

**Issue 5:  
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**CHEDER NEWSLETTER**  
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## **Senior Cheder: moving the curriculum on**

Over the last two terms, the Senior Cheder age range has become less diverse, and so Senior Cheder is older and Junior Cheder has a large number of students. We are now preparing a new curriculum to redress part of that imbalance. We would like to move children from age 10 up into the Senior Cheder, with their own curriculum. This curriculum will run alongside the topics being discussed by the older children. The aim is that the older group will continue their discussions, but the younger ones will do sessions on the same themes aimed more at embedding Jewish knowledge and understanding. At the end, the older group will present their views on the controversies involved in each theme, giving a balanced picture of the issues involved. This will also provide them with an introduction to the public speaking and presentation skills they may need to develop for their bar/bat mitzvah.

So now we hope to move the older children from Junior to Senior Cheder, and to start the new programme with them as soon as possible.

If any parent is interested in volunteering to work with either group, they are very welcome. Please contact Laura Miller, the Cheder Head Teacher.

Senior Cheder this year so far has been about controversy as Laura Miller explains:

## **Controversy in the Cheder**

This year there is a lot of controversy in the Cheder. We have taken the booklets produced by Liberal Judaism on Liberal Jewish Values and Liberal Judaism in Practice, and used them to discuss some of the issues that make our community such a vibrant one.

We started out talking about what Liberal Judaism is and how and why it is different from other branches of Judaism. We looked at the differences in celebrations, in how people should be treated, what happens in life cycle events, mostly using the leaflet "Liberal Judaism and Jewish Identity."

We then went on to look at the role of women, and we discussed at great length how women work in our community and how different or similar this is in the outside world and in other branches of Judaism. The children drew pictures of how they see women now and how they were viewed some time ago – very instructive. And yes, they all know men can be rabbis too. The fact that most of the Cheder students who come regularly are female made this discussion particularly interesting and intimate, although really we need boys for balance! ("The Role of Women")

In the last session we went on to look at ethical shopping, and discovered that if the girls didn't shop at the stores that were using sweat shops, they could wear hoodies, skirts and probably some shoes, but almost nothing else. We tried to find out if Marks and Spencer's underwear was made in sweatshops, but didn't have the technology. That would, of course, take care of the underwear... (Ethical Values in "The Affirmations of Liberal Judaism.")

(Getting the internet in the community rooms doesn't seem to work. I bring in my laptop and dongle, but never seem to get a signal. Any suggestions from you computer geeks out there would be very welcomed.) We are going on to look at Ethical Eating, Animal Welfare ( a particular interest of one who, in earlier life, would have liked to be a veterinarian – me), the Environment, then Ageing and how the aged are treated, Genetic Research and Zionism and Israel, all covered by these booklets.

Finally we will sum up by looking at the leaflet "Affirmations of Liberal Judaism."

Because there is so much to discuss in each issue, we have not set specific dates for each discussion. Sometimes an issue will take two sessions, sometimes one session will do.

The booklets are now out of print, apparently, although I think they are useful for older students who are finding their own role in the world. It has always been my view that for young adults, an open discussion of why we hold the ethical values that we do, and why we continue to perform the practices we do, is imperative if they are to continue our legacy.

If anyone has any readings, paragraphs, poetry or would like to write something for the students to discuss, I would be delighted to receive it.

Laura Miller

## **Junior Cheder has worked on community**

The programme for the two terms is: What is community?

Our activities have focused on the duties of a community and having the students do very creative and informative tasks:

1. Visit the sick- make get well cards
2. Support the poor- raise money
3. Welcome guests- invite friends to shul, make invitations
4. Marriage. Decode ketuba
5. Bury the dead- Prayer for the dead
6. Warden role - To assist, give out Torah portions, help in service
7. Rabbi - Set of cards, what a Rabbi does or does not do. Make kippot
8. Teaching – Teach our children; Make a book for the crèche; Make a book for children's classroom
9. Learning: The Shema - Finding data, on who is learning what? Prep one week – what types of learning are there?
10. Survey community on why we are here.
11. Create assembly on what is our community



## Hebrew for younger children

Vicky Millan teaches Hebrew based on the *Eizeh Kef* system. Vicky is always delighted to meet parents and discuss their children's progress. It would be helpful if parents could



- Ensure that their child is punctual for class. Classes take place once every fortnight and begin promptly at 10am
- Ensure that their child attends regularly to ensure progression in the Hebrew language
- And finally, please encourage their child to complete homework tasks as this too is a significant aid to progression.

## Hebrew for teenagers

- The Teenage Hebrew and Torah study group (post-bnei mitzvah) is starting this term on Shabbat mornings at 10 am, during the children's Hebrew time slot. We read part of the weekly parsha in Hebrew and discuss some of the ideas it contains. All teens welcome, whatever your level of Hebrew.

Please contact Liz Reiner if your son or daughter wants to join this group

## Post Bnei Mitzvah group

We are trying to organise some activities for over 13s.

- On **Sunday morning 18th March** some of the members of the post-bnei mitzvah group and their families will be going on a Jewish women's history walking tour of the East End. More info here: <http://www.jewishmuseum.org.uk/whats-on?item=222> There is a cost associated with this and you need to book in advance. Contact Liz for more info.
- On **Sunday morning 20th May** the post-bnei mitzvah group will be visiting the Jewish Museum in Camden Town and stopping for lunch afterwards. Details to be confirmed nearer the time. Contact Leila for more info.

## How do we pay for our Cheder?

Our Cheder is an important part of NLPJC's activities and its budget is part of our annual accounts, which are scrutinised every year at the AGM. This year, we are budgeting a total of £2,161 for the Cheder, children's Hebrew and crèche costs. Most of this (just over £1,500) goes on staff costs. The rest of the budget is for materials for Cheder and Hebrew (£520 of which £420 is for Hebrew materials which we know we need but which are particularly expensive), £20 for crèche materials

(parents are asked to pay towards these but we have to budget for a shortfall) and this year we set aside £50 in the hope we could organise a Cheder outing in the summer.

Parents are asked to pay £28 per child this year towards Cheder, mainly to cover the cost of materials. Last year we collected £375, but we have raised the charge by £3 this year, and we have more children in Cheder, so this year we hope to raise £530 from that. The rest of the money comes from the main NLPJC budget. This year, we are forecasting a small loss on the NLPJC budget as a whole, so are looking for any economies possible as well as making efforts to raise more money.

Separately from this, we do ask parents to pay for the food their children get at break times in Cheder and crèche. This is £10 per head per year.

Laura is in charge of the materials budget for Cheder and Hebrew. Any questions? Ask Laura or Sue.

## Who does what for children's education?

We try not to make our structures too complicated in NLPJC, but we do rely on volunteer effort a lot, and so have to parcel out tasks between those who are willing but have little time. After a couple of enquiries, it seemed a good idea to explain who is involved in children's education and what their roles are.

**Laura Miller** is the Cheder Head Teacher and teaches the senior Cheder group, including all children 10 and over. She has oversight of the curriculum for both Cheder groups, and devises the curriculum for Senior Cheder in consultation with the rabbi and education group. She liaises with the rabbi, parents and sometimes other teachers about the preparation for bnei mitzvah. Laura also works with parents and bnei mitzvah children on the social and individual aspects of being a bnei mitzvah.

**Talk to Laura** about the senior programme and any concerns about your child in the senior group. And talk to her if your child is approaching 10 as we like to move children between groups in a planned way, preferably coinciding with term times.  
Laura reports to Sue.

**Rachel Epton** is the teacher for the Junior Cheder who devises the curriculum for this group (ages 5 – 9) in consultation with the rabbi.

**Talk to Rachel** about the junior programme and any concerns about your child in the junior group. And talk to her if your child is approaching 5 to discuss when it would be best for her or him to join the group.  
Rachel reports to Laura.

**Vicky Millan** runs the children's Hebrew programme, in coordination with the rabbi.

**Talk to Vicky** about your children's Hebrew learning needs and progress in the programme.  
Vicky reports to the education group.

**Shulamit Ambalu** is the rabbi and oversees the religious and spiritual content of all curricula and works with the teachers on the curricula for each group and for Hebrew. She also supervises Bnei Mitzvah education

**Talk to Shulamit** about the religious content of our education and about Bnei Mitzvah preparation  
Shulamit reports to the NLPJC chair, Claire Helman

**Anna Sklair** runs the crèche for under fives.

**Talk to Anna** about helping in the crèche if your children attend it!

Anna reports to the education group

**Liz Reiner** has just started a discussion and Hebrew group for older children, mainly the post Bnei Mitzvah group. She is also organising some outings for this group.

**Talk to Liz** if your child is 13 or over and would be interested in joining.

**Leila Baker/Simon Falush** are the joint parent representatives on the NLPJC committee. Leila also manages the Cheder budget and organises the snacks for children attending Cheder or crèche and is organising some outings for older children.

**Talk to Leila or Simon** if you have suggestions for things to be taken to the education group or the NLPJC committee.

**Sue Lukes** chairs the education group which meets termly and discusses all aspects of children's education and progress. Parents of children of all ages are welcome to get involved. All the above are invited to all education group meetings. Sue also sits on the NLPJC committee.

**Talk to Sue** about any of the above.

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## Cheder, Hebrew, Crèche & Festival dates for 2012 ~ see main community newsletter for more details



### **Saturday 3<sup>rd</sup> March**

Hebrew, Cheder & crèche  
Rehearsal for Purim Spiel

### **Sunday 11th March**

Purim party 2pm-5pm

### **Saturday 17th March**

Hebrew, Cheder, no crèche

### **Saturday 7th April**

Pesach, 2<sup>nd</sup> night Seder 6.30pm

### **Saturday 21st April**

Hebrew, Cheder, no crèche

### **Saturday 5th May**

Hebrew, Cheder & crèche

### **Friday 11th May**

Lag Ba'omer BBQ supper in the park (*weather permitting*)

### **Saturday 19th May**

Hebrew, NO Cheder or creche ~  
special children's welcoming service

### **Saturday 2nd June**

Hebrew, Cheder & crèche

### **Saturday 16th June**

Hebrew, Cheder, no crèche

### **Sunday 17th June**

10 year birthday celebrations 2pm-7pm

### **Saturday 7th July**

Hebrew, Cheder & crèche

### **Saturday 21st July**

Hebrew, Family & Community service,  
Kabbalat Torah graduation