

Seder Strategies: Making the Seder Engaging & Relevant for all Ages and Stages



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לע"נ משה בן יעקב ז"ל

EDUCATION

- Education is what remains after one has forgotten what one has learned in school
~Albert Einstein

- The goal of education is not to increase the amount of knowledge but to create the possibilities for a child to invent and discover, to create men who are capable of doing new things.
~Jean Piaget



EFFORT

- יְגִיעַ כַּפֵּיךָ כִּי תֹאכַל אֲשֶׁרֶיךָ וְטוֹב לָךְ – You shall enjoy the fruits of your labors; you shall be happy and you shall prosper
~Tehillim 128:2
- Continuous effort - not strength or intelligence - is the key to unlocking our potential.
~Winston Churchill

SEDER CHALLENGES

- Late



- Cryptic Text



- School Curriculum



- Different Ages & Stages



SO WHAT DO WE DO?

- No single method works
- Differentiation is classroom practice that looks eyeball to eyeball with the reality that kids differ, and the most effective teachers do whatever it takes to hook the whole range of kids on learning.
~Carol Ann Tomlinson

DIFFERENCIATED INSTRUCTION

- חֲנוּךְ לַנֶּעַר עַל פִּי דַרְכּוֹ גַם כִּי יִזְקֵין לֹא יִסּוֹר מִמְּנָה - Teach a child in the way he ought to go; he will not swerve from it even in old age.
~Mishlei 22:6
- Rabbi Dr. David Eliach



INVOLVEMENT & ENGAGEMENT

- Discussion rather than unidirectional teaching
- Research-proven methods of engagement:
 - Choice
 - Positive Demeanor
 - How do I feel? Am I interested? Is this important?
 - Pacing
 - Not too fast; not too slow

(Marzano, J., Pickering, D. *The Highly Engaged Classroom*. 2010)

RECAP: FOUR COMPONENTS

- EFFORT+
- PREP+
- DIFFERENTIATION+
- ENGAGEMENT+



CHALLENGES TO AVOID

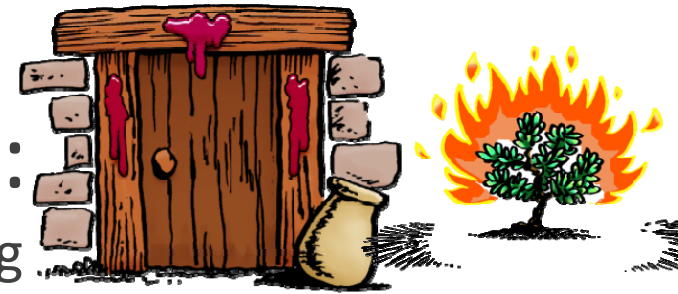
- Ma Nishtana Renditions
- School Dvar Torah Recitations
 - Balancing school prep with group interest
- Purely Frontal Divrei Torah
- Getting caught in one part of the Haggada

DO'S & DON'TS



REMEMBER THE EXODUS

- Making the Discussion Relatable AND Relevant
 - Anything to foster engagement and interest is a good thing, but remember it's still Pesach
- Main components of Haggada:
 - Story+Historical Relevance+Praise & Thanksgiving



TIPS & SUGGESTIONS

- Three Different Ages:

- Toddlers & Children

- Adolescents

- Adults

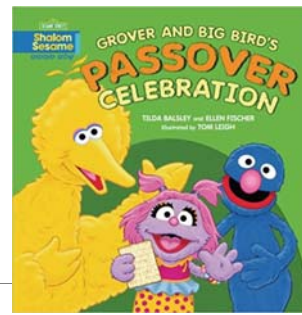


- For each, the same principles apply:

- Effort+Prep+Differentiation+Engagement

- Avoid the Don'ts + Try to stick with the Exodus

TODDLERS & CHILDREN



- EFFORT: Involve with the prep, not just the actual Seder
- PREP:
 - Talk POSITIVELY about Pesach and the upcoming Seder
 - Discuss the details – substantive and mundane (e.g. where will everyone sit? Where should we put the seder plate? How do we make sure that we can stay awake? Which Haggada should we use?)
 - Engage with them about what they're learning in school about Pesach
 - Take the child shopping for stuff for the seder
 - Devote a block of time
 - Prep Activities: Decorations; Charoset Taste Test; Haggada shopping

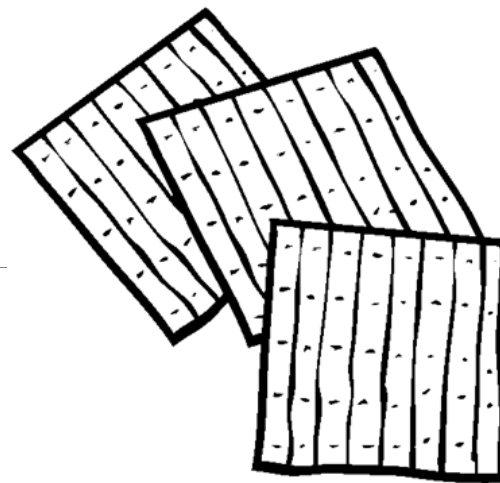


TODDLERS & CHILDREN (cont'd)

■ DECORATIONS

- Coloring Pictures – use coloring pages or otherwise
 - Scenes from Exodus story (Makkot; Yam Suf etc.)
 - Matza and Maror pictures
- Turn dining room into Yam Suf with Streamers
- Make “man” (either pictures or ornaments) and hang from/on ceiling
- Make “barad” pics/ornaments and hang from ceiling
- Get window pencils or paints and color the windows of your dining room (if you're brave enough 😊)





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TODDLERS & CHILDREN

■ DIFFERENTIATION:

- What interests each child? Relate those things to the larger presentation
 - E.g. let's say you have one kid who loves sports, one who loves princesses and one who loves power rangers:
 - Make story characters interchangeable
 - Use props from those things (e.g. PR mask is now a Pharaoh hat; princess doll is now Pharaoh's daughter; baseball bat is now Moshe's staff)
- Figure out school material in advance and figure out what everyone knows and how you can generate discussion.
- Relate to Parshiot and aspects of parshiot they're familiar with



TODDLERS & CHILDREN

■ ENGAGEMENT

- Discussion not teaching
- YOU ask THEM as many questions as you can
 - Trivia & open-ended questions (e.g. what do you think...)
- Games
 - Trivia (emphasis on parts of story they know; use other areas of knowledge)
 - Seder Headbandz
- Props
 - Jello-blood trick
- Hang up a schedule in the room with target points and rewards
- Try to get kids to talk to each other using these tools
- CANDY
 - “Afisplosion”



ADOLESCENTS



- EFFORT:
 - Learn with your kid in advance (parsha, gemara, haggada etc.)
 - Talk to them about the Seder – what do they like and not like
 - Involve them in the details

ADOLESCENTS



- PREP:
 - Decorations
 - If artistic come up with ideas to decorate room
 - Ideas: decorating light fixtures; streamers; seat covers
 - Have them help with actual prep – cooking; setting room up; schlepping
 - Discuss ideas – use their ideas!
 - Try to allocate multiple blocks of time
 - Assign tasks and “homework” to prepare (e.g. trivia questions; discussion topics)

ADOLESCENTS



- **DIFFERENTIATION:**
 - Play off individual interests
 - Use areas/topics in which they converse
 - Combine school material
 - Utilize individual talents
 - Ask “what would you...” questions

ADOLESCENTS



■ ENGAGEMENT:

- Discussion discussion discussion
- Get your kid to laugh at you 😊
- Use music if they enjoy it
- Guide discussion based on familiar school material
- Use their interests

ADULTS

- PREP:

- Positivity!
- Request input
- Share reading material
- Figure out everyone's individual knowledge level
- Share music you'd like to sing at the seder
- Assign homework



ADULTS

■ DIFFERENTIATION:

- Have adults engage with kids
- Use as little “jargon” as possible if they won’t understand
- Incorporate singing
- Use individual interests



ADULTS

■ ENGAGEMENT:

- Use examples from individual's past
- Games trivia etc.
- Charleton Heston
- “How'd you do this in your house growing up?”



SEDER STRUCTURE

1) Introduction to the Exodus Story and its retelling on Passover

- הא לחמא עניא ; מה נשתנה ; עבדים היינו ; מעשה ברבי אליעזר ; אמר ר"א בן עזריה ; ברוך המקום ; ד' בנים ; יכול מראש חודש

2) The story of the Exodus – *Sippur Yetziat Mitzrayim*

- **From the birth of the patriarchs to slavery in Egypt**
 - מתחילה עובדי עבודה זרה ; ברוך שומר הבטחתו ; והיא שעמדה
- **The dawn of peoplehood, slavery and Divine Intervention in Egypt**
 - צא ולמד ; דרשות על ארמי עבד אבי וכו' ;
- **The extent of Divine intervention**
 - דבר אחר ; י' מכות ; רבי יוסי הגלילי אומר ; רבי עקיבא אומר

3) Placing the Exodus story in perspective

- דיינו

Connecting the commandments of Passover to the Exodus story just recounted

- רבן גמליאל היה אומר-פסח מצה ומרור

Relevance of the Exodus story today

- בכל דור ודור חייב אדם וכו'

The Exodus just recounted demands that we give praise and thanksgiving to God

- לפיכך אנחנו חייבים להודות

The first segment of thanksgiving

- הללו ; בצאת ישראל

The blessing recited on the telling of the Exodus story.

- אשר גאלנו וגאל את אבותינו וכו'