

RENA CONFERENCE 5778 (2017)

A ROCKY MOUNTAIN CHAI for Reconstructionist Educators

Programming Proposal for Day 1 of RENA Conference
Tuesday, November 15, 2017 -- *parashat toledot 5778*
Rabbi Jamie Arnold, Congregation Beth Evergreen

TITLE: Uncovering the Old Wells Anew to Reinvigorate us as Educators

והפירו...וימצאו שם באר מים חיים "They dug ...and rediscovered wells of living waters." Gen. 26:19

GUIDING PRINCIPLES:¹

- 1) **Learners as Teachers, Teachers as Learners**
- 2) Education Directors as Visionaries
- 3) Educators as Professionals, and the Bridge-Builders between the generations
- 4) It Takes a Village: Schools Partnering with Families [Homes] and Congregation
- 5) **Environments as Inspiration for Inquiry**
- 6) **Teaching (self-care and spiritual practice) by Example**
- 7) Co-creating a "shared sacred story," our journey "home" to Israel

CORE VALUES:²

- שמחה / JOY - celebrating the joy of learning-teaching together
- התלמדות / CURIOSITY - keeping the spark of WONDER alive
- אחריות / ACHARIYUT - planning ahead and fine-tuning our response-abilities
- תיקון מידות / TIKUN MIDOT - improving ourselves as learners-teachers
- כבוד / HONOR - respecting our differences as unique, invaluable assets
- ענווה / HUMILITY - taking up the right amount of space
- הכרת הטוב / GRATITUDE - appreciating learning-teaching, naming the good

GOALS:

- Offer educational leaders of the Reconstructionist movement an opportunity to "refill" the inspiration tank with *Torah lishmah, learning for its own sake*;
- Create space for Recon educators to **connect with, learn from** and be re-inspired by **one another** and the **natural beauty** in Evergreen, Colorado;
- Dig into, rediscover, and share practices and resources that enable educators to sustain their holy work through ongoing *talmud torah* and *tikun middot*.

OBJECTIVES:

- Enjoy simply being together and learning together in a beautiful setting
- Clarify our needs and aspirations with a '**spiritual inventory**'
- Sample and share spiritual practices, ways to "tap the buried wells"

¹ Principles based on the "Seven Core Elements of SHEVA," an initiative of the JCC (National) for Jewish ECE.

² Building upon the innovative work of the Tikkun Middot Project, with thanks to th IJS and Rabbi David Jaffe

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- Design a '**spiritual curriculum**' for yourself

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A *BLESSIN'* PLAN for the MORNING:

- 10:30 AM *Mah Tovv*: Arriving at Congregation Beth Evergreen, tour the space
- 10:40 AM *Hinei mah tov*: Re-Introductions, learning something new about you.
- Share song
 - Share stories: what inspired you to become a teacher?
 - Share hopes for this conference
- 10:50 AM *Bircat Hatorah*: *Hevruta* study, Gen. 29, *Isaac accesses wells of Abraham*
- Gen. 29:12-33, Take turns reading, rephrasing, and questioning.
 - What inspires you about this story? What challenges you?
 - *Remez* – allegories for educators? *Drash* – Connections for souls?
 - *Sod* – what's the 'secret sauce' of stimulating study?
- 11:10 AM *Pesukei d'Zimra*: Sharing verses of praise
- *Hevrutot* share reflections with larger group
 - Sing *Shir hamaalot*:
"Those who sow, who sow with tears,
will reap with joy, will reap with joy.
Hazorim b'dimah, b'RENA yik'tzoru"
- 11:20 AM *Barechu*: The blessings of *torah lishmah*
- *What did WE enjoy about that?*
 - *If it nourished us, why?*
- 11:25 AM *Shema v'Ahavta*: Listen, and you shall love teaching diligently (R. Jamie)
- Teaching about *tikkun midot*, Mussar Movement re-introducing character development to Jewish education
 - Parallels between Mussar and Recon movements
 - Kaplan's translation of *Mesillat Yesharim*
 - Values-Based Decision Making
 - Journaling
- 11:35 AM *Mi Camocha*: Wading into the living waters (R. Jamie)
- How to create a spiritual curriculum for yourself?
 - Diagnostic tools
 - Principles and Practices
 - Sketching a personalized Spiritual Curriculum
- 12:00 PM **Lunch** – optional exercise in a) Mindful Eating or b) Speaking

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A BLESSIN' PLAN FOR AFTERNOON:

- 1:00 PM **Amidah:** Getting up and Going Out -- weather permitting
- Short 'Hike' in Elk Meadow Open Space
 - Reflections on *tefilat Yitzhak (minchah)*, "conversations in the field"
 - Walking in Silence – Embodied Meditation
 - Walking together – *Vayeilchu ... b'yachad*
 - The Power of Laughter / Isaac – 'Laughing Yoga'
- 2:00 PM **Aleynu:** "It is upon us to..." (R. Jamie)
- Creating a Values-Based [Spiritual] Curriculum for your classroom/school
 - Naming Guiding Principles and Core Values (*See first page*)
 - Sharing models of shul-wide *Tikun Midot* Curricula
 - *Kabbalat* – personalized home 'learning' assignments (for teacher too)
 - The challenges/opportunities regarding integration
 - Reviewing Self-Sustaining Models for Jewish Learning-Teaching
 - From Isaac (laughter/lover of learning) receiving to
 - Rebecca (server/steward/guide) giving
 - *Pirkei Avot* 3:22. "Those whose deeds exceeds their wisdom, are likened to ...a tree[s] planted by the water, neither afraid nor troubled."
- 2:30 PM **Tikun Midot in YOUR School** (R. Ariann Weitzman)
- Small Working Groups
 - Crafting a *Tikun Midot* Curriculum
 - For your school
 - For your classroom
 - ...and for yourself
- 3:45 PM **BREAK TIME**
- 4:00 PM **Meditation** (Sue Penn, Ed. Dir. Irvine, CA)
- 4:45 PM **Reflections and Siyum Ritual** (R. Jamie)
- 5 PM - Bedtime FREE TIME**
- 7:00 PM OPTIONAL: **KABBALAH CLASS** at Beth Evergreen (R. Jamie)
- 8:30 PM OPTIONAL: **Kumzitz** at Beth Evergreen with Song Swap