



# The Jewish Education Center Of Cleveland's תורה -- a newsletter for educators

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י"ז כסלו תשס"ג

## *Teaching Tanah (Bible)*

The Curriculum Department, through Project Curriculum Renewal, has developed a series of units for older middle school and high school students, each based on a different Big Idea ("enduring understanding") of Judaism. Originally developed for a program with minimesters (6 sessions of 90 minutes each), the courses are easily adaptable to schools with semester-length divisions. These curricula help teachers empower the learners to draw conclusions from materials and ideas presented, with much work structured in cooperative groupings. The following three curricular documents focus on different aspects of the *Tanah*:

### **Picture is Worth a Thousand Words**

Study of the Bible, as a book sacred to Jews and non-Jews, offers students a chance to examine the interplay of text, interpretation, and culture. This curriculum shows that Biblical analysis can take many forms, including traditional commentary, modern poetry, and especially art. Through the activities of this unit, students gain skill in close reading of the Biblical text, so that by unit's end, students are ready to try their hand at Biblical commentary through various artistic media. [NOTE: This curriculum is the foundation of a Spring 2003 course offered through the new community-wide high school program, "Other Times, Other Places." The course will meet on six Sunday afternoons during February and March at Meyers Apartments, and is an intergenerational course with teens and seniors. For more information, or to register your favorite teen, contact your school director or Melissa Bernstein at 216-371-0446 x111.]



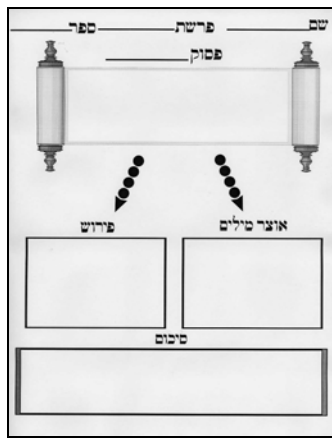
**God's Messengers** This course is an overview of the challenging messages given by the Prophets that the Jewish people would often rather have ignored. Passions, intolerance, and the values our people hold dear are all explored in the unit. This is an engaging course, on a topic teens don't often study in our supplementary schools

### **B'rit: More Powerful than Pinky-Swear**

The *b'rit* (covenant) contracted between God and the Jews of the Torah, has the power to shape and engage the lives of Jews today. With a special focus on the stories of Abraham and the events at Sinai, students consider their own connections to the covenants of fate (the one we are born into) and faith (the one we confirm or affirm when we are older).



## Graphic Organizers for Bible Study



Graphic organizers, visual representation of information, are invaluable in helping students understand complex concepts. For students who tend to learn best from visually presented information, graphic organizers scaffold new learnings and understandings.

The example here shows how commentary grows out of biblical text. Other graphic organizers can illustrate cause and effect (i.e., Creation), cyclical events (i.e., Judges), key concepts (i.e., Prophets), timelines and much more.

Please feel free to stop by the Teacher Center to see how graphic organizers can help you in your teaching. We are happy to share previously designed materials, and to assist you in creating something just right for your classroom.

*-Created by the JECC Teacher Center, Rona Fox, Marci Rogozen, Co Directors*

## The New Media Bible, The Genesis Project, Inc. 1980.

This four part series, though done in the 1980's, remains an important complement for teaching *Tanah*. The voice-over narrative is a direct quotation of the biblical text. The location, architecture, artifacts, clothing, and cultural practices have been carefully researched; Biblical scholars, Drs. Harry Orlinsky and Nahum Sarna consulted on the project. Produced with technical sophistication, superb animation, and beautiful on-site photography, it can be viewed in many venues. Part 1: Creation through Noah and the Flood. Part 2: Abraham. Part 3: Isaac, Esau, and Jacob. Part 4: Joseph.



## Sippurei HaTanach Vol.2, Creation, The Tree of Knowledge, Noah's Ark, Tower of Babel, Media Connection, 1995, color, animation, 35 minutes, Hebrew language.

Original animation and creative dialogue enhances the retelling of four Bible stories, offering opportunities for discussion on several levels. **The Creation** is narrated by a young boy and has excellent visuals. **The Tree of Knowledge** is cleverly told by the snake and combines humor with shrewd insight. **Noah's Ark** is a more traditional retelling. **The Tower of Babel** is told from the perspective of G-d's angels who are concerned as the tower grows higher. Also available in English.

*-Reviewed by Bonnie Shapiro, Ratner Media and Technology Center Associate*

## Websites

Mechon Mamre (<http://www.mechon-mamre.org>) - Online versions of the *Tanah* in Hebrew and English.

*-Reviewed by Maury Greenberg, Director, Technology Resources & Professional Development*