National Association of Temple Educators
An Affiliate of the Union for Reform Judaism
אגודת המחנכים ליהדות רפורמית

BIENNIAL LEARNING SESSIONS FEATURING NATE PRESENTERS

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK B: WEDNESDAY, DEC 11, 3:15-4:45 PM

4 - Beyond Google: Empowering Families with Young Children to Create a Continuum of Connection to the Jewish Community
Looking for ways to connect families with young children to your congregation in meaningful ways? Join this interactive session to bring home guiding principles, successful strategies and proven ways to foster a congregational culture that supports early engagement and ensures that these families connect early and deeply to one another and to synagogue life.
Rabbi Efrat Zarren-Zohar, Regional Director, Florence Melton School of Adult Jewish Learning
Nancy Bossov, RJE, Founding Director Kehillah School, Temple Israel, New Rochelle, NY
Sherry Fredman, Director, Bay-Nimoy Early Childhood Center, Temple Israel of Hollywood; President, BJE-LA Jewish Early Childhood Directors Network of Los Angeles, CA

23C - The Angst of Aging: Alzheimer's Disease and the Jewish Community Alzheimer's disease and dementia affect nearly every Jewish family. What is the appropriate Jewish response? Learn from professionals working with Alzheimer's patients about sensitive and spiritual approaches for supporting both those who suffer from dementia and their caregivers, and how to address issues of aging in the Jewish community.
Rabbi Douglas Kohn, Congregation Emanu El, San Bernardino, CA
Cantor Ellen Dreskin, Coordinator, Cantorial Certification Program, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR, New York, NY
Mina Freidler, Site Director, Israel Levin Senior Center, Jewish Family Service of Los Angeles, Venice, CA

31C - Today's Campers - Tomorrow's Congregants
What is the role of Jewish camps in leadership and membership development in congregations? Share in rethinking your congregation's approach to camping. Explore how to integrate more of the camp experience into congregational complementary education. Together we will plot a course to ensure that more heads in beds at camp today will mean more Jews in pews tomorrow.
Avi Orlow, Director, Jewish Education, Foundation for Jewish Camp
Gila Hadani Ward, Director, East Geographic Congregational Network, URJ
Rabbi Michael Lezak, Congregation Rodef Sholom, San Rafael, CA
Ruben Arquilevich, Director, URJ Camp Newman
Alison Kur, Executive Director of Jewish Living, Temple Beth Elohim, Wellesley, MA

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK C: THURSDAY, DEC 12, 8:45-10:15 AM

33A - A Systemic Approach for Reflection to Enhance Your Jewish Learning and Teen Initiatives
Learn how to apply the power of reflection and systemic thinking in creating a more effective strategy for achieving your congregational priorities. Participants will be able to choose Jewish Learning or Teen Engagement as topics for learning and experiencing the practical application of this proven corporate organizational alignment tool, in order to learn how to replicate it in your own congregation.
David Trietsch, Founding Director, Leadership and Development Institute, Combined Jewish Philanthropies
Julie Vanek, Director of Jewish Learning Connections, CJP
Reuben Posner, Director of Camping and Teen Engagement, CJP

1 - B'nai Mitzvah Revolution: Lessons Learned in the First Year

This session will tell the story of the B'nai Mitzvah Revolution from the beginning to the present, highlighting what has been learned so far from 90 participating congregations. Session participants will hear from BMR congregations about their experiences and experiments and will learn about important factors in helping them reach their desired outcomes.
Dr. Isa Aron, Professor of Jewish Education, HUC-JIR, URJ Faculty
Rabbi Bradley Solmsen, Director of Youth Engagement, URJ
Lisa Langer, RJE, Associate Director, B'nai Mitzvah Revolution
Katherine Schwartz, RJE, Congregation Har Hashem, Boulder, CO
Cantor Melanie Cooperman, Community Synagogue of Rye, Rye, NY
Randee Bishoff, Temple Akiba, Culver City, CA

30B - Community of Practice: Experimenting with Innovative Approaches to Engaging Young Families
Parents of young children have many alternatives outside the synagogue when seeking out meaningful relationships. A URJ-organized congregational cohort is challenging itself to scale up Jewish engagement with parents of young children in local communities. Learn about these trailblazers' accomplishments and how to apply their work to reimagine Jewish life in your own congregation.
Stephanie Fink, Associate Engagement Director, URJ

31C - Community of Practice: Pursuing Excellence in Early Childhood Education
Jewish Early Childhood Centers create a natural portal for families with young children to become involved in Jewish life and the life of the synagogue. Come learn from a group of trailblazers as they share research, findings, initiatives and challenges, and how you can apply their work to reimagine Jewish life in your own congregation.
Cathy Rolland, URJ Early Childhood Education & URJ Faculty Member

30E - Inclusion or "inclusion": Religious School, Lifelong Learning and Engagement in Synagogue Life

Explore ways to be inclusive in various areas of synagogue life with a specific focus on the varying requirements of students with special needs. Strategize action items to implement in your religious school and synagogue. This workshop will provide information at varying levels of inclusion implementation. All are welcome to attend!
Jeannette Cohen, Child Support Coordinator, Temple Beth Am, Seattle, WA
Stacy Rosenthal, Religious School Principal, Congregation Beth Israel, Scottsdale, AZ
Dana Kanter Prottas, RJE, Lower School & Hebrew School Director, Mount Zion Temple, St. Paul, MN

33B - Letting Go and Taking Hold: Embracing Change in Synagogue Life
We tend to consider real change only in crisis. Come explore a new model for change management amidst stability. Develop a culture of ongoing self-reflection and innovative change.
Rabbi Elyse Frishman, Barnert Temple, Franklin Lakes, NJ
Sara Losch, Director, Lifelong Learning, Barnert Temple, Franklin Lakes, NJ

32A - NATE Accreditation 101: Growing Your School from Good to Great!
Learn everything you ever wanted to know about NATE Accreditation and even more! Learn how this proven self-evaluation process will ensure that your school will grow from good to GREAT!
Marlene Myerson, RJE, Curriculum Consultant, URJ Books and Music
Robin Eisenberg, Director, Lifelong Learning, Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, FL
Patty Beck, President, Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, FL
Rabbi Steven Rau, RJE, Director, Lifelong Learning, The Temple, Atlanta, GA

7A - Oh the Thoughts You Can Think: A Congregational Case Study in Youth Engagement
Join as we share our congregation's journey in creating a "Think Tank for Youth and Family Engagement." We will model our initial Call to Action and our ongoing successes and challenges in listening to the needs of our community in a positive and productive way, and the resulting actions we took to create meaningful connections.
Amy Lieberman, Co-Chair, Congregational Think Tank on Youth Engagement, Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego
Joellen Zollman, Co-Chair, Congregational Think Tank on Youth Engagement, Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego, CA
Ava Kurnow, Director of Religious School Education, Congregation Beth Israel, San Diego

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK D: THURSDAY, DEC 12, 10:30 AM-12:00 PM

6A - Big Screen Worship: Praying without Prayerbooks
Learn from rabbis, cantors and soloists who are creating visual t'filah in their synagogues large and small. How do you get started? How much equipment is needed? What software can you use? How much technical knowledge must you have? Most importantly, how do you spiritually integrate it with your worship and with your community?
Rabbi Dan Medwin, Publishing Technology Manager, CCAR
Rabbi Billy Dreskin, Woodlands Community Temple, White Plains, NY
Cantor Amy Levy, Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA
Rabbi Elizabeth Dunsker, Congregation Kol Ami, Vancouver, WA
Lori Shapiro, Cantorial Soloist, Temple Beth El, Boca Raton, FL

21 - Creating Successful Lay-Professional Leadership Teams
Lay and professional leaders need each other. A collaborative professional/lay partnership built on trust, support, deep Jewish commitment and a mutual understanding of roles and responsibilities has the power and capacity to inspire and transform congregations and members. Come to this session as a lay/staff team to be enlightened and energized, and to learn new ways to draw strength from each other.
Robert Hersh, Executive Director, Temple Beth Am, Pinecrest, FL
Adrian Dubow, President, Temple Beth Am, Pinecrest, FL
David Kasakove, Immediate Past President, Congregation Beth Elohim, Brookyn, NY; Member, URJ Board of Trustees; Member, URJ Conference of Presidents Steering Committee
Rabbi Shira Koch Epstein, Associate Rabbi, Congregation Beth Elohim, Brooklyn, NY
Marisa Kaiser, RJE, The Alpert-Waldman Family Director of Education Chair, Shir Ha-Ma'alot, Irvine, CA
Dr. Rachel Harman Friedman, Education Chair, Shir Ha-Ma'alot, Irvine, CA
Rabbi Stan Schickler, RJE, Executive Director, NATE

29B - Forward! Mitkadem Digital and E-learning in the 21st Century Synagogue
Hundreds of students across North America are learning Hebrew online, both at home and in the classroom. Get hands-on experience with the URJ's flagship Hebrew curriculum and learn strategies for integrating e-learning into your school's program from educators succeeding with Mitkadem Digital.
Joan Carr, RJE, Curriculum Consultant, URJ Books and Music
Marlene Myerson, RJE, Curriculum Consultant, URJ Books and Music
Michelle Ruby Schwartz, Assistant Director of Education, Temple Sinai, Denver, CO
Michael Goldberg, Publisher and Editor-in-Chief, URJ Books and Music

30A - More than Just Preschool! An Opportunity to Transform Parents of Young Children into Synagogue Leaders
More Than Just Preschool! Learn how today's Early Childhood Centers are shifting to play an instrumental role in engaging parents in Jewish life from the very beginning. Explore how the leadership of two congregations transformed their view of early engagement by focusing on the needs of families with children as young as 6 weeks old! Discover how lay and professional leaders have reframed their approach to ensure that these families connect early and deeply to one another and to synagogue life.
Rabbi Gary Glickstein, Temple Beth Sholom, Miami, FL
Lori Kowit, Director, Early Childhood Education, The Temple-Tifereth Israel, Beachwood, OH
Rabbi Stacy Schlein, Director of Education, The Temple-Tifereth Israel, Beachwood, OH
Cathy Rolland, Early Childhood Education, URJ Faculty Member

33B - The Power of Working Together: Creating a Vibrant Congregation Through Collaborative Professional Partnerships

Often working in the silo of their own program area, congregational professionals work toward the same goal - ongoing and deep engagement throughout the various stages of life - but don't necessarily understand how to join forces to develop opportunities for engagement that are strong, vibrant and cohesive. Learn what creative strategies are being piloted to construct stronger professional bonds which strengthen lifelong Jewish engagement.
Sari Luck Schneider, President, ECE-RJ
Paula Sayag, PhD, Early Childhood Director, Beth Ami, Rockville, MD
Shelly Sender, Director, Early Childhood Education, Temple Emanu-El, Dallas, TX,
Livia Thompson, Senior Director, Central Synagogue, New York, NY; Immediate Past President, NATA
Cindy Terebush, Director of Schools at Temple Shalom Schools, Aberdeen, New Jersey; Early Education Consultant
Karen Hoffman, Program Director, Temple Emanu-El, Dallas, TX; President, PDRJ
Rabbi Jonathan Stein, Senior Rabbi,Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY
Janice Rosenblatt, FTA, Executive Director Beth Ami, Rockville, MD, President, NATA

11AB - Think Tank: Let Your Voice Be Heard
Explore what it means to engage a community of diversity at the URJ Expanding Our Reach Think Tank! Add your voice to the conversation about Judaism in the 21st century and help the URJ shape its sacred work on engaging those who feel on the outside of our congregations and the greater Jewish community.
Lisa Lieberman Barzilai, RJE, Director, Expanding Our Reach, URJ

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK E: THURSDAY, DEC 12, 3:30-5:00 PM

23C - 21st Century Early Childhood Director: Powerful Tools and Critical Connections to Ensure Early Childhood Engagement Success!
The role of the early childhood director has evolved from directing pre-schools to serving as a catalyst to engaging families in Jewish life. These exceptional leaders of ECE-RJ (Early Childhood Educators of Reform Judaism) will share programmatic tools and strategies to ensure success in your congregation.
Heidi Baker, Early Childhood Director, Temple Beth Avodah, Newton, MA
Jennie Rubin, Director, Early Childhood, Temple B'nai Or, Morristown, NJ
Nancy Bossov, RJE, Founding Director, Kehillah School for Early Learning, Temple Israel of New Rochelle, New Rochelle, NY
Ellen Dietrick, Director, Early Childhood Learning, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA

29D - Moving Religious School from Supplemental to Central: Innovative Models of Congregational Learning

Learn about congregations in our Movement having tremendous success in educating our children using innovative models! There are new initiatives across North America that rely on best principles in secular education that have been adapted to create meaningful and deep Jewish learning in our synagogues. From incorporating technology to creating small groups and a focus on families learning together, come and be inspired as you discover how these expert educators and innovations are engaging Jewish learners of all ages.

Mindy Davids, RJE, Director of Religious School and Educational Innovation, Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY
Rabbi Melissa Buyer, Temple Israel of the City of NY, New York, NY
Rabbi Jocee Hudson, Educator, Temple Israel of Hollywood, Los Angeles, CA
Deborah Niederman, President, National Association of Temple Educators, Temple Shalom, Dallas, TX

10 - Successfully Including Youth With Special Needs

Successful youth engagement means providing meaningful and fulfilling Jewish experiences for all youth, including those with special needs. Using examples from successful congregations, camps, NFTY, and congregational youth programs, this session will provide specific, concrete strategies for providing appropriate accommodations and meeting the needs of all youth in our programs and communities.

Lisa Friedman, RJE, Co-Director of Education, Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough, NJ
Marissa Frankel, Assistant Director, URJ Eisner Camp
Beth Lipschutz, Regional Director of Youth Engagement, NFTY-MV
Abby Knopp, Vice President of Strategy and Program, Foundation for Jewish Camp

5AB - T'filah and the Pre-Teen

T'filah for early adolescents can be a challenging experience for both the youth and the leader. This ma'ariv experience is planned to help think about what good t'filah might look like for this age group. This interactive learning experience, planned and led by the B’nai Mitzvah Revolution, will include both a service and time to discuss your reactions.

Dr. Isa Aron, Professor of Jewish Education, HUC-JIR, URJ Faculty
Lisa Langer, RJE, Associate Director, B'nai Mitzvah Revolution
Rabbi Nicki Greninger, Director of Education, Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA
Rabbi Stacy Rigler, Director of Religious Education, The Reform Congregation Keneseth Israel, Elkins Park, PA
Rabbi Rachel Saphire, Temple Beth Elohim, Wellesley, MA

30E - The True Story of How and Why Jewish Education Fails (and What We Can Do About It)

People cite the high costs, the lack of time, the inadequacy of the teachers … and all of these may be true, and yet: were we to solve all these problems, we still would not be addressing the real dilemmas intrinsic to the endeavor of Jewish education. We will look together at sociological research and philosophical theories from the past century leading to one inescapable conclusion: Jewish education can and does work, when we aren’t afraid to let it.

Saul Kaiserman, Director of Lifelong Learning, Congregation Emanu-El of the City of New York, New York, NY

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK F: FRIDAY, DEC 13, 8:30-10:00 AM

31B - A RAC Campaign: LGBT Equality and Workplace Protection
Despite historic advances in LGBT equality, it is still legal in many states to hire or fire employees based on their sexual orientation/gender identity. Congregations are joining with the Religious Action Center to ensure workplace equality for LGBT Americans. Learn what you can do to advance this civil rights issue.
Rachel Laser, Deputy Director, RAC
Rabbi Ilana Schwartzman, Congregation Kol Ami, Salt Lake City, UT
Rabbi Eleanor Steinman, Director of Programs & Funds Development, A Wider Bridge

1 - Baby Steps: Practical Strategies for Attracting Families with Young Children
Attracting new families is essential for the future vitality of any congregation. Increasingly, innovative congregations are finding that carefully designed programs that specifically focus on families with young children can bring many new families in the door. In this session, three national experts will describe, based on research and experience, how to create successful programs and initiatives that generate a buzz, make your congregation a family destination, and support families on their Jewish journeys.
Mark I. Rosen, Ph.D., Associate Professor, Hornstein Jewish Professional Leadership Program, Brandeis University
Jodi Jarvis, Director, Families with Young Children and Interfaith Engagement, Combined Jewish Philanthropies, Boston, MA
Deborah Cooper, Assistant Vice President, Young Family Engagement, JUF/Jewish Federation of Metropolitan Chicago
Cathy Rolland, Early Childhood Education, URJ Faculty Member

33A - Professionalizing Your Youth Professional: How to Make Visions of Youth a Reality Learn how you can provide resources and professional growth for your youth professional and increase their impact with the youth in your congregation. This roundtable discussion with youth practitioners will explore how to maximize their potential to engage future generations.
Alan Goodis, Recording Artist
Nicole Miller, Jewish Education Project
Carine Warsawski, Marketing Director, Authentic Israel, iCenter
Brett Lubarsky, Director of Youth Engagement, Temple Beth Elohim, Wellesley, MA
Craig Parks, Director of Youth Programming, Temple Solel, Cardiff by the Sea, CA
Rabbi Ana Bonnheim, Associate Director, URJ Greene Family Camp
Ivy Cohen, Director of Youth Engagement, Jewish Crescent City Youth
Rachel Sabath Beit-Halachmi, National Director of Recruitment and Admissions, HUC-JIR
Rabbi Melissa Zalkin Stollman, MARE, MSW, Coordinator, Certificate Program in Jewish Education for Adolescents and Emerging Adults, HUC-JIR, New York, NY

30B - Reimagining Hebrew Learning in "Hebrew School" After four years of attending "Hebrew School," our students typically don't understand or read Hebrew very well. Why is that the case, and what can be done about it? A curriculum expert, two synagogue education directors and a lay leader will explore why many students have trouble learning Hebrew, offer some principles that would make a difference, suggest avenues for turning Hebrew learning on its head (including "Hebrew Through Movement"), and share one congregation's story of change.
Nachama Skolnik Moskowitz, Senior Director, Jewish Education Center of Cleveland, Cleveland, OH
Rabbi Nicole Greninger, Director of Education, Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA
Ellen Fox, School Director, Temple Solel, Cardiff by the Sea, CA
Dan Myers, Vice-President, Temple Isaiah, Lafayette, CA

33B - We're All in This Together: Disability Rights in Our World
Today, we are doing ever more to make certain that our congregations and our communities are open and accessible to all – including people with disabilities. Learn what your congregation, your community, and your country can do to ensure that all people can be full participants.
Lisa Friedman, Co-Director of Education, Temple Beth-El, Hillsborough, NJ
Shelly Christensen, Program Manager, Minneapolis Jewish Community Inclusion Program for People with Disabilities; URJ Faculty Member
Barbara Weinstein, Associate Director, RAC

9 - The Meeting After the Meeting in the Parking Lot: Better Decision Making
Eliminate parking lot meetings and throw out Robert's Rules of Order by learning consensus decision making skills – an inclusive, collaborative, relationship-building approach to reach agreement and arrive at creative, dynamic Jewish decisions that everyone actively supports – or at least can live with.
Rabbi Samuel Joseph, PhD, Professor of Jewish Education & Leadership Development, HUC-JIR
Mindy Davids, RJE, Director of Religious School and Educational Innovation, Temple Shaaray Tefila, New York, NY
Deborah Niederman, President, National Association of Temple Educators, Temple Shalom, Dallas, TX

21 - Worship that Works: DO Try this at Home
Today's congregants are seeking worship experiences to which they can relate. Today's congregants are a hugely diverse group. There is no "one size fits all." Should our music be Hebrew or English? Old or new? Ashkenazic, Sephardic or American? Is our tone meditative, celebratory, or participatory? Join facilitators who are immersed in the world of innovative worship techniques and the architecture of sacred community. Learn tools and tunes that teach and reach, that inspire and enhance congregational worship for all.
Shira Kline (ShirLaLa, Lab/Shul), Performer, Educator, Sacred Music and Worship Leader
Dan Nichols, composer, community mover, shaliach tzibbur
Cantor Ellen Dreskin, Coordinator of the Cantorial Certification Program, Debbie Friedman School of Sacred Music, HUC-JIR

LEARNING SESSIONS BLOCK G: FRIDAY, DEC 13, 2:15-3:45 PM

29A - A Journey of Transformation: Taking the "School" Out of "Religious School" and Beyond
Temple Beth Shalom underwent a three-year process to transform their religious school into a new model for Jewish families of the 21st century. The result was their new Mayim program for children in kindergarten through fifth grade and their families, and an impact felt across all of their learning programs and throughout the temple as a whole. This session will focus on the process of educational change within a synagogue setting, providing practical tools and strategies you can use in your own synagogue setting.
Rabbi Todd Markley, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA
Ellen Dietrick, Director of Early Childhood Learning, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA
Rachel Happel, Director of Elementary Learning, Temple Beth Shalom, Needham, MA

31C - Laugh and Learn: Telling Stories out of (Jewish Day) School
Laugh, learn and transform your assumptions in this heartwarming laughter-to-tears storytelling session. Jewish comedian Joel Chasnoff will introduce a dynamic line-up of engaging Reform Jewish adults and teens who will share stories that will illuminate.
Joel Chasnoff, Stand-up comedian and writer
Jodi Hessel, Temple Beth Am, Los Altos Hills, CA
Alison Kur, Executive Director of Jewish Living, Temple Beth Elohim, Wellesley, MA
Lisa Berney, Rabbinical Student, HUC-JIR
Micah Friedman, NFTY Religious and Cultural Vice President
Lee Davis, Holy Blossom Temple, Toronto, CA
Beth Behar, Admissions Director, Wise School, Los Angeles, CA

23A - Placement in the Reform Movement: The State of the Art
The Reform Movement offers several placement services for our member congregations to engage synagogue professionals - American Conference of Cantors (ACC) for cantors in congregations, Central Conference of American Rabbis (CCAR) for placement of rabbis in congregations, and National Association of Temple Educators (NATE) for placement of educators in congregations. This workshop focuses on accessing and utilizing these three placement services.
Cantor Kay Greenwald, Director of Placement, ACC
Rabbi Alan Henkin, Director of Rabbinic Placement, CCAR
Rabbi Stan Schickler, RJE, Executive Director, NATE