

evaluate: How did I teach? How did the students absorb? How did they react? How did they connect with the information? Which activities, discussions, etc. appealed to the students? Were any of their questions left 'hanging'? Don't be intimidated to take a close look at yourself in the conceptual mirror.

For example: In preparing this course, we had originally included a wonderful lesson (or so we thought) on pre-Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Although we liked the lesson, there was something that bothered us; we just couldn't put our finger on it. Finally, when we were nearly completed putting this book together, and we were trying to make sure all the lessons had perfect segues into the next, it hit! That lesson simply didn't flow well into Bar/Bat Mitzvah. Yes, it was thoughtful and creative - but it was tangential! Painful as it was, we deleted it from this book.

The point? There are times when things don't work. It may be difficult to admit to oneself that it didn't work, but in order to be effective teachers, we must!



## **WHAT'S *MOST* IMPORTANT TO TEACH IN EACH LIFE CYCLE UNIT**

### **Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION**

#### **Chapter 2: BIRTH**

The unit on birth includes:

- A lesson on the soul and its purpose in the human condition,
- Analyzes the Jewish calendar and its lessons,
- Outlines some customs regarding birth, and
- Describes the connection between the Mitzvot we perform and the impression it leaves on the soul.

If pressed for time, omit the calendar lessons. You can simply state that Jews are compared to the moon and explain why. Leave the scientific aspects for another time.

#### **Chapter 3: JOIN THE CLUB**

The unit on 'joining the club' includes an exploration into the Hashem-connectedness forged by

- Baby Naming
- Brit
- Pidyan Haben.

If pressed for time, you can omit how Jews kept their Jewish names while enslaved in Egypt. Also, Pidyan Haben (a Biblical obligation) obviously takes precedence over Shalom Zachor (a tradition).

#### **Chapter 4: EDUCATION**

The unit on education includes:

- A description of the initial framing of a child's Jewish identity,
- The Upshernish practice, and
- Candle-lighting for girls.

If pressed for time, you can omit the lesson on Upshernish (since it's a minhag not a Mitzvah). You can also omit an in-depth study of Tzitzit (how to tie the knots, etc.); there will be other opportunities for that.

## **Chapter 5: CHILDHOOD**

The unit on education includes:

- Explanations of how childhood gives them an opportunity to assess who they are and who they can be.

## **Chapter 6: BAR/BAT MITZVAH**

The unit on Bar/Bat Mitzvah includes:

- The critical transition from child into responsible adult the infusion of Da'at and the Neshamah's total integration into one's body,
- The inner beauty of a woman's mission, the Mitzvot relegated to a woman, the modest dress, etc.
- Tefillin that a Bar-Mitzvah lays, the Shemah message and the inner mechanics of Tefillin.

If pressed for time, you can omit the lesson on the inner workings of Tefillin. There are many opportunities to teach that.

## **Chapter 7: ADOLESCENCE**

The unit on Adolescence includes:

- An exploration of the beauty and struggle of the teen years.

## **Chapter 8: MARRIAGE**

The unit on Marriage includes:

- Information on what to look for in our 'other half' and how to bring G-d into this fusion of halves,
- Assorted wedding preparations including Mikveh and Ufruf, and
- The actual wedding ceremony,

If pressed for time, you can omit the play-by-play of the Chassidic wedding. Although, it is chock full of how-to's, when the times comes they can speak to their rabbi. However, if we can succeed in inspiring them with the overall beauty of the wedding rituals, we may will have (hopefully) impacted their future conduct and lives.

## **Chapter 9: ADULTHOOD**

The unit on Adulthood includes:

- The difference between fate and choice and how we can choose a productive life,
- Some of the sadder aspects of life, divorce,

- Adult choices to join the club through conversion to Judaism, and
- The experience we can learn from seniors.

Although we didn't include much information on divorce, we felt it would be negligent to omit it. After all, the students have to know that there is a Jewish process in this sad life cycle event.

#### **Chapter 10: PASSING ON**

The unit on 'Passing On' includes:

- A description of the soul's transition from the human condition into 'Higher Life.'

#### **Chapter 11: THE SOUL LIVES ON...**

The unit on 'The Soul Lives On' includes:

- Analyzes the post-human existence.

*Best of Hatzlachah in  
igniting the souls of Yiddishkeit's future,*

*Mendy and Malkie Herson  
Basking Ridge, NJ*