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LOOKING BACK TO THE FUTURE

Introduction

This curriculum was originally written for summer day camps, but it can easily be adapted for use in Hebrew schools as well. The following introduction will explain the general themes and goals of this project, and offer tips and suggestions on the following topics:

- The Theme
- Background Music
- How To use The Curriculum
- Implementing The Curriculum as a Camp Program
- Scrapbook Ideas

The Theme

Looking Back To Our Future is a journey through the highlights of our ancient Jewish history with discussions and applications that children in our modern day can relate to.

The most basic objective of this project is that the children should know and love their heritage. They should leave the summer/ Hebrew school classes dreaming about Moshe splitting the Red Sea, Miriam the Prophetess sitting under her tree, The Maccabbi knights, Queen Esther, The Baal Shem Tov, the Arizal, and all the rest of the heroes they've learned about. They should be able to picture vividly the clouds in the Sinai dessert, the hills of Jerusalem, The grand Beis Hamikdosh, the villas in Spain, and the shtetlach in Poland.

In addition, we want to use all these rich and beautiful stories as a springboard for discussions, games, learning about Mitzvahs, and connecting the past to the future. Hence the title, Looking Back To The Future.

In the very first lesson we explain our goal to the children using the analogy of a play: Jewish history is like one long play, and we are now at the last and final scene. In order for us to finish the play properly, we have to know all the preceding scenes. We are not learning it as boring old history, we are learning because it's crucial for us to know it here and now, so that we can bring the play to a grand closing. We can't cop

out now; everyone is waiting for the end of the play. It's up to us to lead them to the conclusion of all those long scenes, the Final Redemption.

Background Music

Jewish history has been written, summarized, and organized many times over. Our goal in this curriculum is to present the same concepts, but with the outlook and spirit of Chassidus. The Rebbe's talks to children were always suffused with The Three Loves that the Baal Shem Tov introduced: love for Hashem, love for Torah, and love for Yiden.

This is the spirit we want to transmit to the campers/students. Long after the students have forgotten the details of the wanderings in the desert, they'll remember how their teacher spoke with such love about Matan Torah.

Before beginning to teach Jewish history, the teacher should take a moment to focus on each of these basic recurring concepts. They are presented here in a very concise form and they are explained in greater depth throughout the lessons. This is the background music that will be playing throughout all the lessons, and will resonate long after the content is forgotten.

1. Hashgacha Protis - Hashem has a master plan, and everything He does is for the good.
2. Hashem's love for Yiden - Although there have been many hard times in our history, we know that Hashem loves the Jews as a father loves his children, and when the Jews have hard times, it hurts Hashem more than it hurts us.
3. Hashem Echad- The Jews believe that there is only one power, one G-d, one creator, whereas all the other nations believed in many Gods.
4. Pintele Yid/Jewish spark - Every Jew has a soul that connects him to Hashem in all times and in all circumstances. He may not feel it but its there.
5. Emuna - A Jew must always believe that Hashem is with us and will care for us; our Emuna was tested many times as a nation.
6. Teshuva- Although we may turn away from Hashem, Hashem is always waiting and ready for us to return with our whole heart.

7. Dira B'Tactonim - Our job is to make the world a G-dly place through illuminating it with the light of Torah and Mitzvahs. In this way, Hashem can feel comfortable to dwell in our world.
8. Jewish Leaders - The Jewish leaders are the mouthpieces of G-D, and in this way they guide, lead, love and comfort the Jewish people. We can emulate our leaders. They are our heroes.
9. Specific roles of men/ women/ children- Judaism gives special but different roles to men, women and children. We can learn from our history to appreciate our particular mission.
10. Am Yisroel - Despite years of wandering and hardship, we have remained true to the Torah and we have survived all these years. We are a great and loyal nation.

How To Use The Curriculum

Each lesson is made up of the following sections:

- Introduction to teachers
- Questions for Review
- The Timeline
- The Story Of The Day
- Discussion
- Hands on Activities
- Camp Activities

Introduction To Teachers

This section will introduce the teacher to the concepts or Mitzvah discussed in the lesson. This will give the teacher a moment to focus on what points she wants to stress throughout the lesson.

Questions For Review

It is important to remind the children of the preceding lesson before starting the lesson of the day. This can be done through questions. A list of suggested questions are offered each day.

Timeline

Each lesson begins with a basic orientation of the given time period, and the Hebrew and secular dates of any related events. The dates are based on the timeline from: *The Jewish Timeline Encyclopedia: A Year by Year History from Creation to the Present* by Mattis Kantor. It is advisable for the teacher to try and obtain this elaborate outline so that he/she can see the bigger picture of all Jewish history as they proceed from lesson to lesson.

The Story of The Day

This section makes up the main body of the lesson. It has a clear summary of a given story or time period in Jewish history. The earlier lessons are easy to teach, but as Jewish history progresses, the lessons become more difficult. They cover a wider range of topics, a longer span of time and many political discussions. For these lessons the teacher must use his/her discretion in deciding how much to teach. There are always stories within the lessons, and they can be taught to younger children in place of the technical information.

Some of the lessons are very long and it may be worthwhile to divide the lesson and spend two days on it, even at the expense of a later lesson - especially since the later lessons are so much more difficult. It is better to teach less quantity and have the children understand it, than to finish the entire lesson and leave everyone overwhelmed.

Discussion

The Discussion section is divided into a number of small ideas, parables, and explanations of Mitzvahs that relate to The Story Of The Day. Once again the teacher

must use his/her discretion in deciding how much time he/she wants to spend on the Discussion of the lesson at the expense of the actual lesson.

The Discussion presents ideas on different levels. A number follows each heading to indicate the level of the given idea:

Level 1 - Grades 1-3 with a Hebrew school or day school background

Level 2 - Grades 4-6 with a Hebrew school or day school background

Level 3 - Grades 7-8 with a Hebrew school background, or younger children with a more advanced level of Jewish education.

Hands-On Activities

Each lesson is accompanied by one or more suggestions for a small activity to do within the short time allotted for the Shiur or class. These activities are intended to involve the children in the lesson and add fun and excitement so that the campers will look forward to learning more.

Camp Activities

See following section: Implementing the Curriculum as a camp Program.

Implementing the Curriculum as a Camp Program

The advantage of Hebrew school is that there is more time for teaching the material and it can be taught over a longer period of time, without the pressure of a summer camp eight-week deadline.

The advantage of summer camp, however, is that the information can be taught with a BANG. The lesson of the day is not relegated to the morning Shiur only, but it's celebrated throughout the whole day. The campers are singing it at lineup, creating it in craft projects, acting it out in plays, and bouncing with it all through the activities of the day. In this way they live it, love it and certainly can't forget it.

Here are a number of tips to help achieve this goal:

1. The camp director or Shiur director should review the lessons with the staff once a week. In this way they can discuss, as a group, which points they want to stress and generally brainstorm on the information.
2. The Shiur teachers must prepare the lesson. Without proper preparation the class will fail. They should look at the information each night, decide which parts to teach and be fully prepared and confident when Shiur time arrives.
3. There should be one staff member designated to make all the copies and generally manage the Shiur program. This staff member can prepare the handouts, collate the scrapbooks, and prepare the materials for the hands-on activities.
4. The highlight activities of the day should connect to the daily lesson. Most of the standard camp activities are flexible enough and can be adapted to almost any topic. There are suggestions included at the end of each lesson.
5. In addition, the counselor skits, songs, baking and crafts should also be in connection with the day's Shiur whenever possible. This will truly cause the campers to internalize the Shiur.

Scrapbook Ideas

Being that the curriculum covers a span of 6,000 years and hundreds of names and places as well, it is recommended that the campers follow the progression of the history with a personal scrapbook. This will help them see the sequence of events.

Here are some scrapbook ideas:

- ❖ Camp Style - each camper receives a piece of foam, which they decorate creatively as the cover of their scrapbook. They then put in two binder rings, and wait to fill it up with papers. Each day they receive a colored piece of cardstock. Throughout the day they have to find a souvenir of the Day's lesson and paste it on to their cardstock, and put it on their 'binder'. For example, on Creation day they can find a souvenir for each of the seven days of creation; on the Flood day they can find a leaf for the raven that Noah sent. This is a fun, spunky, campy idea and it has a real scrapbook look at the end.

- ❖ Coloring Book - For younger children the best scrapbook is a daily coloring sheet, which is bound into a booklet at the end. There are numerous holiday and Parsha coloring books, and finding a coloring sheet for every day isn't that difficult. The pictures help the children actually 'see' the event, making it easier for them to remember it.

- ❖ Workbook - For Hebrew schools looking for a more educational sort of scrapbook, they can do more of a workbook idea. Each child can receive a binder with sheet protectors, and each day they receive a handout, question sheet or activity sheet that they store in their binder. There are a number of prepared handouts that go along with these lessons.

- ❖ Journal - for older students who can relate to the history in a more mature way, a journal can be a perfect tool to help them internalize the concepts learned. Each lesson can end with the campers/students writing in their journals on topics like: "If I was standing at the Red Sea, and felt the Egyptian bullets behind me, what would I do?" "If I was in Spain, and I had the choice to leave or stay and live as a Marrano, which would I choose?"

Keep In Touch

If you have questions or suggestions, please feel free to e-mail cmgourarie@hotmail.com. Wishing you much success in this program and all other programs, and may our combined efforts lead us to the final Geulah - Bimheira V'yameinu.

Mushky Gourarie

Shevat 5762

B”H

BOOK ONE

LESSON 1 – LESSON 17



YEAR 1 – 2935

CREATION –

COMPLETION OF FIRST BEIS HAMIKDSOH

Lesson One: One Long story

Introduction to Teachers

Today's lesson has two important points:

1. The continuity of the Jewish people -Through activities and stories we want to stress to the campers that there is a chain from Adam all the way down to our generation. We are the last link in this long and glorious chain.
2. The concept of the Jewish spark - *Pintele Yid*

Hands-On Activity

Materials Needed:

- A sheet of white paper for each camper
- Pencils for each camper
- Matches and a candle

The lesson should start off with an activity, commonly known as Who-What-When-Where-Why. Each camper receives a piece of paper and writes a 'who' of one or two people. For example:

Who: President Bush

The Campers then each fold over what they wrote and pass it on to the next person. Then each camper writes a 'What', folds it over and then they pass it on. They do the same thing with the 'When', 'Where' and 'Why'.

After they fill in the 'Why' they pass it on and then each camper opens his paper and reads the whole story. Usually they come out very funny because they make no sense at all. For Example:

Who - George Bush and ????

What- Went to the mall

When - At three o'clock in the morning

Where- At the swimming pool

Why- because she loves marshmallow fluff

Story Of The Day

One Long story/ Aristotle Goes to Greece/ The Last Act

One long story

Once the activity is complete, ask the campers to analyze what they just did. Ask them why the stories sound so silly. Together you should come to the conclusion that the reason why they sound so ridiculous is because there is no continuation from one sentence to the next. No one knew what the sentence before said so they couldn't continue on with something that followed sensibly. Unless you know what happened before, your story won't make any sense.

Jewish history is one long story, one long show with different acts. In order for the story to make sense we have to know what happened in the generations before. If we try to live as Jews without knowing what happened before and what our fathers experienced, we won't know what to do. We are an important part of the story, we are the newest chapter in the story, and we want the story to flow.

Aristotle Goes to Greece in 2001

Aristotle goes to visit Greece in year 2001. He comes with a long robe and a scroll under his arm. He turns to the first person he sees and says "Hello" in Latin. The guy looks at him very puzzled and says, "What?" Aristotle looks at the man's jeans and notices his cell phone sticking out of his pocket. Aristotle walks away dejectedly.

Aristotle sees another man sitting under a tree with a big black thing on his lap. Aristotle says "Hello" again. This man knows Latin so he says, "Hi". Aristotle pulls out his scroll and says: "Do you want to learn some wisdom?"

The man laughs and says, "I have all the wisdom I need right here on my laptop."

Aristotle leaves him feeling very sad and homesick. The old Greece he knew is gone; it's a whole new world now.

Describe the same phenomenon in Rome or Egypt.

Then: Moshe Rabbeinu decides to visit Israel in year 2001. He comes in to sunny Jerusalem and says 'Shalom' to the first person he meets. The Jew responds with a hearty "Shalom" back.

"What's your name?" Asks Moshe.

"I'm called Moish," The man responds. Moshe is very pleased that his name is still used by the Jewish people.

"I haven't yet put Tefilin today, do you know where I could find a pair?" Moshe asks.

"Sure," says the Jew, "I have mine with me, I was just coming from the Synagogue."

Moshe takes the Tefilin and continues walking. All the people around him are speaking Hebrew, a little modern, but basically the same. He then walks into the Synagogue and he sees people learning Torah - the exact same Torah that was given at Sinai.

"Can I join you?" Moshe asks, and he eagerly sits down to learn with them. He feels right at home.

* * *

The Greeks have a 'silly story'. Their story didn't maintain itself; it changed many times since Aristotle's times. Aristotle didn't feel at home. But the Jews are one long chain. We all still study the Torah that Moshe taught, we all still put on Tefilin and we still speak Hebrew and have Jewish and biblical names.

The Last Act In The Drama Of Jewish History

Address the campers: You are the latest chapter in the story. It's up to you to make the story make sense for the next generations. In order to help us do this we will learn the story of Jewish history from the very beginning. We will go into a Magical Theater every day and see another act in the story. We will learn how our fathers and grandfathers lived and they will give us clues and guidance how to live as Jews today.

If Moshe came to visit us in Gan Izzy, we would want him to feel right at home!

Discussion

Water And Oil/The Jewish Spark/ Yossel's Small Jewish Spark/ Jewish Heroes/ Inside The Text

Water And Oil (1)

Supplies needed:

- ❖ Small bowl

- ❖ Cup of oil
- ❖ 2 cups of water

Why do you think all the other nations forgot their customs and language after a while, and only the Jews are still speaking the same language and living in pretty much the same way? The other nations always mixed with each other. For example, when the Roman people went to Greece, they soon became Greek, and when the Greek people went to England, they soon became English.

The Jews have been to almost every country on earth, why didn't they mix with the other nations? How did they manage to keep their Judaism in all places and in all times?

Let's do an experiment to help us understand this.

We have over here three paper cups. Let's write on one 'Jew', on the other 'Roman', and on the third 'Greek'. Each of these represents a different nation.

What's more expensive, oil or water? Oil. Let's fill up the Jew cup with oil, and the other two, with water.

Now let's pour some of the Greek water into our bowl. This bowl now represents Greece. Now let's add some Roman water inside. Can anyone tell the difference between what was Roman water and what was Greek water? No, They are blended together; there is no difference.

Now, let's bring some Jews into Greece. Let's pour the oil in. Can we tell the difference between the oil and the water? Yes, the oil always floats to the top. It doesn't matter where the Jews go. They always float to the top; they never truly mix with the other nation.

Why don't Jews mix? Because Jews are special. Hashem chose us because He has an extra special love for us.

As we go through our history we are going to see this over and over again. The Jews were always guests in other countries, and they always kept to their Judaism. Like oil, they always float to the top.

The Jewish Spark (2,3)

As we go through the story of Jewish history we will encounter many hard and dark times. We can compare history to a long and sometimes very dark tunnel.

But in this tunnel there are small lights.

Can anyone guess what is the light that brightens this tunnel?

Every Jew is a light. Every Jew has a Neshama, a small Jewish spark inside, that keeps him strong. This Neshama is actually a part of Hashem. Most Jews don't feel their Jewish spark, but it's there, lighting up the way. Our Jewish spark keeps us connected to Hashem and it makes us want to do Torah and Mitzvahs. When the Jewish people faced persecution and other nations wanted them to forsake their Judaism, they always refused, because their Jewish spark wouldn't let them be separated from Hashem.

The counselor can then light the candle and close the lights.

Do you see how the flame reaches upward all the time? Why do you think that is?

The Jewish spark is always yearning to be close to Hashem. It always wants to do more Mitzvahs and learn more Torah.

Turn the candle upside down. The campers will see that the flame still goes upward.

Even when times are very hard and it seems like that little Jewish spark is about to be extinguished, it still continues to go upward.

Is this flame that you see here a big flame or a small flame?

Some times the Jewish spark inside a Jew is very, very big and strong, and sometimes it's tiny. But it's always there - in all Jews during all times.

Let the campers look at the flame for a while and think about their own Jewish spark. Make sure this concept sinks in because we will be referring to it a great deal in the later lessons. While the campers are still sitting in the dark and looking at the flame, the counselor can tell them the following story:

Yossel's Small Jewish Spark (2,3)

There was once a little boy who came from a very poor home. There never was enough food to eat and he was always hungry. One day he passed a stand with

delicious apples. "Nothing will happen if I take just one," he thought to himself. Yossel quickly grabbed a big green apple and ran off.

Seeing how easy it was, he decided to do it again, and again and again. By the time he was a teenager he joined a group of professional thieves and spent all his time robbing people. Each night they would decide on whom they would rob the next day. One day they decided that they wanted to rob the tall church with the colored windows that stood in the center of town. They knew that there were many treasures hidden inside the church. They drew lots as to who would actually break in, and the lot fell to Yossel.

That night he quietly climbed through the church window and began filling sacks with gold and silver dishes and ornaments. There were many treasures so he had to make a few trips. On his very last trip, when he was just about finished, he tripped and fell right outside the church. The noise alerted the police, and they immediately arrested the thief.

The church was furious. They couldn't believe that not only had they been robbed, but also that a Jew had done that. They decided to punish him with a painful death; they would torture him to death. On the appointed day, all the townspeople gathered to watch the spectacle and poor Yossel was taken out of jail and led to the center of town.

Before the torture began, the Bishop asked to say a few words. He stood up and said: "My dear friends, this Jew, Yossel, has sinned greatly against the Church, and no punishment will be great enough to atone for this sin. However, being that the church is merciful, we offer him one way to atone for his sin. If he agrees to convert to Christianity, we will not torture him; and he can continue to live. He turned to look at Yossel, "Do you agree?" He asked.

"Never!" Yossel screamed, "I may be a thief, but I am a Jew!" They began to torture him, hoping he would change his mind, but it was to no avail. Finally in his very last moments he called out, "Shema Yisroel Hashem Elokainu, Hashem Echad," and with those holy words, he breathed his last.

A Jew may sin, even repeatedly, but he will never stop being a Jew, because his Jewish spark won't let him be separated from Hashem.

Jewish Heroes (2,3)

Our history is full of Jewish heroes who left us many lessons about what it means to be Jewish and how to live as Jews. We will meet another one each day and

see what they teach us. At the end of the summer we will have many Jewish hero friends.

Today's hero is you, the Jewish children. Because you are upholding Judaism in your times just like those Jewish heroes upheld Judaism in their times.

Inside the Text (3)

For a more in-depth discussion on the concept of the Jewish spark:

Tanya Likkutei Amorim, Chapter 18-19

Lunch Skit

Counselors should act out the scene of Aristotle vs. Moshe. They should involve the campers by making each bunk another ancient culture. The counselor will then go visit the bunks and the campers who already heard the story during Shiur will know how to 'confuse' the counselor, by speaking about modern things that 'Aristotle' or 'Pharaoh' know nothing about.