worries; let us feel ourselves in the paused dance that is the candle with its leaping flame: let us too pause before Shabbat lets us go.

Let us linger in the last candlelight of Shabbat. Here we have felt ourself again a people and one. Here we have kindled our ancestors to flame in our minds. Here we have gazed on the faces of the week's casualties, opened the doors of our guilt, raised our eyes to the high bright places we would like to walk soon. This little light we have borne on our braided selves - let us take it with us cupped in our minds.

Now we drown the candle in the little lake of wine. The only light we have kept is inside us. Let us take it home to shine in our daily lives.

Questions for discussion:

1. What does the braided Havdalah candle mean to you? What do the multiple wicks represent for you? (Is each wick a different person important to you, or something you are interested in, or a commitment you have, or something else?)
2. Shabbat is a 24 hour period for us to rest from our daily work. Havdalah is a special ritual to help us transition back into the regular week. How can the ritual of Havdalah

help you bring to you some of the sweetness and peacefulness that we have on Shabbat? Can you remember the smell of the spices during the week or the taste of the wine to help you feel less stressed?

3. What is the light that shines inside of you? What makes you feel peaceful and happy and rested? Is it a person, a food, a smell, an activity?

As a family, try this!

There are four blessings that make up the Havdalah service. Each blessing is said over something; wine, spices, candle/fire, and separation. One could call them sensory blessings. As a family you will use the supplies you have been given and use your senses to feel your way into beginning a holy week.

Sensory Blessings (from A Day Apart by Noam Sachs Zion and Shawn Fields-Meyer):

Yayin = Wine - the tongue is used to taste the wine

- What does the wine/grape juice feel like on your tongue? What does it taste like?
- How can that taste and feeling help you in the coming week?

B'Samim = Spices – the nose smells the spices

- What do the spices smell like? Are they sweet, strong, fruity, flowery, dark, etc.?
- The ancient rabbis said that the spices help revive us, because at the end of Shabbat our “extra” soul leaves us and we are weak. How can remembering the smell of the spices help you feel stronger, as if you still have that “extra” soul?

Ner = Light – the eyes see the light of the candle

- Look into the light – What great things do you see happening for you this week? What great things do you see that you will do for others this week?

Havdalah = Separation – the brain with its “common sense” distinguishes between Holy and secular

- How can you bring Holy and secular closer together?
- How can you make your everyday life have within it more moments of holiness? Is it something you must do or something you can think about?

Hanukkah Celebration

Lesson 5 Text Study

Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Shabbat (21b)

Our Rabbis taught: The commandment of Chanukah requires one light per household...

-- Beit Shammai says: On the first day eight lights are lit and every night they are gradually reduced [by one each day]; but Beit Hillel says: On the first day one is lit and every night they are progressively increased.

Rabbah b. Bar Hana said: There are two old men in Sidon: one did as Beit Shammai and the other as Beit Hillel: the former (Shammai) gave the reason of his action that it should correspond to the days of the Festival (Sukkot), while the latter (Hillel) stated his reason because we encourage in [matters of] sanctity but do not reduce.

The matter of the dispute was voted upon, in the democratic spirit of the Talmud, and the practice to be followed was decided in accordance with Beit Hillel; which means, we begin with one and add one candle each night, concluding with eight lights on Chanukah.

Our Rabbis taught: It is incumbent to place the Chanukah lamp by the door of one's house on the outside; if one dwells in an upper chamber, place it at the window nearest the street.

Questions for discussion:

1. Shammai believes that we should light all the candles on the 1st night of Chanukkah and then take one away each night. Hillel believes that we should light one candle the first night and add a candle each night. Who do you agree with and why?
2. Do you think one way makes the holiday more special? Does adding something make an item or a ritual more important? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think the rabbis said that we should put our Chanukah lamp by the door or by a window? What does it mean if other people can see the lights?
4. What does the light of the Chanukiah (Chanukah lamp/candles) represent for you?

Shabbat Kodesh

Lesson 6

Priority Goals:

1. Introduce families to the spiritual and religious meaning of Jewish holidays.
2. Create a space for developing personal meaning.
3. Enable young people approaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah to develop a framework to live full Jewish lives.

Enduring Understandings:

1. Making a meaningful and connected Jewish life is my responsibility.
2. Rituals and traditions of Judaism bring order to life and mark sacred time.
3. Living a rich Jewish life requires marking time as sacred.

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to live in Jewish time?
2. What does it mean to me to celebrate a Jewish holiday?
3. How can I make meaning of an ancient Jewish tradition?
4. What tools and rituals do I engage in to make meaning for each holiday?
5. How can you make Shabbat a day when you realize the miracle of the world that God created?
6. What does it mean to take a specific time every week and consider it holy?

Evidence of Understanding: Belonging will be demonstrated when the family blogs their experiences after they have done their experiment.

Shabbat dinner at a participant's home:

Materials:

Copies of prayer sheet

Copies of song sheets

Copies of text sheet

Candles

Matches

Kiddush cup

Wine

Grape juice

Challah

Challah cover

Three families from the program will experience Shabbat together. Parents and children will join at one of the participant's homes. When the families first arrive they will be welcomed by the hosts.

- VI. Before the guests arrive: Prior to Shabbat, the clergy/teacher should make sure that the family has all the supplies and prayers necessary for the evening. The clergy/teacher will arrive half an hour early to the host home to meet with the family. Explain to the hosts, that this is their experience, so you would like them to welcome everyone and lead introductions. Additionally, you should ask and encourage the family to lead the group in the Shabbat prayers and the singing. This would be a good time to practice the prayers with the family members. Ask them which prayers they feel comfortable leading. Try and get the family members to take as much leadership in this as possible. Remember, our ultimate goal is to have families take control of their own Jewish lives!
- VII. Host: Welcome! We are so glad to have everyone here at our home to celebrate Shabbat. Before we begin welcoming Shabbat with song and prayers, I want us all to go around and welcome each other. As we go around say your name and share one thing good that happened to you since last Shabbat.

(Everyone introduces themselves)

- VIII. Singing: Everyone should stand around a central location, dining room table or together in a room where everyone can fit. If someone can play guitar, it is a nice addition, but singing should happen with or without accompaniment. You can pick two or three songs from the list below.

Host or Clergy: Please join with me in some Shabbat songs.

Songs: Bim Bam; Boi Kallah; Hiney Mah Tov; Oseh Shalom

- IX. In the same space that everyone is in, continue together by lighting Shabbat candles. Next, you will pass out copies of the blessing over the children and ask parents to recite it together. Then, everyone will raise their glass for Kiddush, and finally the motzi. Enjoy Dinner!
- X. Part of a Shabbat experience should include "sacred conversation." A way to elevate a Shabbat meal is by having an encounter with a Jewish voice from the past and creating a conversation between friends. During the meal the clergy/teacher

representative will engage all the families in our experiment of the evening. Below is the protocol for this evening's Lab.

KNOWING

1. Ask a Question- What is the difference between spending time with someone just because you want to and spending time with someone because you need to get something from them?
2. Do Background Research - read Heschel's text, "Care for the Seed of the Earth"

Questions for discussion:

- What is the difference between spending time with someone just because you want to and spending time with someone because you need to get something from them?
- According to Heschel what is the difference between "time" and "space"?
- Do you agree that you need to turn away from all money and work in order to celebrate Shabbat? Why or why not?
- How can you make Shabbat a day when you realize the miracle of the world that God created? What are concrete things you can do to remember the miracle of creation?

DOING

3. Construct a Hypothesis-for example, "Going to Shabbat services just for the sake of getting credit for school would be considered more like "space", but if you go to get credit and to celebrate Shabbat and pray with your community, you are also engaging in "time".
4. Test Your Hypothesis by Doing an Experiment- As a family you will have to come up with a way to test your hypothesis at a later date. For example, (with hypothesis above), as a family you would invite another family to have Shabbat together: either to go to services and have dinner together, to go to services, or to have Shabbat dinner together.

BELIEVING

5. Analyze Your Data and Draw a Conclusion - After your family does the experiment you will come together and analyze whether what you did, felt any

different for you. Could you call one way “time” or one way “space”? Did you prefer one way or the other? Why or why not? Or, did they blend?

BELONGING

- 6.** Communicate Your Results- Post on the “LabJudaism” blog what your family did for their experiment and what your results were.
- XI.** Finally, during dessert the on-going question of “LabJudaism” will be asked, “what traditions or rituals that we engaged in this evening can add meaning and spirituality to our family in the future?”

Care for the seed of eternity

Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Sabbath

The meaning of the Sabbath is to celebrate time rather than space. Six days a week we live under the tyranny of things of space; on the Sabbath we try to become attuned to holiness in time. It is a day on which we are called upon to share in what is eternal in time, to turn from the results of creation to the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

He who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil. He must go away from the screech of dissonant days, from the nervousness and fury of acquisitiveness and the betrayal in embezzling his own life. He must say farewell to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man. Six days a week we wrestle with the world, wringing profit from the earth; the Sabbath we especially care for the seed of eternity planted in the soul.

Abraham Joshua Heschel, *The Sabbath: Its meaning for modern man*. (New York: The Noonday Press), 1951, pp. 10, 13.

Care for the seed of eternity

Abraham Joshua Heschel

The Sabbath

(Adaptated for children)

The meaning of Shabbat is to celebrate “time” and not “space”. Six days of the week we live with the burden of all things of “space”; on Shabbat we try to become comfortable to holiness in “time”. It is a day on which we are asked by God to share in what is eternal (Godly) in “time”, to turn away from only results of creation and instead to see the mystery of creation; from the world of creation to the creation of the world.

A person who wants to enter the holiness of the day of Shabbat must first turn away from all money, work, and hardships. A person must turn away from all the hard days one has had, from being nervous and angry with greed and the disloyalty in cheating his own life. A person must say goodbye to manual work and learn to understand that the world has already been created and will survive without the help of man. Six days a week we wrestle (work really hard) with the world, making and taking from the earth; on Shabbat we especially care for the seed that God planted in our soul.

Questions for discussion:

1. What is the difference between spending time with someone just because you want to and spending time with someone because you need to get something from them?
2. According to Heschel what is the difference between “time” and “space”?
3. Do you agree that you need to turn away from all money and work in order to celebrate Shabbat? Why or why not?
4. How can you make Shabbat a day when you realize the miracle of the world that God created? What are concrete things you can do to remember the miracle of creation?

Shabbat Songs

Bim Bam

Bim bam, bim bim bim bam-
Bim bim bim bim bim bam! (X2)
Shabbat Shalom, hey!
Shabbat Shalom, hey!
Shabbat Shabbat Shabbat Shabbat Shalom (X2)
Shabbat Shabbat
Shabbat Shabbat Shalom (X2)
Shabbat Shalom, hey!
Shabbat Shalom, hey!
Shabbat Shabbat Shabbat Shabbat Shalom.

Translation: Bim Bam is a niggun which means the words have no meaning other than to support the melody. The second part, Shabbat Shalom means Sabbath Peace.

Boi Kallah

Boi kallah, boi kallah, boi kallah, boi kallah
Lecha dodi, likrat kallah
P'nei Shabbat n'kaaaaaaaaaab'la.

Translation: Welcome the bride. Come my beloved, my bride.

Hiney Mah Tov

Hiney mah tov umah naim shevet achim gam yachad

Translation: How good it is, and how pleasant when we dwell together in unity (Psalm 133:1)

Oseh Shalom

Oseh shalom bimromav

Hu ya'aseh shalom aleinu

V'al kol Yisrael

V'imru, v'imru amen.

Ya'aseh shalom, ya'aseh shalom

Shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael

Ya'aseh shalom, ya'aseh shalom

Shalom aleinu v'al kol Yisrael

Translation: May he who makes peace in high places, make peace for us and for all Israel, and let us say, amen.)

To hear some of these songs check out:

www.oysongs.com (a great resource to hear these songs from various artists)



Blessing Over Shabbat Candles

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam
Asher kid'shanu b'mitzvotav v'zivanu l'hadlik ner shel Shabbat*

בְּרוּךְ אַתָּה יְיָ, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְצִוָּנוּ לְהַדְלִיק נֵר שֶׁל שַׁבָּת.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Sovereign of the universe.
You hallow us with Your mitzvot and command us to kindle the lights of Shabbat.

Blessing Over The Children

*Ye'simcha Elohim
ke-Ephraim ve'chi-Menashe
ke-Sarah, Rivka, Rachel ve-Leah*

*Ye'varech'echa Adonai ve-yish'merecha.
Ya'eir Adonai panav eilecha viy-chuneka.
Yisa Adonai panav eilecha,
ve-yaseim lecha shalom.*

יְבָרְכֶךָ יְהוָה, וַיְשִׁמְרֶךָ
יֵאֵר יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּחֲנֶךָ
יֵשָׂא יְהוָה פָּנָיו אֵלֶיךָ, וַיַּשֵּׁם לְךָ שְׁלוֹם

May God make you like Ephraim and Menashe,
Like Sarah, Rebecca, Rachel and Leah.
May God bless you and watch over you.
May God shine toward you and show you favor.
May God be favorably disposed toward you,
and may God grant you peace.

Kiddush

Vay'hi erev vay'hi voker yom hashishi.
וַיְהִי עֶרֶב וַיְהִי בֹקֶר יוֹם הַשִּׁשִּׁי.

And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day.

Vay'chulu hashamayim v'haaretz v'chol tz'vaam.
Vay'chal Elohim bayom hash'vi-i m'lachto asher asah.
Vayishbot bayom hash'vi-i mikol m'lachto asher asah.
Vay'varech Elohim et yom hash'vi-i vay'kadeish oto,
ki vo shavat mikol m'lachto asher bara Elohim laasot.

וַיְכַלּוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל־צִבְאָם. וַיְכַל אֱלֹהִים בַּיּוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיִּשְׁבֹּת בַּיּוֹם הַשְּׁבִיעִי
מְכַל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ אֲשֶׁר עָשָׂה. וַיְבָרֶךְ אֱלֹהִים אֶת־יוֹם
הַשְּׁבִיעִי וַיְקַדֵּשׁ אֹתוֹ כִּי בּוֹ שָׁבַת מְכַל־מְלַאכְתּוֹ
אֲשֶׁר בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים לַעֲשׂוֹת.

Now the whole universe - sky, earth, and all their array - was completed. With the seventh day God ended the work of creation, resting on the seventh day, with all the work completed. Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, this day having completed the work of creation.

Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,
Borei p'ri hagafen

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, בּוֹרֵא פְּרִי הַגָּפֶן.

Praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the Universe,
Creator of the fruit of the vine.

Baruch atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,
asher kid'shanu b'mitzvvotav v'ratzah vanu,
v'Shabbat kodsho b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchilanu,
zikaron l'maaseih v'reishit.
Ki hu yom t'chilah l'mikra-ei kodesh,
zeicher litziat Mitzrayim.
Ki vanu vacharta, v'otanu kidashta, mikol haamim.
V'Shabbat kodsh'cha b'ahavah uv'ratzon hinchaltanu.
Baruch atah Adonai, m'kadeish haShabbat.

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם, אֲשֶׁר קִדְּשָׁנוּ
 בְּמִצְוֹתָיו וְרָצָה בָּנוּ, וְשִׁבֶּת קֹדֶשׁ בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן
 הַנְּחִילָנוּ, זִכְרוֹן לַמַּעֲשֵׂה בְּרֵאשִׁית. כִּי הוּא יוֹם
 תְּחִלָּה לְמִקְרָאֵי קֹדֶשׁ, זִכָּר לִיְצִיאַת מִצְרַיִם. כִּי בָנוּ
 בְּחֵרָתְךָ, וְאוֹתָנוּ קִבֵּשְׁתָּ, מִכָּל הָעַמִּים. וְשִׁבֶּת קֹדֶשׁךָ
 בְּאַהֲבָה וּבְרָצוֹן הַנְּחַלְתָּנוּ. בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, מִקְדֵּשׁ
 הַשַּׁבָּת.

Praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe, who sanctifies us with mitzvot and takes delight in us. In love and favor, God made the holy Shabbat, our heritage as a reminder of the work of Creation. It is first among our sacred days, and a remembrance of the Exodus from Egypt. O God, You have chosen us and set us apart from all the peoples, and in love and favor have given us the Sabbath day as a sacred inheritance. Praise to You, Eternal, for the Sabbath and its holiness.

HaMotzi

*Baruch Atah Adonai, Eloheinu Melech haolam,
 Hamotzi lechem min haaretz.*

בָּרוּךְ אַתָּה יי, אֱלֹהֵינוּ מֶלֶךְ הָעוֹלָם,
 הַמוֹצִיא לֶחֶם מִן הָאָרֶץ.

Our praise to You, Eternal our God, Sovereign of the universe,
 Who brings forth bread from the earth

Purim Seudah

Lesson 7 Text Study

And to the Jews was light, happiness, joy and prestige. (Esther 8:16)

"Light," is Torah, "happiness" are the festivals, "joy" is circumcision, and "prestige" are the tefillin. (Talmud, Megillah 16b)

Purim is about being different.

Haman complained to King Achashveirosh that "There exists a singular nation, scattered and divided among the nations in all the provinces of your kingdom, whose laws are different from those of all nations...." (Book of Esther 3:8). A "singular nation," Achashveirosh agreed, different and unique despite their dispersion, cannot be tolerated; he concurred with Haman that "it is not worth that the king let them be ... it must be decreed that they be destroyed."

The Jewish response to Haman's decree was to intensify their singularity. The people rallied under the leadership of Mordechai and Queen Esther with a renewed commitment to their uniqueness as God's people.

Questions for discussion:

After relating the story of Haman's downfall and Israel's victory, the Book of Esther sums up the miracle of Purim in one sentence: "**And to the Jews was light, happiness, joy and prestige.**" The Talmud interprets these words as a reference to the four primary distinguishing features of the Jewish people: the Torah, the festivals, circumcision and *tefillin* (these are the black boxes wrapped around one's arm and forehead that contain the prayer of the Shema). There are, of course, 613 commandments and many more principles, laws and customs that comprise Judaism, but these four are singled out.

1. What does it mean that "to the Jews was light"? What does light represent to you?
2. Why does the Talmud single out four commandments that set the Jewish people apart? Would you pick those four commandments? Why or why not?
3. Why do you think it was important to the Jews to band together and renew their commitment to being unique to God?
4. How are you unique to God?

Passover *Bedikat Chametz*

Lesson 8

Priority Goals:

1. Introducing families to the spiritual and religious meaning of Jewish holidays and creating a space for developing personal meaning.
2. Enable young people approaching Bar/Bat Mitzvah to develop a framework to live fully.

Enduring Understandings:

1. I can take control of making a meaningful and connected Jewish life.
2. I can use the rituals and traditions of Judaism to bring order to my life and mark sacred time.
3. Marking time as sacred allows me as a Jew to live fully.

Essential Questions:

1. What does it mean to live in Jewish time?
2. What does it mean to me to celebrate a Jewish holiday?
3. How can I make meaning of an ancient Jewish tradition?
4. What tools and rituals do I engage in to make meaning for each holiday?
5. What is the chametz in my life that I want to get rid of?

Evidence of Understanding: Belonging will be able to be seen when the family blogs their experiences after they have done their experiment.

Bedikat Chametz will be done at a participant's home:

Materials:

Flashlights (1 per family)

Feathers (1 per family)

Large spoons (1 per family)

Pieces of bread wrapped in saran wrap (10 per family)

Post-it notes (for families to write their personal chametz on)

Pens

Small metal trash can

Matches

Copies of prayer sheet

Three families from the program will experience bedikat chametz together. Parents and children, will join at one of the participant's homes. When the families first arrive they will be welcomed by the hosts.

- I. Before the guests arrive: Prior to the evening, the clergy/teacher should make sure that the family has all the supplies and prayers (flashlights, feathers, spoons, garbage

can, matches, and blessing sheets). The clergy/teacher will arrive half an hour early to the host home to meet with the family. Explain to the hosts, that this is their experience, so you would like them to welcome everyone and lead introductions. Additionally, you should ask and encourage the family to lead the group in explaining what will be taking place. At this point you should explain to the family the meaning and the process of bedikat chametz. Try and get the family members to take as much leadership in this as possible. Remember, our ultimate goal is to have families take control of their own Jewish lives!

- **Make sure to hide the chametz around the house before the families arrive.**

II. Host: Welcome! We are so glad to have everyone here at our home to prepare ourselves for Passover. I want to take a minute and explain what we are going to do tonight. We are going to engage in a ritual called bedikat chametz. In order to prepare for Passover we take the time to thoroughly look at our lives and clean out the chametz. This means we literally clean our houses, cars, offices, etc. Tonight we are going to literally search for the chametz in the house and also search for our personal chametz. Before we begin, I want us all to go around and introduce ourselves. As we go around say your name and either your favorite thing about Passover or your favorite Passover memory.

(Everyone introduces themselves)

III. Host and clergy/teacher will explain the specifics of what everyone will do. (see attached explanation of bedikat chametz) In a minute, as families, we are going to do the ceremonial searching and cleaning of chametz from the house. There are pieces of chametz hidden around the house, each family should search and collect 10 pieces. After you have collected all 10 pieces, you should spend time as a family thinking of the things that are “chametz” in your souls. Please write a few of them down on a piece of paper.

IV. Finally, families will bring the 10 pieces of chametz and their papers to the outside and ceremonially burn away all the chametz in their lives.

Below is the protocol for this evening's Lab.

KNOWING:

7. Ask a Question - What is the chametz in my life that I want to get rid of?
8. Do Background Research - In order to prepare for Passover we take the time to thoroughly look out our lives and clean out the chametz. This means we literally clean our houses, cars, offices, etc., but we also should look into our souls. Spend time reflecting on the chametz in your life, things that make you puffy, unclear, fuzzy, full of myself, dishonest. Passover is about much more than house cleaning. Just as I must clean the chametz out of my house, this is the time to rid one's self of inner chametz. As I go through the extensive preparations for Passover, I also spend time in self-evaluation assessing the things in my life that stand between me and my community, me and God. Are there unfounded jealousies or anger that eat away at me? Have I spoken unkind or untrue words about someone?

BELIEVING:

9. Construct a Hypothesis -For example, "The chametz in my life is always trying to be perfect. This Passover I am going to work to rid myself of the pressure to be the "perfect" mother, wife, career woman, and friend."

DOING:

10. Test Your Hypothesis by Doing an Experiment-
 - a. As a family you will search through the house looking for the 10 pieces of chametz that have been hidden. Before all families begin recite the blessing for bedikat chametz (found on attached sheet).

Once you have collected all 10 pieces, sit as a family and think about what each of these pieces represent in your lives. Write down a few of the things that you want to get rid of. These will then be burned in the second half of our experiment.

- b. All the families will come together with the pieces of chametz they found and their personal chametz written on small pieces of paper. Everyone will go outside and everything will be put in a small metal trash can and burned. After the chametz has been burnt in the fire, recite the declaration found on attached sheet.

BELONGING:

11. Analyze Your Data and Draw a Conclusion- How did bedikat chametz make you feel? Do you feel like you could use this ritual in your home? Everyone does some sort of spring cleaning. Next time you are cleaning your house do you think you will think differently about what it means to clean and get rid of things?
12. Communicate Your Results- Post on the “LabJudaism” blog your conclusions.

What is bedikat chametz? Bedikat chametz is the search for any bread crumbs or food products left in the house before the start of Passover. On Passover we do not eat bread and instead eat matzah. The Jewish law extends this to all bread products or anything today that is not officially made for Passover. The process of creating a chametz-free environment comes to its climax the night before Passover. We conduct an out-and-out “search and destroy” mission to find any remaining chametz in our home and eradicate it. The search is traditionally conducted with a beeswax candle, using a feather, wooden spoon, and a paper bag for collecting any chametz found (a flashlight can be used also).

Because most people need more than one evening to thoroughly clean a home, the preparations for Passover traditionally begin immediately following Purim. So, on the 14th of Nissan (30 days after Purim), a person’s home should be clean and ready for Passover. In order to fulfill the commandment of bedikat chametz, it has become customary to put 10 pieces of bread hidden around the house. The dispersal of pieces of chametz around the home prior to the bedikat chametz is not obligatory -- the obligation is to search, not necessarily to find -- but it has become an accepted Jewish custom.

Blessing recited before the search begins:

Baruch Atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech Haolam

Asher Kideshanu Bemitzvotav

Vetzivanu Al Beeur Chametz.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and has commanded us concerning the removal of chametz.

On the eve of Passover, when the entire home has been spotlessly cleaned, it is highly doubtful that any chametz would be found in the home. These pieces which will now be "found," will give us "chametz fuel" for the traditional chametz burning ceremony on the following morning.

On the morning before Passover, we burn all the chametz that was found during the search, and anything that was left over from breakfast and not stored with the chametz that will be sold or stored for the duration of Passover.

After the chametz has been burnt in the fire, we recite the following declaration:

All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession,

Whether I have seen it or not,

Whether I have observed it or not,

Whether I have removed it or not,

Shall be considered nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

Blessing recited before the search begins:

Baruch Atah Adonai

Eloheinu Melech Haolam

Asher Kideshanu Bemitzvotav

Vetzivanu Al Beeur Chametz.

Blessed are You, Adonai our God, Ruler of the universe, who has sanctified us with commandments, and has commanded us concerning the removal of chametz.

After the chametz has been burnt in the fire, we recite the following declaration:

All leaven or anything leavened which is in my possession,

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Whether I have removed it or not,

Shall be considered nullified and ownerless as the dust of the earth.

Searching for the Chametz in Our Soul

From Preparing Your Heart for Passover, by Kerry M. Olitsky (Ch 1, pgs 1-5)

Some people think that the majority of the effort of preparing for Pesach is finished once the entire house has been thoroughly cleaned. All that is left is the cooking! However, even after everything is spotless, the real work of preparation for Pesach is just beginning. The chametz we must work arduously to seek out, does not make its home in the corners of the pantry. Rather, this chametz, lurks menacingly in the recesses of the soul. ...

This chametz requires that we focus our spiritual attention on the debris that has accumulated in the soul since the last Passover cleaning....

Some people say that chametz can be any feelings we are carrying around inside us that we'd like to get rid of, any broken promises or lost friendships, mistakes we made, poor decisions, anything we want to remove and start anew...

Preparations for Pesach are governed by personal preference and family traditions... We each develop our own individual way of cleaning our homes and cleansing our souls...some study, some meditate, some spend time in community...and in the midst of these endeavors, our inner chametz rises to the surface. Then we get ready to clean and search.

Questions for discussion:

1. What do you think of adding a spiritual cleaning to the physical cleaning?
2. How do both searches/cleanings better prepare us for the Passover Festival, a Festival of our Freedom? How are they connected?

As a family, try this!

Snap a mental photograph of the rooms in your house. Can you find five places chametz always hides?

Now erase that picture and snap one of yourselves...each family member...What kinds of chametz hide inside of you? Or, What kinds of chametz do you see hidden in the world? **Write these down on 5 pieces of paper.**

It's easy to find "outside chametz."
Finding "inside chametz" is much harder

Kabbalat Shabbat Service and Oneg

Lesson 9

Text Study

If you hold back from trampling on Shabbat

From doing your regular work on my holy day

If you call Shabbat “a delight”

God’s holy day “honored”

...

Then you will take delight in God

I will let you ride over the high [most holy] places of the earth

I will nourish you with the heritage of your parents Jacob, Rachel and Leah

(Isaiah 58:13-14)

Questions for discussion:

1. How does this text suggest we should think about (“call”) Shabbat?
2. What does it mean to “trample” on Shabbat? How can you not “trample” on Shabbat?
3. The texts say that we should call Shabbat “a delight.” How do you make Shabbat delightful in your family?
4. What is a new way that you can imagine to make Shabbat “a delight”?
5. How are Shabbat and God connected in this text? How are they connected for you?

Shavuot Late Night Study Session

Lesson 10

Text Study

Exodus 19:16-20:1

¹⁶ On the morning of the third day there was thunder and lightning, with a thick cloud over the mountain, and a very loud trumpet blast. Everyone in the camp trembled. ¹⁷ Then Moses led the people out of the camp to meet with God, and they stood at the foot of the mountain. ¹⁸ Mount Sinai was covered with smoke, because Adonai descended on it in fire. The smoke billowed up from it like smoke from a furnace, and the whole mountain trembled violently. ¹⁹ As the sound of the trumpet grew louder and louder, Moses spoke and the voice of God answered him.

When the time came for God to give the Torah to humankind, God began searching for a nation that would be willing to receive God's gift. God went to one powerful nation and said to its people, "Will you accept My Torah?"

"What is written in it?" they asked.

"You shall not murder," God said. "You shall not steal."

"We cannot accept the Torah," replied this nation. "We live by conquering other countries, robbing their people, and killing them."

God went to another nation, one that was wealthy, and asked its people to accept the Torah.

"What is written in it?" they asked.

"You shall have just weights and measures," God said. "You shall not put a stumbling block before the blind."

"We cannot accept the Torah," replied the people of this nation, "because we would not make enough money if we could not cheat and deceive."

God went from nation to nation, asking the people whether they would accept the Torah, but each nation refused after they heard what was in it. Finally God came to the smallest and weakest nation on earth, the Children of Israel. God delivered them from slavery in Egypt, took them to Mount Sinai and asked them, “Will you accept My Torah?”

“*Na'aseh V'nishmah*, we will do and we will hear all that *Adonai* has spoken,” replied the Israelites as one.

At that moment, God sent angels to place a crown on the head of every Israelite present because all of them had agreed to observe God's commandments even before they heard what those commandments were. God said to Israel, “If you obey Me and keep My covenant you shall be My special people. All the earth is Mine, but you shall be a nation of priests, a holy nation.”

It is said that all the mountains in the world argued over which one would be chosen as the place where God would give the Torah. One mountain proclaimed, “I am the most beautiful.” Another boasted, “I am the tallest mountain.” To them God said, “Neither you nor you, but Mount Sinai, which is a humble and ordinary mountain, shall be the site.” So, too, God chose the Israelites to receive the Torah.

(*Rabbinic Midrash* adapted from The Book of the Jewish Year by Stephen M. Wylen)

Questions for discussion:

1. Why do you think God used thunder and lightning and smoke at the mountain when giving the Torah?
2. Why do you think the Israelites were the only nation to accept the Torah from God?
3. What does accepting the Torah from God mean to you? How do you accept Torah in your life?
4. What does “*Na'aseh V'nishmah*, we will do and we will hear all that *Adonai* has spoken,” mean to you? Would you have said this to God? Why or why not?

Annotated Bibliography

1. "Bar Mitzvah Studies Take to the Web." Virshup, Amy. The New York Times, November 19, 2010.

This article presents a dilemma for the Jewish community, whether individualized education and ritual is acceptable or positive. There have always been families who did not go to synagogue for their children's bar mitzvahs, but instead traveled to Israel or held a ceremony in a hotel. However, with the advent of more online tutoring and other options, the number is increasing. The positive comments by parents who had children go through the online Bar/Bat Mitzvah process leads me to think that we need a diversified model for our community today. Not all Jews will find comfort within the synagogue walls, but that does not mean that they are not practicing Judaism in their own way.

2. Bar/Bat Mitzvah Education: A Sourcebook. Helen Leneman (ed.). A.R.E. Publishing, Inc.: Denver, Colorado (1993).

This book is a survey of all Bar/Bat Mitzvah programs throughout congregations in North America. The end result is a description of a wide range of programs, viewpoints, practical and pedagogical approaches, from Reform, Conservative, and Reconstructionist educators. Solutions to many of the issues educators face regarding Bar Mitzvah training are found in this book. The research is both specific and general to all aspects of Bar/Bat Mitzvah training. It can be useful for synagogues who want to start, expand, or improve their Bar/Bat Mitzvah program.

3. Cohen, Steven M. and Eisen, Arnold M. The Jew Within: Self, Family, and Community in America. Indiana University Press: Bloomington and Indianapolis (2000).

The Jew Within is the compilation of a study that tells the story of how American Jews today live and understand their Judaism over the span of their lives, in their families, and among their friends. Cohen and Eisen dug below the surface and explored the foundations of belief and behavior among moderately affiliated American Jews. They concluded that the construction of Jewish meaning in America is personal and private and that communal loyalties and norms no longer shape Jewish identity. What was discovered was that the primary expression of Jewish identification was the observance of Jewish holidays with family. This can help us make connections to what is important for a family when it comes to lifecycle events.

4. Kaiserman, Saul Jewish Education is about Living Jewish Values. *Originally published in Temple Emanu-El Bulletin, Vol. 84, No. 2, October 2011.*

This article explains a new congregational program that is being instituted to support families in living Jewish values. The program utilizes a new approach to education, "whole person" learning. LOMED provides a language with which we can articulate the goals of the school curriculum clearly and simply. It focuses on all aspects of an

individual, head, heart, hands, and feet – knowing, believing, living/doing, and belonging.

5. “Recent Publications on Bar/Bat mitzvah: Their Implications for Jewish Education Research and Practice.” Schoenfeld, Stuart. Glendon College, York University; Religious Education; Fall 94, Vol. 89 Issue 4.

This study uses Bar/Bat Mitzvah planning books, psychology and sociology studies and parent gift books as ways to look at contemporary Jewish education and Jewish life in general. From this study we learn that: family education is being used widely; overall the child and the family are feeling positive about Judaism **during** the Bar/Bat Mitzvah training and ritual; there is positive values acquisition through the study of mitzvah programs; and today the educators not only include religious school teachers and rabbis, but also youth workers, and individual tutors.

6. “Researching and Teaching Jewish Youth: A Study of Post-B’nai Mitzvah Retention and Engagement.” Ravitch, Sharon M. Journal of Jewish Communal Service; Summer 2002, Vol. 78 Issue 4.

From 2000-2001 the Auerbach Central Agency for Jewish Education conducted a study on dropout and retention of teens post Bar/Bat Mitzvah. The goal was to find ways to retain young Jews at this age, 13-22, when identity formation is important to their lives. The study focused on the education of the students before, during, and after B’nai Mitzvah, their families, community leaders, and college students. This collaborative and action oriented study used the method of personal interviews of Bar/Bat Mitzvah past, present, and future students.

7. Saxe, Leonard, and Barry I. Chazan. "Final Thoughts." Ten Days of Birthright Israel: a Journey in Young Adult Identity. Waltham, Mass: Brandeis UP, 2008. 186. Print.

This book took a serious look at the effects of Birthright Israel. Through personal interviews and even joining on the trips themselves, the authors made every effort to offer an objective view of the Birthright program. The authors realize that it will take a generation to understand its true ramifications. But, even its early lessons can help influence how we educate and socialize the next generation of the Jewish community throughout the world.

8. Schein, Jeffrey and Schiller, Judith S. Growing Together: Resources, Programs, and Experiences for Jewish Family Education. Alternatives in Religious Education, January (1990).

This is a resource guide for families and educators that offers a fresh approach to Jewish family education. This book addresses the needs of today's Jewish family. The underlying assumption is that families today are seeking a way to practice Judaism in a more serious and intense manner. Attention is given to changing family structures, lifestyles and learning styles. Many of the programs presented are experiential and multi-faceted. The goal is to help families realize that one can be Jewish in the market, on the

playground and when planting trees. This book provides many ways to bring families together.

9. "The Rite Stuff." Tresniowski, Alex, Frey, Jennifer, Grossman, Wendy, Stambler, Lyndon, Stein, Anne E., People, 00937673, 4/26/2004, Vol. 61, Issue 16.

This article presented the negative aspect of Jews, themselves, focusing so much attention on the party and trappings surrounding Bar/Bat Mitzvah and less on the fact that it is a Jewish religious ritual. "A centuries-old Jewish tradition, bar mitzvahs (for boys) and bat mitzvahs (for girls) mark the passage from childhood to adulthood with rituals like candle lighting and slicing braided bread called challah, as well as with elaborate and often expensive celebrations." The article presented firsthand accounts of why parents and children chose to throw or attend *faux mitzvahs*. "We didn't want her to feel different from her friends," says her father, Tooraj, 46, a Manhattan endocrinologist.

10. "Today I am a Man": An Eleventh Hour Legacy. Kaplan, Karen Bookman. Journal of Pastoral Care & Counseling. 62 no 1-2 Spr-Sum 2008.

This is a story of the true meaning of a Bar Mitzvah. The article only focuses on one specific man and his life story, but it exemplifies the power of religious ritual. The man lived his life feeling like he had missed an important rite of passage and did not want to die without becoming a Bar Mitzvah. "In this context at the end of life, the meaning of a Bar Mitzvah ceremony is vividly reaffirmed: It is about the taking on of a new status. It is about the receiving and the passing on of tradition. It is about becoming an adult spiritually." (p.154) If there was a way to share with young 13 year olds, the feelings that this man felt, we would be able to bring a more spiritual and importance back to the ceremony of Bar/Bat Mitzvah

11. Wertheimer, Jack. Family Matters: Jewish Education in an Age of Choice, Brandeis Series in American Jewish History, Culture and Life. Brandeis. May (2007).

Jack Wertheimer and other scholars have written a book that is an extremely important understanding of the dynamics of American Jewish life today. It helps to answer the question: How do American Jews exercise their educational choices? It also aims to help us figure out how the community can encourage choices that are comfortable for Jewish professionals and sustain a vibrant Jewish life. This book offers groundbreaking essays that range from interviews about educational decisions with families, teenagers, and Jewish educators to sweeping new statistical data about the actual state of Jewish education in America.

12. Zion, Noam and Fields-Meyer, Shawn. A Day Apart: Shabbat at Home. Shalom Hartman Institute. August (2004).

This book, for beginning and those already knowledgeable, is a guidebook for all things that have to do with Shabbat. From preparing for the arrival of Shabbat to ending it with Havdalah, this step-by-step guidebook provides blessings and songs, rituals and

reflections, stories, and lots of art. This book can provide a way for all Jews to deepen their understanding of Shabbat practices.