

November 1, 2009

Hello everyone,

I hope this email finds you all well. I just want to update you on our class progress and current assignment.

As for the Holocaust study portion of the class we are reading our book *Alicia* and due on Sunday, Nov. 8th we will have a written assessment and discussion on chapter 4.

For the Madrikim training we have our first challenging project, The First Steps of Lesson Plan Development. What follows are the instructions. To be perfectly frank, this assignment should be challenging for the students. The ideal point of any good lesson plan is so that ANYONE can pick up a lesson plan and teach it. With that said, instructions must be clear, concise and thorough. A lesson plan, of course, should be engaging for the target audience. You make a lesson plan engaging by showing your (you, the teacher) own enthusiasm and interest. For example, if you enjoy baseball, creating a lesson plan using a baseball game to create understanding and excitement will meet your objective because the students can see your own joy in the activity as well as the subject matter.

The whole idea is to get the Madrikim to come up with their own innovative ideas on how to teach subjects so that they and their target audience are excited and want to learn. And this is no easy task. If you work on this with your child, you can test it yourself. Take their lesson plan and try to follow their directions to see if they are giving enough detail in how they want the lesson to proceed. If you have questions on what to do next, or what they are trying to convey, it probably means they need to be more specific and thus have some work to do. If they find they are struggling with being detailed enough, that is okay. On Sunday we will read everyone's lesson plans together and give constructive feedback on how to develop lessons even more.

Here are a few hints that might help them get on the right page:

With Jewish education in mind, we have it easy because we have the Torah to always refer back to for references, arguments, and ideas. Torah research and the use of its various verses to obtain meaning and understanding is always a positive thing to include into a successful Jewish lesson plan. It is always important to note, if the teacher is excited to give the lesson, the students will be excited to learn. Conveying that excitement is crucial to any successful lesson plan. And we all know everyone one of our children has many things that engage and excite them so there shouldn't be any lack of ideas!

The instructions for the assignment follow:

### *First Steps to Lesson Plan Development*

- I.) Identify your topic
  - a. In our case – Teaching the various elements to the Friday Night Service
  
- II.) Identify and Define Key Terms (Your children should have a more detailed listing of key terms)
  - a. Kabbalat Shabbat Portion
    - i. Six Psalms – 95-99
    - ii. Lecha Dodi Poem
    - iii. Psalm 92 and 93
  - b. Maariv Portion
    - i. Shema
    - ii. Amidah
      - 1. Special Shorter version of the Amidah for Shabbat Eve
    - iii. Alenu
    - iv. Ending Song (usually Yigdal or Adon Olam)
  
- III.) Creating your Presentation Plan
  - a. Here is where they can get innovative to teach the previous listed defined terms.
    - i. You can do a type of text study
    - ii. Develop a game to help remember
    - iii. Show a powerpoint
    - iv. Create a Song
    - v. Anything that will motivate them and their audience to learn about the elements and order of the Friday Night Service
    - vi. REMEMBER – They can focus in on certain topics as well. It does not have to be just a general lesson, say they want to focus on the Shortened Amidah or the meaning of Lecha Dodi in the context of Shabbat...They have nearly limitless options.
  
- IV.) Create an Assessment
  - a. This can be as formal as a written test
  - b. Or it can be an after lesson discussion regarding the topic

On Sunday I will share with them my lesson plan and we will go over theirs. Please be sure to have at least two typed copies of the lesson plan.

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Sincerely,

Roy Ham

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August 17, 2009

Hello Parents of the 8th Grade (Chet) class of Talmud Torah 2009.

My name is Roy Ham (I go by Roy or Hillel, whichever you prefer) and I have the great pleasure of teaching and learning with your 8th grader this year! I apologize for the mass email to everyone, but to get things started I figured this the most efficient way to get in contact with everyone.

First, a little about me. I believe my sister and I are the only kosher "Ham" on the planet and in this I take great pride. I am originally from Las Cruces, New Mexico where I grew up in a small, but vibrant, Reform Jewish community. In 2003 I came to Tempe and began attending Arizona State University (the Harvard of the Southwest) and I graduated in 2007 with a degree in Political Science and Economics. In 2003 I had the fortunate opportunity through the ASU Hillel Student Organization to be part of the Teaching Scholars' Program with Rabbi Barton Lee and his lovely wife Marci. This is when I formally began teaching religious school; however, I was very involved in youth development back in New Mexico. I have taught at a number of Synagogues around the Valley and especially with Janette Silverman at Temple Beth Shalom, Solel, and now at wonderful Beth El. So thank you for the opportunity and thank you for providing the youth to teach! Oh and when I am not teaching I work as a stock broker in the Retail Investor Group of Vanguard in Scottsdale.

As far as this year goes...

Your children, my students, will receive two genres of education this year. One, as I am sure you are aware, is the Madrikhim training so that they may become wonderful teacher's aides (and G-d willing wonderful teachers) in the future. The other part of our lessons will be a holocaust study curriculum. I have attached (at the end of this email) the curriculum also found at the Talmud Torah Website (on page 23 of 25 in the PDF) ----->

<http://bethelphoenixed.files.wordpress.com/2008/08/2009-2010-curriculum2.pdf>

As with any Holocaust curriculum, I want everyone to know and understand that you are ALL INVITED to any portion of my class at any time. Obviously Holocaust study is challenging and difficult but a necessity for post-World War II Jews to develop their identity and gain an understanding of the world around them. I believe we will all gain from this experience and be all the stronger for it.

Now I have much more to say, but this email is getting long enough and I know we are all busy. I just wanted to express my excitement for the coming year. I know I have met some of you in the past years as both a teacher and substitute teacher at Beth El. I cannot wait to spend the year learning with your children and you as well. If you have any questions for me specifically or just want to talk about how awesome ASU is feel free to call me, email me or stop me in the hall around Beth El.

And lastly, on Sunday, the class will be meeting with Myra Schindler from Hebrew High. She will be in to talk about the 8th Grade retreat as well as Hebrew High in general. That is all for now, I hope to speak to

you all soon!

My Email Address - [chet.bethelphoenix@gmail.com](mailto:chet.bethelphoenix@gmail.com)

## The Curriculum

### Chet (Eighth Grade)

Class Hours: Sunday 9:00– 10:30 AM Madrikhim Training 10:45 AM – 12:15 PM

Teacher: Roy Ham [chet.bethelphoenix@gmail.com](mailto:chet.bethelphoenix@gmail.com)

Texts and Books: JTA Global News, Alicia: My Story, “Accessing the Holocaust – a curriculum for 8th – 10th graders”

Students will begin to discuss the Holocaust through the eyes of Alicia Appelman Jurman who, as a child and young teen experienced the tragedies of Jewish life in Europe in the 1930’s and 1940’s. Students will discuss the influences of their peers and adults on their decision making processes and how choices are made and how the repercussions of choices made during the course of daily life can affect others.

A component of the eighth grade curriculum is training for Madrikhim (Teaching Assistant program) is optional for those students who choose to participate. Upon successfully completing the Madrikhim training, they will be ready to join our cadre of Teaching Assistants (T.A.s) who work on Sundays (they are also welcome to work on Wednesdays) in classrooms helping teachers.

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Chet Students will:

- understand the effect of choices
- examine and discuss the influences different people have on their decisions